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Edmund Kean in New York and Boston: The 1820s. (Volumes I and II)

De Zego, Frank, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1988

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EDMUND KEAN IN NEW YORK AND BOSTON: THE 1820s

by

FRANK DE ZEGO

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Theatre in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1988

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Theatre in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

EDMUND KEAN IN NEW YORK AND BOSTON: 1820s

by

Frank De Zego

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The study attempts to provide a deeper understanding of the significance of Edmund Kean's engagements in New York and Boston during the 1820s, an important decade in nineteenth-century American theatre history. Although it mainly concerns Kean's appearances in New York and Boston, pertinent information is given about his performances in other cities, such as Philadelphia and Baltimore. In addition, there is a discussion of Kean's interim periods in England.

Kean's appearance in the United States represents one of the most exciting episodes in the history of nineteenth-century American theatre. The story of Kean in America is a record not only of the visit to the United States of a great actor, but, also, the story of America's growth towards cultural independence--a growth that shows a country, formerly a colony of England, asserting its own standards of morality, patriotism, and art.

Kean's engagement in the United States, especially in New York and Boston, produced many firsts in the American theatre. Besides the unveiling of Kean's romantic acting style (Kean provided the model for James Wallack and John Maywood who preceded him in 1818 and 1819 in New York), American audiences were exposed to the first sight of curtain calls. Never before had an American audience seen a Hamlet reappear after the final curtain to acknowledge the cheers of the audience. Never before had claques been formed in an American theatre to bolster the performance of an actor. Never before had box seats been auctioned for sale to meet the demands of overflowing audiences. Never before had tickets been resold to insure a profit for unscrupulous spectators. Never before had an actor been so eagerly expected. And never before had an actor so profoundly influenced the interpretation of Shakespeare. Finally, during Kean's engagements in New York and Boston in 1825, audiences witnessed the first riots ever at an American theatre, together with his villification publicly for moral indiscretions.

A corollary value of this study is that Kean's engagements provide invaluable information heretofore unavailable to a reader about this period in American theatre.

PREFACE

It is hoped that the following chapters will provide a deeper understanding of the significance of Edmund Kean's engagements in New York and Boston during the 1820s, an important decade in nineteenth-century American theatre history. Kean's appearance in the United States represents one of the most exciting episodes in the history of nineteenth-century American theatre. The story of Kean in America is a record not only of the visit to the United States of a great actor, but, also, the story of America's growth towards cultural independence--a growth that shows a country, formerly a colony of England, asserting its own standards of morality, patriotism, and art.

When Kean arrived in the United States in 1820 he was praised by most and damned by some. He was joined by an American theatrical corps that was essentially still in its infancy, largely dependent on the importation of British performers. Such performers as James Fennel, Thomas Abthorpe Cooper, John Hodgkinson, George Frederick Cooke, James W. Wallack and John Maywood had already appeared in the United States before Kean. Some, such as

Cooke and Cooper, had distinguished themselves as stars on the American stage. None, however, with the exception of Cooke and Cooper, could rightfully be called legitimate stars.

Although Cooke had established himself as a star before his appearance in the United States, Kean was the first "truly extraordinary star" -- arguably the first genius to perform on the American stage. He was generally considered the successor to the great David Garrick by scores of English critics years before his debut in New York. Kean's eminent position as the greatest tragedian since Garrick established a precedent for generations to come. His arrival accelerated the importation of other English performers--setting the stage for the entry of future distinguished performers, such as William Charles Macready, Frances and Charles Kemble, and Junius Brutus Booth. Though not as "celebrated" as Kean, but greatly influenced by his impetuous acting style and success in America, Junius Brutus Booth came to America first in 1821, and would later make America his domicile. Booth's decision to remain in the United States planted the seeds for the first great American theatrical family--culminating with Edwin Booth.

In 1825, a young American actor by the name of Edwin Forrest met and performed with Kean. Kean's impassioned, energetic, and so-called "natural" acting style made an indelible impression on the young Forrest, so much so that

American critics in 1826 noted that Forrest's fiery acting resembled Kean's. Forrest went on to become a great native tragedian.

America had never before seen anything like Kean. His genius transcended all before him, although it must be said that great debates ensued as to the merits of his "novel" acting style as compared to that of Cooper and Cooke. Kean's romantic acting style not only influenced Forrest and Booth, but may have also set an example for other commendable American performers.

Kean's engagement in the United States, especially in New York and Boston, the essence of the following study, produced many "firsts" in the American theatre. Besides the unveiling of Kean's romantic acting style (Kean had provided the model for Wallack and Maywood who had preceded him in 1818 and 1819 in New York,) American audiences were exposed to the first sight of curtain calls; never before had an American audience seen Hamlet reappear after the final curtain to acknowledge the cheers of the audience. Never before had claques been formed in an American theatre to bolster the performance of an actor. Never before had box seats been auctioned for sale to meet the demands of overflowing audiences. Never before had tickets been resold to insure a profit for unscrupulous spectators. Never before had an actor been so eagerly expected. Never before had an actor received so much public attention. And never before had an actor so

profoundly influenced the interpretation of Shakespeare. Finally, during Kean's engagements in New York and Boston, audiences witnessed the first riots ever at an American theatre, together with his villification publicly for moral indiscretions.

Much more can be said about the significance of Kean's engagements, which, especially in New York and Boston, as this study will reveal, provide invaluable information, heretofore unavailable to a reader, about early nineteenth-century American theatre. Furthermore, in order to explain the details of Kean's reception in New York and Boston, reference has been made to the English theatre. I have also provided material about Kean's interim periods in England in order to amplify the events and causes that prompted Kean to visit the United States in 1820 and 1825. Finally, in order to furnish the reader with a better understanding of American reaction to Kean's unique acting style, the introduction contains an overview of Kean's acting style as seen through the eyes of British critics.

I have utilized primary sources, wherever and whenever possible. Whenever I have had to rely on a secondary source, which is not often, it was either because the primary source was not accessible to me, as with some English sources, or a possible source was not properly identified by the writer, or it was simply unavailable (as with a few newspaper accounts,) or it was

not considered germane to the study. Most of the newspaper and periodical accounts have not been included in books to date, e.g., information about Kean, other performers, and unusual circumstances. This is true also of manuscript sources and collections, e.g., various newspaper clippings, some of which are impossible to identify, biographical materials, letters, and extensive portions of Kean's so-called "American Diary," located in the Widener Collection at Harvard.

I am grateful for the guidance and forbearance of Professor Stanley A. Waren, who has been my mentor throughout this dissertation. I am also greatly indebted to Professors Vera Mowry Roberts and Stanley Kauffmann for their suggestions and kindness. If not for the enormous resources of the New York Historical Society, with its large collection of New York newspapers, this dissertation would not have been possible. Thanks must be accorded to the Lincoln Center Theatre Collection with its numerous clippings and illustrations. I am especially grateful to the Lincoln Center staff for allowing me to copy the rare "first draft" of Kean's initial contract with the proprietors of Drury Lane in 1814. I am also indebted to the New York Public Library for assistance in providing various inter-library loans of microfilmed newspapers, such as, the two New York National Advocates and the Morning Chronicle [London,] from such places as Columbia University and the Library of Congress. Additionally, the third floor

research division at the New York Public Library contained various materials (many of them English) which made this dissertation possible.

Thanks must next be extended to the Boston Public Library for allowing me to microfilm countless Boston newspapers. Also, to the staff at the Harvard Theatre Collection for their assistance and materials. In addition, the Widener Library at Harvard permitted me to look at the rare, specially illustrated 14 volume edition of W. F. Hawkins' biography of Kean, which contains Kean's "American MS Diary" with its 22 pages of material, often illegible, written by Kean about some of his engagements in the United States. This material has been especially useful for furnishing information about the terms of Kean's engagements, and the amount of money he received for his New York and Boston engagements.

Although the study mainly concerns Kean's appearances in New York and Boston, I have provided pertinent information about his performances in other cities, such as Philadelphia and Baltimore. There is more to be done by another researcher on materials outside of New York and Boston.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The subject of this study, Edmund Kean, had boldness, power and genius, was energetic in the extreme, and supplied the fountain of glistening waters of the romantic school of acting. Kean typifies the best of romantic acting. He was a shining example for many who followed: some copied him slavishly like John Maywood, James W. Wallack, and Junius Brutus Booth, while others like William Charles Macready and Edwin Forrest merely used Kean as a model. Not since the days of David Garrick had an English actor so profoundly influenced the English stage. Not since the days of Garrick had an English actor been so enthusiastically, openly, and overwhelmingly welcomed by the English public.

Kean's emergence fulfilled the dreams of romantic writers, such as John Keats, Lord Byron, William Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who were desperately searching for an ideal person to bring to life the heroes of their poems, novels and essays, and to replace the icy oratorical style of the Kemble school of acting.[1] In Kean, writers, like Keats, visualized the

embodiment of the romantic ideal--no longer confined to the printed page:

> Kean! Kean! have a carefulness of thy health, an in-nursed respect for thy own genius, a pity for us in these cold and enfeebling times! Cheer us a little in the failure of our days! for romance lives but in books. The goblin is driven from the heath, and the rainbow is robbed of its mystery![2]

Although William Hazlitt was not perfectly satisfied with Kean's conception of Shylock at his Drury Lane debut[3] on 27 January 1814, saying "the fault of his acting was . . . an overdisplay of the resources of the art,"[4] he nonetheless conceded that "for voice, eye, action, and expression, no actor has come out for many years at all equal to him."[5] and "if Mr. Kean does not completely succeed in concentrating all the lines of the character, as drawn by Shakespeare, he gives an animation, vigour, and relief to the part, which we have never seen surpassed. He is more refined than [George Frederick] Cooke;[6] more bold, varied, and original than [John Philip] Kemble, in the same character," said Hazlitt about one of Kean's many performances as Richard III.[7]

Although Kean provided the romantics with an image in which they could mirror their own fantasies and realizations, and a relief from the formalism of John Kemble, he was not always considered perfect.[8] The following statement, contained in the "Table Talk of April 27, 1823" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, refers to Kean's peaks and valleys:

> Kean is original; but he copies from himself. His rapid descents from the hyper-tragic to the infra-colloquial, though sometimes productive of great effect, are often unreasonable. To see him act, is like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning.[9]

Leigh Hunt, who would later in 1831, pronounce Kean "the finest actor we ever saw,"[10] was at first disenchanted with Kean's performance as Richard III. He thought him "no better than Mr. Kemble" and "no better than the best kind of actor in the artificial style."[11] And, like Coleridge's appraisal of Kean, Hunt's also recognized Kean's unevenness:

> We wish the reader to keep in mind that we look upon him to be equal, at all times, to the best actors in vogue; but in particular passages, he undoubtedly goes far beyond any of them, and makes us regret that he who can be so natural, so nobly familiar, in half a dozen instances, should not conduct himself with the same nativeness throughout.[12]

Hazlitt, one of Kean's greatest admirers, considered Kean a giant among actors--a Gulliver in a land of dispirited performers; however, he nevertheless believed that Kean was deficient in grace, manner and voice:

> We do not think there has been in our remembrance any tragic performer (with the exception of Mrs. Siddons) equal to Mr. Kean. Nor, except in voice and person, and the conscious ease and dignity naturally resulting from those advantages, do we know that even Mrs. Siddons was greater. In truth of nature and force of passion, in discrimination and originality, we see no inferiority to anyone on the part of Mr. Kean, but there is an insignificance of figure, and a hoarseness of voice, that necessarily <u>vulgarise</u> or diminish our idea of the characters he plays; and perhaps to this may be added, a want of a certain correspondent elevation and magnitude of thought of which Mrs. Siddons noble form seemed to be only the natural mould and receptacle.[13]

Hazlitt readily admitted some flaws, but he was quick to point out that Kean's

> style of acting, if we may use the expression, is more significant, more pregnant with meaning, more varied and alive in every part, than any we have almost ever witnessed. The character never stands still; there is no vacant pause in the action; the eye is never silent.[14]

And,

> In going to see Mr. Kean . . . we go to see (what he never disappoints us in) great spirit, ingenuity, and originality given to the text in general, and an energy and depth of passion given to certain scenes and passages, which we should in vain look for from any other actor on the stage.[15]

Hazlitt was not the only one who disliked Kean's voice. Crabb Robinson regretted both Kean's "want of a commanding figure and powerful voice."[16] Whilst praising Kean's Richard III as a "masterpiece of genius," Bell's Weekly Messenger found some fault with Kean's voice:

> The character [Richard III], as performed by Kean, is a masterpiece of genius--He conceives it in all its essentials, as well as in its minutest circumstances, and he paints it with the genius of a poet--It gave us great pleasure to find his voice more solid and consistent than heretofore--Its compass is altogether enlarged--It is, however, at best, but a fragile and delicate instrument, and he sometimes injudiciously overstrains it. Kean, however, is well studied in the maxim of Horace, and knows, quid valeant humeri, quid ferre recusent.[17]

In a Record of Literature, Fine Arts, Science, Antiquities, The Drama &c. the writer freely admits that Kean's genius makes up for whatever faults he may have:

> It is, indeed, true, that talent may be overwhelmed by ridicule and satire, but genius will make its way through every obstacle; and it is therefore that we are more free in exposing the faults of Kean, than those of other actors, . . . In Kean's best acting

> there is generally something deficient, which very inferior talent might supply; in his worst, there is always some excellence which sets all rivalry at defiance--and precisely such was his performance of Octavian [in a performance of Massinger's Roman Actor;] there were all his old pantomime tricks--his perpetual playing with the hair--his abrupt sinkings and elevations of the voice; but at the same time there were some touches of pathos, and some bursts of passion, that none but himself could have supplied.[18]

Hazlitt criticised Kean's unrestrained characterizations--failing to literally transcribe "his author's text," but nevertheless preferred "his liberal and spirited dramatic versions to the dull, literal, commonplace monotony of his competitors [for one, John Philip Kemble.]"[19] Fanny Kemble, the daughter of Charles Kemble, likewise felt that Kean's conceptions were incorrect, but, like most other critics, she was overwhelmed by his power and genius:

> Kean is a man of decided genius, no matter how he neglects or abuses nature's good gift. He has it . . . He has the first element of all greatness--power . . . his faults however obvious, his conceptions however erroneous, and his characters, each considered as a whole, however imperfect, he has the one atoning faculty that compensates for everything else, that seizes, rivits, electrifies all who see and hear him, and stirs down to their very springs and passionate elements of our nature. Genius alone can do this.[20]

And, moreover, she continues:

> I do not know that I ever saw him in any character which impressed me as a whole work of art; he never seems to me to intend to be any one of his parts, but I think he intends that all his parts should be him. So it is not Othello who is driven frantic by doubt and jealousy, . . . it is Kean, and in every one of his characters there is an intense personality of his own that, while one is under its influence, defies all criticism--moments of such overpowering passion, accents of such tremendous power, looks and gestures of such thrilling, piercing meaning, that the

> excellence of those parts of his performance more than atones for the want of greater unity in conception and smoothness in the entire execution of them.[21]

T. C. Grattan, a long-time acquaintance of Kean, believed that "impulse" was purely responsible for Kean's greatness:

> In Kean's professional displays there was no evidence of study, in his personal conduct all appeared to result from it alone. The laborious efforts which usually form the "artist" were unknown and unnecessary to him; or rather he resorted to them only in order to warp his character from its original bent. Impulse was the spring of his greatness on the stage--straining for effect the cause of the littleness of his social career.[22]

But was it all impulse? George Vandenhoff, the actor, thinks not:

> Poor Kean! I was but a boy when I saw him in his decadence,--worn out in constitution, not by years,--but I shall never forget him. I can never hear of Richard III, Othello, Sir Giles, Bertram, Sir Edward Mortimer, Shylock, without thinking of him, and bringing him before my mind's eye. His style was impulsive, fitful, flashing, abounding in quick transitions; scarcely giving you time to think, but ravishing your wonder, and carrying you along with his impetuous rush and change of expression. But this seeming spontaneity was not chance-work; much of it, most of it, was carefully premeditated and prepared. You might hear the same soft flutelike tones, the same waves of melody, the same cadence, night after night, in his delivery of the lines in Richard,--
>
> "But soft, my love appears; look where she shines,
> Darting pale lustre like the silver moon
> Through her dark veil of rainy sorrow!"
>
> So, his delivery of Othello's "Farewell" ran on the same tones and semitones, had the same rests and breaks, the same forte and piano, the same crescendo and diminuendo, night after night, as if he spoke it from a musical score. And what beautiful, what thrilling music it was! the music of a broken heart--the cry of a despairing soul![23]

George Henry Lewes, who, like Vandenhoff, saw Kean as a boy (in 1825), likewise felt that Kean's every move, every

utterance, was painstakingly premeditated:

> Kean was a consummate master of passionate expression. People generally spoke of him as a type of the "impulsive actor." But if by this they mean one who abandoned himself to the impulse of the moment, without forethought of prearranged effect, nothing could be wider from the mark. He was an artist, and in art all effects are regulated. The original suggestion may be, and generally is, sudden and unprepared--"inspired," as we say; but the alert intellect recognized its truth, seizes on it, regulates it . . . Kean vigilantly and patiently rehearsed every detail, trying the tones until his ear was satisfied, practicing looks and gestures until his artistic sense was satisfied; and having once regulated these he never changed them.[24]

Hazlitt also thought that Kean's inexorable and passionate acting was laboriously produced, to such an extent, that even the spectator strained to follow his exertions:

> Mr. Kean is all effort, all violence, all extreme passion: he is possessed with a fury, a demon that leaves him no repose, no time for thought, or room for imagination. He perhaps screws himself up to as intense a degree of feeling as Mrs. Siddons,[25] striking home with as sure and as hard a blow as she did, but he does this by straining every nerve, and winding up every faculty to this single point alone; and as he does it by an effort himself; the spectator follows him by an effort also. Our sympathy in a manner ceases with the actual impression and does not leave the same grand and permanent image of itself behind. The Othello furnishes almost the only exception to these remarks . . . His Sir Giles is his most equal and energetic character: but it is too equal, too energetic from beginning to the end.

In spite of this, however,

> Cooke . . . compared to Kean, has only the <u>slang</u> and <u>bravado</u> of tragedy. Neither can we think Mr. Kemble equal to him, with all his study, his grace, and classic dignity of form. He was the statue of perfect tragedy, not the living soul . . . Mr. Kemble has the external requisites, (at least of face and figure), without the internal workings of the soul.[26]

If Kemble was not "the living-soul," Kean apparently was. Lord Byron after seeing Kean in Richard III, records in his journal for 19 February 1814:

> Just returned from seeing Kean in Richard. By Jove, he is a soul! Life--nature--truth without exaggeration or dimunition. Kemble's Hamlet is perfect;--but Hamlet is not Nature. Richard is a man; and Kean is Richard.[27]

Mrs. Garrick, who had seen both Cooke and Kean perform Richard III, told Thomas Dibdin that although Cooke's portrayal of "King Richard was good," and put her "in mind of Mr. Garrick," it was Kean who reminded her most of her husband:

> Mr. Kean--. . . is like Mr. Garrick himself . . . he not only speaks some speeches in the style of that good actor (making the little adjective with most impressive emphasis, and looking up at a picture of Mr. Garrick over the fire-place), but seems to me to choose the very same board to speak them on, and this Mr. Dibdin, is no small compliment to Mr. Kean, when the worth of my husband is still tinkling [sic] in my ears.[28]

There is one peculiarity of Kean's technique which has rarely been discussed. Kean altered some of Shakespeare's text and omitted some passages. In 1814, after assessing the merits of Kean's performance as Hamlet,[29] an English newspaper advised Kean to avoid such inconsistencies:

> In many passages we would advise him not to make the "blank verse halt," as he does. He frequently alters the text of Shakespeare, with no other effect than that of hurting the melody of the versification. For instance--instead of
>
> "Which I have told thee of my father's death,"
>
> He says,
>
> "Which I have related to thee of my father's death."

For

> "What is the reason that you use me thus,"

He exclaims--

> "What is the reason you use me thus."

> These are little blemishes, which shew an inattention inconsistent with the manner in which he has studied the spirit of the author.

He also

> omits some passages, which have always been considred as essential. We hear nothing of
> "So excellent a King, that was to this Hyperion to a Satyr--
> --"Yet within a month --
> "Let me not think--Frailty, thy name is woman!"[30]

While Kean toured the United States in 1820, William B. Wood, the manager of the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, was similarly surprised by his frequent alteration of Shakespeare's text:

> In Othello he surprised us by a new reading. Instead of
> "are there no stones in Heaven
> But what serve for the thunder?"

He said,

> "Are there no stones in Heaven?
> For what then serves the thunder?"

> On this reading being remarked to him, he merely replied,
> "I believe I have always read it so."[31]

Most English critics regarded Kean's Richard III and Othello as his masterworks.[32] However, it was his Othello which received the greatest praise--considered by most his crown jewel. Hunt proclaimed Kean's Othello "the masterpiece of the living stage."[33] And Hazlitt called Kean's Othello "his best character, and the highest effort of genius on the stage."[34] And the Fine Arts, Science, Antiquities, The Drama, &c. considered Kean's Othello "the

most splendid of his performances; and in being that, is of course the most splendid performance of our day."[35]

Some English publications reserved their adulation solely for Kean's performance in the third act--regarding it as the most illustrious piece of acting on the English stage:

> In the first and second acts there is nothing particularly striking . . . Of the third act it will be difficult to speak as we feel, without incurring the imputation of extravagance. After having witnessed all the principal efforts of the histrionic art that have delighted the town for the last seven or eight years, not excepting those of Mrs. Siddons, we do not hesitate to say that for purity, delicacy, and high poetical beauty of conception--for truth, and depts, and variety of expression,--nothing has been exhibited which equals the whole of the third act of Mr. Kean's Othello.[36]

In summing up Kean's contribution to the English stage during the romantic era, Eluned Brown said:

> It is an over-easy judgment that Kean was the actor for the Romantic writers because he overthrew the artificially rhetorical style of Kemble. Many writers saw him as the "natural" actor, with great force of passion and energy, and with added ferocity perhaps the successor of Garrick, who in his turn overthrew the artificiality of Quin. The critics who were the leaders of the Romantic movement in journalism and belles-lettres . . . welcomed Kean's style and rejected Kemble's even before 1814. But there were always important qualifications.[37]

Qualifications or not,

> Nothing was comparable to his acting since the best days of Garrick; they [the critics] point to his attitudes which Titian might have painted; he has given new interest to Shakespeare, and so on through all the fulsome hyperbole of flattery enough to turn the strongest brain.[38]

And as Hazlitt succinctly put it,

> Mr. Kean, in a word, appears to us a test, an <u>experimentum crucis</u>, to shew the triumph of genius over physical defects, of nature over art, of passion

> over affectation, and of originality over common-place monotony.[39]

Kean's genius, for whatever it meant to early nineteenth-century English critics, was a beacon of light by which other actors were judged. Alongside his contemporaries, he was indeed the resplendent star.

The preceding pages are simply meant to provide a brief description of Kean's acting style, as viewed by British writers, in order to furnish a springboard for American criticism to be found in the ensuing chapters. Before Kean travelled to the United States in 1820, American critics were familiar with the novelty of his acting style.[40]

One must keep in mind when reading the following chapters that most American theatre critics c.1820 and 1825 were essentially amateurs.[41] There was not a Hazlitt, Hunt, or Keats to provide an inquisitive public with competent reviews. William Coleman and Major Noah were truly exceptions who were really editors. Some other Americans, like Thespis, Crito, Aurelian, and Delta were "no" names who probably did their best. Yet even these "amateur" critics can provide some insight into Kean's practices and his effect on his audiences.

CHAPTER II

KEAN DECIDES TO COME TO AMERICA

Speculation exists about Edmund Kean's apparent willingness to vacate his position as Drury Lane's most prestigious actor in order to visit America. George C. D. Odell, suggests that Kean came to the United States because he disliked Robert Elliston, the enigmatic manager of the Drury Lane Theatre, and, also, for financial gain.[1] In an exemplary biography of Edmund Kean, H. N. Hillebrand expresses the opinion that Kean visited the United States because he wanted to follow in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessor, George Frederick Cooke: Cooke appeared in the United States from 1810 to 1812. In addition, Hillebrand also suggests that Kean was simply interested in making money.[2]

Of the considerations cited above, there is concrete evidence to support Kean's dislike of Elliston and of his desire to emulate Cooke. There is also reason to believe that Kean came to the United States for pecuniary reasons. There are other points not mentioned by either writer that deserve some attention as well. Kean did seek fame and notoriety. Furthermore, he needed a change of venue to revivify his declining popularity.

In spite of Kean's presence in the Drury Lane company, the theatre managed to accumulate debts which, at the time (in 1818, roughly two years before Kean's first engagement in American cities), appeared insurmountable. According to the New York Evening Post of 25 July 1818, using as its source a "London Paper" dated 3 June 1818, Drury Lane was in a quagmire. The sub-committee, who controlled the affairs of the theatre, had amassed debts "calculated at £80,000 and the loss per night was averaged at £100."[3] Could the dwindling attendance at Drury Lane be attributed to Kean? Perhaps his novel acting style was no longer the attraction it once had been, or his powers and energy were waning because of his incessant drinking and erratic behavior. During the 1816-1817 season receipts on the nights Kean performed had dropped to as little as 197 pounds.[4] In Kean's first season at Drury Lane (1814), he had "replenished DL coffers with £32,642 taken on sixty-eight nights, £20,000 profit left in the treasury."[5] Furthermore, although Drury Lane "was built to hold about 630 pounds" on a nightly basis, Kean usually returned (for the first few seasons) "nearly 700 into the (Drury Lane) treasury."[6]

If Kean came to the United States because he felt responsible for the declining affairs of Drury Lane there is no evidence to support this claim. We do know, however, that Kean wanted to be named the new lessee of the theatre. A sub-committee which was formed from

shareholders, came together in 1814 to conduct the business of the theatre. In 1814 this committee included "Lord Essex, Lord Byron, the Hon. George Lamb, the Hon. Douglas Kinnaird, and Mr. Peter Moore."[7] It was under their leadership, or rather their lack of leadership, that the theatre was plunged into serious debt. By 1819 the seriousness of the situation had been amplified by the "departure of Lord Byron from England" and the "suicide of Mr. Whitbread in July 1815."[8] Previous to his suicide, Whitbread had been the chairman of the committee. To further complicate matters, Douglas Kinnaird resigned from the committee.[9] The remaining three members of the committee decided that the only way to extricate themselves from the deplorable condition at the theatre was to rent the theatre to a professional man. They were seeking a savior. Edmund Kean thought that he was the chosen one who would lead the theatre out of bondage, but the committee had other thoughts.

There were several candidates for the new position: Thomas Dibdin, Samuel Arnold (former acting manager), Robert William Elliston, and Edmund Kean.[10] Kean insisted that he be selected as the lessee of the theatre. To Douglas Kinnaird, Kean wrote a cutting letter telling him that if he was not accepted as lessee, he would pack his bags and "cross the Atlantic." A part of the letter follows:

> Sir, it was a saying of Aristippus, that it is a foolish thing to eat more than we can digest, the truth of which I am now proving; for really the printed articles of the agreement between the lessee and the proprietors of Drury Lane Theatre appear to be so indigestible, that the more I read the more I am constipated. They present a chaos from which my shallow brain, talpa coecior, perhaps, can extract nothing. To re-open Drury Lane Theatre under an experiment so obligatory would only plunge it into deeper involvements and more absolute contempt.
>
> The public has witnessed the mismanagement that has brought this magnificent theatre to ruin; its restoration can only be achieved by a popular professional man. I now stand forward to devote my property, reputation, and experience to this great cause--to cleanse the Augean stable, and "raise a new Palmyra."
>
> I cross the Atlantic should the proprietors reject my proposals, which are these--rent and taxes ten thousand pounds a year. The committee may pay my watchmen and firemen . . . if they please; but no servant except my own shall have ingress on my property. I shall propose such securities as the committee cannot think objectionable. Now, sir, everything else I reject in toto . . . Let me hear from you immediately, that in the one case I may be making my arrangements for the restoration of Drury's monarchy, or be preparing for crossing the Atlantic.[11]

In spite of the rhetoric, Kean was not appointed lessee of the theatre. On the "7th of August, 1819," Elliston was "declared the accepted candidate."[12] The Drury Lane committee accepted Elliston's proposal "to take the theatre for fourteen years, to expend seven thousand pounds on the building during that time, to pay eight thousand pounds rent for the first year, nine thousand for the second year, and ten thousand for the remainder."[13]

Kean was vexed by the committee's decision to name Elliston to a position that he felt he deserved. It was bad enough that the committee had not chosen him to

succeed to the helm of Drury, but to choose Elliston over him, was the final insult. His resentment of Elliston can be traced to Kean's first full year in London as a contract player for Drury Lane. Prior to Kean's first contract with Drury Lane in 1814,[14] Kean had signed a contract with Elliston to appear at the New Olympic Theatre. As soon as Kean was told by Samuel Arnold (acting manager for the Drury Lane committee) that the Drury Lane committee wanted to sign him for their theatre, Kean attempted to extricate himself from the commitment he had made with Elliston. At first Elliston was not willing to free Kean from his contract, but the Drury Lane committee convinced Elliston that it would be advantageous to him if he let Kean go. He did. According to George Raymond, "The Wych Street manager [Elliston] consented to cancel the engagement, on the condition that Kean should compensate H. Wallack with three pounds per week, to take his duties at the Olympic; and the new heir of Drury entered on his memorable career at a salary of eight pounds per week."[15]

Kean now refused to perform at Drury Lane while Elliston was manager. Kean "would rather pay the forfeit of his bond--a thousand pounds---than enter the house under the present lessee."[16] Elliston beseeched Kean to reconsider. If Kean still wanted to go to America, at the end of the season, he would grant Kean a leave. Kean

responded with a sarcastic letter offering Elliston congratulations on his new position.

Kean's letter was sent to Elliston shortly after his appointment as manager. The letter reveals both Kean's emnity for Elliston, and his determination to go to America:

> I congratulate yourself and the public on your accession to the diadem of Drury Lane, wearied and disgusted as all sensible people must have been with the stultified dynasty of the last two seasons. The lovers of the drama will hail with rapture a minister to their amusements so transcendent in his art and so mature in experience as Robert William Elliston. With regard to myself, I expressed my determination at the close of the last season to leave England. My arrangements are made. Cras ingens interabimus oequor--I quit the kingdom! This has not been kept a secret. On my return I may treat with you; but it will not be consonant with my feelings to act in any theatre where I have not the full appropriation of my own talents. But I shall allow the field open to my compeers, and heartily wish success to all aspirants--this for the sake of the drama, which should be immortal. I have prepared Mrs. Kean to answer any inquiries that may be necessary in my absence. Richards and Hamlets grow on every hedge. Grant you may have a good crop.[17]

Elliston again desperately tried to convince Kean that he could have his way if he relented and stayed at Drury for another season. Finally, Kean agreed to stay for the remainder of the season. He would embark for New York on 7 October 1820.

On 4 October 1819, Kean had sent a letter to the editor of the Times which informed the readers that he intended to postpone his trip to America and enumerated the reasons that had almost made him desert Drury Lane for the American stage. The public was well aware of his

peculiarities and eccentricities and Kean wanted them to know that this was not just another quirk. Because of its importance, I will quote a significant part of Kean's lengthy reply:

> With the London audience is associated every feeling of pride I may be allowed to indulge, and still to meet their approval must be the highest object, that I beg leave to solicit your attention to the following statement of those reasons which at first suggested to my mind the propriety of withdrawing myself from Drury-Lane for a short time. For the last two years my situation at the theatre has been highly embarrassing. I have been considered responsible for circumstances over which I have no control; and even the press has attached blame to me for occurrences I could neither forsee nor avoid [probably the Bucke and Porter controversies]. It would be, perhaps, indelicate for me to enter into particulars; but you Sir, seem yourself to be aware that I have been an innocent sufferer upon occasions whch I should have been held blameless. When the theatre fell into the hands of Elliston, I understood that he had made such arrangements as were a virtual breach of my articles, and I was unwilling to embarass an undertaking of such risk and importance by returning to claim their fulfillment. The former reason still powerfully operating on my mind as an inducement to withdraw myself for a period, I thought it would be equally advantageous both to Elliston and myself, to take upon me the responsibility of breaking with him. Under the circumstances, too, which had come to my knowledge, I thought that Mr. Elliston would himself consider £1,000 penality which I offered to pay, a full equivalent for my services; and I even now, doubt whether he would not prefer this arrangement. By my articles I must be manager on the nights on which I play and this must necessarily embarass Mr. Elliston, if he has not provided for it. By another clause in my articles, which I only mention by way, since I have a right to demand their fulfillment to the very letter, to show that Mr. Elliston could not have contemplated my return, my name, must still continue as large in the bills as the Committee first chose to advertise it. Should I insist upon my right in this point, Mr. Elliston will be forced to break with an actor (in his line) of the first importance in his profession--I mean Mr. Dowton, who has in his articles, I understand stipulated that my name should be advertised like others. This matter, though a

> trifle in appearance, must lead to the question, whether I am to yield to Mr. Dowton, or Mr. Dowton to me. Now, Mr. Elliston has provided against the alternative, had not my intention of retiring to America. He has engaged Mr. Vandenhoff, of Liverpool, an actor of the first place, and whom it would be therefore degrading to make secondary to anyone. This gentleman's walk in the drama is the same as my own, . . . What place then, is there for me at this house? I still cannot help thinking, that to withdraw for a time would only be fair towards my compeers, and an advantage to Mr. Elliston. But since the public voice demands my return, I shall obey it as I have always done, and obey it cheerfully. Nor shall I be wanting in every exertion to deserve the approbation which they have hitherto so liberally accorded to my poor endeavors.[18]

What can be said about all of this? Clearly, Kean was not fond of Elliston and he wanted to leave England. Kean had yielded to public opinion. Was Kean's desire to depart England only due to his dislike of Elliston? Perhaps. Kean, however, had been prepared to leave Drury Lane months before Elliston's appointment, but he did not allow his "obstinancy" or "animosity" to get in his way when he decided to postpone his trip to America for an additional season. He was advised by friends that Elliston could and would levy a considerable penalty, in excess of the 1,000 pound bond, if he broke his contract. To mollify him, Elliston had reassured Kean that he would give him his leave later.

The American press was aware of Kean's dispute with the Drury Lane management. The New York National Advocate of 19 October 1819, using the New York Evening Post as its source, let New York readers know that Kean was not coming as expected for the Fall 1819 season:

> It has been announced here, on the authority of the English newspapers, that Mr. Kean is engaged by the managers of the New York theatre, and is to appear in short time on our boards. The public ought to be disabused, respecting this, by being informed the best source, that Mr. Kean is not expected here this season, as he has positively declined the offers which were tendered him.[19]

During Kean's disagreement with Elliston, he performed in the provincial theatres "at Glasgow, . . . at Edinburgh, and . . . at Greenock."[20] He terminated his tour of the provinces with an engagement at Liverpool. On 9 November 1819, Kean made his return to the Drury Lane stage for a final season, before sailing for New York. The regular season would conclude "at the end of the summer season, 1820."[21] Kean's triumphal return to the London stage was enthusiastically announced by the Morning Chronicle and the Times. The report issued by the Times is particularly noteworthy, since it mentions the possibility of Kean quitting England. The ebullient reviews must have pleased Kean. The Times gave the following account of Kean's return as Richard III:

> Yesterday was Kean's peculiar triumph. He made his first appearance for the season, and in his most striking character, that of Richard III. His return to the London boards is always a great theatrical evening, and has now awakened additional interest in some degree from the splendour of the new management, but still more from the probability that has existed of his quitting the country. Kean is a favourite with all classes, and if his reappearance, as there can be little doubt, has been the leading topic in the upper circles, it has not less engaged the attention of the lower. . .His reception was animating and enthusiastic, and corresponded to the feeling previously excited. A performance which has been so often repeated can have little for comment...In general he was quite himself and in the byplay and

> minor points, which inferior actors are in the habit of wholly passing over, surpassed, we had almost said, the conceptions of the author...When the curtain fell, Elliston came to announce the play (for the next evening), but all their deference for the manager could not divert the audience from the usual practice of calling for Kean [the modern curtain call evolved from this practice of calling for Kean; William B. Wood, the manager of the Philadelphia and Baltimore theatres, bemoaned this practice during Kean's engagements]--an absurdity that has now taken too deep root to be easily eradicated.[22]

At the conclusion of the summer season, on 8 July 1820, Elliston "informed the public his theatre would re-open on the 15 of August, for the purpose of affording Kean an opportunity of playing his principal characters before his departure for America."[23] The extended engagement began on the 15 of August; and it ended on the 16 of September. Elliston engaged the services of Junius Brutus Booth in order to heighten interest for the month-long engagement. Booth was to play Richmond, Pierre, Iago and Edgar to Kean's portrayals of Richard III, Jaffier, Othello, and King Lear. On 18 September 1820, the Morning Post gave a rapturous report of Kean's farewell performance as Richard III.[24] It is with Richard III that Kean would commence his American engagement in New York on 29 November 1820. Therefore, a glimpse of the London review provides insight into what a British publication thought of Kean just before his arrival in New York. Of Kean's final appearance at Drury Lane, the Post said that

> Mr. Kean appeared before the public for the last time previous to his departure for America. In Richard

> this gentleman first laid the foundation of his future fame, and in the same character he has taken a farewell, but we trust not a long one, of a British audience . . .We may briefly observe, . . . that Richard has always appeared to us one of Mr. Kean's most successful efforts. It exhibits the most brilliant bursts of genius and the most consumate power of displaying the varied and intense feelings in which the character abounds . . . Unqualified praise is, with few exceptions, an unjust as unqualified censure; it is very properly regarded with an eye of jealousy, and not unfrequently emanates from motives which are altogether foreign from those feelings which ought to animate the pen of an unbiased critic.
>
> Mr. Kean's last performance of Richard, however, outstrips any of his previous exertions; the critic who delights in censure only may throw aside his pen, for in this instance justice demands that utmost praise that language can bestow. We can conceive nothing more perfect . . . Need we add that Mr. Kean was greeted on his entrance by the rapturous applause of a very crowded audience.

Aside from calling Kean after the performances to voice their pleasure, the audience occasionally felt it was necessary for Kean to make a speech. This later happened on several occasions in New York and Boston. After the conclusion of Richard III, Kean came forward to address the Drury Lane audience "in nearly" the following manner:

> Ladies and gentlemen--It is with pain I announce to you that a long period must elapse before I can again have the honor of appearing before you; and when I reflect on the uncertainty of life, the sentiment will intrude itself, that this may possibly my last performance on these boards. (Cries of No, no we hope not, Kean).--My feelings overcome me. (In a voice deeply agitated). I am unable to proceed--(After a considerable pause, Mr. Kean resumed.) I cannot but remember with gratitude that this is the spot where I first enjoyed the welcome of public favour. I was then a wanderer and unknown, but received here shelter, and I may add reputation. If ever I have deviated from that height to which your favours have raised me, it is to you only I should appologise. (There is no occasion, from the boxes.)--During eight years your favour has been my protection and encouragement; my present enjoyment and future hope.

> It has been to me a shield against the shafts of calumny to which I have been exposed; it is the cargo that freights my venture to another clime, and is the star to which my thoughts, when I again direct them to my native home, ultimately turn. Ladies and gentlemen, my heart is too full to add more: with the deepest sentiments of esteem and gratitude, I respectfully bid you farewell.[25]

Shortly afterwards, Kean successfully performed in Liverpool, "from September 25 to October 6, closing with Othello."[26] On 7 October 1820, Kean Left Liverpool--sailing on the packet Martha for New York.

After all that has been said, we may surmise that Elliston had a great deal to do with Kean "crossing the Atlantic." However, as stated earlier, there is also reason to believe that Kean did want to make money. In 1817, the New York Evening Post published a report, from the National Reader, that gives us possible proof that money was an inducement for Kean. This bit of information is also interesting because it reveals that Kean was prepared to visit New York as early as 1817, a date nearly two years before Kean's intended trip of 1819, and approximately three years before Kean's actual voyage to America in 1820:

> It is now said that Mr. Kean, the principal and most fashionable British actor of the day, is about to engage with Mr. Holman, to perform in this country at the modest price of ten thousand sterling, or forty-four thousand dollars, per annum. Mr. Kean would seem himself a little staggered at the largeness of this sum; for we are told by the London prints that he demands security for the payment of it into the hands of a banker in London. In that particular we think he is right; for, fond as some of our countrymen may be of rare shows, rope-dancers, and learned pigs, and superior as Mr. Kean may be, and perhaps is, in

> the line of his profession, we do not think that Mr. Holman could levy forty-four thousand dollars a year on the American public by exhibiting Mr. Kean, and make in addition any profit for himself. If Mr. Kean should come among us in the ordinary way of actors, and confide in the known taste and liberality of the American community, we should be glad to see him; and he would no doubt find great advantage in a trip to the United States.[27]

In a letter dated 5 April 1821, while Kean was in the United States, Kean told Charlotte Cox (the wife of Alderman Cox, with whom Kean was having an affair) that he not only loved her, but that he was sending great amounts of money to England. "You asked what money I am making; my love, it is almost incredible. I am living in the best style, travelling magnificently, and transmitting to England one thousand pounds each month," said Kean.[28]

Shortly before Kean's first New York engagement, in 1820, Kean made financial arrangements with Stephen Price, the manager of New York's Park Theatre. The terms of the agreement stipulated the number of engagements, the possibility of extensions, and the cities in which he would tour. The contract also established the amount of money Kean was to receive. The precise information about the money Kean received for his engagements is contained in "Kean's MS American Diary of his visit to America." This document states that Kean received for his New York engagement

> fifty pounds Sterling for the first seven nights of half the clear receipts of the eighth night and fifty pounds Sterling. For the following seven nights & half the clear receipts of the sixteenth night. Mr.

> Kean's name put up on the eighth & sixteenth nights.[29]

For Boston, we may rely principally on the statistics furnished by William Clapp from his Record of the Boston Stage, however, a citation from "Kean's MS Diary," and some statements from Boston newspapers also provide us with invaluable information.[30] Kean, as in New York, made substantial money. We can therefore assume that as for New York, Kean agreed to the financial arrangements before his trip to America. As in New York, Kean received 50 pounds per night, but unlike New York, he received a "clear benefit."[31] For the initial nine-night engagement, Kean "shared with managers after $1,000 per week, . . . the engagement resulted in his adding to his treasury the neat sum of $3302.68."[32]

If Kean made most, if not all, of his monetary arrangements before his departure, there is no question that money was a catalyst. Kean must have known what financial delights awaited him in the land of opportunity. We already know that he was offered $44,000.00 by Holman, in 1817. Is there reason to believe that Kean would expect less in 1820?

There is also reason to suppose that another of Kean's motives for coming to the United States was notoriety or increased fame. The National Advocate of 15 September 1820, contains an "extract of a letter," from a

London Correspondent, which attributes "renown" as Kean's sole reason for coming to America. The writer said:

> Kean will leave this country [England] in about two months for America. It is not for lucre that he cares, (these are his words) but for renown: he considers America as the best country in the world, and though he will make great sacrifices in leaving England, he is determined to go.[33]

T.C. Grattan, an acquaintance of Kean's from his provincial days, substantiates this concept:

> Even though Kean, in the early summer of his celebrity, rejected with violent (and also, be it allowed with vulgar) scorn the proffered society of the great, he might wisely, at this epoch [1817], have retired into the simple range of the middle classes, with the respectable reserve of a Kemble, a Young, or a Macready. He might, like them, have been an honour to his profession, the founder of his family's fortune; and today, and for many years to come, alive, and well, and happy. But he had been inoculated with the rage for notoriety; and that he was resolved to obtain, even at the price of ruin--and to seek, even in depths of disrepute.[34]

There is little doubt about the authenticity of the letter written by the British correspondent, but Grattan's remark is revealing and prophetic. Kean did entangle himself in several controversies before his first visit to the United States--a fact which the American public and press were well aware of. Moreover, Kean became embroiled in more than one controversy while performing in Boston and New York in 1821 and 1825.

According to Hillebrand, Kean wanted to duplicate George Frederick Cooke's pilgrimage to the States. Other than Hillebrand's word and Kean's apparent devotion to and admiration of Cooke (including the erection of a monument

in his memory at St. Paul's church in 1821,) little else confirms the feeling that Cooke influenced Kean's decision to visit America, until I found the following. In the New York Evening Post of 19 May 1821, an excerpt of a synopsis of Kean's farewell address to the Baltimore audience (from the Baltimore Morning Chronicle) does contain proof that Cooke did influence Kean's decision:

> After acknowledging the flattering approbation he [Kean] had received since he landed among us, he in turn flattered us by reassuring us, in very pretty terms, of the admiration he entertained for our heroes, philosophers and statesmen;. . . He felt no common zeal for the profession of which he was a member, . . . he regretted to say that the histrionic art, with us, was now in its infancy. He trusted, however, that we should yet rise to eminence in the drama as we had done in the field and cabinet, . . . The candidates of the tragic muse should look only to the country in which Shakespeare lived and wrote, for those brilliant Stars, that give even a lustre to his name! We had yet seen but one individual, whose acquaintance with the conceptions of Shapespeare, could be justly and masterly expressed! That one was Cooke, a fit model for our imitation; and it was from the friendly advice of that great man that he was induced to visit our hospitable shores.[35]

There is still another possibility that may have induced Kean to leave England for another clime; that is, he needed a respite from the rigors of performing on the English stage and from the gossip that followed him.

In 1817, the Drury Lane sub-committee wanted to raise its diminishing attendance, which was declining despite the presence of Kean. Kean was no longer the attraction that he had been in 1815 and 1816, and his erratic behavior had a great deal to do with this. The

committee decided to engage the services of the promising Junius Brutus Booth, then engaged in Covent Garden. Involved in a contractual dispute with Harris, the manager of Covent Garden, Booth decided to accept the invitation of the Drury Lane sub-committee. Both the committee and Kean lured Booth to Drury Lane--promising great things. Unbeknownst to Booth, Kean, however, had his own agenda. Kean did not like competition. In fact, he abhorred it. If his position as England's greatest actor was threatened, he might resort to anything to maintain it.

Although Booth's signing was publicly sanctioned by Kean, privately he resented and loathed the competition. Booth rivaled Kean in manner, and this Kean could not tolerate. J. F. Molloy, one of Kean's earliest biographers, claimed that Booth's performance of Richard III, at Covent Garden on 12 February 1817, surprised the Covent Garden audience "by the similarity of the tones and sudden changes of his voice; his gestures, gait, and rapid movements; the methods of his entrances and exits, and management of his business, to those of Kean."[36] Kean wanted to embarrass Booth. He would not tolerate the possibility of his diadem being taken away, as almost happened in 1822, when Charles Mayne Young appeared at Drury Lane. On that occasion, Kean wrote a seething letter to Elliston saying,

> Your treasurer has written to me, by which I find Mr. Young is engaged for thirty nights to act with me. Now this is what I call an impudent proceeding.

> The throne is mine!--mine! I say--no one shall come near it; and I will maintain it even at the expense of expatriation. To whatever quarter of the globe I may sail, all shall acknowledge me the first English Actor. Nil ortum tale, fatentes.[37]

On 20 February 1817 the awaited performance of Othello with Kean and Booth took place. The Drury Lane audience was excited at the thought of seeing both actors on the same stage, at the same time. Kean acted Othello to Booth's Iago. It was a mismatch. By the third act, the more experienced Kean clearly dominated Booth. He virtually demolished Booth, "As the tragedy advanced," said Molloy, "Kean's power was gradually felt, whilst Booth's declined in proportion."[38] Barry Cornwall, who observed the performance, felt that Kean

> seemed to expand from the small, quick, resolute figure which had previously (during the first two acts) been moving about the stage, and to assume the vigour and dimensions of a giant. He glared down upon the now diminutive Iago, as it were, together; now the Moor seemed to occupy the stage alone. Up and down, to and fro, he went, pacing about like the chafed lion who has received his fatal hurt, but whose strength is still undiminished. The fury and whirlwind of the passions seemed to have endowed him with supernatural strength . . . There is no doubt but that Kean was excited on this occasion in a most extraordinary degree; as much as though he had been maddened by wine. The impression which he made upon the audience has, perhaps, never been equalled in theatrical annals.[39]

Booth was totally demoralised, refusing to perform on the same stage with Kean. He terminated his agreement with Drury Lane--returning to the friendlier confines of Covent Garden. Booth wrote to the Drury Lane sub-committee:

> In an unguarded moment I quitted Covent Garden Theatre (where the most eligible situation for the exertion of my professional talents was open to me) to go over to Drury Lane, where I have since found, and felt to my cost, that every character which I was either desirous or capable of playing was already in possession [in Kean's possession], and that there was no chance of my appearing in the same. What occasion, therefore, could you have for me, unless to crush any talent I may possess in its infancy? I have now seen through my error, and have therefore renewed the negotiation which was so unfortunately interrupted with the proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre, and have just signed a regular article with them for three years; consequently, I have no longer the power of appearing again at Drury Lane Theatre, and you will have the goodness to take my name entirely out of your bills.
>
> I have heard, Gentlemen, that your treasury has benefited considerably from my appearance on Thursday last; I ask no pecuniary recompense for it. I only request that you will not seek to persecute or molest a young man just entering into life, and who cannot afford either to be shelved (according to the theatrical phrase) at Drury Lane Theatre, or to be put into such characters as must infallibly mar all his future prospects.[40]

It was not until Kean's final appearances at Drury Lane (1820), previous to his departure for New York, that Booth again performed with Kean.

The following letter, which was published in the 2 March 1821 New England Galaxy, is a vivid reminder of Kean's abhorrence of competition. In this instance Cooper and Kean might have appeared on the same stage. Kean would have none of it. The letter shows Kean carrying his jealousy of other actors across the Atlantic. It was addressed to the editor of the Galaxy:

> While Mr. Kean was playing at the New-York theatre, Mr. Cooper applied to the managers for permission to play with him. But they with good reason supposed, that the influence of fashion and of great name would of itself collect a crowded audience; and taking it

> for granted that they would be obliged to pay Mr. C. for his services, they very properly consulted as they thought, their interest, and rejected the application. The moment Mr. Cooper was appraised of this fact, and of the motives that led to it, he offered to play without any compensation whatsoever. The managers could have no possible objections to this arrangement; but, those of Mr. Kean were invincible. Mr. Cooper, without doubt, was animated by a noble emulation; and with his confidence, was willing to try his strength with his rival upon equal ground, but Mr. Kean refused to meet him.[41]

Kean's self-centered actions were not only directed at actors, they were also aimed at authors. During the 1817-1818 season at Drury Lane, Miss Jane Porter submitted a Swiss tragedy to the Drury Lane sub-committee. She had written the play, Switzerland, for Kean--shaping the heroic character to suit Kean's special talents. The committee however, listened to Kean and voted for The Jew of Malta. The committee allowed "him to be the manager of his own plays."[42] For the following season, the committee persuaded Kean that Switzerland should be presented. Kean made arrangements with Porter to attend the rehearsals of the play, convincing her that he would try to truly perform the part.

During the rehearsals, including the final one, Kean misled Porter by giving magnificent renditions. The performance, however, which took place on 15 February 1819, was another matter. Kean walked through the part--altering lines and displaying little emotion. Porter, it seems, was the unknowing pawn of a power play between the committee and Kean. Kean wanted to show the

committee (at the expense of Miss Porter) that no play could succeed that did not have his approval. Of this incident, Porter said:

> Think, then, my astonishment, when on the night of Public Representation, the Curtain drew up, and discovered all this promised energy, transformed into an almost motionless Automation! He appeared to have lost his memory, and his power of action: the other performers became disconcerted in their parts: and the confusion on the Stage, being now answered by an equal confusion amongst the audience, the whole became a chaos of uproar. "Shame! -Shame Kean!" burst from every part of the House: contending with the vociferous yells of a set of wretches, who could only have come from the lowest orgies of the Western Hustings on that day . . . When the curtain dropt, (though stunned by the cool, deliberate act of--I will not give it a name--I had just witnessed;) I yet sufficiently possessed myself, to insist on <u>withdrawing the Piece totally</u>: though urged by a member of the committee, to permit a second representation, and with a new Performer. I had been betrayed, by the actor in whose honour and talents I had trusted![43]

The newspapers were indignant at Kean for his slovenly portrayal in <u>Switzerland</u>. It was an obvious insult--carefully designed by Kean to undermine the play. The foremost denunciation of Kean's actions were printed in the <u>Champion</u>. Later, when we attempt to measure Kean's misbehavior in the United States, this piece will increase in importance:

> Miss Porter's new tragedy, <u>Switzerland</u>. --As for Kean's performance of what should have been the hero--perhaps a greater insult was never offered to an indulgent audience--or a more unqualified abuse of the prerogative of favouritism. We have it, from undeniable authority, that Miss Porter affirms that scarcely any part of her language was by him delivered: that he spoke, as it were, what came upper-most: and it is even added, that Mrs. Glover complained, that his inaccuracy perpetually put her out. Whether this be true, to its full extent, we do

> not pretend to answer; but there was certainly throughout the whole, all the embarassment of in imperfect rehearsal. The public, it seems, have shown some part of their sense of Mr. Kean's conduct on this occasion, by leaving him to play Hamlet to empty benches . . . The interests of the proprietors--and what is more, of the drama,--must not be sacrificed, with impunity, to the whims and caprices of any man. Mr. K. it is true, for the want of a better, stands at the very head of his profession; and if he enjoyed his eminence with discretion, we should be happy to swell the chorus of his reputation. But if he will suffer no other merit, among actors, to appear beside him on the boards; no production of authors to be accepted or to succeed, that does not make his character the exclusive object of attraction; and no wish or promise of managers to be fulfilled, that does not chime in with his ambition to shine, not only superior, but alone, it is high time for criticism to look to the other side of the picture: and Mr. K. may assure himself, that there are still faults enough to be pointed out in his elocution and action, to place, without discolouring or exaggeration, even his very best characters in a much less favourable point of view, than they have generally been regarded by an indulgent public.[44]

One other incident deserves attention. In 1817 the author Charles Bucke submitted The Italians, a verse tragedy, to the Drury Lane sub-committee. It was enthusiastically accepted by the committee (and Kean) and Kean agreed to play the lead role. The Italians was set for immediate production. Bucke, however, was to be disappointed, as his play was shunted aside by The Bride of Abydos, "which had a prior claim."[45] The committee did solemnly promise that Bucke's play would be the next production, but once again, it was deferred and the comedy The Castle of Glendower produced at Kean's recommendation.[46] So, here it was, February 1818 and Bucke could not as yet have his play presented. Then,

towards the end of February, Bucke was given hope by Kean that his play would be produced after yet another play, The Jew of Malta.

By the end of April 1818, and during the presentation of The Jew of Malta, preparations commenced for the rehearsal of Bucke's play. "The composer had directions relative to the music; the scenery was put in hand, and all was going on to my entire satisfaction," said Bucke,

> when, one evening that I chanced to be in the Green Room, it was hinted to me, by Mr. Kean, that "the character of Manfred was too much in his line;" "that the blind man was too good"; "that the page would excite too much interest;' and, 'that no man should write a tragedy for that house, without making the entire interest centre in the character he should perform." I listened to all this in silent astonishment! I related this curious conversation to a person connected with the management, who replied, "that he and most of the performers were well aware of the unfortunate jealousy of Mr. Kean;" and that if Miss Kelly were to perform the character of Scipio, as I wished, such was the interest she would excite, that he was certain Mr. Kean would immediately throw up his part.[47]

Following this latter conversation, Bucke spoke to a "literary friend" who told him that

> he himself sent a tragedy to the Committee, of which Mr. Lamb was the leading Member, and a letter to Mr. Kean, who had returned for answer, that unless the entire interest centered in the character designed for him, it would neither suit his reputation, nor the interest of the Theatre, that it should be accepted.[48]

After his conversation with Kean, Bucke received a letter from Peter Moore, one of the committee members, asking him to defer the play. Bucke refused, and the play

was immediately put into rehearsal. As the rehearsals progressed, Bucke sensed uneasiness between the committee and the performers:

> Hostilities between the Committee, the Hon. Douglas Kinnaird, and Hon. George Lamb, and the Performers, now became public; . . . to permit my Tragedy to be performed, under such circumstances, would be the height of superlative folly. A Nightmare seemed to set upon the House; ---all was treason within; and all was clamour without.[49]

Bucke quickly withdrew his play from rehearsal in spite of the previous setbacks.

Still not giving up hope, Bucke again approached the committee with the suggestion that the play be produced. The committee agreed to stage The Italians, but only if Kean was willing to play the title role.[50] Bucke then wrote Kean a letter, dated 14 January 1819. Kean responded indifferently:

> I have nothing to do with the management of the theatre: if the Committee think your tragedy worthy of representation, I am the servant of the establishment, and have neither right nor wish to offer any impediments; and for my own sake, shall make the most of the materials that are allotted me: further explanation on this subject is unnecessary when the prompter sends me the character, I shall enter on its study.[51]

Because of Kean's cold reply and the Switzerland debacle, Bucke as before withdrew his play. He told the Drury Lane committee:

> The scene witnessed, the other evening, at the representation of Miss Jane Porter's Tragedy, can never be forgotten. It forms an epoch in Theatrical History: and the name of Mr. Kean must ever be pronounced, with indignation, by all admirers of those prides of civilized life,--elegant and accomplished women.

> The conduct of Mr. Kean, on that occasion, exhibited such a contemptuous disregard to the common decencies of society, that I scorn to be in any way obliged to him!
>
> Miss Jane Porter is nothing to me:...But to wound,--deliberately,--the feelings of such a woman, and that, too, before one of the most brilliant audiences, ever assembled at a Theatre, surely could not have proceeded from a man of courage!...
>
> You may Gentlemen, continue to suffer the establishment of Drury Lane Theatre to become a martyr to Mr. Kean's ambition and caprice, if you please;--I shall have nothing to do with him!--...I beg to leave to withdraw my Tragedy of the Italians entirely from the Stage.[52]

Bucke published The Italians including a preface that detailed all the grim facts about the affair. No less than seven editions were published following the first edition in March 1819. As with the Switzerland episode, both newspapers and public were incensed by Kean's misconduct and demanded an explanation:

> The author of a tragedy, entitled "The Italians," has just published his play, with a preface, which details some curious traits of conceit and jealousy on the part of the Drury-lane actor. We have heard of similar circumstances before: but the charges are now substantively before the public, and it behoves Mr. Kean, if he can, to refute them. We have heard, and certainly the actual state of the company at Drury-lane corroborates the report, that Mr. Kean will not perform with an actor or actress that is too tall, or that has too much merit, and so forth.[53]

Kean sent a statement to the editor of the Courier, denying all of Bucke's charges:

> My hours are at this moment too much, and, I am proud to say, too well occupied, to be devoted to such unworthy subjects as "The Italian" and its author; but to confute the malicious propagations, emanating only from a corrupt heart and little mind, I think it necessary to state, through the medium of your paper, that no such conversation ever passed between Mr. Bucke and myself as the Public Prints have specified;

and that Miss Kelly (whose talents I look on with enthusiastic admiration) never was, to my knowledge, allotted any character in the Play. Mr. Peter Moore, one of the Drury-lane Committee, excited with some ability, my personal compassion for Mr. Bucke; in consequence of which, I undertook to act in his play; and had it been produced, should have done my utmost to have fulfilled my duty to that Public, whose name I teach my child to bless--to whose protection my gratitude alone is due--and over whose unprejudiced mind malevolent can never have an influence.

On reading the tragedy of "Deranged Intellect" (for that was the name it was known in the Green Room), to my professional brethren, the only feelings it excited were uncontrollable laughter, and pity for the author. From this criterion, I took the liberty of suggesting to the Management the impossibility of producing a Play, which must have been attended with considerable expense, when there was not in it one gleam of hope for its success. There is certainly some pretty poetry in the character which was to have been sustained by Miss Cubitt: and after that, I will say, in good set terms, Mr. Bucke's Tragedy is the worst of the bad. In this opinion I am joined by the whole of the Dramatic Corps that were to have been concerned in it; and particularly by the present Acting Manager, whose judgment as an artist, and conduct as a man, form an impregnable bulwark in my defence. The publication of "Deranged Intellect" is all the answer necessary to the author's attack upon my judgment; and for his inventive fabrication, I publicly tell him that he has not uttered one word of truth in the whole of his aspersions; and I thus leave him to his contemplations, with disgust for his falsehood, and pity for his folly. I have the Honor to be, Sir, your most obedient Servant,

Edmund Kean.

I shall enter into no further public contentions; if Mr. Deranged Intellect wishes to indulge his malice further, he knows where I am to be found.

No. 12, Clarges-street, March 17, 1819.[54]

Bucke immediately responded with a letter (published 22 March 1819) to the editor of the Courier denouncing Kean's fanciful assertions. To the committee Bucke said: "I call upon them instantly to come forward and convince

me publicly of a falsehood, if I am wrong in stating, that Mr. Kean, previous to his journey into Scotland, gave a distinct pledge, that nothing on his part should prevent my Tragedy from succeeding The Jew of Malta, and that too, without any reference to compassion."[55]

The public's ire about the Bucke affair did not subside, and Kean was compelled to make a public apology. He did so before the performance of Brutus, but his apology was "so perfunctory"[56] that much of the audience clamored for a fuller apology, to no avail. Soon the demands of the audience ceased. The newspapers, however, were still not satisfied with Kean's inadequate statement to the audience and voiced further dissatisfaction with Kean's treatment of authors. The Morning Herald published this account:

> In candour and justice we must confess, that, in our humble opinion, Mr. Kean's apology was sufficient; so far as it regarded the insult, which he offered to the public, in the publication of his letter. As to the insult, which he had given to the literature of the country, by his whole conduct towards Mr. Bucke, no apology should be demanded for it;--because none can be adequate.
>
> To men of literary talent, and of that high spirit, to which eminent talent is a natural and a becoming appendage, we have one advice to give--"never write for Drury-lane Theatre, so long as the present system continues; you but waste your noble energies; and subject yourselves not only to disappointment, but to insult. . . ."
>
> If any one doubt the merit of this author's tragedy, he has only to read it; and he will find that the beauty and simplicity of the poetry,--the great moral purpose of the catastrophe,--the originality and the strength of the principal characters,--...would, in all probability, have crowned The Italians with perfect success on the stage. In the closet it will survive, at least, the memory of Mr. Kean.[57]

"To appease public opinion," The Italians was finally performed on 3 April 1819.[58] Alexander Rae played the role originally assigned Kean. The play was not well received. as a matter of fact, it was booed by an organized claque--possibly instigated by Kean. The play was given one other performance on 12 April 1819 and never staged again. As with Switzerland, The Italians was not truly a good play. Therefore, Kean should not be totally faulted for the play's lack of success. Kean's reputation, however, remained sullied because of his mistreatment of fellow artists and authors.

Several of the English newspapers suggested that Kean leave the British stage for a time in order to regain at a later date the appeal that he once had. At the onset of Kean's farewell engagement at Drury Lane, the Times stated:

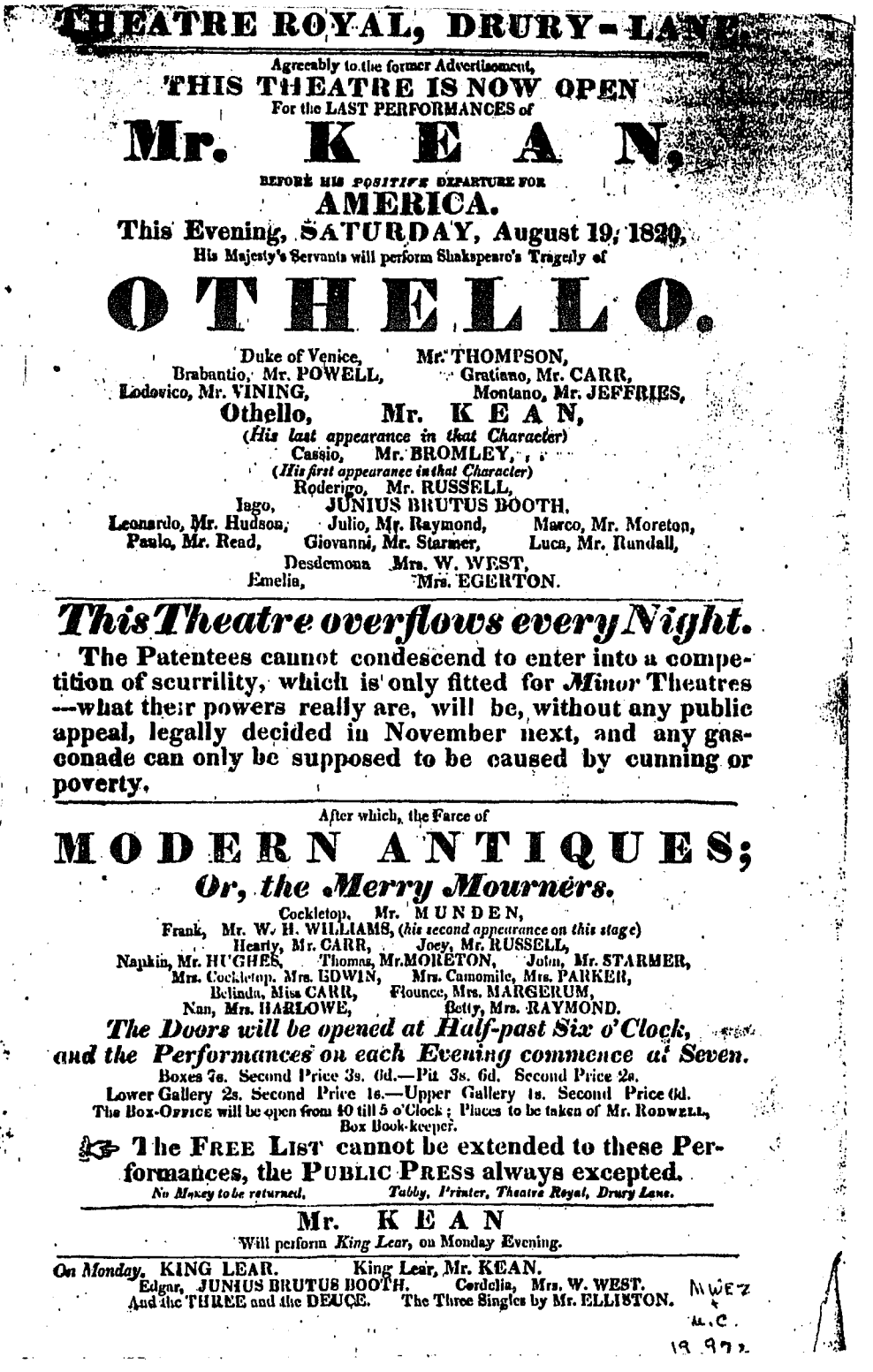
> This theatre has opened for a few nights, with the view of affording to Mr. Kean, who is on the eve of taking his departure for America, and opportunity of presenting himself to the public, before he quits this country, in a series of the principle characters which have acquired for him the high renown he enjoys in his profession. During the zenith of his popularity no actor of the present day has drawn audiences more numerous, or acquired a more powerful hold on their admiration! and if his attraction at intervals, to judge from an occasional display of "empty boxes," been considered on the wane, it could never justly be referred to a decay of power, but solely to that innate principle and feelings, common to all the votaries of amusement and frequenters of theatres--the love and demand for variety--and insatiating desire to which the most perfect and refined exhibitions of talent must give place. Garrick and Kemble were both aware of the influence of this principle. They knew that it was vain to bear up against it; and they knew,

> even when it thinned the ranks of their admirers, that it was no evidence of declining skill. But those leading ornaments of the stage, but particularly the latter, deemed it prudent to withdraw at intervals from the public eye, till the inferiority of those by whom their places were sure to be supplied caused their return to be anxiously wished for, and their reappearance hailed with warm acclamations, Kean, though he must often have been reminded that he was too prodigal in his performances, by the aspect of the theatre, does not appear to have been aware of the cause, but to have continued them more than once, in the course of his career, at the risk of reputation with those--a numerous party--who prefer theatrical fame and merit to numbers alone. With this view, though the discerning few may lament his loss, we think that Kean is prudent in withdrawing himself for a time from the spot where he first harvested his laurels.[59]

The Times continued with a prophetic and revealing analysis of the American audience which awaited Kean:

> The diffusion of the English language and the progress of refinement in the United States of America open a fine and extensive field for the exercise of this profession, and render it the most eligible sphere to which eminence in theatrical skill could be transferred; yet it may be doubted whether an absolute retirement and study for an equal period, as far as future fame is concerned, might not have been preferable for him. Without an invidious contention for the superiority in national taste, it may be referred to, as fact, that American audiences have received with coldness and neglect some of the favourites of this hemisphere, and have welcomed with approbation performers to whom our minor theatres would not have tendered an engagement. A difference of taste clearly exists; and should Kean fail to propitiate the critics of New York or Philadelphia [if the writer had greater foresight, Boston would have been included], his powers, may be paralysed by the mortification of failure, or, in striving to adapt himself to the reigning taste, he may lose that fine tact which has distinguished him here, and may forfeit on his return the applauses of an English audience.[60]

If we view the Times's comments with fairness, it appears that the paper was right; Kean needed a change. I believe, however, that Kean's questionable behavior was a



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His Majesty's Servants will perform Shakspeare's Tragedy of
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Duke of Venice, Mr. THOMPSON,
Brabantio, Mr. POWELL, Gratiano, Mr. CARR,
Lodovico, Mr. VINING, Montano, Mr. JEFFRIES,
Othello, Mr. KEAN,
(*His last appearance in that Character*)
Cassio, Mr. BROMLEY,
(*His first appearance in that Character*)
Roderigo, Mr. RUSSELL,
Iago, JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH,
Leonardo, Mr. Hudson, Julio, Mr. Raymond, Marco, Mr. Moreton,
Paulo, Mr. Read, Giovanni, Mr. Starmer, Luca, Mr. Rundall,
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Or, the Merry Mourners.

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Frank, Mr. W. H. WILLIAMS, (*his second appearance on this stage*)
Hearty, Mr. CARR, Joey, Mr. RUSSELL,
Napkin, Mr. HUGHES, Thomas, Mr. MORETON, John, Mr. STARMER,
Mrs. Cockletop, Mrs. EDWIN, Mrs. Camomile, Mrs. PARKER,
Belinda, Miss CARR, Flounce, Mrs. MARGERUM,
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Edgar, JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH. Cordelia, Mrs. W. WEST.
And the THREE and the DEUCE. The Three Singles by Mr. ELLISTON.

MWEZ
n.c.
19,972.

Fig. 1. Playbill of Othello from Kean's final engagement at Drury Lane before his departure for America. Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, MWEZ, n.c. 19, 972.

decisive factor in his decision to come to the United States. He was acutely aware of the public's feelings and sensed that it was time to move on. The Times's seeming contempt for the American audience, was based on some little bitterness that existed between the two countries. The British maintained they were superior to their American cousins, and the Americans, though suspicious of anything British, relied mainly on British literary and actor imports. Secondly, the Times's prognostication of Kean's possible reception in the United States is relatively true. As will be seen in the next chapter, and in still others, the New York press and the Boston press were prepared to prejudge Kean before his arrival. For the believers, little could sway them from supporting Kean. For the doubters, they awaited the one slip by Kean that would confirm their suspicions and result in their saying, "See, I told you so, he's no Cooke or Cooper!" The Times was almost entirely correct in predicting the reaction of some of the American press who criticised Kean's unique and different acting style. American critics were seeing a totally different school of acting--unlike that of a Cooper or a Fennell, and one that was alien to their stage. Some New York critics complained about Kean's voice--saying he pushed it--not realising that Kean performed in much larger English theatres, a fact sadly attested to by John Bannister. At

any rate, the Times's insights about Kean's probable reception are astonishing.

On 1 December 1820, the New York Evening Post printed an article from the English New Monthly Magazine (dated September 1820) that substantially agrees with the Times. It disagrees with the Times in its affirmation that Kean will be appreciated by the Americans. No distinction is made between the press's reaction and the public's reaction. The public did not doubt that they would like Kean. It was the press who were the "doubting Thomas's." The New Monthly Magazine's article is especially interesting because it summarises many of Kean's greatest roles, which were performed during his final engagement at Drury Lane. This account is helpful when reading American reviews of the same roles:

> It seems now to be certain, if there is any faith in managers, that we are really to lose Mr. Kean for a season. While we regret his determination on our own accounts, we acquiesce in it as wise. Frequency has unhappily a power to injure the fairest of earthly charms . . . human life is short for enjoyment--and the life of an actor is even shorter. He [Kean] cannot afford to resign a year of the prime of existence and hey-day of fame to preparations for a future, which may never arrive. As Mr. Kean is to leave us for a while, we are glad that America will be the scene of his exertions. His acting, we should think, will scarcely fail of one appreciation in the New World, if there may be found any taste or sympathy for genius. For it does not depend on thar artificial dignity, or awaken those associations of old greatness, which can have little place in a young republic. . . .
>
> Mr. Kean's performances, so far as they have yet preceeded, have been instinct with a spirit which appears inspired by a determination to leave on the mind an impression which no absence may dissipate. In Richard, perhaps, he never so entirely vivified

> throughout his striking and ingenious conceptions.--The early part of his performance of this magnificent character is, however, at the best, very inferior to his acting in its closing scenes . . . His last contest and death . . . redeem a thousand errors. The uprearing of his head in super human defiance--the noble swelling of his chest--the inextinguishable spirit breathing in every limb, when mere nature is exhausted--present perhaps the sublimest picture ever witnessed, of the momentary triumph of the energetic will over mortal agony.
>
> Mr. Kean's Jaffier . . .is not, on the whole, suited to his genius. . . .
>
> As Jaffier is below Mr. Kean's powers, Hamlet, which he performed next, is above them,--This however, may be said with truth of every one who has attempted the character within our memory . . . The revering love for his father--the affection for Ophelia, faintly counterfeiting anger--and the indignation and scorn for his own wrongs--are all beautifully depicted by Mr. Kean. But his performance is a "thing of shreds and patches," though some of them are of the fairest hues...His last performance, however, was a much nearer approach to the great original.
>
> In Sir Giles Overreach--his fourth exhibition--Mr. Kean is always at home. He is fitter on the whole to play Massinger than Shakespeare...
>
> His Shylock, tho' his expression of mere fiendish malignity is less striking and prominent than that which we remember in Cooke, is almost perfect...His scene with Tubal, where the Jew hears of his daughter's extravagance and of his foe's losses, is the finest in the play: the quickness of his transitions here astonishes like lightning...His acting in the trial scene is admirable.
>
> Mr. Kean's Othello was, to the full, as grand as ever. "The force can no further go." The marble stillness of his surprise--the terrific flow of his range--the sighs which faintly relieve the labouring soul--the beautiful returns of his love which suffuse his eyes with childlike tears...are beyond description or praise.[61]

If we had to select the decisive factor that made Kean abandon the shores of England, we probably would center on his dislike for Elliston. We could not, however, ignore Kean's desire and ability to acquire large sums of money. He was the most renowned and highest paid

actor in England and there is no reason to assume that he would earn less money in the United States. In fact, he sent more money home to England than he had ever earned at Drury Lane. Then there are the actors like Cooke and their advice to Kean.

Finally, we cannot ignore Kean's disposition to enhance his fame and notoriety "cross the Atlantic."--knowing how he felt about himself--as the monarch of the English stage. Moreover, he did (as suggested by his critics) required a drastic change. He had to purge himself of the controversy and the disquieting information about him that was influencing public opinion in 1820, and desperately needed the change in order to overcome the fading enthusiasm for his art. All of the above then may be regarded as the rationale that prompted Kean to come to America.

CHAPTER III

SOME BRITISH SHAKESPEAREANS WHO PRECEDED KEAN ON THE AMERICAN STAGE

Edmund Kean was not the first English actor to appear in the United States. Many English actors preceded him, including Thomas Abthorpe Cooper, George Frederick Cooke, James W. Wallack, and John Maywood.[1] If circumstances had been more favorable, the great John Philip Kemble (Sarah Siddons' brother) might have performed in America before Kean.[2] However, the advent of the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain interfered.[3]

The spring of 1818 signified a new era of increased activity in the obtaining of British talent for the American theatre. At the forefront of this "new era" were Stephen Price and Edmund Simpson, the indefatigable managers of New York's Park Theatre. They wished to entice as many English performers as possible to the United States, a movement that continued well into the nineteenth-century, and fostered dependence on English performers. Thus, the way was paved for the eventual arrival not only of Edmund Kean, but later on, of such

English stars as Junius Brutus Booth and William Charles Macready.

In October of 1817 Charles Incledon, a "celebrated singer" of the English stage, made his first appearance in the United States in New York. His arrival is not especially significant, except for a statement issued by the National Advocate that encouraged the emigration of foreign talent:

> Mr. Incledon's reception in his first landing in this country, in addition to the satisfaction it must afford him, will be sufficient proof of the estimation in which abilities such as he possesses, is held in the New World, and we hope it will be a sufficient inducement for professional men of capacity to emigrate. It affords us pleasure to state, that the deportment of Mr. Incledon and his obliging manner has created very favorable impressions, and we trust that he may meet equal support in other cities of the union.[4]

During the spring of 1818 Edmund Simpson embarked on a journey to England to bring back "a reinforcement to the dramatic Corps" for the Park Theatre.[5] The following statement includes a long list of British performers who were expected to arrive with Simpson or follow him to New York:

> Mr. Simpson, one of the managers of the New York Theatre, who left last spring for G. Britain, for the purpose of procuring a reinforcement to the dramatic Corps, returned this morning . . . from Liverpool. We understand he has succeeded in engaging almost an entire new company. Among the number are Mr. Howard, Mr. Moreland, Mr. Blair, and Miss Leesugg, and Mr. and Mrs. Bartley (late Miss Smith) of the London Theatres, were to embark from Europe shortly after Simpson, and will arrive in the course of the ensuing theatrical season.[6]

While visiting England in 1818, Simpson attempted to secure the services of the important young actress Eliza O'Neill. However, "she declined" his offers.[7] It is believed that O'Neill's acting style was similar to Kean's. She, too, eschewed the Kemble school of acting. If she had appeared in the United States, she might have revealed herself as a female version of Edmund Kean and a possible rival to Kean in 1820.

In the 9 September 1818 article about James W. Wallack's premier engagement in New York, the National Advocate said: "It is satisfactory to contemplate an increasing disposition to emigrate to this country among professional men--it is creditable to our institutions and rising character."[8] Thespis, writing in the 8 September 1818 edition of the New York Evening Post, deplored the difficulty of obtaining "accredited" English talent for the American theatre:

> As yet we have it not effectually in our power, to attract performers of great merit from England. The Theatres in London, the focus of talent, received from an overgrown population, a steady and liberal patronage, which must be reciprocated by managers in the selection and engagement of such performers whose celebrity is known and admitted. It requires, therefore, strong inducements to performers of talent, to quit a country, where merit is fully patronised, and when our managers have it not in their power to offer, as yet, an equivalent for their services and sacrifices. There are some, however, whose enterprise and love of novelty have surmounted these difficulties; who have relinquished profitable engagements to try their fortune in the new world, and whose confidence in the discernment and liberality of an American audience, has led them to brave the dangers of the ocean, and launch their bark, if not on hazardous experiment, at least on problematic

> results. Messrs. Cooke, Incledon, and Philipps, are instances of such enterprise, and the result of their transatlantic experiments has induced others of accredited talent to imitate the example.[9]

It is clear, then, that the enterprising managers of the New York Theatre and the New York press encouraged the importation of British talent.

George Frederick Cooke was the first truly outstanding English star to visit the United States. Cooke left England in November, 1810 and "sailed from Liverpool . . . in the ship Columbia, for the United States of America."[10] He was "engaged by Mr. [Thomas Abthorpe] Cooper,[11] the manager of the principal theatres in America, to play at New York, Philadelphia, and most of the other large towns."[12] Cooke's distinguished reputation[13] as a first rate tragedian produced considerable excitement at the box office in New York:

> We understand the engagement of Mr. Cooke is likely to be a golden harvest for the managers. The box books are already crowded with fashionable names. Numerous offers have been made to the Manager for the profits of Mr. C's ten nights; and others for the whole first row of Boxes. The Manager however, to use a vulgar phrase, is determined to suck all his eggs himself, and has positively declined every offer.[14]

As it turned out, Cooke's engagement was indeed "a golden harvest" for the managers. On 21 November 1810 Cooke made his first appearance at the Park Theatre "in the character of Richard the Third."[15] He managed to attract an audience "of three thousand two hundred people."[16] And

his success was immense. There was $1,820 in the house, and, till he disappointed the public on the night of his benefit in his usual way, the receipts invariably exceeded a thousand dollars per night. During the seventeen nights he played in New York, the money received by the manager was $21,578.[17]

Of Cooke's Richard, the New York Journal said:

> Richard the Third is Cooke's best character; in that part he is allowed to be the first in the world. . .
>
> Cooke performed Richard on Wednesday evening [21 November], to the entire satisfaction of the happy few who had the good fortune to get squeezed into one of the fullest houses ever witnessed in our city.
>
> I have seen Cooper, Fennel, and others, do the part of Richard, but never save it to my mind's eye, till I saw it done by the inimitable Cooke.[18]

On 5 December 1810, the New York Journal reported that Cooke's Shylock, his other renowned personation, drew "several hundred persons more" than his Richard did during "his first appearance:"[19]

> Mr. Cooke performed the part of Shylock this evening, and as we have never seen Mr. Cooper in the character, we can make no comparison, but it is impossible for him to equal Mr. Cooke's performance; so natural it was, that we should have detested both Shylock and Cooke, had we not known that the latter personates the former only on the stage.[20]

Anglo Americus, writing for the New York Herald on 28 November 1810, concludes with some remarks about Cooke's merits as an actor with the following:

> We cannot conclude these remarks without congratulating the Managers of the New York Theatre, on the acquisition of this most original and excellent performer, who revives the spirit of tragedy at their house, and invigorates the too much neglected characters of our immortal Shakespeare, with all their pristine life and energy.[21]

Cooke's enormous success in New York continued with his Boston engagements. He made his debut in Boston "on

the 3d of January, 1811," at the "Boston Theatre."[22] As in New York, Cooke commenced his engagement as Richard III. According to Clapp "the house had not been so crowded for six years, and, . . . the receipts were great, when we consider the capacity of the house. Price (Cooke being paid a salary) received for this engagement $3,640.68."[23] The receipts for Cooke's fourteen night engagement totalled $11,650.96.[24] Cooke's tremendous success in New York and Boston would later be eclipsed by Kean's engagements.

If Cooke was the first significant star to come here, then Edmund Kean was the first superstar[25] to perform in the United States. Kean, unlike Cooke, Cooper, and others who preceded him, had been praised by the most prestigious writers and critics of the day (William Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, John Keats, Lord Byron, Samuel Coleridge and others) as the greatest English speaking actor since the legendary David Garrick.

Although Kean was the initiator of the romantic acting style, he was not the first romantic actor to appear in the United States. The British actors, James W. Wallack and John Maywood introduced the novel romantic style to America, Wallack in September, 1818 and Maywood in January, 1819. Notwithstanding the fact that Kean had not yet appeared here, the two actors were often compared, directly and indirectly, to Kean by the New York press. The press was aware of Kean's performances in Great

Britain and knew he was responsible for the burgeoning romantic school.[26]

Thespis, who later covered many of Kean's performances for the Post, wrote about Wallack's debut in New York, which took place on 7 September 1818. Thespis not only compared Wallack to Cooper, but noted Wallack's similarity to Kean. Wallack made his debut "in the character of Macbeth." Thespis said that Wallack's performance of Macbeth

> was a bold and hazardous attempt, familiar as the American audience were with the successful and superior performance of Mr. Cooper in the same character, . . . It was then under manifest disadvantage that Mr. Wallack made his first appearance . . .
>
> It is . . . reasonable to infer, that he who personates Macbeth with effect, who gives a general coloring, a force, a point, and stamina to the character, cannot fail in any other prominent part. Such were our conclusions when the tragedy was terminated, and the loud and reiterated applause satisfied us that the audience were gratified exceeding their expectations. No stranger has ever appeared on our boards, who has met with reception equally flattering on the first night, if we except Mr. Cooke . . .
>
> We discerned some of the touches of Kean, which were given with great effect; and the battle scene, a fine display of graceful attitude and skill, . . .
>
> Altogether, we have seldom seen any character represented with more effect. For upwards of twenty years, the American audience have been familiar with the extraordinary power of Cooper in that part,--an actor whose superior merit has been universally acknowledged, and it is the highest compliment that can be paid Mr. Wallack, to say, that he delighted the same audience in Macbeth, who for so many years had been accustomed to Cooper's representation of the part.[27]

Some parts of the review were not flattering. Thespis

cited several defects peculiar to Wallack's person, noting that he

> wants something in height, and he stoops too much . . . his face is rather effeminate and somewhat too handsome to play the villain and tyrant with effect; his eye is small and piercing; his voice is not melodious, yet sufficiently full and capacious. His defects are such as may be easily surmounted, . . . we have much to applaud and much to anticipate.[28]

Several similar defects were noted about Kean in his first New York engagement in 1820. Some critics felt that Kean was not sufficiently tall and that he did not possess an especially pleasing voice. However, when Kean finally appeared on the New York stage, he, too, was extolled as having received the greatest "reception . . . on the first night."

The correspondent writing for the National Advocate also praised Wallack as Macbeth:

> On Monday evening [September 7] the New York audience were gratified at the appearance of Mr. Wallack, from Drury Lane Theatre, in Macbeth . . .
>
> The expression of countenance required to delineate all these passions, in their successive operations, is of no common order, and Mr. Wallack succeeded in giving to most of them a peculiar force and direction . . . Mr. Wallack . . . when more at ease we have no doubt that he will strike out on several new and interesting points. He has no defects that time and attention will not eradicate.[29]

The National Advocate of 20 September 1818 presented a brief statement about Wallack's upcoming benefit performance. Stressed were Wallack's merits as an actor and his "private worth."[30] Furthermore, it is noted that it was important to have a supportive audience if

other actors "of merit" were to be enticed to come to the United States:

> The benefit of this promising young actor, whose performances has [sic] met with such merited applause, is announced for this evening; and if we may judge from the box book, we have the fullest assurance of a splendid and crowded audience. In this belief we trust no disappointment will occurr; [sic] it is due to his talents, his enterprise and private worth; and an ample benefit is the best reward; as it is a just criterion of that merit which seems to be very generally acknowledged. It is by patronage and protection that we advance talent and induce actors of merit to emigrate to this country. Relying therefore on the generous efforts of our audience, we cheerfully commend Mr. W. to their patronage and support.[31]

The "private worth" of an individual was a highly valued asset for an early nineteenth-century actor performing on the American stage. It is apparent that the American press carefully monitored the private lives of actors--native and foreign. To the chagrin of Kean in May 1821 and again in 1825, he would learn that the so-called "private worth" of actors was indeed a cherished attribute and one that he was sorely lacking.

"An Impartial Spectator" wrote an extensive article for the New York Evening Post of 25 September 1818--commenting about Wallack and his impersonation of Macbeth and also speaking of Cooper and Kean. Once again, we can see that the press was well aware of Kean's presence in England--and of his plans to come to the United States:

> I attended the theatre during the engagement of Mr. Wallack, and I should, perhaps, have made some remarks on that gentleman's performance, but perceiving that your correspondent Thespis had largely preoccupied

> your columns, I found it would be superfluous. I shall content myself with briefly remarking on this meritorious young actor . . . In Tragedy he is undoubtedly respectable and may attain to very considerable eminence; . . . but it is in genteel comedy, and the melo-drama, that he might hope to rival every performer of the present day. In this country he appears as a theatrical star, and I wish he may meet with the success he certainly deserves, and which, judging from the past, he will obtain.
>
> On Wednesday, Mr. Cooper entered upon his engagement for a few nights, in the arduous character of Macbeth; rendered particularly interesting at this time, by the circumstance of its having lately been played by Mr. Wallack, and who is understood to have kept the present favorite of the London audience, Mr. Kean, in his mind's eye, throughout . . .
>
> This, of all the characters in Shakespeare, that Cooper has ever attempted, is the one in which, when he pleases he is pre-eminently successful; . . . he enters so entirely into the original . . . His countenance, his voice, his deportment, and his whole manner, is suited to the representation . . . The scene of the murder, and his appearance after he had "done the deed," was executed with marvelous effect . . . When Mr. Wallack bids the servant "Get thee to bed," he makes a great point (as it is called) of this, in imitation of Kean, and pronounces these words (after a marked pause, and dropping his voice) in the most colloquial manner; and this draws down thunders of applause . . . Cooper, though cavear [sic] to the multitude, is true to nature.[32]

While summing up, in 1880, Wallack's contribution to the "romantic school of acting," James Murdoch said:

> James Wallack, Sr., was the first actor on the American stage to exhibit great excellence in the highest forms of the tragic and comic drama and in modern productions of the heroic, domestic, and romantic order . . . That rare combination, fine person, handsome features, distinguished manners, and thorough dramatic training based on intellectual culture, was the pedestal on which . . . Wallack stood, a statuesque representative of the "expressed and admirable in form and feature"--of what Charles Dickens termed "the romantic school of acting."[33]

John Maywood, the other British romantic actor to precede Kean here, followed Wallack at the Park Theatre in

January 1819. The New York Gazette stated that Maywood "struck out into a new style of acting" which differed from the "old school:"

> We have not ventured to say much respecting Mr. Maywood's success in the characters in which he has already appeared, reserving an opinion until his talents and mind were more fully developed; and after Richard, Sir Giles, and Bertram, were persuaded that he possess the qualifications of a chaste performer, and such as he could be most usefully and successfully exercised in any theatre . . . It was however, in Shylock that his talents were fully and satisfactorily developed. He struck out into a new style of acting, entirely foreign from the stamping, staring and vaporing method of the old school; his personation of the character was a chaste copy from nature as was testified by the powerful sympathy and applause that were, without exception, expressed. The taste in acting must necessarily, at intervals, undergo a change from this circumstance.[34]

The writer went on to observe that Maywood and other "young aspirants," attempt to ape actors of genius. Consequently, they often blend good and bad qualities. Kean is specifically mentioned in the article. The writer concludes:

> Some actor, of genius, will so astonish by his forcible conception and spirited performance of a character, that the young aspirants, after histrionic fame, will tread slavishly in his steps, and indiscriminately treasure up the beauties and faults together, without reflecting that there are even graces and perfections which sit very well on one individual and that are totally unbecoming to another. Garrick was the first that introduced the rational method of reading dramatic poetry, instead of that bombastic style [like Kemble's, and perhaps Cooper's] which sacrificed the sense entirely to the sound; but it seems, from the success of burlesque pieces, such as Bombastes Furioso, that the fault is still too prevalent--equally novel is the style of acting lately introduced on the British stage by Kean, and of which we had a feeling specimen in Mr. Maywood's Shylock . . . Mr. Maywood's success was beyond doubt; his readings were emphatic and correct;

> his style amazingly chaste, though new; and, if his person and voice were somewhat improved, he would be equal to any performer. When we are more familiar with this new school of performing, it will gain admirers.[35]

The reviewer makes the connection between Maywood and Kean, with Maywood treading "slavishly in his [Kean's] steps." Kean's novel "style of acting," the writer believes, has influenced Maywood's performance of Shylock.

"If his person and voice were somewhat improved, he [Maywood] would be the equal to any performer." As we have seen, an almost identical comment was made about Wallack. Then, in 1820 there are complaints about Kean's height and voice. Early nineteenth-century American critics seemed overly concerned about the "private worth" of actors, and the manifestation of this "private worth" conjoined with a pleasing, melifluous voice and gargantuan proportions.

On 18 January 1819 the Commercial Advertiser made several negative but mostly laudable comments about Maywood. The journal echoed negative sentiments about Maywood's "person" and "voice" but commended his "new style of acting:"

> From his [Maywood] not possessing that grandeur of person that strikes at first sight, it is necessary to see him in different characters, to form a correct estimate of his genius. When we look at him, while tranquil, he is nothing, or plunges into the sea of action, then it is that he hurries away the feelings of the audience, by the most brilliant display of attitude and pathos. His voice, though not stentorian, is agreeable in its tones--his reading remarkably correct, with a little more attention to costume, will have an imposing effect. It is said,

> that Garrick, (who was about Mr. Maywood's stature) had the address to make his person appear nearly six feet high. Upon the whole he is a most able performer, with talents that would command success in any time; an we do not wonder at the admiration which this new style of acting has received from the London audience. It is to be hoped, that Mr. Maywood will have such a benefit, after his great and successful efforts to please, as will give him no reason to complain of any want of liberality in a New-York audience.[36]

Both Wallack and Maywood paved the way for Kean. Their introduction of the romantic acting style to New York and Boston audiences helped to lessen any asperity the press may have had for Kean, when he arrived in the United States. The press had become somewhat familiar with the romantic school of acting as presented by both Wallack and Maywood and their suspicions about Kean were somewhat allayed by the time he made his first appearance in New York. Some newspapers, however, still continued to harbor suspicions about Kean and his acting style.

Since he was America's most popular actor before Kean's initial engagement, it is not surprising that Thomas Abthorpe Cooper, who had come to the United States in 1796 at the request of Thomas Wignell, "the manager of the theatres in Philadelphia and Baltimore,"[37] was continually being measured against Kean by many of the daily New York newspapers both before and after Kean's arrival. Cooper's acting style differed from Kean's. While Cooper emulated the declamatory school of acting, Kean developed an acting style which was impetuous and highly impassioned. Kean's acting style, as described in

the introduction, was seemingly motivated by natural action and language. Cooper's was not. This difference gave the American press much to talk about both before and during Kean's appearances here. Who was better, Cooper or Kean, the New York press continually asked? If the question was not resolved, the answers, at least, elicited exciting possibilities.

Before Kean's arrival in New York, Cooper had lost some of his appeal. Cooper's diminishing popularity was a subject of discussion in the New York National Advocate and the New York American in October of 1819, approximately one year before Kean's first appearance in New York. It is important that this point be stressed, because Kean, in 1819, was indirectly compared to Cooper by the above newspapers, and later in November 1820, only days before his debut directly compared to Cooper. Consequently, commentary about Cooper,[38] both preceding and following Kean's arrival in New York, provides some understanding about Kean's reception.

In October of 1820, the New England Galaxy observed that Kean had not yet left England and confidently asserted that

> Gentlemen . . . from London, in whose taste and judgment we have confidence, declare that Mr. Kean is an actor much inferior to Mr. Cooper. The probability is that, Mr. Kean's style of acting, being no longer a novelty, has become tiresome to London audiences, and that the arrogance of his deportment has "cooled his friends, and heated his enemies." It is certain that he is not so followed as formerly.[39]

If Kean's popularity in England was fading, as contended by the Galaxy, so was Cooper's in New York as noted in the 25 October 1819 issue of the New York National Advocate. The Advocate, while reviewing Cooper's impersonation of Beverly from the Gamester, attributes a lack of patronage to a preoccupation with the new school of acting introduced by "floating talent" (Wallack and Maywood):

> We have had much floating talent, of late, in this country and the busy eye of curiosity, has wandered over its excellencies and defects, and a corresponding encouragement has not been withheld--But may we not, in our desire for variety, neglect that talent which, for years, has been exercised, successively, for our amusement? How comes it that Mr. Cooper cannot, amid the taste of New York, succeed, within late, of attracting a crowded house? It is because his powers have failed?--Not so--he is, at this moment, superior in compass of voice, experience, expression, and disiplined conception, than he ever has been; and, in the full meridian of talent, he surpasses everything which has gone before him, and bursts upon the audience with improved excellence . . . to the important benefits of nature, he adds the most approved acquirements. When such performers fail to attract the drama must have retrograded indeed.[40]

On 27 October 1819 the American published an article which praised Cooper's Macbeth and Mrs. Bartley's Lady Macbeth as the greatest representations of either character ever on an American stage, and noting that these could not be equalled or bettered by their English counterparts on an English stage, or for that matter, here. Quite aside from the praise, the American criticises "the modern improvement in transatlantic acting" as inferior to Cooper's style of acting. By finding fault with the "character of the late innovators

of acting" from England and their representatives (Wallack and Maywood) in New York, the American was also taking aim at Edmund Kean--the model for both Wallack and Maywood.[41] The American's comment reads:

> Mr. Cooper's Macbeth is unquestionably his best part, and we think it so nearly perfect as to warrant the belief that it is unequalled. We are the more strengthened in our opinion from the character of the late innovators of acting from England [Kean and Booth], and from the specimens (perhaps faulty) of their style [Wallack and Maywood], that we have seen among us. As far as we can judge from the criticisms we have read, from what we have heard, and from little what we have seen, the modern improvement in transatlantic acting consists in the mummery of dumb show, in the impertinence of eccentric innovation, [no doubt a stab at Kean] and in the novelty of insulting the nature which a depraved taste cannot relish or understand. In these improvements Mr. Cooper is certainly deficient. The advantage of a fine person, of a countenance naturally expressive of the higher passions, and, of a voice confessedly unequalled by that of any competitor, have placed him above the necessity of resorting to the little tricks of artifice, which distinguish the disciples [Edmund Kean, James Wallack, John Maywood and Junius Brutus Booth], as they style themselves, of modern nature. His merit consists not in Pantomine, nor in that wretched coquetry with the audience which is style bye-play, or more appropriately stage-trick--but in a chaste and powerful delineation of the character his author meant to represent. The nature he copies is the nature Heaven gave us, not that which is created by the whim of an age, and which, founded in their caprice, is not more durable than its influence. The fault of Mr. Cooper's acting is, perhaps, that it is too laboured [sic]; but we think it scarcely possible to attain the perfection to which he has reached it.
>
> We have made these remarks chiefly in reference to Mr. Cooper's relative standing: not that we think he has any equal here, or that he has reason to fear any competitor [Edmund Kean?] in true talent from any other quarter; but because the love of novelty and singularity has produced a partial heresy in taste which, if it effects, is as likely to prove pernicious to the public, as in its operation, it is depressing to him.[42]

On 18 November 1820 (eleven days before Kean's November 29 debut) Crito, who wrote many articles about Kean's performances during his two New York engagements, severely criticised Cooper's Virginius in the New York Evening Post:

> Throughout the whole of Mr. Cooper's performance I did not perceive that any gush of feeling choked up the avenues of the voice, although once or twice (and not oftener) by means of an artificial shake of a cadence, and a sudden drop to an undertone, he drew something like applause from the inconsiderable part of the audience; nor was there a tear visible on his eyelid even in the scene where pathos is wrought to its point. In a performance of this kind, the mind and the heart must be active agents, or the representation is lamentably defective, and the heart never acts without giving instant and indubitable testimony of its presence. Mr. Cooper possesses a fine, but not a flexible voice; or it may be that its inflexibility is attributable to the want of skill in its government, rather to any defect of power. If it be susceptible of those sudden transitions which in common life occur suddenly and accidently, as the passions and prejudices of men are acted upon, how lamentable in that blindness or mistake of judgment which prevents the development of so inestimable a property.[43]

The American responded by informing its readers that Cooper's powers had not declined, surmising that excessive criticism of Cooper had been instigated by the dire motive of preparing the way for Kean--at the expense of Cooper:

> A writer [Crito] in the Evening Post of Saturday whose cumbrous style and perplexed ideas give a peculiar weight to his opinion in matters of taste, has favored the unenlightned public with a new estimate of Mr. Cooper's theatrical powers, respecting which it appears they have hitherto been altogether in the dark . . . it will scarcely be necessary to defend Mr. Cooper from his censure . . .
>
> Mr. Cooper's talents need no vindication; in the higher parts of tragedy he has no equal here; and if we may rely on the opinion of the few candid and intelligent Englishmen who visit us, he has none abroad [obviously the American was already biased

> against Kean.] If he has failed in the representation of Virginius, we suspect it was rather because the character was unworthy of him, than that he did not do justice to the character . . .
>
> If as we suspect the abuse of Mr. Cooper is intended as a mere prelude to the praise of Mr. Kean, we think it is doing injustice to both, and may probably provoke a feeling by no means favourable to a fair comparative estimate of their respective merits, if indeed they stand in any degree of comparison.
>
> In a word, if Mr. Kean is a great actor, he does not stand in need of any newspaper introduction to the public, whether deprecating the merits of a rival, or by exaggerating his own. If he is not a great actor, no puffing or party support will be of much use to him here.[44]

The American was not alone in its opinion. Preceding Crito's review of Cooper's Virginius, the editor (William Coleman) of the Evening Post prefixed the following statement:

> It seems unaccountably strange, that the writer [Crito] should only find cause for censure, and nothing to commend, throughout the whole performance of an actor who has so long, and I will add, so justly, been the admired favorite of an American audience . . . But we should revolt, should we discover an interesting design to write down one in order to write up another. Such projects are permitted I know, in London and Liverpool, but we shall always set our faces against any attempt to introduce such a mercenary traffic here.[45]

Crito swiftly replied with an editorial in the Evening Post, defending his position by specifically citing other writers apprehension of the supposed "puffing" of Kean. The article appeared on 28 November 1820--only one day before Kean's first performance in New York:

> He who ascends the critical chair with a determination to decide independently, must expect that his opinions will be condemned, and his judgments called in questions by those who have not clearness of intellect to understand that one, or are suffering under the afflictions of the other. "Injustice,"

> "mercenary motive," and a wish to write down one actor in order to write up another are the charges already directly or indirectly brought against me. In my remarks on Virginius, I have my own conception of the character as it should be performed . . . If I gave false statements, I am open to contradiction:--if true, Mr. Cooper and his friends should thank me for a criticism founded in fact and in justice. Mercenary motive I have none: the combined wealth of the actors and the managers throughout the United States could not purchase from me a sentence of unmerited praise, nor induce me to expunge of merited censure. They, who accuse me of a design to write up Mr. Kean, will wonder at their own sagacity, whenever I may have occasion to remark upon that gentleman's performance in this country . . . Mr. Kemble has totally failed in many characters:--and should Mr. Kean, and Mr. Young, and Miss O'Neil, and Mr. Cook,[sic] and Mr. Garrick [Crito seems guilty here of hyperbole, because "Mr. Cook, and Mr. Garrick" were long dead at the writing of this article] I presume the idolaters of Mr. Cooper will not stand up for his infallibility! . . .
>
> As far as a cold declamatory style, and a slow and formal enunciation, . . . the Othello of Mr. Cooper is a successful performance . . . though the herd of Mr. Cooper's admirers laud him to the skies, men of taste and intellect (and to such alone I wrote) must pronounce his enactment of Othello, in those touches which are essential to a proper effect, . . . greatly below the character which the immortal author conceived and coloured.[46]

The American, still incensed at Crito's reaction to Cooper, openly stated that Crito's object was to criticise Cooper in order to, as they suspected, prepare the way for Kean. An editorial appeared in the American on the same day that Kean made his debut, supposedly submitted to the paper by an anonymous writer. However, the editorial was preceded by an opening statement made by the American, establishing the paper's attitude towards Kean. This attitude remained constant throughout Kean's first engagements in New York and Boston:

The following communication would not have been inserted but for the renewed attack on Mr. Cooper, and the evident object for which it was made.

The system of puffing is as yet unknown to us, and it is among the exotics that we wish not to see transplanted. If we are to become converts to the modern English school, let it be through the unbiased operation of public taste and its own intrinsic merit. If Mr. Kean is a better actor than Mr. Cooper, let the public find it out without the aid of newspaper critics: but if it is necessary that he should be bolstered up by such auxilaries, we think it a duty that both sides should have fair play, and therefore insert the following:

The Evening Post not long since contained a criticism of Mr. Cooper's Virginius, which I confess I read with feelings of no small indignation. The current rumours of the town have not tended to allay them, I seize the first moment of leisure to make a few observations on that production, and to unmask the motives which led to the publication . . .

Its object is apparent. The way for Kean was to be smoothed. Crito's long and laboured article announced his approach; and thus he prepared to raise Mr. Kean's character on the ruins of Mr. Cooper's reputation. He has however shown but little skill in the playing of his game--his motives are but ill concealed beneath the candour and impartiality which he would appear to assume. There is throughout an evident design to find fault with Mr. C. not in those particular and characteristic traits of acting which form the striking contrast to Mr. Kean. Mr. C. must be believed to be too dignified and stately, before the pantomimic starts and lounging walk of Mr. K. can demand applause. Mr. C.'s commanding figure--clear, or since Crito admits it, fine voice, and graceful gestures, must be destroyed, that he wants them all, may be held up as nature's favoured child. "A gush of feeling" should deprive the actor articulation; and "choke up the avenues of the voice." and the rough harshness of Mr. Kean will become a beauty. If the voice of Mr. C. reaches us loaded with feeling, "commanding tears to flow," the very power it evinces, is summoned up by Crito to show its deficiency. Why then speak at all--why root then rob the author of his words, and let the gush of feelings so completely choke up the avenues of the voice, that all the inward emotions, like Tillurina's tears, must be expressed or signified by the white handkerchief that conceals them?

But enough of this--Mr. K. undoubtedly has great merit, and his defects which are many and striking, may be attoned for by his talents; but when these very defects are assumed as the standard by which to judge

> all--when the very denials of nature are to be considered her richest gifts; when a silver trumpet tongue is to be silenced, because it does not accord with the croaking voice of a critic's idol, we are put upon our guard, and feel that these propositions are so at war with truth and fairness, that we are almost ready to drive even candour from our own minds, and visit the transgressions of the critic upon the head of the actor. But Mr. Kean is all nature--this school of nature is one of the caprices of an English audience [if Crito was biased, so is our writer with his feelings for "an English audience"]. In establishing it, however, they have in our opinion, taken the exception for the rule, and because the soul that has prompted noble actions, has not always been encased in the most noble form, it is at once assumed, that the clumsy body of the peasant, is the only depository worthy of so rich a treasure . . . But we must conclude these remarks; they are made with no unkind feelings to Mr. K. He is a man of talents, who has often delighted us by their exhibition. Those talents are about to be appreciated by the unbought sufferages of an independent public. They need not the officious aid of an interested, bigotted professional critic.[47]

So, the battle was on. Kean was probably aware of the ambivalent and somewhat embittered press as he girded himself for his first performance ever in New York. He had to contend with the popular Cooper by continually being compared with him. And, of course, Wallack and Maywood were still fresh in the minds of the public. Furthermore, Kean had to contend with the memory of the deceased George Frederick Cooke.

Not much had been said about Cooke in relation to Kean prior to Kean's arrival in New York. The newspapers refrained from making comparisons as they had with Cooper. The press instead chose to discuss both actors during Kean's engagements.

It is sufficient to say for the moment that, like Cooper, Cooke was a favorite of the American audience. The American press and public were extremely fond of Cooke in spite of his frequent drinking bouts and his missing of performances. Both traits, incidentally, were associated with Kean, too.

Dr. J. W. Francis was one of Kean's chief supporters and admirers during Kean's engagements in New York. He had seen Cooke perform Richard III at his debut on 21 November 1810 in New York.[48] Francis was impressed with Cooke, and later with Kean. His first impression of Cooke prompted him to say that Cooke's

> commanding person, his expressive countenance, his elevated front, his eye, his every feature and movement, his intonations, showed the great master, who eclipsed all predecessors. His capacious intellect, his boldness and originality, at once convinced his hearers of the superiority of his study and his matchless comprehension of his great author [Shakespeare]. The critics pronounced him the first of living actors: he engrossed all minds.[49]

Later, critics would proclaim that Kean was "the first of living actors."[50] Cooke served as one of the criteria against which to measure the abilities of Kean. On the eve of Kean's first appearance in Philadelphia, the Union fondly recalled the memory of the "late George Frederick Cooke:"

> The visit of the late George Frederick Cooke was generally considered as a promising omen to the American stage; and the fact has been exemplified in the emigration of some of the most distinguished performers of the London boards, since the great exit of the great character to

That undiscovered country from whose bourne
"no traveller returns--"[51]

So it was that George Frederick Cooke--"a promising omen"--prepared the way for the emigration of "distinguished performers" (Wallack, Maywood, Philips, Incledon etc.) to the United States. On this glory road arrived one who was perhaps the most illustrious of them all, namely, Edmund Kean.

CHAPTER IV

KEAN'S AMERICAN DEBUT: NEW YORK 1820

The New England Palladium of 28 November 1820 informed its Boston readers that Kean had left Liverpool "on the 11th" of October for America. Kean sailed to New York on "the ship Martha" with "Capt. Sketchly" at the helm, and arrived in New York on 24 November 1820.[1] After several postponements, first in 1817 and again in 1819, the New York audience and press would finally see Kean act. The 30 November 1820 review of Kean's debut as Richard III, in the New York Evening Post, states that Kean's arrival was preceded by "prepossessions in his favor" and prejudices to encounter."[2] New York was preparing itself to assess the talents and behavior of an actor they had read so much about. Was Kean the genius so highly touted by most of the English press? Did Kean deserve the accolade as the greatest English-speaking actor since the great David Garrick? Would Kean efface the memory of the late George Frederick Cooke? Would Kean replace Thomas Abthorpe Cooper as the new favorite of the American audience? And, finally, would Kean's

reprehensible behavior towards fellow artists, authors and managers affect the attitude of the New York audience? Other cities, especially Boston, awaited the answers.

Kean made his debut at the Pavilion Theatre, in Anthony Street, on 29 November 1820 in Colley Cibber's adaptation of Shakespeare's Richard III; this use of Cibber continuing a tradition which persisted from the Restoration period. The Pavilion theatre was more commonly known as the Anthony Street Theatre during Kean's engagements and future references will cite the latter. The Anthony Street Theatre opened on 12 April 1813,[3] primarily as a summer theatre. The Park Theatre was destroyed by fire on 25 May 1820--forcing the Park Theatre management to use the Anthony Street Theatre as a temporary home for their company.[4] The Anthony Street Theatre had commenced its season on 4 September 1820. On that date, the National Advocate spoke about the commencement of the season with the "old company," and, also, implied that although a theatre is needed, the theatre is still immoral:

> The want of a rational amusement has been felt, and many persons accustomed to spend their hours with advantage at the Theatre have of late resorted to places less moral and advantageous.[5]

John Howison, Esq., an English traveller, recalls attending a theatre in New York City in 1820. By the details, it most probably is the Anthony Street Theatre:

> Their regular theatre was burnt down in the spring of 1820, and that which I visited was merely a

> temporary one. The actors were no better than third or fourth rate, and the scenery and decorations corresponded in meaness, but were, I was told, very much inferior to those that the fire had destroyed. The ladies and gentleman, who occupied the boxes, did not appear in full dress: and the latter generally sat with their hats on.[6]

The National Advocate of 23 September 1818, notes that

> Our friend Patronus has succeeded in banishing many of those hideous bonnets from the boxes, and turbans, veils and dress caps now afford to every part of the audience a full view. Could he not, in his efforts to render the beau monde yet more engaging, induce them to suspend an appetite which seems to be more voracious in the walls of the theatre? For the consumption of the quantities of fruit, nuts, and bons bons, however agreeable, is "caviau" to good taste and breeding. The lovers of good tragedy are not aware that it whets the appetite amazingly for supper after the play is done.--What can be more ungraceful than to see a beautiful lady affected even to tears, and, at the same time, eating almonds and raisins?[7]

It is very likely that Kean encountered such situations during his performances.

Stephen Price, manager of the Park Theatre, exerted extensive influence over other theatres in major cities on the East coast: Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Charleston. He had an arrangement with the managers of the aforementioned theatres, "like a modern Charles Frohman or Shubert, . . . to supply them with notable imported stars."[8] Kean was one such star. Price made it relatively easy for the "visiting stars" to make their arrangements with the various cities.[9] This trend towards foreign stars, particularly English, for the resident theatre companies, helped to undermine the

existence of these companies; but the stock companies were to become an endangered species. More and more, the companies would merely support the incoming stars--gradually fading into insignificance as the nineteenth-century progressed.

Many newspapers, including the New York American and the New York Evening Post, printed bills which announced Kean's arrival. The public was reminded in these bills that the "Free List" would be "excluded" during Kean's engagement. In addition, tickets "only answer on the night for which they are purchased."[10] The American listed the cast of each play during Kean's engagements. This policy was not duplicated by other journals even though the cast for Richard III and the Poor Soldier, an afterpiece,[11] included several competent performers such as Edmund Simpson (stage manager of the Park Theatre company), Mr. and Mrs. Barnes (engaged from England), and Mr. Kilner. Later casts included John Maywood and a few less notable performers.

The 8 volume of an illustrated edition of the Life of Edmund Kean by F. W. Hawkins, contains an invaluable document written by Kean. This document is "Kean's MS Diary of his visit to America" in 1820 and 1821.[12] In the twenty-two pages of this rare manuscript, Kean has recorded, somewhat haphazardly, financial statements and arrangements that he had made with the managers of the New York, Boston and Philadelphia theatres.[13] For his first

New York season, Kean, "on Saturday the 25th of November," made "the following engagement with" Stephen Price, the manager of the Park Theatre company:

> The terms of Mr. Kean's engagement are fifty pounds sterling for the first seven nights & half the clear receipts of the eighth night and fifty pounds Sterling, for the following seven nights & half the clear receipts of the sixteenth night. Mr. Kean's name put up on the eighth & sixteenth nights.

At the end of the above statement, Stephen Price's signature is appended; and, then, the following is added:

> the first performance on Wed. the 29th Nov. the second on Friday the 1st Dec, the third on Saturday Dec. 2nd. the engagement then continues on the Monday-Tueaday. Thursday. & Fridays in the following weeks till concluded.[14]

William Coleman, the editor of the New York Evening Post, gave New York readers something to think about after his November 30 review of Kean as Richard III. Whatever misgivings Coleman had had about Kean before the performance were quickly eliminated by the end of the play:

> We had the pleasure last evening [29 November], of being one of a crowded audience to greet the entrance of Mr. Kean, on the American boards, and never did we witness a warmer reception, which was returned in the most grateful and graceful manner. No actor, perhaps, has ever appeared in New York--, with such prepossessions in his favor, or such prejudices to encounter, and we candidly confess, we were among the number of those who entertained the latter. We were assured that certain imitations of him were exact likeneses; and that certain actors were good copies [Wallack and Maywood]; that his excellencies consisted in sudden starts, frequent and unexpected pauses, in short, a complete knowledge of what is called stage trick, which we hold in contempt. But he had not finished his soliloquy before our prejudices gave way, and we saw the most complete actor, in our judgment, that ever appeared on our boards.--The imitations [Wallack and Maywood] we had seen, were indeed, likenesses, but it was the resemblance of copper to

gold: and the copies no more like Kean "than I to Hercules."

It cannot be expected that we should here enter into particulars, nor shall we attempt it.--We will confine ourselves to a few remarks.

As to the figure, Mr. Kean appears to be beneath the middle size, (for we have never seen him but on the stage): his features are good, and his eye particularly expressive and commanding, his voice, in which he is most deficient, is, however, in its lower tones, sonorous, and he has the power of throwing it out so as to be heard at the extremity of the house; at least, when the hurry and violence of passion does not choke his utterance. Though we often see this effect in real life, and now, therefore, it is nature herself, yet the actor upon the stage should remember the instruction of Shakespeare to his players: "In the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it [distinctness]."

We had been induced to suppose that it was only in the more important scenes that we should see Kean's superiority, and that the lighter passages would, in theatrical phrase, be walked over. Far otherwise: he gave to what has heretofore seemed the most trivial, an interest and effect never by us imagined. The most striking point he made in the whole play, (for we cannot notice the many minor beauties he exhibited) was his manner waking and starting from the couch, with the cry of "Give me a hoarse--Bind up my wounds! Have mercy, heaven! Ha! soft, 'twas but a dream:" &c. "Cold drops of blood hang on my trembling flesh. My blood grows chilly, & I freeze with horror." This with all that followed, was so admirable: bespeaking a soul, so harrowed up by remorse, so loaded with his guilt, as gave such an awful and impressive lesson to youth, that not one who witnessed it can ever forget it. We must not pass over the unnatural love scene with Lady Ann: and can say, Kean is the only actor, that we have ever seen, that could ever render it reconcilable with even bare possibility.

We beg pardon, but if we might make a suggestion to so consummate a judge as Mr. Kean, we would hint that he is deficient in manifesting his anger and disappointment, after his failure to bring Buckingham to his guilty purpose and latter has gone out. "The king seems angry," says Catesby. We did not observe it. Some instances of misplaced emphasis we noticed. "Didst thou see them dead?" I think, with submission, see is the emphatic word. "Saddle White Surry for the field to-morrow. By placing the stress on the last word, he insinuates that he has no other horse, instead of directing to select his favorite. "But

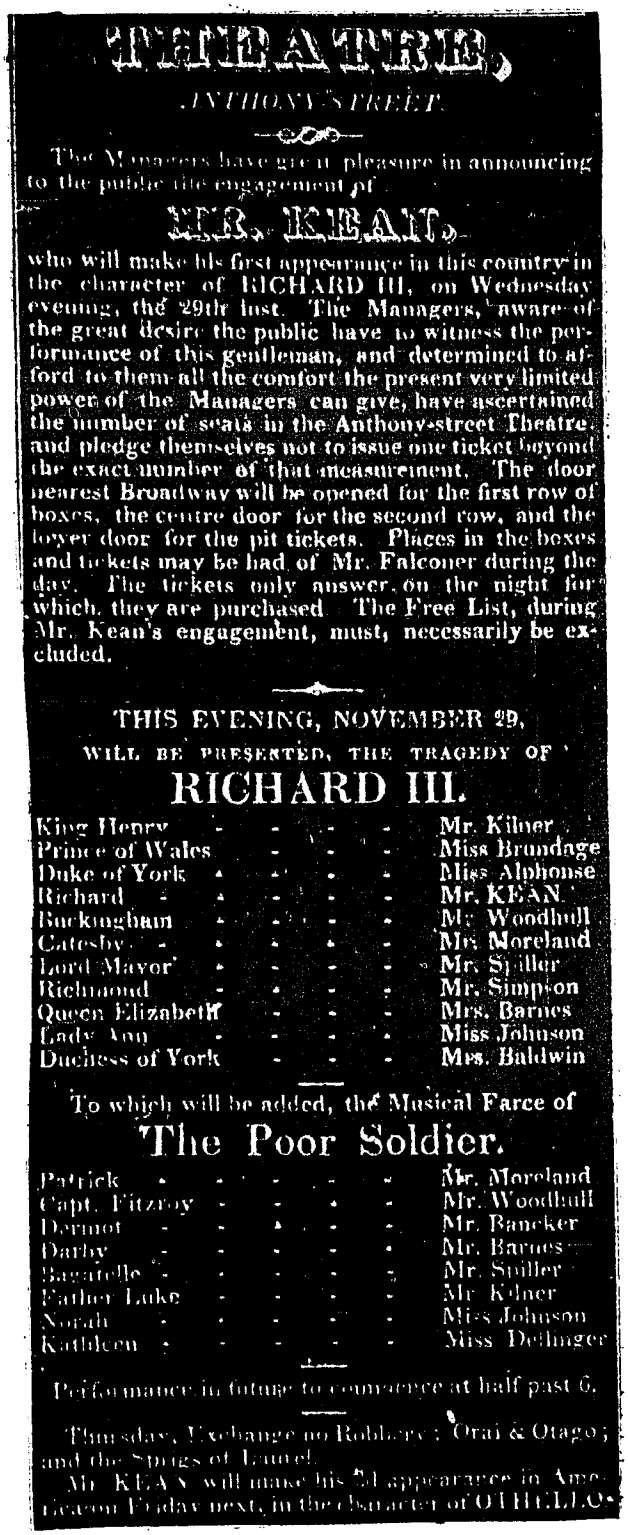
> from the eager love I bear another." Why this line is given in a loud and angry voice, instead of a low and taunting tone, we are at a loss to conceive. But those are peccadiloes. We cannot finish without pointing out the extraordinary fine effect with which he gave: "Off with his head--so much for Buckingham." The bitter tone of malignant exultation with which he uttered the latter part of this line, can only be conceived by those who heard, saw, and felt it.
>
> We were rejoiced, once more, to behold our Theatre filled to overflowing, from top to bottom, by the most respectable gentlemen; for of ladies there was a plentiful scarcity, owing to fears, which had taken possession of the town, that the house was not safe for an overflow, but which we are morally certain were entirely groundless. We are desirous that all should witness the exhibitions of Kean, because we believe he will introduce a new and better taste in acting. As Philipps did in singing, and thus materially improve the judgment of the public.[15]

What did other journals have to say about the most "complete actor . . . that ever appeared" on the New York Stage? Some journals had little or nothing to say; while others had much to say. Positions rarely wavered and when they did, the results were negative. This is particularly evident at the end of May 1821, and later in 1825. The New York Evening Post, the New York National Advocate, and the New York American provided the bulk of criticism during Kean's first season. Surprisingly, William L. Stone's New York Commercial Advertiser had little to say about Kean in 1820; but, in 1825, Stone's paper unleashed negative comments about Kean which prevailed during his entire second visit.

Shortly before Kean's tour, as we have already seen, the American and Evening Post engaged in a bitter dispute over the merits of both Cooper and Kean. What followed



Fig. 2. Engraving of Kean as Richard III. Courtesy of the Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 802.



THEATRE,

ANTHONY STREET.

The Managers have great pleasure in announcing to the public the engagement of

MR. KEAN,

who will make his first appearance in this country in the character of RICHARD III, on Wednesday evening, the 29th inst. The Managers, aware of the great desire the public have to witness the performance of this gentleman, and determined to afford to them all the comfort the present very limited power of the Managers can give, have ascertained the number of seats in the Anthony-street Theatre, and pledge themselves not to issue one ticket beyond the exact number of that measurement. The door nearest Broadway will be opened for the first row of boxes, the centre door for the second row, and the lower door for the pit tickets. Places in the boxes and tickets may be had of Mr. Falconer during the day. The tickets only answer on the night for which they are purchased. The Free List, during Mr. Kean's engagement, must, necessarily be excluded.

THIS EVENING, NOVEMBER 29,

WILL BE PRESENTED, THE TRAGEDY OF

RICHARD III.

King Henry	Mr. Kilner
Prince of Wales	Miss Brundage
Duke of York	Miss Alphonse
Richard	Mr. KEAN
Buckingham	Mr. Woodhull
Catesby	Mrs. Moreland
Lord Mayor	Mr. Spiller
Richmond	Mr. Simpson
Queen Elizabeth	Mrs. Barnes
Lady Ann	Miss Johnson
Duchess of York	Mrs. Baldwin

To which will be added, the Musical Farce of

The Poor Soldier.

Patrick	Mr. Moreland
Capt. Fitzroy	Mr. Woodhull
Dermot	Mr. Bancker
Darby	Mr. Barnes
Bagatelle	Mr. Spiller
Father Luke	Mr. Kilner
Norah	Miss Johnson
Kathleen	Miss Dellinger

Performance in future to commence at half past 6.

Thursday, Exchange no Robbery; Orai & Otago; and the Sprigs of Laurel.

Mr. KEAN will make his 2d appearance in America on Friday next, in the character of OTHELLO.

Fig. 3. Richard III advertisement from the New York American. Kean's first performance in New York.

was a continuation of the newspaper war between the American and Evening Post, to be joined later by the National Advocate. Unfortunately, Kean was entangled in this newspaper war that often had little to do with him; but more to do with the politics of the papers. During the early nineteenth-century, many newspapers fostered certain principles which shaped the entire contents of their journals. Robert Walsh, the editor of "Philadelphia's most quoted political paper"[16] the National Gazette, clearly demonstrated a predilection against the theatre, which probably influenced the policies of other papers. On 4 November 1820, the National Gazette "commenced as a Daily Evening paper." Walsh said:

> Although we will not lend ourselves as the instruments of the passions of any man or party, it is not our intention to abstain from taking sides in important political questions, or from playing the satirists at the expense of folly, extravagance, or vice, when exhibited on the public stage. Our exertion in every cause will be proportioned to its importance, and to the favorable circumstances of the conjuncture. Our reprobation shall be pointed, and our ridicule unsparing wherever the public good may seem to require the use of these the lawful weapons of all periodical writers.[17]

The American, on 3 March 1819, had said in its first issue:

> This paper will be conducted by an association of young men. Their object is political. The tone of their politics is expressed in the name they have assumed. Exclusively American, their aim will be to support the character, and to promote the interests of their country, without reference to the present nominal distinctions of party . . . Viewing the Press as the great instrument of liberty; . . . Free from

> all control but that of religion and morality, Independent of any influence but the good of our country and mankind . . .
>
> The immediate object of our attention is the moral and political condition of our native state, . . . We wish to give to the Press its full force, and to see its proper ends--the union of morality, religion, and liberty.[18]

With the above criteria, it is easy to comprehend why Kean was possibly victimized at different junctures of his engagements.

The American was one of less than "a half dozen or more daily papers . . . , and as many weeklies and semiweeklies."[19] As expected, its response to Kean was not enthusiastic. His performance was viewed with disdain. The American, both before and during Kean's engagements, challenged his supremacy. Later criticism will demonstrate that the American's fondness for Cooper had something to do with their dislike of Kean. Earlier criticism, on the eve of Kean's arrival, clearly revealed a preference for Cooper. On 30 November 1820, the American said:

> Mr. Kean last night made his first appearance before an American audience, in the character of Richard. As it is a point of etiquette to receive strangers with indulgence, and as Mr. Cooke is still fresh in our recollection, we shall abstain from any remarks that might tend to exemplify the school-boy lesson that "comparisons are odious." We conceive, too, that the impression made by the whole performance will not be essentially altered by an examination of the blemishes or beauties of particular parts, and that impression is precisely what we anticipated from the discrimination of an impartial audience. We are proud to hail it as a proof of the independence and superiority of American taste, and as an omen that the dogmas of British criticism, which we believe to be

quite as vitious [sic] as the doctrines of their politics, will soon be held in the same estimation.[20]

On 1 December 1820, the American published a fuller review of Kean's Richard, by A Critic in the Pit. This review, as with many early nineteenth-century articles, is captious, redundant and overlong, but it vividly establishes the American's dislike of Kean:

> The character of Richard, we might readily imagine from history, must be extremely difficult to be presented in any manner coming up to the peculiar traits that distinguish it: although Shakespeare found in the groundwork of his character certain leading marks, in the delineation of which he particularly excelled, yet "that mixture of intellectual vigour and moral depravity," so conspicuous in the features of his life, and the different passions that actuated him at times, must ever make the part extremely difficult for a perfect execution, although the character has been most ably and happily portrayed. Many performers who were at the height of their profession, and who excelled in characters in which it might be supposed success was more attainable, have entirely failed in that of Richard.--The part of Macbeth has been successfully personated by those who have entirely misconceived that of the crooked back tyrant. It was one of those characters the late Mr. Cooke particularly excelled in; it was that in which Garrick first appeared, and that which laid the foundation of the high standing which Mr. Kean was acquired in his own country, and the first in which he has appeared in ours. That Mr. Kean's performance of the character is original, is indisputable; it was so in England when he first appeared in it; and it is clearly so to us. It is right, therefore, that we should throw aside any dislike we might have on the ground of our being accustomed to the execution of the character as done in the manner of Mr. Kean. Indeed, in England, on his first appearance in Richard, there were considerable doubts to his merits, for no other reason than that his performance was original. It is but justice to Mr. Kean, therefore, that, if he has hit upon a happier conception, according to his own belief, we should judge and criticise it with candour and fairness,--Full of curiosity and anticipated pleasure, we went to witness Mr. Kean's first appearance on the American boards, and the following is the result of

our observations: To speak generally, his figure and looks were well adapted to our ideas of the tyrannical Richard; his voice is not good, especially when he elevates it, when it breaks in the most disagreeable manner; and his delivery is new; every word comes forth as if it were measured in a slow method of speech he uses, which, as it was continued through all those scenes where it was possible to employ it, rendered it at length very tiresome, and by no means agreeable. We really thought at times that he was reading the part in his own closet, deep intent on the study of it, preparatory to his performance,

We agree with a London critic that the "Courtship scene with Lady Ann is an admirable exhibition of smooth and smiling villainy," but we witnessed not only, in that scene attempts at stage effect, but repeatedly in the denouement of the plot the apparent uneasy delivery of the sentences, if original, is certainly not pleasing, notwithstanding each word is expressed with great precision and distinctness; and although an English writer (Mr. Hazlitt) cannot imagine (as he observes) an character presented with greater distinctness and precision, more perfectly articulated in every part, yet this "perfect articulation," distinctness, and precision, appear to us to be attended with a most uneasy way of delivery, there being too much an appearance of artificial manner. In repeated sentences, too, we observe a pause at the end of the word preceding the last, and after stopping a few seconds or so, pronouncing the last word. This was done, doubtless, in order to give effect to the whole. We took notice of this, we were about to say, in almost every scene he appeared.--Another circumstance struck us, which more fully evinced the aim of the performer; it was those sudden transitions which were so strikingly displayed. It cannot be denied that some of them were required; but in the words of one of his own critics, "his delineation of it should have somewhat less brilliancy, fewer glancing lights, pointed transitions, and pantomimic evolutions, with more solidity, depth, sustained and impassioned feeling; "or in other words, he seems to have at his command a variety of resoures, in order to give a continual eclat to his performance, and he incessantly employed them as in making those long pauses, quick transitions, and, among other things, as Mr. Hazlitt in his lectures calls it, his "exuberance of manner." He gave a new reading to several passages which pleased us; and the manner of his bidding his friend "good night," was very striking, although we cannot but believe the long pause was intended by Mr. Kean for effect than for a display of any real talent he

> thought the idea possessed; we could mention several scenes in which he appeared to effect, and several in which effect was partially destroyed.[21]

If the Critic in the Pit had done his homework, he might have discovered that, although Hazlitt's criticism of Kean's Richard (15 February 1814) was complimentary, it was not entirely so:

> It is possible to form a higher conception of this character (we do not mean from seeing other actors, but from reading Shakespeare) than that given by this very admirable tragedian; but we cannot imagine any character represented with greater distinctness and precision, more perfectly articulated in every part. Perhaps, indeed, there is too much of this; for we sometimes thought he failed, even from an exuberance of talent, and dissipated the impression of the character by the variety of his resources.
>
> If Mr. Kean does not completely succeed in concentrating all the lines of the character, as drawn by Shakespeare, he gives an animation, vigour, and relief to the part, which we have never seen surpassed. He is more refined than Cooke; more bold, varied, and original that [sic] Kemble, in the same character. In some parts, however, we thought him deficient in dignity.[22]

On the other hand notwithstanding some "physical defects," the National Advocate's initial response was overwhelmingly positive. On 30 November 1820, the paper wrote:

> We, last evening, had the pleasure of witnessing the performance of Mr. Kean in the character of King Richard the Third. It was the original of which we have seen so many copies. Our limits will not enable us to say much at present, or to point out those scenes which were fine beyond description, or those which fell in interest. His readings of Shakespeare and his soliloquies have never been surpassed, and to an eye of matchless power, he adds a face of wonderful expression. His voice is thick, though deep and sonorous, and we have never witnessed such a combination of powers, and such a display of genius, mastering, if not strangling, those physical defects, which were clearly perceptible in some of the bustling

> scenes. We shall notice the performance at large tomorrow.[23]

It should be noted that both the Evening Post and the National Advocate state that Kean is the original of "so many copies." Although names are not given, doubtless the "copies" are Wallack and Maywood, both devotees of the romantic school. In January 1821, the Union, a Philadelphia newspaper, covered Kean's first appearance there and

> were forcibly struck with the similitude between his [Kean's] acting and Mr. I. Wallack's, which circumstance appears very natural when we recollect that they frequently performed together at Drury Lane, and Wallack was generally known to have imitated him in his performance.[24]

In a more extensive review of Kean's Richard on 1 December 1820, the Advocate wrote:

> "Well, what do you think of Kean?" is the first question among the friends of the Drama in this city. Wonderful, says one, Very extroardinary, says another, I don't think I like him, says a third, but to speak the truth, "I don't understand much about these things," This is the barometer of public feeling. The American audience I have ever considered fully equal judges, if not better than the English audience, not because their faculties are more alive, but because they are free, and unshackled from retained critics; if they are pleased they say so, and if they are not pleased they say so, and if they are not pleased they can give the reasons why; notwithstanding which it is impossible at this enlightned period for any man to hold possession of the English stage for any length of time, without great and peculiar merits.[25]
>
> Shakespeare's plays are nearly strangers on the stage--every "puny" writer within twenty years has stalked before the majesty of his genius, and the mind must retrograde to become once more familiar with the "immortal bard."--Hitherto we have seen Richard acted, and acted well--but on this occasion, we have seen something so closely approximating to Richard himself, that the delusion was difficult to dissipate. His

conception of the character was perfectly natural, and his execution plainly, intelligibly, freely and forcibly expressed. In his readings we had a new variety, evincing taste, judgment and a bold impressive original, together with a close fidelity to the obvious sense of the author.

There were so many prominent beauties mingling themselves with and trampling upon the defects of his performance, that we are at a loss which to commend most.

His first soliloqy: "Now is the winter of our discontent," was delivered in a slow, measured style, displaying a perfect acquaintance with the dark and ferocious character of Gloster, and his disregard of all feelings and obligations, which interfered with his deep and aspiring designs. We confess our inability to do sufficient justice to the scene in which the tyrant wooes Lady Ann. The air of truth and tenderness, the soothing flattery, the soft cadence of his melting voice, the "dejected havior of the visage," contrasted with the flashes of hypocrisy and transient archness of demeanor visible in this scene, exhibited so much genius and solidity of conception, as to draw forth the most rapturous applause. Our limits will not permit us to go thro' each act minutely.

In the tent scene, the effect produced was electric. The workings of his soul, when labouring under the impression that the horrible dream was a reality; the contortions of the countenance, indicative of a conscience at once awakened by a sense of the past and a dread of the future; the exclamation of terror which escaped him on the sudden entrance of one of his minions at this awful moment of seeming retribution, were specimens of the most finished acting. It was not possible to withdraw the attention from the object before us, until the curtain closed the scene with a representation of the death of the tyrant, in which the same excellent display of keeping [sic] and thorough knowledge of character was preeminent. Never to our recollection were the means of producing effect more strikingly legitimate, and never were they employed to greater advantage. The audience, taken altogether, did not exactly know what to think of Mr. Kean's acting. It was a new school opened to their view--they had not been accustomed to his style; yet they discerned, occasionally, something wonderfully striking; and the muscles of his countenance, and peculiar brilliancy and effect of his eye, produced a strange and unaccountable influence.--

Mr. Kean has much to fear from our climate. The humidity of the English climate does not affect the voice; but the cold currents of air which rushes on

> our stage cannot fail to produce a hoarseness, which was discernible in the third act. It is said that liquids afford but temporary relief, but that a prune, or a few raisins have a tendency to clear the voice. The fall of the voice has sometimes a harshness and grating sound, which appears in Mr. Kean to be assumed. In the bustle and scenes requiring violent declamations, his powers fall somewhat short; but his readings and soliloquies are in themselves the greatest dramatic treat ever enjoyed in this country. We await to see him in his other parts.[26]

Unlike British critics, American critics were largely amateurs. Most American theatrical critics used pseudonyms, such as Crito, Thespis, Betterton, and Garrick, in place of actual names. Rarely, if ever, during this period, did American newspapers engage the services of a full-time theatre critic. More often than not, the editors wrote the criticism. However, because of the significance of Kean's appearance, the editors accepted letters and other correspondence from guest writers. The English press, for the most part, employed an impressive array of distinguished professional critics, such as William Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt and Charles Lamb. American criticism also tended to be very subjective.

The New York Daily Advertiser, on 30 November 1820, wrote a short paragraph about Kean, in which it was said that "Mr. Kean was received, last evening, with unbounded applause. His Richard was unquestionably one of the finest specimens of acting ever witnessed in this country."[27] The Commercial Advertiser had even less to say. Their concluding statement said: "His performance is highly spoken of by those who profess to understand

these matters."[28] A few days later, on 5 December, the New York Gazette and General Advertiser printed its review about Kean's Richard. Like the American, they were not pleased with Kean:

> We attended the Theatre on Wednesday evening last, to witness Mr. Kean's debut on our boards, in the character of Richard the Third, and felt gratified to find our citizens so numerously assembled. This actor, so celebrated, was received in a manner, which must have been pleasing to himself, and certainly proved our attention and courtesy to a stranger. It would be difficult, perhaps, to speak decidedly as to his success with the majority of the audience, for many and varied indeed were the opinions of his performance: for our own part, we must declare, it did not please us as a whole, though there were parts entitled to great praise. His opening soliloquy appeared too studied--too sombre--and abounding with trick. There was also a misconception in it--the lines "This restless world's but hell, till this misshapen trunk," &c. were delivered in an extreme undertone, and with a sneer, which is evidently in opposition to the meaning . . . The interview with King Henry had nothing particular to recommend it. The scene with Lady Anne, at the beginning of a second act, was so covered with sarcasm, that the grand effect was lost . . . The speech which ends the act was very finely given, with the exception of the last sentence, which was begun with a gutteral cadence, and ended with a croak. The third act was the least successful of the whole play; there were nevertheless some points happily hit off in its course. In the fourth act he was highly effective, and could have abstained from those unnatural cadences, which appear like warts upon a fair face, and been aided by a little more distinct articulation in the more impassioned passages, he would have impressed his auditors most powerfully in his favor. His bidding "good night," and his rushing from the tent after the dream, were very fine; the horror and agony displayed on his countenance, were true to nature, and came with full force. In the scene previous to his dying, he was very inaudible. He fenced well, and managed the closing of the parts with judgment.--There were some false emphasis and mal-readings scattered over his performance, which are unpardonable in an actor of such high standing.
>
> It is quite evident that Mr. Kean is a man of genius, and well skilled in his profession, but he

> frequently obscures the effect of his genius, by stooping to tricks in order to catch applause, and continually using the harsh and grating parts of his voice, when he wishes to be emphatic. Some object to the novelty of style, but we confess we are pleased with that which most resembles nature, which has evidently been the plan on which Mr. Kean has commenced, but he has greatly obscured the original. Nature is beautifully simple, and must ever charm--covering so fair a surface with trick and art, may dazzle for a moment, but must wither and decay before the power of reason.[29]

An article appeared in the 4 December Evening Post that severely criticised Kean's Richard. Crito, who had previously, on 18 November, assailed Cooper's Virginius, had sent the criticism to Coleman. Of this, Coleman said:

> We confess we reluctantly yield our assent to publish the following critique from our theatrical correspondent, Crito, who might more appropriately have taken the signature of Zoilus. Instead of writing, as we at first conjectured, for the purpose of depressing one, that he might the better exalt another, he seems to us to be a very Ishmael of the theatre; ready to raise his hand against every one. Neither Cooper nor Kean meet his approbation: In the former, he can find nothing to please him, and in the latter, only two little monosyllables through out the whole performance of Richard. But he gives us to understand, that he has often sat on the critic's row in a London Pit, and very fairly lets us know, that there, Mr. Kean was no favorite with him. We think he has amply testified, in the following remarks, that he is not now disposed to alter his mind; nor to be at any pains to conceal his acerbity. He writes in the temper of Richard himself; he can snarl and bite and play the devil.[30]

Although Crito's article is substantially negative, he finally is able to admit that Kean possesses "glittering gems of genius:"

> By the friends of Mr. Kean, I believe, his Richard is considered one of the best, if not the most successful, of his performances. By a more favourable criterion, therefore, his merits cannot be tested. His voice is miserably defective in power: a few of

its tones fall, full and harmonious, on the ear, but its compass is so limited that the slightest effort to rise above the middle notes expires in an abortive and most dissonant croak. To remedy this defect of nature, . . . Mr. Kean has fallen into the error of introducing a quaint and artificial emphasis upon his ultimate words, which, in some instances, is most superfluous--in others, highly discordant--and, in not a few, totally subversive of sense as well as harmony. This is more particularly the case at his exits. . . . I also very strongly object to the slow articulation of words, and even of the syllabic moieties of words, which marked the delivery of many of his soliloquies. . . . The frequent and long pauses also were much too artificial; because they betrayed the art of the actor, which should always be kept out of sight. . . it would be absurd to deny that the performance of Mr. Kean was marked with very striking points of beauty, which were exquisitely conceived and completely effective. The most prominent of these were "good night!"--and the conclusion of the tent scene. . . . When Mr. Kean does not resort to trick and pantomime, which, if ever tolerated, ought to be under the check of a most vigilant and judicious discretion, his performance is very effective; but where he loses sight of truth, so far as to give his speeches a studied and elaborate character; or, by misconception, or a mistaken modulation of voice, to burlesque nature, I hope and trust the good taste and spirit of his audiences will always be sufficient to correct him.

I have witnessed Mr. Kean's performances night after night; and have watched the effect produced by them upon London audiences; but I was never the priest of his idolatry, although I have ever been ready to give him credit for that share of talent which unquestionably belongs to him. At the same time, I have deferred a great portion of his success to his intimate knowledge of stage trick, and of all those little arts which, more than sterling and steady force of genius, ensnare the approbation of mankind. . . . I have heard the delivery of sentences so distorted and mangled in their passage through his throat, as to lacerate the feelings they were intended only to excite, reward with most rash and ruinous plaudits--. . . Yet, notwithstanding all this, I admit that Mr. Kean has great powers of conception: glittering gems of genius, sparkling amidst masses of error, from which they require to be separated and purified.[31]

Kean next performed Othello on 1 December 1820. Many English critics, such as William Hazlitt considered Kean's Othello "his best character, and the highest effort of genius on the stage."[32] An article, from the [London] Monthly Magazine, had appeared in the 6 September 1817 Evening-Post, praising Kean's Othello, especially the third act:

> We do not hesitate to say that for purity, delicacy, and high poetical beauty of conception--for truth, and depth, and variety of expression,--nothing has been exhibited which equals the whole of the third act of Mr. Kean's Othello.[33]

The New York newspapers, as with Richard III, gave mixed reviews to Othello. Some liked it. Some did not. The National Advocate, which had previously commended Kean's Richard, had some reservations about his Othello:

> This character has always been supposed to be Mr. Kean's chef d'ouvre, at least by the most able of British critics, yet we cannot avoid thinking that it is second to his Richard [Kean preferred Richard]. We have indeed the same vigorous conception in both characters, the same towering genius; but the malice and hypocritical cunning, and cold blooded cruelty of Richard afford a wider field for the display of that genius than in the noble, constant, generous Othello.
>
> The scene with Iago in which the seeds of jealousy are first shown, was managed with great skill and address, but the passions as exhibited in the succeeding act, however finely conceived however natural in their execution, appeared at times somewhat extravagant. This may be accounted for from the circumstance of Mr. Kean's having accustomed his voice and gestures to a spacious Theatre, a wide and deep stage and proscenium, together with a lofty dome, and, as yet, he has not been able to pitch his voice, corresponding to the diminished size of our Theatre. These scenes, therefore, where a combination of passions, struggling for utterance, breaks forth with too much violence, should be regarded by our audience as a picture drawn by a master--the lights and shades rather too strong when closely examined; but when



THEATRE,

ANTHONY-STREET.

Second Night of Mr. Kean's Engagement.

The Managers have great pleasure in announcing to the public the engagement of

MR. KEAN.

☞ The Managers, aware of the great desire the public have to witness the performance of this gentleman, and determined to afford to them all the comfort the present very limited power of the Managers can give, have ascertained the number of seats in the ANTHONY-STREET THEATRE, and pledge themselves not to issue one ticket beyond the exact number of that measurement. The door nearest Broadway will be opened for the first row of boxes, the centre door for the second row, and the lower door for the pit tickets. Places in the boxes and tickets may be had of Mr. Falconer during the day. The tickets only answer on the night for which they are purchased. The Free List, during Mr. Kean's engagement, must, necessarily be excluded.

THIS EVENING, DECEMBER 1,

WILL BE PRESENTED, THE TRAGEDY OF

OTHELLO.

Othello	Mr. KEAN
Cassio	Mr. Simpson
Iago	Mr. Maywood
Brabantio	Mr. Kilner
Lodovico	Mr. Woodhull
Roderigo	Mr. Moreland
Desdemona	Mrs. Barnes
Emelia	Mrs. Baldwin

After which,

The Review;

OR, *THE WAGS OF WINDSOR.*

Caleb Quotem - - - - Mr. Spiller

Performance in future to commence at half past 6.

Mr. KEAN will make his 3d appearance in America on Saturday, in the character of SHYLOCK.

Fig. 4. Othello advertisement from the New York American. Maywood's first performance with Kean in New York.

> removed at a distance, having all the softness and effect that skill and grace can impart.[34]

Although the Advocate did not agree with other newspapers about Kean's overall defects, there was agreement about Kean forcing vocally. That Kean did not have a melifluous voice was frequently stated by many English critics. Could this apparent defect be attributed, as the Advocate expressed, to Kean's playing in larger theatres? Perhaps. William Hazlitt, who had viewed Kean's first performance at Drury Lane on 26 January 1814, thought so. After watching Kean enact "Sir Giles Over-reach," he said:

> We saw Mr. Kean's Sir Giles Over-reach on Friday night from the boxes, and are not surprised at the incredulity as to this great actor's powers entertained by those persons who have only seen him from that elevated sphere. We do not hesitate to say, that those who have only seen him at a distance have not seen him at all. The expression of his face is quite lost; and only the harsh and grating tones of his voice produce their full effect on the ear. The same recurring sounds, by dint of repetition, fasten on the attention, while the varieties and finer modulations are lost in their passage over the pit. All you discover is an abstraction of hs defects, both of person, voice, and manner. He appears to be a little man in a great passion. The accompaniment of expression is absolutely necessary to explain his tones and gestures: and the outline which he gives of the character, in proportion as it is, bold and decided, requires to be filled up and modified by all the details of execution. Without seeing the workings of his face, through which you read the movements of his soul, and anticipate their violent effects on his utterance and action, it is impossible to understand or feel pleasure in the part.[35]

John Adolphus recorded John Bannister's comments lamenting the enormous size of the English theatres and the effect on the action:

> Modern enterprise, mistaken for improvement, has led to a supposition, that the old theatre, was too small. They who in a dramatic exhibition wish to view the natural portraiture of man in his social state, will regret that in the great theatres they are now ever doomed to see actors upon stilts, stalking unnatural distances, and delivering ordinary comic dialogue in tones adapted to the harangue of a general addressing his army. It is monstrous to see a breakfast-table at an inn or a private dwelling, in a room that looks like the vestibule of a temple; to see a cottage with the furniture and utensils so placed, that high ladders would be required to reach them; and to observe the long-delayed exits of the performers, and the distance that must be passed before a gentleman can shake his friend by the hand or salute his mistress.
>
> In Pantomime, on a stage of moderate size, at the whistle of a prompter, the whole scene changes, as if by magic: but, on a larger, the operation is slow and obstructed, like the putting about of a large vessel heavily laden. The impressive alternations of countenance, the minute by-play, and above all, the exquisite power of the eye, are now utterly lost; nothing remains but energetic declamation, boisterous mirth, and forced dumb show.[36]

It may be asked, why did Kean push vocally on the smaller stage of the Anthony Street theatre? Simply, he was accustomed to doing so on the larger Drury Lane stage. It is surprising, however, that the smaller stage did not ameliorate this tendency. It may be assumed, then, that Kean's voice, notwithstanding occasional strain, was not captivating.

The American, on 4 December 1820 printed a verbose review of Kean's Othello. As before, our quibbling Critic in the Pit submitted the review to the American. After making several observations about Kean's "pointed transitions" and their "misapplication," he concluded the review by saying that "it was a lame performance, and

though here and there we would witness specimens of fine acting, we decidedly think we have seen that part of Othello at least as ably, if not better, executed."[37]

A letter was subjoined to the American review that discussed Coleman's [the editor of the Evening Post] reception of Kean. It lucidly discloses the emnity that existed between the Evening Post and other journals. Ostensibly, in this instance, the American is the perpetrator. This sort of journalism continued to place Kean in an unenviable position in the middle of a newspaper war. The letter was written by Diogenes:

> During my short abscence from the city, I find Coleman has once more enrolled himself among the theatrical dilettanti; with a proper apology to his sober readers for the temporary interruption of "his grave and regular pursuits." How they will relish his insinuation that the din of a pestle and mortar is more grateful to their ears than the song of the muses, is not for me to say; but I think the apology would have come with better grace from a medical than a musical votary of Apollo--for such Billy [William Coleman] is pronounced to be by the very best judges.
>
> It is not my intention to dispute but rather to vindicate, Billy's right to the laurel, in opposition to the cavils of the few who say that he has a peculiar talent for the absurd, that he is sure always to mar his own designs, and that as he succeeded in rendering Phillips [one of many English actors brought over by Stephen Price in 1818] ridiculous, so will be reduce Mr. Kean to the same plight, unless his officious goose quill be speedily cut short in its critiques.
>
> Of this, however, I find no proof in what he has already written, but on the contrary, think he has done credit to both himself and the country, and infinite service to the great actor, by the notice of his first appearance among us. I am sure this is the general opinion also, for I have within a day or two had my local price gratified by perceiving that Billy gives the tone to public taste in Philadelphia and Boston, where his remarks are republished with universal applause, but one editor [Robert Walsh]

differing from him in the very unimportant point of whether the emphasis should be placed upon a horse or a day.

A short examination of the aim and tendency of his remarks will be their best vindication from impertinent sneers and malevolent abuse. Billy's object was to compliment Mr. Kean in the highest manner, and to convince the public that he is the best actor extant, and it strikes me that no more summary and effectual mode of accomplishing this double purpose could have been devised by the invention of any other man. "Mr. Kean (he says) returned a very warm reception in the most grateful and graceful manner;" that is, is made a very good and low bow. Now what is more likely to conciliate public favor, or please the individual, than his ingenious tribute to the mental and physical excellencies that are united in him, and which were so happily blended in one grateful bow?" Having thus put the public in good humour with Mr. Kean, and Mr. Kean on the best terms with himself, Billy proceeds systematically in the same unanswerable manner, to prove that the powers of the actor are as extraordinary as the grace and good feeling of the gentleman.

After quoting the entire 29 November 1820 Evening Post Richard III review, Diogenes continued:

Here is one of those sudden and miraculous conversions that give the most exalted idea of the power by which they are produced. Billy goes to the play full of prejudices--five words, and five minutes, drive them away like one of Shakespeare's Ghosts at cock crowing, and the morning light dawns on him in the shape of the "most complete actor that ever appeared on our boards." A common critic would attempt some solution of this phenomenon: he would account, on some plausible grounds, for his conviction, on the trust of one soliloquy, that the "figure wanting size," the "voice deficient in distinctness," and the judgment "that could err" in manifesting anger and disappointment, might not rise up in judgment against him before the play was finished. But not so Billy. He knew the power of the marvellous, and scorned to weaken the spell by entering into particulars; and, if we may judge by effect, he was in the right. His oracles have been received with as much faith as ever was yielded to the inspirations of the Pythian Goddess; and I am inclined to believe, from much the same cause, their not being understood. This is a strong proof, however, of the devotion of the public, and the infallibility of the

> critic, whom I now leave (as I humbly trust) fortified against the attacks of detraction and envy.
>
> I am sensible that my elucidations come lagging too far behind their subject matter, and that the principal claim they have to attend arises from the importance of the question, and the high standing of the great author in whose vindication they are offered.[38]

The New York Gazette on 5 December 1820 evaluated Kean's performance in Othello. Like the American's observations, there were more "crudities" than "beauties" in the performance. For the remainder of the season, the Gazette did not publish any reviews about Kean:

> Mr. Kean's style, to which so many have objected, is not new to us, though his peculiar execution is. We have of late, ("though not by copies of Mr. Kean") had tragedy divested of its pomp and reduced to the standard of life, and cloathed in nature's garb. The numbers of the poet have without losing their consequence, been rendered subservient to the natural exhibition of the passions and the events and circumstances of life. Those who object to such a style would perhaps be best pleased with having the language of tragedy either sung or chanted by men and women of the grunt breed--we for our poor part are contented to behold the "mirror" held "up to nature."
>
> Mr. Kean, in the earlier scenes of Othello, was very slow and prosing, even to syllabical measurement; as the play proceeded however, he became warmer and more forcible, and gave parts with great effect. "Let him come when he will" and "not a jot, not a jot" and "not much moved" were most naturally and finely given; the soliloquy too after Iago leaves him, "this fellow of exceeding honesty," &c. was most powerfully delivered, but it appeared to us, that before the poison was properly instilled, Mr. Kean gave its full effect. The pressure of his head, as if the brain was bursting would have been very fine, had he reserved it until he had received something like proof: for instance, after "Iago's" description of sleeping with "Cassio;" there it might have been happily introduced. The latter part of the third act was altogether too boisterous and extravagant, and so covered with the false and unnatural cadences we have noticed before, that it was absolutely painful to witness. In the fourth act, where he receives the mandate of the Duke to return to Venice, he was

> excellent; but we cannot say as much for the following scene where he upbraids "Desdemona" with being a wanton, &c. though there were some good points displayed. His fifth act had some beauties and many faults. We particularly objected to a sound, half laugh-half cry, which was extremely out of tune, and seemed to us more like the whine of an illnatured child, than the heart-broken ejaculations of the "wronged Othello." The long pause which preceded his asking "Cassio" how he came by that handkerchief, &c. was too strained; . . . to pause, . . . and utter a tone of surprise, was too apparently a stage trick. Novelty will sometimes prove a jack-a-lantern; and leave the hunter in a quagmire. Strict keeping ought to be attended to, and sudden glancing lights avoided. The opening of the last speech seemed to hang too much upon the tongue; and after the wound was inflicted, Mr. Kean stood too long ere he fell. During the whole of the performance, there were many beauties and an abundance of crudities. In truth, from what we have yet seen, his execution wants chastening.
>
> Mr. Maywood's Iago was bold and forcible, and had all the genuine coloring of nature about it. . . . There was no pantomimic gesticulation--no studied cadence, to make way for a point; but all was clear, smooth, and chaste.
>
> Mrs. Barnes performed Desdemona most sweetly. It was, indeed, the gentle being described by the poet.[39]

The Gazette claims that "many" objected to Kean's style. Apparently, the Gazette arrived at this evaluation, largely, from letters submitted to the paper. The Evening Post's coverage of Othello challenges the feeling expressed by the Gazette; and more probably represents the majority "sentiment of playgoers:"[40]

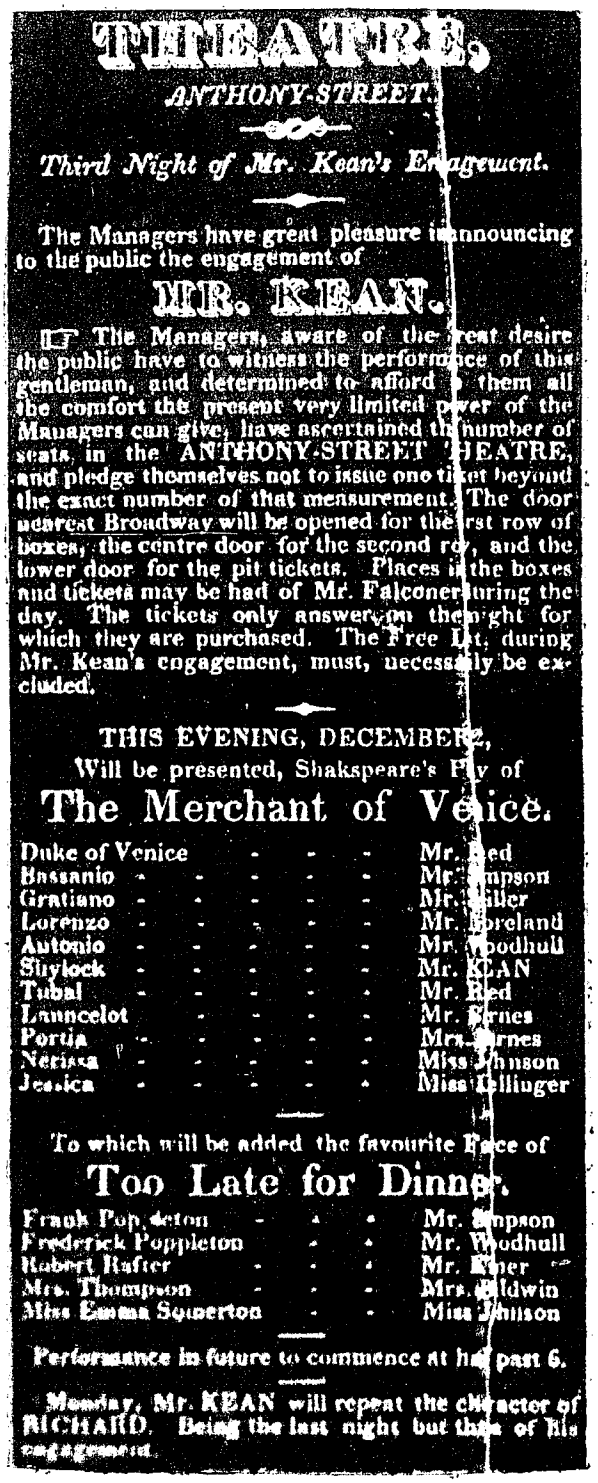
> Last evening Mr. Kean personified Othello to as numerous an audience as on his first night. We have only time to remark that although his voice failed to bear him through that ardous part; and several of his exertions, evidently, came short of the effect aimed at, yet the opinion we formed and expressed of him on his first appearance, that we never before looked upon his like, remains unchanged.[41]

Edmund Simpson, in a letter dated 7 December 1820, wrote to T. Philipps, "then in Dublin," about Kean's success. The contents of the letter show that Kean was gradually gaining playgoers support. Furthermore, it tells us, by inference, that Simpson anticipated a different Kean: the Kean that was continually embroiled in indecorous affairs. Simpson states that

> Kean is with us & playing to great business: he averages about $1000 a Night--the people don't know exactly what to make of him--his strange manner surprises them but his style gains converts every night & before he leaves us, I expect they will be unanimous in calling him as they express it the greatest creature they ever saw. We find him extremely agreeable in the Theatre & are agreeably disappointed in finding him in manner and conduct exactly the reverse of what we expected.[42]

For the third night of his engagement (Dec. 2), Kean played Shylock in Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice. Kean had made his first appearance on the Drury Lane stage as Shylock on 26 January 1814. During the performance, Kean had departed from tradition by donning a black wig in place of the usual red wig. Although none of the New York reviews mention this, it may be assumed that Kean retained the novelty. The National Advocate, on 4 December 1820, printed its usual favorable report of Kean:

> This is the third character sustained by Mr. Kean: and he is a different man in each of them. He enters so fully and effectively into each character, that he can scarcely be recognised; the tones, gestures, carriage, all differ, exhibiting an extraordinary versatility of powers.--Shylock has never been a great favourite--there are but two scenes of interest, namely, the one with Tubal, and the court scene. In the first, the transition of feelings was



THEATRE,

ANTHONY-STREET.

Third Night of Mr. Kean's Engagement.

The Managers have great pleasure in announcing to the public the engagement of

MR. KEAN.

☞ The Managers, aware of the great desire the public have to witness the performance of this gentleman, and determined to afford them all the comfort the present very limited power of the Managers can give, have ascertained the number of seats in the ANTHONY-STREET THEATRE, and pledge themselves not to issue one ticket beyond the exact number of that measurement. The door nearest Broadway will be opened for the first row of boxes, the centre door for the second row, and the lower door for the pit tickets. Places in the boxes and tickets may be had of Mr. Falconer during the day. The tickets only answer on the night for which they are purchased. The Free List, during Mr. Kean's engagement, must, necessarily be excluded.

THIS EVENING, DECEMBER 2,

Will be presented, Shakspeare's Play of

The Merchant of Venice.

Duke of Venice	Mr. Red
Bassanio	Mr. Simpson
Gratiano	Mr. Miller
Lorenzo	Mr. Moreland
Antonio	Mr. Woodhull
Shylock	Mr. KEAN
Tubal	Mr. Red
Launcelot	Mr. Barnes
Portia	Mrs. Barnes
Nerissa	Miss Johnson
Jessica	Miss Dellinger

To which will be added the favourite Farce of

Too Late for Dinner.

Frank Poppleton	Mr. Simpson
Frederick Poppleton	Mr. Woodhull
Robert Rafter	Mr. Exer
Mrs. Thompson	Mrs. Baldwin
Miss Emma Somerton	Miss Johnson

Performance in future to commence at half past 6.

Monday, Mr. KEAN will repeat the character of RICHARD. Being the last night but three of his engagement.

Fig. 5. The Merchant of Venice advertisement from the New York American.

> rapid and wonderful, and the whole business of the court scene was a finished piece of acting.[43]

In the above review, we are told that Kean was able to enter so completely into a role that his personality was virtually unrecognizable. Dr. John W. Francis, who befriended Kean during his engagements, confirms this feeling by saying that Kean

> won my admiration from the moment of my first interview with him. Association and observation convinced me that he added to a mind of various culture the resources of original intellect . . . the drudgery of his early life had given a pliability to his muscular powers that rendered him the most dexterious harlequin, the most finished gentleman, the most insidious lover, the most terrific tragedian. Shakespeare was familiar to him: times, costumes, habits, and other manners of the age. He had dipped into phrenology, and was a physiognomist of rare discernment. His analysis of characters . . . often struck me with astonishment. His eye was the brightest and most penetrating any mortal could boast, an intellectual telegraph . . . I attribute his unrivalled success in so wide a range of characters somewhat to his extraordinary capacity for observation. He individualized every character he assumed. Wherever he was, he was all eye, all ear. Everything around him or wherever he moved fell within his cognizante. . . . He might have been called the peripatetic philosopher.[44]

On December 8, the American printed another lengthy article, this time about Kean's Shylock. The American's criticism of the Merchant of Venice was its final review of a Kean performance for the duration of his first season. It was not until 1825, during Kean's second trip to America, that the paper would resume reporting about his performances. The correspondent, who wrote the following article, contrary to other opinion, claims that Kean's acting style was not natural: this denouncement

apparently places Kean alongside the declaimers from the Kemble school of acting:

> I threw together, without any intention at the time, to publish them, some crude observations upon Mr. Kean's Shylock, to which, if you think them worthy the ink and paper, you will afford a nook in your journal.
>
> I was fully prepared to witness in Mr. Kean a style of acting different from anything we had ever seen in this country; but from what I had read of this performer, I was induced to suppose that this difference consisted in a closer adherence to nature, and a more complete divestiture of that bombast and fustian so common with most of the tragic actors I had seen. I was, however, astonished to find that the very reverse was the fact, and that the study of this gentleman appeared to have been more directed to what is termed making points and effect, than to either nature or his author. I do not mean to say by this that Mr. Kean is not natural at times or that effect should be neglected by an actor: but it appears to me he should not depend more upon trick for applause than upon a natural delineation throughout of the character or passion he is representing.
>
> I shall say nothing of Mr. Kean's voice or figure, but shall confine myself to the reading of some prominent passages, in which I think he displayed a want of conception of the meaning of his author. Verbal criticisms generally are contemptible; but where whey tend to illustrate the text: or indicate the "progress of the passions" I think they are important.
>
> When Shylock is "possessed" of the amount and time required by Bassanio, he answers with the indifference of the usurer, "well":--but when he is told "Antonio shall become bound," I think he should express, both by his countenance and manner of repeating the line, delight at the prospect of getting his worst enemy in his power. Instead of this, Mr. Kean gave this passage without emotion of any description, but immediately after throws out what the actors call a clap-trap, by his quaint and significant manner of rendering "I will be assur'd I may: that I may be assured I will bethink me."
>
> Instead of saying doubtedly, "Antonio is a good man," he gives it as if he really meant that "he was sufficient."
>
> The first part of the soliloquy that follows was given with fine effect, but the panting, palpitating manner of his saying "If I can catch him once upon the hip," was a specimen of the ludicrous only worthy the

imitation of Barnes.

Did Mr. Kean suppose his audience so dull or stupid that it was necessary for him, in order to make them comprehend the passage

> "This Jacob from our holy Abraham was
> (As his wise mother wrought in his behalf:)
> The third possessor; ay, he was the third."

to repeat aloud a question which the author meant should be asked internally, as it is not in the text "the third possessor?"

His affected surprise (in the first act) at the presence of Antonio, the bitter sarcasm in his manner of enumerating the "shames that he had stained him with," and the hypocritical humility of his "bated breath and whispering humbleness," were worthy the genius of Cook[sic].

Mr. Coleman has said that the "keeping" through Richard was admirable; not if I understand what is meant by keeping, Mr. Kean has less of it than any actor I ever saw--to prove which, I need only mention the unequal manner in which he played the scene with Tubal, which was a perfect mixture of touching pathos and disgusting rant. This is an extremely difficult scene: to express the conflicting passions that agitate the Jew, the rapid transition from grief, approaching to madness, for the loss of his "well upon thrift," to the malignant joy in the contemplation of the gratification of his revenge, required uncommon powers in the actor. Here I expected Mr. Kean would shine. I saw he had been successful in "forcing his soul to the conceit," but "in the very torrent, tempest, and whirlwind of his passion," he forgets "that he must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness."

The trial scene was very much in the manner of the last, unequal throughout: alternately exciting admiration and contempt.

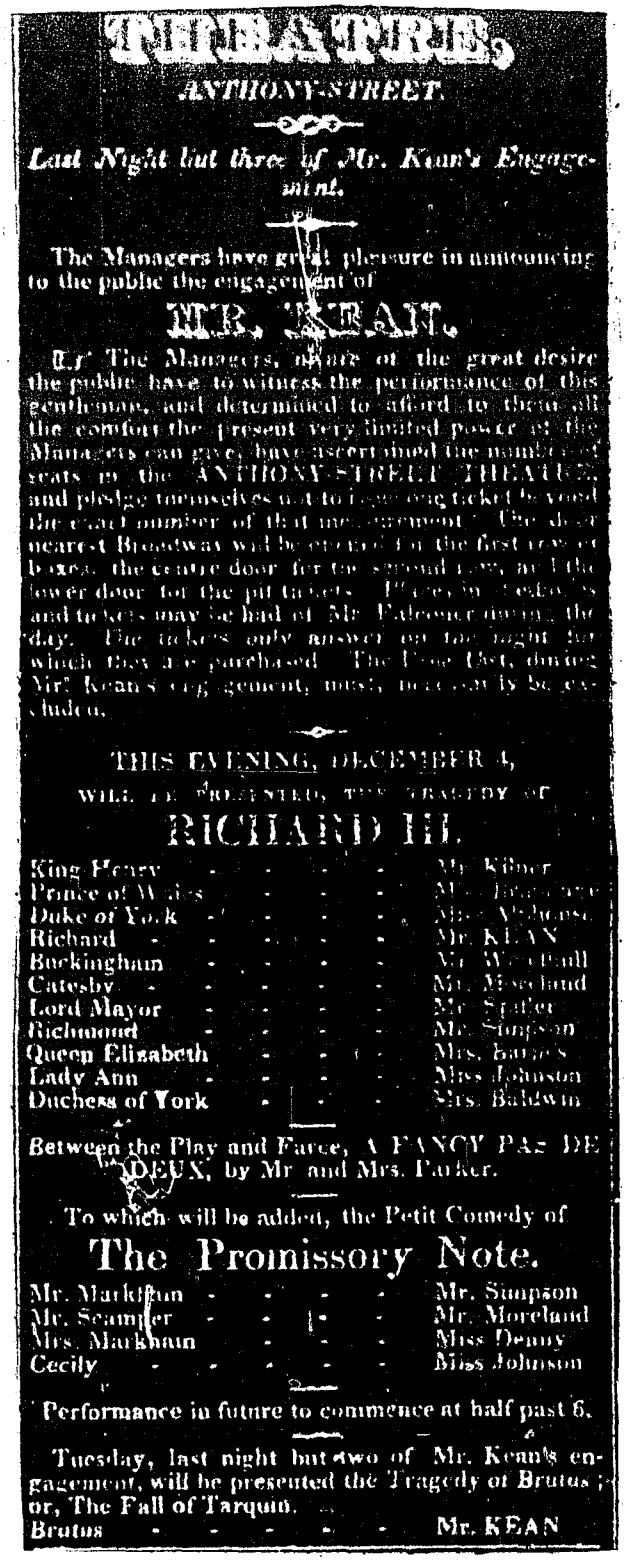
I shall close this article by remarking that, for the credit of the New-York audience, I trust that they will not suffe the echoes of his trans-atlantic fame to drown the voice of reason, or the eulogiums of an enthusiast to bias their judgments, but withold from Mr. Kean the full need of their applause until he shall have learned that muscular action is not feeling; rant, passion: nor grimace, expression.[45]

"In a postscript"[46] to Crito's criticism of Kean's enactment of Richard III, the Evening Post on 4 December 1820 ardently wrote:

> We have merely room to add, that on Saturday evening, a crowded house witnessed Mr. Kean's Shylock, and, though we do not mean to pronounce it perfect, yet a more effective and faultless performance we never saw. The audience, as is usual with them, (and highly creditable it is to their judgment) evinced their approbation by a profound and expressive silence during the play, that would hardly admit of an interruption of plaudits: and when it was almost impossible to restrain loud bursts of delight, a kind of general hush! was whispered from every part. What a flattering tribute to the great actor?[47]

Kean performed Richard III for a second time on December fourth. Although this performance was considered superior to the first one, most of the newspapers refrained from making further comments. As a matter of fact, for the remainder of Kean's first engagement and reengagement in December, the National Advocate and the Evening Post were the only journals reviewing his performances. This situation endured throughout Kean's second engagement--beginning in March 1821. The program for this performance differed from the first one by including a different afterpiece. A comedy, the Promissory Note replaced the musical farce, The Poor Soldier. The cast for Richard III remained the same, with Kean playing the title role, Simpson as Richard, Kilner as King Henry, and Mrs. Barnes as Queen Elizabeth. On 6 December 1820 the National Advocate affirmed both its and playgoers' support of Kean by remarking that

> Mr. Kean's second and best performance of Richard, attracted again an overflowing audience. Public opinion, which was somewhat unsettled as to his merits in consequence of the new style introduced, is perfectly reconciled to the simple, natural, unostentatious display of his genius. His strong



THEATRE,
ANTHONY-STREET.

Last Night but three of Mr. Kean's Engagement.

The Managers have great pleasure in announcing to the public the engagement of

MR. KEAN.

☞ The Managers, aware of the great desire the public have to witness the performance of this gentleman, and determined to afford to them all the comfort the present very limited power of the Managers can give, have ascertained the number of seats in the ANTHONY-STREET THEATRE, and pledge themselves not to issue one ticket beyond the exact number of that measurement. The door nearest Broadway will be opened for the first tier of boxes, the centre door for the second tier, and the lower door for the pit tickets. Places in Settees and tickets may be had of Mr Falconer during the day. The tickets only answer on the night for which they are purchased. The Free List, during Mr. Kean's engagement, must, necessarily be excluded.

THIS EVENING, DECEMBER 4,

WILL BE PRESENTED, THE TRAGEDY OF

RICHARD III.

King Henry	Mr. Kilner
Prince of Wales	Miss [illegible]
Duke of York	Miss [illegible]
Richard	Mr. KEAN
Buckingham	Mr. [illegible] Hall
Catesby	Mr. Moreland
Lord Mayor	Mr. Stuller
Richmond	Mr. Simpson
Queen Elizabeth	Mrs. [illegible]
Lady Ann	Miss Johnston
Duchess of York	Mrs. Baldwin

Between the Play and Farce, A FANCY PAS DE DEUX, by Mr and Mrs. Parker.

To which will be added, the Petit Comedy of

The Promissory Note.

Mr. Markham	Mr. Simpson
Mr. Scamper	Mr. Moreland
Mrs. Markham	Miss Denny
Cecily	Miss Johnson

Performance in future to commence at half past 6.

Tuesday, last night but two of Mr. Kean's engagement, will be presented the Tragedy of Brutus; or, The Fall of Tarquin.

Brutus - - - - - Mr. KEAN

Fig. 6. Richard III advertisement from the New York American. Second performance of Richard III.

points, the second night were given with greater force, and the applause was more general and merited.[48]

The Evening Post's response to Kean's performance ebulliently stated:

> Last evening [December 4], though the weather was wet and unpleasant, the Theatre was crammed to every corner, to witness a repetition of Kean's Richard; and we are warranted by the tokens of approbation that could not be mistaken, in saying, that never was more complete satisfaction afforded an audience. After hearing repeatedly his voice, & having observed its effects upon the hearers, we are of the opinion, that, so far from its being a defect, in this actors accomlishments, as has many been supposed, its low sepulchral tones aid him materially in giving utterancce to grand conceptions, and the descriptions of horror.--it strikes with electric force upon the nerves, and at times chills the very blood. The tent scene, in all its stages, was a prodigious effort and told throughout the house. The awful manner in which the fiend yielded up his life: the long and repeated struggle; the wild and fixed gaze of horror upon Richmond as he writhed in the agonies of death was too near a resemblance to the reality, ever to be forgotten by those who saw and shuddered at last nights representation.
>
> We close by saying, in the language of the English Monthly Magazine, "Acting can go no further."[49]

On 5 December 1820 Brutus: or, the Fall of Tarquin, by John Howard Payne, was presented. Kean played the title role. With the advent of this performance, Kean's fifth, it had become increasingly apparent that Kean's popularity with the public was on the rise. The following review, by the National Advocate on 8 December 1820, confirms this fact:

> The best criticism that can be pronounced upon Kean's performance is the crowded audiences which he nightly attracts. For the first time in many years, people are compelled to return home with their money in their pockets, not being able to procure seats at the theatre.

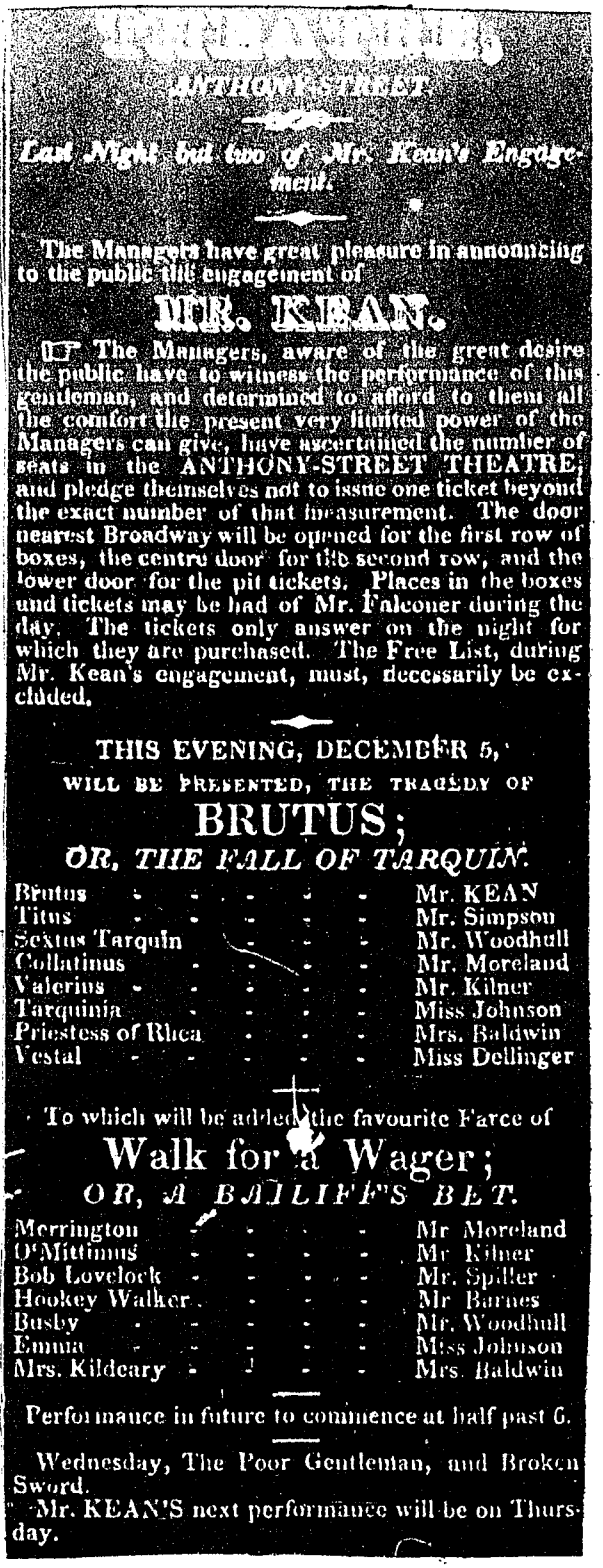
About the performance, the Advocate continues by saying,

> His Brutus on Tuesday evening evinced the same capability, the same genius, the same emphatic and diversified talent, discernible in his other parts. He gave a different colouring to the fool, making some dignity and much "method in his madness." In the forums scene, after a burst of passion, and the usual harshness of articulation which accompany the elevation of voice, his tones fell to a soft, silver melting cadence, in pronouncing the eulogy over the dead body of Lucretia, which gave a wonderful effect to that beautiful passage. In the last and trying scenes, the sterness of the Roman was admirably preserved: and after the execution of his son, the overpowered feelings of the father threw a native lustre over the whole performance. The audience sometimes so wholly engrossed and interested, as to forget the necessary applause.[50]

The Evening Post was not as thoroughly pleased with Kean's performance as was the National Advocate. On 7 December 1820 the paper avowed:

> Having heard that Mr. Kean's personation of Brutus had been pronounced by Mr. Payne the ablest of his performances at Drury Lane, we attended the theatre on Tuesday evening with high raised expectations: nor, were those expectations disappointed during the four first acts: indeed it was not until near the close of the fifth our confidence began to faulter. The meeting between him and his son, after the latter had been taken prisoner, and his guilt made apparent, was most effective: the looks, the gesture, the rhetorical pauses were all appropriate and in admirable keeping. It was not until near the closing of the scene, when he left the judgment seat, that our taste and we venture to say that of the whole audience, revolted, both against his conception and excution. All that passed from that moment was unworthy of Mr. Kean. The truth is that the stern fortitude that should have characterised the Roman was lost in a grief for the situation of his son, which overwhelmed and unmanned him.[51]

As with Kean's second performance in Richard III, Brutus was not reviewed by other papers. The National



ANTHONY STREET.

Last Night but two of Mr. Kean's Engagement.

The Managers have great pleasure in announcing to the public the engagement of

MR. KEAN.

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THIS EVENING, DECEMBER 5,

WILL BE PRESENTED, THE TRAGEDY OF

BRUTUS;

OR, THE FALL OF TARQUIN.

Brutus	Mr. KEAN
Titus	Mr. Simpson
Sextus Tarquin	Mr. Woodhull
Collatinus	Mr. Moreland
Valerius	Mr. Kilner
Tarquinia	Miss Johnson
Priestess of Rhea	Mrs. Baldwin
Vestal	Miss Dellinger

To which will be added the favourite Farce of

Walk for a Wager;

OR, A BAILIFF'S BET.

Merrington	Mr Moreland
O'Mittimus	Mr Kilner
Bob Lovelock	Mr. Spiller
Hookey Walker	Mr Barnes
Busby	Mr. Woodhull
Emma	Miss Johnson
Mrs. Kildeary	Mrs. Baldwin

Performance in future to commence at half past 6.

Wednesday, The Poor Gentleman, and Broken Sword.

Mr. KEAN'S next performance will be on Thursday.

Fig. 7. Brutus advertisement from the New York American.

Advocate and Evening Post were the sole providers of criticism for the rest of the season.

The Evening Post of 6 December 1820 introduced to its readers, for the first time, an article written by A Philadelphian. The following correspondence discusses Kean's Richard, Othello, and Brutus. According to A Philadelphian his opinions are "unbiased;" he hopes "to make known the satisfaction which he has experienced." The letter is addressed to the editor (Coleman) of the Post:

> If a stranger might presume to trespass on your attention for a little while, a Philadelphian would beg leave to offer a few brief remarks on the performances of the celebrated actor, who, at this time, engrosses so much of the public attention: and whose vivid and extraordinary conceptions of character, as delineated by the immortal Shakespeare, have done so much to distract our judgments, in relation to the "beau ideal" of fine acting, and the perfection of dramatic representation.
>
> This article is not intended as a critical exposition of the style, manner, and comparative merits of Mr. Kean: it is merely wished to express the enbiased sentiments of an individual who has neither local partialities to cherish or defend: nor undue predilections for contemporary excellence to influence or pervert his judgment: but who is desirous to make known the satisfaction which he has experienced, and to invite the attention of others to the same source of unmixed delight, and to a participation in the same pure and rational enjoyments.
>
> With a person under the middle statute, and a voice of no great compass, Mr. Kean clearly possesses powers of no ordinary excellence. In general conception of character: in fidelity to nature: in that command of feature which best exhibits the workings of the passions upon the countenace; and in those inflections of voice expressive of various and conflicting feelings, especially where the pathetic and the terrible comigle; we may presume that he stands without a rival.
>
> Of his "Richard," as a whole, much might be said in praise: his conception of the character is

perfect: and of particular scenes and passages, no language can well be considered to encomiastic. The scene with Lady Ann was admirably conducted; and, in my opinion, far excelled that by the late distinguished Mr. Cooke. The interview with the Lord Mayor, wherein that prominent feature, hypocrisy, is strikingly illustrated, was conceived and sustained in the most able manner. Of the "tent scene," little need now be said, as it is universally allowed to be a prodigy of excellence. In short, throughout the whole performance, so many fine and accurate conceptions were embodied, with the full force and effect of commanding action and elocution, as to lead our senses and judgment captive in the train of genius.

Of "Othello," I would merely observe that besides numerous passages of uncommon effect, the whole of the 3d act was so new in manner, so striking in its outlines, so vivid, and so deep wrought and agonising as to make the most obdurate and insensitive exclaim, "we have never seen the like of this before."

Mr. Kean's Brutus was grand and impressive. The blended affections of the father, and the love of country; the struggle between nature and the sense of duty, were admirably portrayed. The last act exhibited many of the most striking and exquisite touches of pathos which we have ever had the happiness to admire. In scenes requiring the idea of majesty, commanding presence, and personal prowess, Mr. Kean, of course, fell short, far short, of our old and justly-esteemed favorite, Mr. Cooper; and in that scene particular, where Brutus advances, with martial music, in the Roman military garb, as the leader of the patriotic band which had sworn to prostrate tyrrany and to revenge their country's wrongs, however much we might admire his classical costume, we were constrained to think of the more impressive dignity and commanding presence of Cooper.

There appear to be certain points in each performance into which the undivided energies of this great actor are merged and concentrated, in order to produce irresistible effect; in these efforts he is generally successful; but in my opinion he is entitled to much less praise for these mighty exhibitions, than for those numberless touches of pathos and transient shades of passion, with which all his performances are imbued throughout in an extraordinary degree.

Besides the inadequacy of Mr. Kean's voice to carry him through the more fierce and animated incidents of the drama, he has a peculiar laugh, a kind of hysterical, convulsive laugh, which sometimes produces a murderous effect--That this laugh is accordant to nature, is certain: but it assuredly ought to be sparingly introduced.

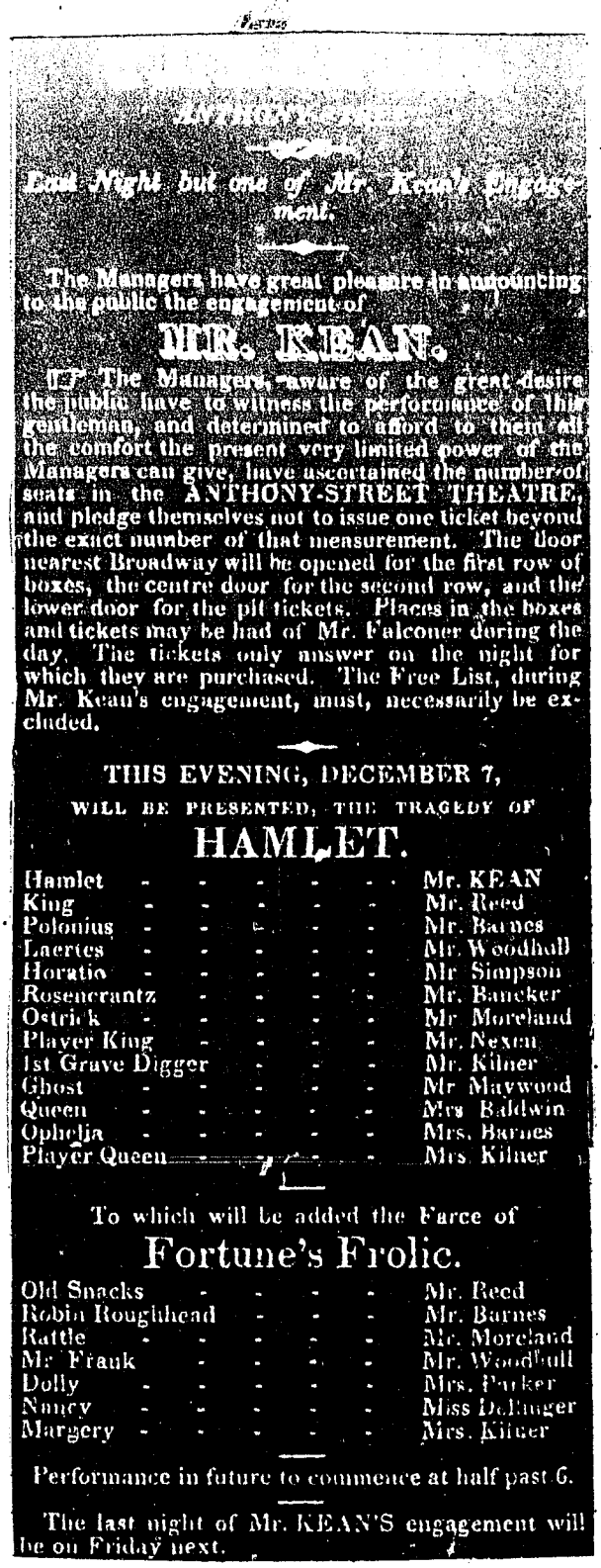
> In fine, Mr. Editor, little is hazarded in predicting, that the extraordinary merits of Mr. Kean will in a little while be conceded by all; excepting those persons who have conjured up in their own minds some ideal and unnatural standard of excellence, to which they continually refer, and to which more human efforts cannot possibly attain; those perspicacious critics who magesterially and cynically pronounce that there is "nothing," absolutely "nothing to admire" in Cooper's Virginius, and little or nothing in Kean's Richard: To gentlemen of distempered imagination, the Garricks, the Le Kains, the Talmas, the Ifflands, the Cookes, the Coopers, and the Keans, are as "nothing," "absolutely nothing."[52]

Perhaps owing to a less than favorable reception in England, the Evening Post was the only paper that offered any comment about Hamlet played on 7 December 1820. On 8 December 1820, the Post devoted a short paragraph to some passing remarks about Kean's performance in Hamlet:

> Although we have not room to write more than a word concerning Mr. Kean's Hamlet last evening, yet we will avail ourselves of a corner to say, that never did we see that most difficult of all Shakespeare's characters so justly conceived or so finely executed. The house, as usual, was filled: but a greater number of fashionable females enlivened and adorned the boxes than on any previous evening. The curtain fell amidst loud plaudits.--Cheers of bravo! were heard from all parts of the house.[53]

Hamlet marks the second appearance of John Maywood (Ghost) opposite Kean in New York. Since Maywood was regarded as one of Kean's imitators, it is surprising, then, that no comparisons were made between the two actors.

On 8 December 1820 Kean personated one of his most successful roles, Sir Giles Overreach in Massinger's A New Way to Pay Old Debts. Kean's impassioned performance as Sir Giles Overreach on 25 May 1814 had made an indelible



Last Night but one of Mr. Kean's Engagement.

The Managers have great pleasure in announcing to the public the engagement of

MR. KEAN.

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THIS EVENING, DECEMBER 7,

WILL BE PRESENTED, THE TRAGEDY OF

HAMLET.

Hamlet	Mr. KEAN
King	Mr. Reed
Polonius	Mr. Barnes
Laertes	Mr. Woodhull
Horatio	Mr Simpson
Rosencrantz	Mr. Bancker
Ostrick	Mr Moreland
Player King	Mr. Nexsen
1st Grave Digger	Mr. Kilner
Ghost	Mr Maywood
Queen	Mrs Baldwin
Ophelia	Mrs. Barnes
Player Queen	Mrs. Kilner

To which will be added the Farce of

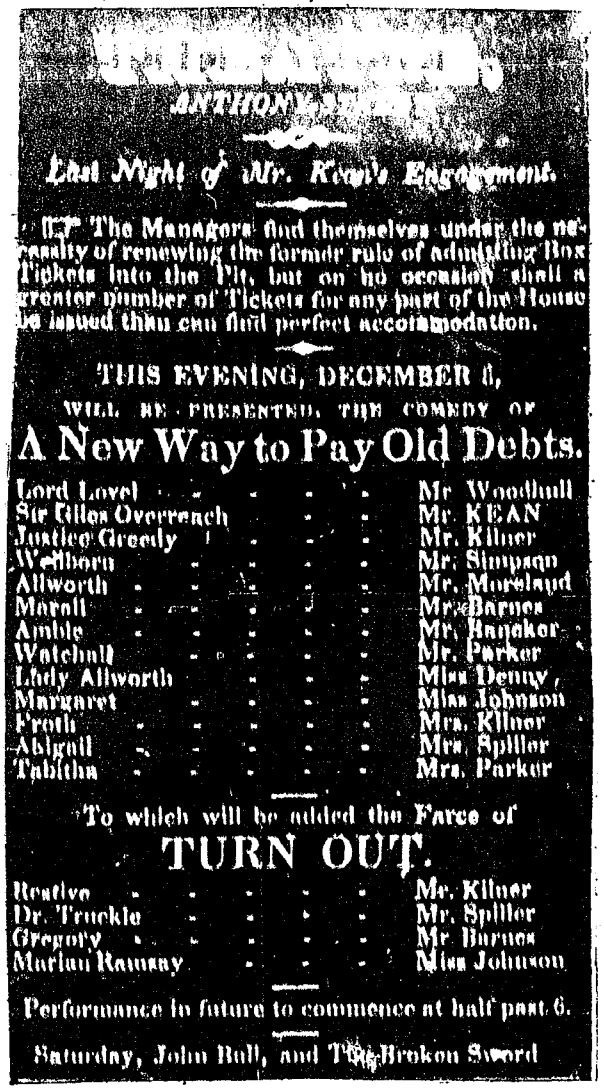
Fortune's Frolic.

Old Snacks	Mr. Reed
Robin Roughhead	Mr. Barnes
Rattle	Mr. Moreland
Mr Frank	Mr. Woodhull
Dolly	Mrs. Parker
Nancy	Miss DeInger
Margery	Mrs. Kilner

Performance in future to commence at half past 6.

The last night of Mr. KEAN'S engagement will be on Friday next.

Fig. 8. Hamlet advertisement from the New York American.



ANTHONY

Last Night of Mr. Kean's Engagement.

☞ The Managers find themselves under the necessity of renewing the former rule of admitting Box Tickets into the Pit, but on no occasion shall a greater number of Tickets for any part of the House be issued than can find perfect accommodation.

THIS EVENING, DECEMBER 6,

WILL BE PRESENTED, THE COMEDY OF

A New Way to Pay Old Debts.

Lord Lovel	Mr. Woodhull
Sir Giles Overreach	Mr. KEAN
Justice Greedy	Mr. Kilner
Wellborn	Mr. Simpson
Allworth	Mr. Moreland
Marall	Mr. Barnes
Amble	Mr. Barnes
Watchall	Mr. Parker
Lady Allworth	Miss Denny
Margaret	Miss Johnson
Froth	Mrs. Kilner
Abigail	Mrs. Spiller
Tabitha	Mrs. Parker

To which will be added the Farce of

TURN OUT.

Reative	Mr. Kilner
Dr. Truckle	Mr. Spiller
Gregory	Mr. Barnes
Marian Ramsay	Miss Johnson

Performance to future to commence at half past 6.

Saturday, John Bull, and The Broken Sword

Fig. 9. A New Way to Pay Old Debts advertisement from the New York American.

impression on Lord Byron. Thomas Moore, Byron's biographer, recalls:

> Such effect had the passionate energy of Kean's acting on his [Byron's] mind, that, once, in seeing him play Sir Giles Overreach, he was so affected as to be seized with a sort of convulsive fit; and we shall find him, some years after, in Italy, when the representation of Alfieri's tragedy of Mirra had agitated him in the same violent manner, comparing the two instances as the only ones in his life when "any thing under reality" had been able to move him so powerfully.[54]

The Evening Post's 11 December 1820 article about Kean's Overreach was submitted by Garrick. Interestingly, one of Philadelphia's theatre critics also used as a pseudonym the name of a British performer--Betterton. Except for a few minor criticisms, Garrick's comments are laudatory:

> Mr. Kean's performance of Sir Giles Overreach, on Friday night, was, in my opinion, the finest exhibition of his powers we have had in this country. The part is particularly adapted to his style of acting; his peculiarities are no blemishes here, he even turned his faults and deficiencies to account: for the absence of personal dignity, of clear and melodious tones and of smooth and measured declamation, is in truth not wanted in the personification of this odious character. Tho' the colouring which Mr. K gave the character throughout, seemed to me admirably true to nature, it was not until towards the conclusion of the play that opportunities offered themselves for making some of those points that are characteristic of this actor. Among the first was his manner of receiving his abandoned and ruined nephew when introduced by Lady Allworth.--Kean had seen him enter with a look of scornful astonishment, but when the lady tells him Wellborn must be received as her guest, he thinks his features are changing; he seems to retire as it were within himself for thought; a few moments decide him; a mask falls from his face; it assumes in a moment a look of the gentlest and sweetest cordiality, and approaching his nephew he takes his hand in both of his, and welcomes him to his house in the blandest tones of affection: afterwards, when his nephew answers him rudely, his tone and manner in pronouncing

> "have your redeem'd rags made you thus . . .," were wonderful--the admiration of the audience hitherto constantly hushed into silence, would not now be repressed--it burst in repeated "bravo," "bravo, Kean," from all parts of the house. The final exhibition of mingled fury, disappointment, and agony of conscience, goading him to madness, formed a grand and terrible picture. It was indeed most awful to listen to the hoarse war of his voice, and to look on the glaring eye, and convulsed features, and writhen [sic] lip of his insane victim of passion.[55]

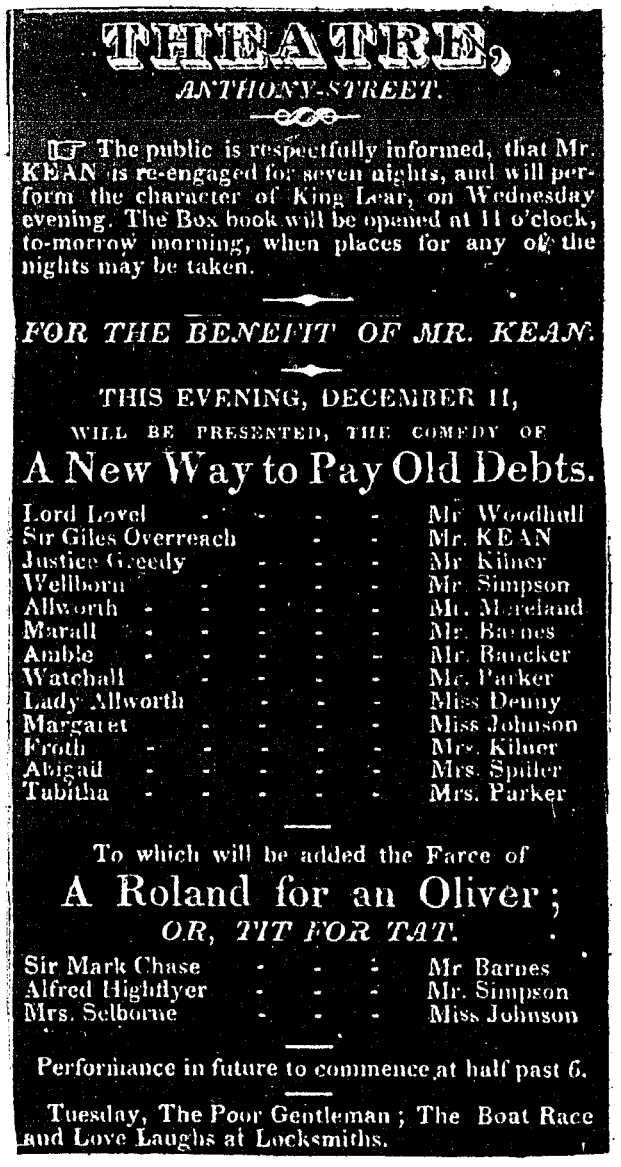
The National Advocate agreed with the Evening Post that Kean's enactment of Sir Giles Overreach was his finest performance to date:

> Mr. Kean's Sir Giles Overreach presented more strong points of excellence, in conception and execution, than any of his other characters. The fifth act was the no plus altra of acting.[56]

Although Kean repeated his personation of Sir Giles Overreach on 11 December 1820 for his benefit, there are no extant reviews of this performance. A trailer to "Garrick's" review of A New Way to Pay Old Debts stated that Mr. Kean is re-engaged for seven nights."[57] According to the terms of the original contract, stipulated in Kean's diary, the reengagement had been planned in advance.[58]

Kean opened his reengagement on 13 December 1820 in Nahum Tate's version of Shakespeare's King Lear.[59] The National Advocate published two reviews of Kean's performance. The first review on 14 December reveals that the Advocate feels that Kean's rendition is the best ever:

> We last evening saw Mr. Kean in Lear. His Richard, Othello, Hamlet, and Sir Giles Overreach, are fresh in our recollection, with all their varied beauties; but never did we witness, never did an



THEATRE,

ANTHONY-STREET.

☞ The public is respectfully informed, that Mr. KEAN is re-engaged for seven nights, and will perform the character of King Lear, on Wednesday evening. The Box book will be opened at 11 o'clock, to-morrow morning, when places for any of the nights may be taken.

FOR THE BENEFIT OF MR. KEAN.

THIS EVENING, DECEMBER 11,

WILL BE PRESENTED, THE COMEDY OF

A New Way to Pay Old Debts.

Lord Lovel	Mr Woodhull
Sir Giles Overreach	Mr. KEAN
Justice Greedy	Mr Kilner
Wellborn	Mr. Simpson
Allworth	Mr. Moreland
Marall	Mr. Barnes
Amble	Mr. Barcker
Watchall	Mr. Parker
Lady Allworth	Miss Denny
Margaret	Miss Johnson
Froth	Mrs. Kilner
Abigail	Mrs. Spiller
Tabitha	Mrs. Parker

To which will be added the Farce of

A Roland for an Oliver;

OR, TIT FOR TAT.

Sir Mark Chase	Mr Barnes
Alfred Highflyer	Mr. Simpson
Mrs. Selborne	Miss Johnson

Performance in future to commence at half past 6.

Tuesday, The Poor Gentleman; The Boat Race and Love Laughs at Locksmiths.

Fig. 10. A New Way to Pay Old Debts advertisement from the New York American. Benefit performance.

> American audience witness any thing equal to his Lear. Critics may doubt--men of taste may even hesitate--those attached to the old and still school of the drama may question certain parts of his performance; but for a perfect unparralleled whole, his Lear will bear away the palm, and the tears of the audience choking their plaudits, attested their sympathy and discrimination, while crowning the actor with the merited wreath of genius.[60]

The second review, on 16 December 1820, fervently reported that

> Mr. Kean's Lear is universally spoken of in the highest terms of approbation. We never saw an audience so moved by the power and genius of an actor. Lear is a very difficult character to perform. His passions, when contrasted with his age, and supposed feebleness, demand no ordinary efforts to exhibit. The mad scenes created great effect, and it is supposed by many that his Lear far surpasses either Richard or Othello.[61]

Perhaps the "mad scenes" attained some of their brilliance and impact from Kean's careful observation of mentally disturbed patients. Kean told Dr. John W. Francis, while appearing in New York for a second time in 1825, that he "often visited St. Luke's and Bethlehem hospitals in order to comprehend the manifestations of real insanity" before he "appeared in Lear."[62]

The Evening Post, of 15 December 1820, had nothing but the highest esteem for Kean's Lear; so much so, they compared some of his "points" to those of the then legendary David Garrick:

> King Lear has been considered, by several eminent English critics, among the first efforts of human genius, . . .
>
> On Wednesday evening last this play was exhibited in our theatre, (the principal part by Mr. Kean,) to a full and fashionable house, and certainly with an effect that we never before witnessed. Strong



THEATRE,

ANTHONY-STREET.

☞ The Managers have much pleasure in informing the public, that Mr. KEAN is re-engaged for seven nights, and that he will make his appearance this Evening, in the character of KING LEAR.

THIS EVENING, DECEMBER 13,

WILL BE PRESENTED, THE TRAGEDY OF

KING LEAR,

AND HIS THREE DAUGHTERS.

King Lear - - - -	Mr KEAN
Duke of Burgundy - - -	Mr. Barnes
Duke of Cornwall - - -	Mr. Anderson
Duke of Albany - - -	Mr Moreland
Earl of Kent - - - -	Mr Woodhull
Earl of Gloster - - - -	Mr. Kilner
Edgar, - - - - -	Mr. Maywood
Edmund - - - - -	Mr. Simpson
Pages - - - - -	Misses Brundege
Cordelia - - - - -	Mrs. Barnes
Regan - - - - -	Mrs Baldwin
Goneril - - - - -	Mrs. Kilner
Arauthe - - - - -	Mrs. Spiller

To which will be added the Farce of

Lock and Key.

Brummagem - - - -	Mr. Barnes
Capt. Cheerly - - - -	Mr. Moreland
Ralph - - - - -	Mr. Spiller

with the favourite song of 'What a woman is like.'

Laura - - - - -	Miss Dellinger
Fanny - - - - -	Miss Johnson

Performance in future to commence at half past 6.

Thursday, Wild Oats; The Irish Haymakers, and Fortune's Frolic.

The 2d night of Mr. Kean's engagement will be on Friday.

Fig. 11. King Lear advertisement from the New York American. King Lear begins the re-engagement.

> emotions even to tears, were excited in all parts of the house; nor were they confined to the female part of the audience. It could not be otherwise. Who could remain callous to the appearance of a feeble old monarch, . . . staggering under decrepitude and overwhelmed with misfortune, . . . who could behold such a sight unmoved? Such a representation was given with perfect fidelity by Mr. Kean. His plaintive tones were heard from the bottom of a broken heart, and completed the picture of human woe, Nature, writhing under the poignancy of feeling, and finding no utterance in words or tears found a vent at length for her indiscribable sensations, in a spontaneous hysteric, idiotic laugh. The impressions made upon all who were present, will never be forgotten. His dreadful imprecations upon his daughters, his solemn appeals to heaven, struck the soul with awe.--But no adequate conception can be conveyed, by words, of Mr. Kean's representation of this high-drawn and arduous character, to say any one who did not see it. When we lately united with an English critic, and said, upon seeing the second representation of Richard, that "acting could go no further," it was because we had not then witnessed his Lear.
>
> That it may be seen in what points he resembled Garrick in this character, we give the following extract from Murphy's Life of that great actor; between whom and Mr. Kean, those who, have seen both, recognise a great likeness.
>
> "It was in Lear's madness, that Garrick's genius was remarkably distinguished. He had no sudden starts, no violent gesticulation; his movements were slow and feeble; misery was depicted in his countenance; he moved his head in the most deliberate manner; his eyes were fixed, or if they were turned to any one near him, he made a pause and fixed his look on the person, after much delay; his features at the same time telling you what he was going to say before he uttered a word. During the whole time, he presented a sight of woe and misery, and a total alienation of mind from every idea but of his cruel daughters."
>
> I must not forget to mention, that Maywood [as Edgar], on this occasion, appeared to greater advantage than we have ever seen him: a little less of art, and a little more of nature, is much to be desired. Mrs. Barnes was a lovely and an interesting Cordelia.[63]

On 16 December 1820 the Evening Post presented another laudatory letter by A Philadelphian in which Kean's

Lear is regarded as nothing short of sublime. He addressed the letter to the editor of the Post:

> I beg leave to express my grateful acknowledgements for your polite and prompt attention to my last communication.
>
> The following remarks on the admirable dramatic representations which it is our happiness at this time to enjoy, are respectfully submitted--with this prefatory observation; that they are put together from motives similar to the last, unbiassed, and uninfluenced, by any other wish, than to present a feeble tribute of applause to the distinguished actor who has enabled us to realize such exquisite pleasure, "to invite the attention of others to the same source of unmixed delight, and to participation in the same pure and rational enjoyments." . . .
>
> It would give me pleasure to expatiate on all the admirable performances of Mr. Kean, since his engagement in New-York; but this is impractible; and I shall beg leave merely to take a cursory view of his "Lear," his last and most powerful representation; with some passing remarks on his general excellence.
>
> The tragedy of King Lear has been pronounced by distinguished critics as one of the best of all Shakespeare's plays . . . On the stage the greatest efforts of genius can scarcely hope to give due effect to a character so arduous and so exalted.
>
> We certainly were of this opinion until we had the happiness to admire the personation of "Lear," by Mr. Kean: which we cannot hesitate to pronounce one of the finest pieces of acting that was ever witnessed on any stage. His conception of the character of the credulous and impetuous, though good, old King; the abberations of his mind; his irregular starts of imagination; the feebleness of age; the dreadful and overpowering pathos of reasoning insanity; were so striking and effective as to produce but one united sentiment of enthusiastic approbation . . .
>
> The meeting between Lear and Cordelia was most affecting. In this scene the author has transfused the very essence of all the heartfelt truth of nature; and to this scene did Mr. Kean impart a reality and a pathos to which no language however encomiastic can do justice. . . .
>
> The whole of Mr. Kean's Lear was a performance of unrivalled excellence; and I know of nothing with which to compare it, even from him.
>
> I am obliged to conclude this article without entering on any examination of the peculiarities or manner of Mr. Kean, and to conclude in these terms: that never until now have we possessed an opportunity

> of enjoying such refined and exalted entertainment by dramatic representation: as never until now have we had an opportunity of witnessing the display of genius and talents so commanding and triumphant as these of Mr. Kean.[64]

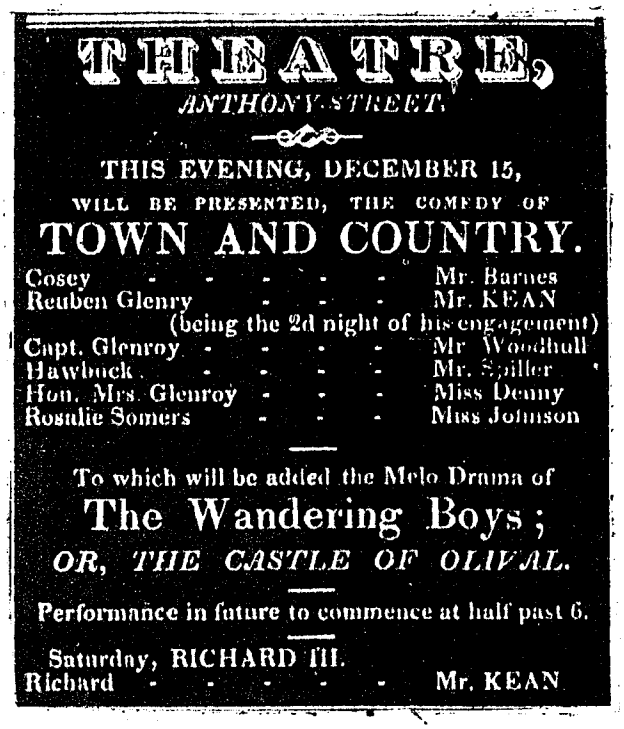
After his successful portrayal of Lear, Kean next played on 15 December 1820, Reuben Glenroy in the comedy Town and Country by Thomas Norton. Although both the National Advocate and Evening Post liked his performance, they felt that the play did not fully display his enormous talents:

> Although he imparted to the character all the interest and force of which it is susceptible, we still think it below his powers and genius. There is no field for the display of those fine points which distinguish his Lear, Richard, and Othello.[65]

The Evening Post's review (16 December) is as frank as the Advocate's in its admission that "Mr. Kean played Reuben Glenroy . . . with a success that surprised his audience. We did not imagine that the character possessed one half the strength of coloring he gave it."[66]

Only one article was printed about Kean's third performance of Richard III of 16 December 1820. Though the National Advocate published an account of Richard III on 18 December 1820, there was only a solitary comment about Kean's performance. It contained the effects of applause on Kean's performances:

> On Saturday evening [December 16] we saw him in Richard for the third time: he appeared to labor under some indisposition. We have to remark a particular circumstance which has occurred every evening of Mr. Kean's performance. Part of the audience governed by irresistable feelings, have loudly applauded his fine and occasional bursts. The other part, fearful of losing a sentence, and eagerly attentive to the passage, have arrested this applause



THEATRE,

ANTHONY-STREET.

THIS EVENING, DECEMBER 15,

WILL BE PRESENTED, THE COMEDY OF

TOWN AND COUNTRY.

Cosey - - - - - Mr. Barnes
Reuben Glenry - - - Mr. KEAN
(being the 2d night of his engagement)
Capt. Glenroy - - - - Mr Woodhull
Hawbuck - - - - Mr. Spiller
Hon. Mrs. Glenroy - - - Miss Denny
Rosalie Somers - - - Miss Johnson

To which will be added the Melo Drama of

The Wandering Boys;

OR, THE CASTLE OF OLIVAL.

Performance in future to commence at half past 6.

Saturday, RICHARD III.
Richard - - - - - Mr. KEAN

Fig. 12. Town and Country advertisement from the New York American.

> midway, by a loud "hush." This has a chilling influence on the actor, who has always been accustomed to loud applause, because it affords the actor time to recover himself, and give greater force to the succeeding passage, and we have discovered that applause has an electric influence over Kean--he is fifty per cent greater; and indeed applause may not only be considered as his right, but like the promethian fire, it gives life and animation to his genius, and adds lustre to his performance.[67]

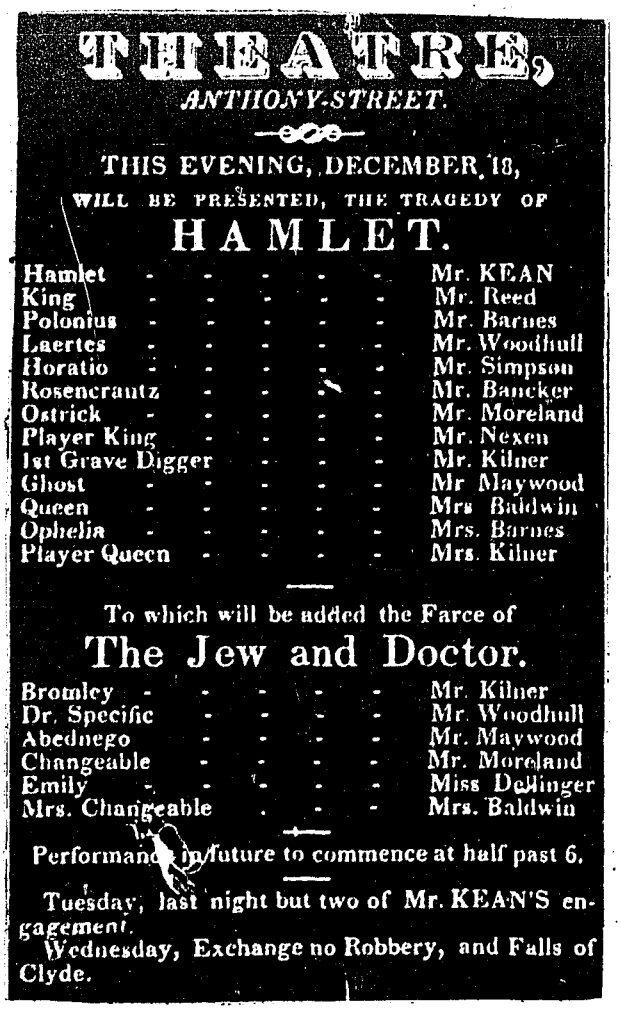
On 18 December 1820 Kean presented Hamlet for a second time. There are no extant reviews of this performance. Following Hamlet, on the 19, Kean enacted Sir Edward Mortimer in the melodrama The Iron Chest. Again, no extant reviews are available.

Macbeth followed The Iron Chest on 21 December 1820. Kean played Macbeth to Mrs. Barnes's Lady Macbeth. The Evening Post's 22 December 1820 account enthusiastically stated that

> The house boasted not only an overflow, but was especially honored by the presence of an unusual number of our first females; and the whole assemblage appeared to be united in the loudest applauses--More than once the Theatre literally rung with the cheerings of bravo! bravo! and at the fall of the curtain lively and long-continued marks of universal delight were heard from every part of the house, even the remotest. They saw the stupendous character of Macbeth justly portrayed in new and splendid colorings.[68]

The National Advocate's report of Kean's Macbeth, on 23 December 1820, corroborates the audience reaction:

> Macbeth attracted an overflowing house. It was a character which excited great curiosity--not only from its being one of the most arduous, but being the only prominent play of Shakespeare, in which Mr. Kean has not appeared. We never saw the character sustained with so much force or brilliancy. Many of the readings were entirely new, and equally appropriate,



THEATRE,

ANTHONY-STREET.

THIS EVENING, DECEMBER 18,

WILL BE PRESENTED, THE TRAGEDY OF

HAMLET.

Hamlet	Mr. KEAN
King	Mr. Reed
Polonius	Mr. Barnes
Laertes	Mr. Woodhull
Horatio	Mr. Simpson
Rosencrantz	Mr. Bancker
Ostrick	Mr. Moreland
Player King	Mr. Nexen
1st Grave Digger	Mr. Kilner
Ghost	Mr Maywood
Queen	Mrs Baldwin
Ophelia	Mrs. Barnes
Player Queen	Mrs. Kilner

To which will be added the Farce of

The Jew and Doctor.

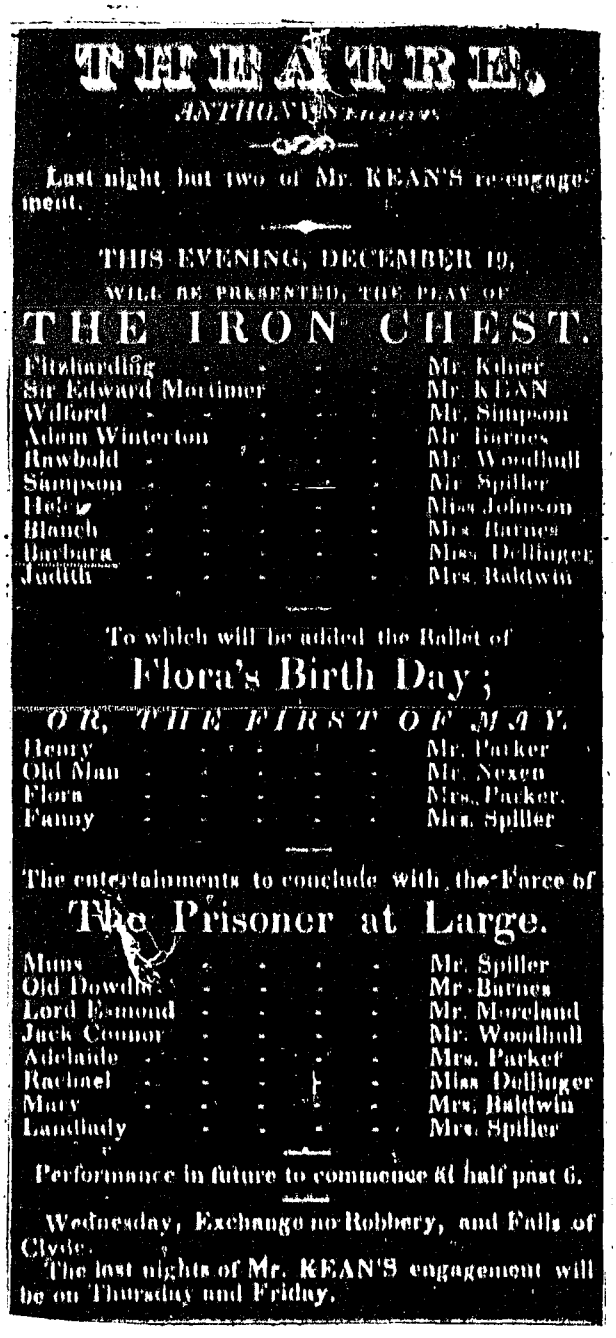
Bromley	Mr. Kilner
Dr. Specific	Mr. Woodhull
Abednego	Mr. Maywood
Changeable	Mr. Moreland
Emily	Miss DeHinger
Mrs. Changeable	Mrs. Baldwin

Performance in future to commence at half past 6.

Tuesday, last night but two of Mr. KEAN'S engagement.

Wednesday, Exchange no Robbery, and Falls of Clyde.

Fig. 13. Hamlet advertisement from the New York American.



THEATRE,
ANTHONY STREET.

Last night but two of Mr. KEAN'S re-engagement.

THIS EVENING, DECEMBER 19,
WILL BE PRESENTED, THE PLAY OF
THE IRON CHEST.

Fitzhardling	Mr. Kilner
Sir Edward Mortimer	Mr. KEAN
Wilford	Mr. Simpson
Adam Winterton	Mr. Barnes
Rawbold	Mr. Woodhull
Sampson	Mr. Spiller
Helen	Miss Johnson
Blanch	Mrs. Barnes
Barbara	Miss Dellinger
Judith	Mrs. Baldwin

To which will be added the Ballet of
Flora's Birth Day;
OR, THE FIRST OF MAY.

Henry	Mr. Parker
Old Man	Mr. Sexen
Flora	Mrs. Parker.
Fanny	Mrs. Spiller

The entertainments to conclude with the Farce of
The Prisoner at Large.

Muns	Mr. Spiller
Old Dowlas	Mr. Barnes
Lord Esmond	Mr. Moreland
Jack Connor	Mr. Woodhull
Adelaide	Mrs. Parker
Rachael	Miss Dellinger
Mary	Mrs. Baldwin
Landlady	Mrs. Spiller

Performance in future to commence at half past 6.

Wednesday, Exchange no Robbery, and Falls of Clyde.

The last nights of Mr. KEAN'S engagement will be on Thursday and Friday.

Fig. 14. The Iron Chest advertisement from the New York American.

and the curtain fell amidst the usual shouts of applause.[69]

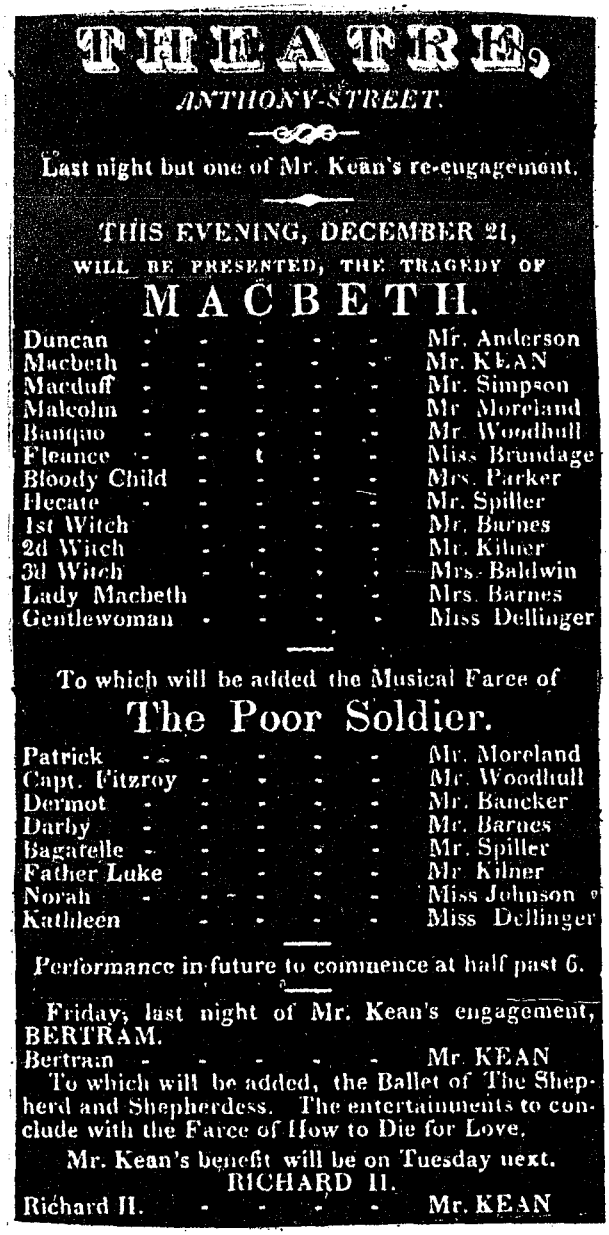
After Macbeth, Kean portrayed Bertram in the play of the same name by Charles Robert Maturin. This performance, staged on 22 December 1820, was mentioned only by the National Advocate on 25 December 1820:

> Mr. Kean's Bertram was received with as much approbation as any part which he has yet sustained. It was a finished display of histrionic talent. Kean's characters seem not yet to have reached a climax--every new part that he plays is pronounced by many to be his best. Bertram never excited so much interest and so much applause.[70]

For his benefit on December 26, his last scheduled performance, Kean played Richard II. Unfortunately, reviews of this rarely performed play do not exist.

At the conclusion of his engagement, Kean was given a dinner by some citizens of New York under the auspices of Major Noah, the editor of the National Advocate. The event was unique; no other actor had been accorded such an honor in New York. The following is the entire account (printed in the 28 December 1820 Evening Post), including Kean's response to Noah's toast:

> Mr. Noah in the course of the evening proposed the Health of Mr. Kean. I have observed, said he, with pleasure, that among the toasts already drank is one to which I fully subscribe--that which declares Genius to be the birth right of no country but the common property of all. Under this impression I beg to propose the health of our esteemed guest whose dramatic talent has been so much admired, and which has already given a new direction to public taste, and whose residence in this country, I trust, will be as gratifying and profitable to himself, as it has already been to the New-York audience.
>
> The toast was drank with loud applause, and after a pause of a few seconds, Mr. Kean rose, and addressed



THEATRE,

ANTHONY-STREET.

Last night but one of Mr. Kean's re-engagement.

THIS EVENING, DECEMBER 21,

WILL BE PRESENTED, THE TRAGEDY OF

MACBETH.

Duncan	Mr. Anderson
Macbeth	Mr. KEAN
Macduff	Mr. Simpson
Malcolm	Mr. Moreland
Banquo	Mr. Woodhull
Fleance	Miss Brundage
Bloody Child	Mrs. Parker
Hecate	Mr. Spiller
1st Witch	Mr. Barnes
2d Witch	Mr. Kilner
3d Witch	Mrs. Baldwin
Lady Macbeth	Mrs. Barnes
Gentlewoman	Miss Dellinger

To which will be added the Musical Farce of

The Poor Soldier.

Patrick	Mr. Moreland
Capt. Fitzroy	Mr. Woodhull
Dermot	Mr. Baucker
Darby	Mr. Barnes
Bagatelle	Mr. Spiller
Father Luke	Mr. Kilner
Norah	Miss Johnson
Kathleen	Miss Dellinger

Performance in future to commence at half past 6.

Friday, last night of Mr. Kean's engagement, BERTRAM.

Bertram - - - - - Mr. KEAN

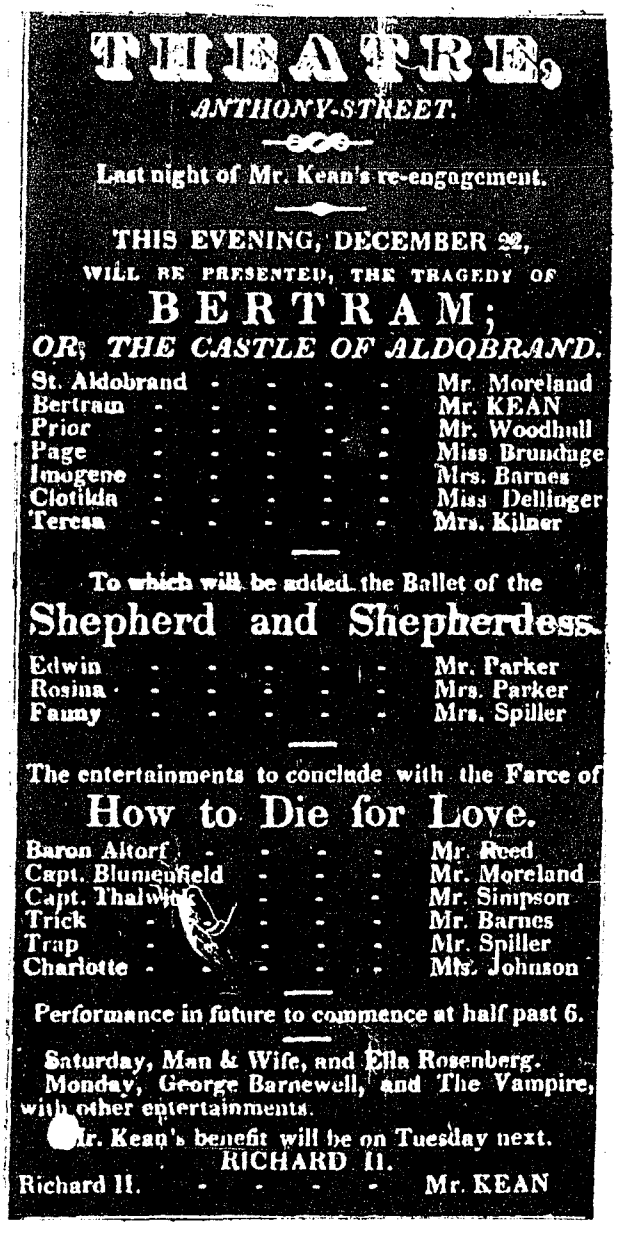
To which will be added, the Ballet of The Shepherd and Shepherdess. The entertainments to conclude with the Farce of How to Die for Love.

Mr. Kean's benefit will be on Tuesday next.

RICHARD II.

Richard II. - - - - Mr. KEAN

Fig. 15. Macbeth advertisement from the New York American.



THEATRE,

ANTHONY-STREET.

Last night of Mr. Kean's re-engagement.

THIS EVENING, DECEMBER 22,

WILL BE PRESENTED, THE TRAGEDY OF

BERTRAM;

OR, THE CASTLE OF ALDOBRAND.

St. Aldobrand	Mr. Moreland
Bertram	Mr. KEAN
Prior	Mr. Woodhull
Page	Miss Brundage
Imogene	Mrs. Barnes
Clotilda	Miss Dellinger
Teresa	Mrs. Kilner

To which will be added the Ballet of the

Shepherd and Shepherdess.

Edwin	Mr. Parker
Rosina	Mrs. Parker
Fanny	Mrs. Spiller

The entertainments to conclude with the Farce of

How to Die for Love.

Baron Altorf	Mr. Reed
Capt. Blumenfeld	Mr. Moreland
Capt. Thalwitz	Mr. Simpson
Trick	Mr. Barnes
Trap	Mr. Spiller
Charlotte	Mrs. Johnson

Performance in future to commence at half past 6.

Saturday, Man & Wife, and Ella Rosenberg.
Monday, George Barnewell, and The Vampire, with other entertainments.

Mr. Kean's benefit will be on Tuesday next.

RICHARD II.

Richard II.	Mr. KEAN

Fig. 16. Bertram advertisement from the New York American.



THEATRE,

ANTHONY-STREET.

For the Benefit of Mr. Kean.

THIS EVENING, DECEMBER 26,
Will be presented, Shakspeare's Play of

RICHARD II.

Richard II.	Mr. KEAN
John of Gaunt	Mr. Maywood
Duke of York	Mr. Woodhull
Bolinbroke	Mr. Simpson
Duke of Norfolk	Mr. Moreland
Earl of Northumberland	Mr. Kilner
Gardiner	Mr. Spiller
Queen	Mrs. Barnes
Blanch	Mrs. Parker
Lady	Miss Johnson

With the song of 'Angels ever bright and fair.'

To which will be added the New Ballet of

The Plough Boy.

The Plough Boy	Mr. Parker
Old Hunks	Mr. Nexsen
Taffline	Mrs. Parker
Fanny	Mrs. Spiller

The entertainments to conclude with the Farce of

The Jew and Doctor.

Bromley	Mr Kilner
Dr. Specific	Mr Woodhull
Abednego	Mr Maywood
Changeable	Mr. Moreland
Emily	Miss Dellinger
Mrs. Changeable	Mrs. Baldwin

Performance in future to commence at half past 6.

Wednesday, Road to Ruin. & Too Late for Dinner
Thursday, Mr. SIMPSON'S Benefit.

The Farce of Modern Collegians; or, Insolvents in London, is in rehearsal, and will speedily be produced.

Fig. 17. Richard II advertisement from the New York American. Kean's benefit performance.

the company in nearly the following manner:

> Gentlemen--To pass over in silence such unequivocal testimonials of your approbation would, I fear, savor more of insensibility than diffidence; and while I apologise for my want of eloquence, I must add, that I am proud of this flattering opportunity to offer in the simple language of my heart, my grateful acknowlegements to the citizens of New-York. When the professional man is fortunate enough to blend private esteem with public approbation, he must have achieved the very extent of his ambition. The union of those feelings have been so manifestly conspicuous during my short residence in this city, that it has placed the records of your kindnesses memoria in eterna. I have too high an opinion of the sound judgment and liberality of feeling of those gentlemen who I have now the honor of addressing, not to suppose they would encourage me in those sentiments of attachment, I ever must entertain for that country which gave me birth; for that country in which I have left everything that is dear to me; for that country which by its plaudits, fanned the humble spark of talent, till it lighted up a reputation, which is the passport to your protection--the introduction to your hospitality; nor does the influence of your favor extend only to the stranger whom you have so generously welcomed.--There are hearts dear to me, conjoined with mine by ties of affection & alliance, who are, perhaps, at this moment anticipating with joy, my professional success in this country, & will blend your names with their thanks to the grand dispenser of events. It is there, I shall instruct the being intrusted to my care, to respect & love the patrons of his father and while the pages of your history record achievements that give lustre to the political and warlike character of your country, be assured that the English actor will, to the last hour, extol the merits of your private worth and gratefully transmit his Columbian laurels to the charge of his posterity.[71]

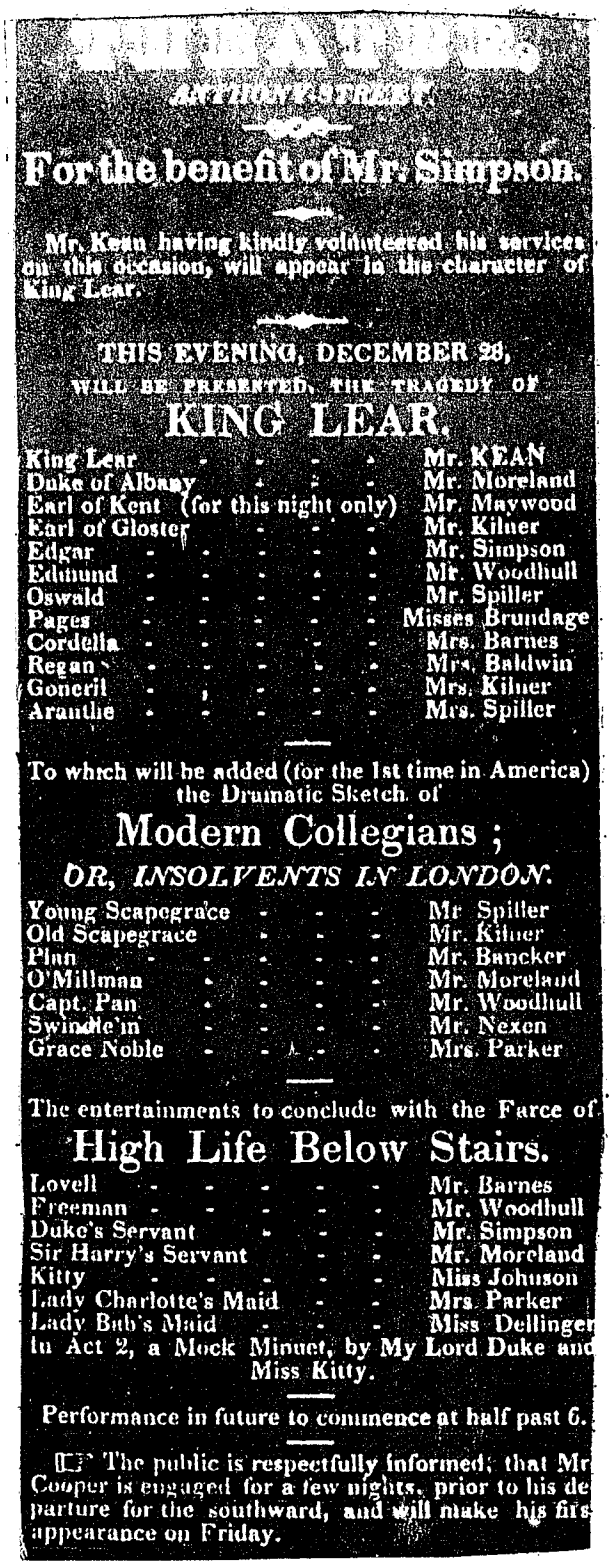
Before departing for Philadelphia, Kean agreed to play King Lear on 28 December 1820, to Simpson's Edgar, for the latter's benefit. In anticipation of this event, the Evening Post said:

> This evening [28 December] the proceeds of the theatre are alloted to the benefit of Mr. Simpson, . . . On this occasion Mr. Kean has volunteered his services in the character of King Lear: in which he has been more enthusiastically and more

> unexceptionally admired, than in any other he has personated in our city. So perfectly is he known to pourtray the poor old man, bereft of his senses, that several physicians will visit the theatre this evening, to view it as a medical study. We are also glad on Mr. Kean's own account, that he has selected this character for his last impression.[72]

The following article by A Philadelphian attests to, what is, probably, the overwhelming approval of the playgoers:

> Notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather . . . Mr. Simpson's benefit was honoured by an overflowing house. Such a house as we have not seen more than thrice since Mr. Kean's engagement; and that house graced and adorned by a generous and brilliant show of all that we love, honour, and admire;--a splendid display of fascinating virtue, beauty, and fashion. This we hail as a triumphant proof of purity of taste, of discrimination, and of munificence, on the part of a just and discerning public; as regards the play, the distinguished actor, and the occasion.
>
> To say that Mr. Kean's "Lear" was a nonpareil, would be merely to repeat what we all already know and are eager to acknowledge . . . he imparted an intensity of interest far beyond any capacity of expression to which I might dare to pretend.
>
> Were it permitted to dwell on any particular passage, I would presume to notice the awful, horrid, vindictive, fiend-like imprecation on Generil. I can merely observe, that it was delivered by Mr. Kean, with an energy, manner, and effect, most terrific and agonizing.
>
> The last act, of course, was the perfection of pathos, and of nature. No language could be too encomiastic in its praise.
>
> The whole performance was honoured by repeated, and almost incessant, bursts of applause. Bravo, Kean! Huzza, Kean! being continually shouted and reiterated during his presence on the stage. But when the curtain dropped, after the customary expression of generous approval, in loud and reverberated bravos, and silence had in some measure been regained, a spontaneous and almost unanimous burst from the Pit, of Kean, Kean, Kean, which was immediately re-echoed from the boxes, was kept up for some time, becoming louder and more importunate, until Mr. Kean at length appeared, and, bowing respectfully observed that "For this unexpected and generous testimonial of approval, he begged leave to express his heartfelt gratitude;



[illegible] THEATRE.

ANTHON'S STREET.

For the benefit of Mr. Simpson.

Mr. Kean having kindly volunteered his services on this occasion, will appear in the character of King Lear.

THIS EVENING, DECEMBER 28,

WILL BE PRESENTED, THE TRAGEDY OF

KING LEAR.

King Lear	Mr. KEAN
Duke of Albany	Mr. Moreland
Earl of Kent (for this night only)	Mr. Maywood
Earl of Gloster	Mr. Kilner
Edgar	Mr. Simpson
Edmund	Mr. Woodhull
Oswald	Mr. Spiller
Pages	Misses Brundage
Cordelia	Mrs. Barnes
Regan	Mrs. Baldwin
Goneril	Mrs. Kilner
Aranthe	Mrs. Spiller

To which will be added (for the 1st time in America) the Dramatic Sketch of

Modern Collegians ;

OR, INSOLVENTS IN LONDON.

Young Scapegrace	Mr Spiller
Old Scapegrace	Mr. Kilner
Plan	Mr. Bancker
O'Millman	Mr. Moreland
Capt. Pan	Mr. Woodhull
Swindle'm	Mr. Nexen
Grace Noble	Mrs. Parker

The entertainments to conclude with the Farce of

High Life Below Stairs.

Lovell	Mr. Barnes
Freeman	Mr. Woodhull
Duke's Servant	Mr. Simpson
Sir Harry's Servant	Mr. Moreland
Kitty	Miss Johnson
Lady Charlotte's Maid	Mrs. Parker
Lady Bab's Maid	Miss Dellinger

In Act 2, a Mock Minuet, by My Lord Duke and Miss Kitty.

Performance in future to commence at half past 6.

☞ The public is respectfully informed, that Mr Cooper is engaged for a few nights, prior to his departure for the southward, and will make his first appearance on Friday.

Fig. 18. King Lear advertisement from the New York American. Edmund Simpson's benefit.

> that he was too much exhausted by the exertions of the evening to be able to say all that he wished to say, in return for so much goodness; but that he hoped when he again had the honour to appear before a New-York audience, he should be enabled to manifest his respect for their kind and generous approbation, by contributing to the utmost of his abilities to their pleasure and gratification: in the meantime he begged leave, respectfully, to withdraw."
>
> This he did amidst plaudits such as we have never before witnessed; for the audience, as if by unanimous accord, stood up & cheered him with three times three: Bravo, Kean! Huzza for Kean! resounding from every quarter of the house.
>
> May such transcendant genius be ever so awarded.[73]

For the moment, the whirlwinds of passion, the rapid transitions, the sudden starts, the sudden changes in pitch, the hoarsness of voice, and his middling stature, did not matter. If Kean did not completely satisfy his critics, he was nevertheless triumphant.

Perhaps there is a similarity between Kean's first appearance in America and his first appearance on the Drury Lane stage in 1814, that is, in both instances, he was received with resounding applause. Kean probably was enthralled by his current success--reliving the intensity and euphoria of his London debut.

CHAPTER V

AFTERMATH OF KEAN'S FIRST ENGAGEMENT IN NEW YORK

At the termination of his first New York engagement, Kean made preparations for a sixteen night engagement (January 8 - February 3) in Philadelphia.[1] Shortly before and during Kean's Philadelphia engagement the New York Evening Post and the New York American resumed their discussion about the merits and demerits of Cooper and Kean. After Kean's first New York engagement had concluded, Cooper played a five-day engagement, at the Anthony Street Theatre, from December 29 to January 4.

In its familiar sophistical manner, the American on 4 January 1821 complains about the "undiscriminating patrons" who lavish actors with undue approbation, particularly Kean:

> On looking over the book yesterday we perceived 35 box seats taken by the naval and military officers for Mr. Cooper's benefit. It is gratifying to perceive that these gentlemen make their pleasures subservient to public duty, by redeeming, in a considerable degree, the character of our taste, and openly asserting the superiority of the tragic muse in good health and her sober senses, to the same lady, as we have lately seen her, labouring under an attack of the palsy or a visitation of St. Vitus. We began to apprehend that the City seal was to be affixed to a

> diploma setting forth the superiority of the fingers and feet over the voice and countenance, in expressing the nobler & higher emotions of the soul, and establishing the fact that extremes meet, by legalizing the most unnatural union between tragedy and farce:--in proportion to our fears, is the pleasure with which we find that so many, and they so respectable, have escaped the contagion of bad taste, or resisted the caprice of fashion, and maintain their own judgment, and the character of the stage against unmeaning puffs, undiscriminating patrons, and all efficient "bravo's:" which by the way, we beg Mr. Kean, as he appears to have brought them as his stage appendages, to take back with him when he goes. We have seen bad effects from them already: they annoy the ladies, and serve to render well meaning and respectable men rather ridiculous in their raptures, who but for those vociferous demonstrations of pleasure might have supported at least a negative reputation for good sense.[2]

Although the American voiced its displeasure about the incessant and clamorous applause afforded Kean during performances, they did not complain about the habit of calling Kean after the curtain has fallen. Regarding this peculiar circumstance, William B. Wood, manager of the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia and the Adelphi Theatre in Baltimore, complains about the annoying and unparalled custom of lauding Kean after performances in these cities:

> The advent of Kean introduced a custom, which, however tolerable in view of his great genius, led subsequently to much annoyance and to many abuses. I allude to the habit of calling out performers, dead or alive, and after the curtain has dropped, to receive a tribute to extra applause. The absurdity of dragging out before the curtain a deceased Hamlet, Macbeth, or Richard in an exhausted state, merely to make a bow: . . . is one which we date with us from this time [January and April].[3]

Further on Wood says,

> We are all aware that this custom was borrowed from the French stage, and was doubtless a part of the system employed by the claquers, or acknowledged hired applauders.[4]

What we are witnessing here, as in New York, is the birth of the modern curtain call in the United States.

On 4 January 1821, A Philadelphian sent a letter to the Evening Post about Cooper's five day engagement. Although the primary emphasis is a discussion of Cooper's performances and acting style, comparisons are made between Cooper and Kean. The letter, published on January 8, is addressed to Coleman:

> Mr. Cooper this evening [January 4] finished a short engagement of five nights, in the character of "Beverly," in the tragedy of the Gamester--The subsequent remarks are more of a general nature, as regards the drama, than I had intended; and much more personal than I could have wished; had not the intemperate zeal of some of his devoted admirers made it incumbent on every lover of truth, and friend of genius, to be as explicit, as candid: and this with the less fastidiousness as Mr. Cooper came forward, immediately on the conclusion of Mr. Kean's engagement, as his rival and competitor, to brave comparison, and to bear away the palm.
>
> Mr. Cooper has been most wretchedly backed by his friends on this trying occasion: and that so distinguished a performer, deserved favorite, and old friend, to whose admirable representations we have all been indebted for much real pleasure and refined entertainment, might justly have calculated on much more generous support.
>
> On Friday evening, Dec. 29 at half past six, there were not quite a hundred persons in the Theatre: and a small party of gentlemen, of which the writer of this article was one, sincerely sympathizing with the feelings of the actor and the man, on an occasion of such contrast with the overflowing houses that had just preceded his engagement, interested themselves greatly to greet him with a hearty welcome: this was done, by the general consent of the Pit, with three cheers. At a quarter from seven the tragedy of Othello commenced before an audience not exceeding 200 individuals.

Of Mr. Cooper's "Othello" I can say little in praise. Excepting the sudden entrance of the Moor to quell the drunken brawl between Cassio and Rogerio, . . . The third act of "Othello," into which Shakespeare has transfused an accumulation of all that is pathetic and agonizing . . . --was tame and souless. There was change of feature; but no feeling; and a total destitution of simultaneous correspondence between features, voice and action. The whole of this act was passed on the same spot, not exceeding a start or a step on either side.

That admirable passage--beginning, "O now, forever farewell the tranquil mind," and ending, "Othello's occupation is gone!"--to which Mr. Kean, by tone of voice so tender, and look of distress so pathetic and afflicting, imparted an intensity of interest, which can only be conceived by those who had the pleasure to witness it, was delivered by Mr. Cooper in such a paroxysm of rage, as to make the Theatre reverberate with the echoes of a powerful voice strained to its utmost capacity.

On Saturday the tragedy of Macbeth was enacted, and although this is generally considered Mr. Cooper's greatest character, and that in which, on every consideration, he has acquired the greatest renown, at a quarter past six, when the orchestra began their customary overture, there was not a solitary individual in the boxes: and the curtain rose at the usual hour to thirty seven persons in the boxes, and about ninety in the pit. The greatest number during the evening did not exceed two hundred and fifty.

Mr. Cooper's performance of Macbeth was highly respectable: though we found fewer beauties than we had been accustomed to perceive; and on the whole were not so highly gratified as we had anticipated. The finest incident, in our opinion, was that of his hesitating, timid, approach towards, and perturbed withdrawal from, the door of Duncan's chamber . . . The first part of the "dagger scene" was exquisetely fine. Mr. Cooper's start of horror was less <u>theatric</u> than that of Mr. Kean, and therefore more impressive.

Of "Richard" I would merely observe that with some beauties, and many faults, it approached nearly to the nature of a <u>failure</u>. After the glowing and masterly representations of a Cooke and a Kean, Mr. Cooper can scarcely hope for success in <u>that</u> character.

About 500 persons in the house this evening. "Leon" I did not see.

"Beverly" was represented to a highly respectable, but thin, house: and of all Mr. Cooper's performances during his recent engagement this was decidedly his best and most effective personation . . . The last act was exceedingly fine; and on the whole it was a

performance of the first order; and as such was received with distinguished applause.

Mr. Cooper's style of acting is stately, stiff, cold, formal, and declamatory. His conceptions do not seem like "thoughts that breathe," but are tardy and reluctant: his susceptabilities difficult of excitement: and his action constrained and defective. His merits may be considered to consist in a fine and commanding person--noble in stature, and beautiful in symmetry: a voice of great sweetness and compass: and an improved cultivated taste. In characters requiring the display of mere physical advantages, he is every thing that the poet could describe, to the eye of the beholder delight to dwell on. His defects or faults are, with respectful submission, deemed to be--want of feeling: want of action: formal prosing: cold declamation: and palpable aiming to exhibit his personal qualifications to the greatest advantage. Why his soliloquies should generally be delivered in a loud and vociferous tone of voice, it is not easy to imagine. In short, Mr. Editor, I fear there is too much truth in the observation, that Mr. Cooper's acting, as compared with Mr. Kean's, is an appeal to the eye, and not to the heart.

These strictures may appear severe; they have not been written in a spirit of unfriendliness; but from a sincere desire to be impartial and just. Such were not my opinions before I had seen a Cooke and a Kean. Till then Mr. Cooper was great beyond all his compeers. I well remember Mr. Cooper's style of acting ten years ago; he was then full of fire, and action, and furious declamation, his starts, and stamps, and bursts, were theatric to a degree bordering on the extravagant. Better studies and more improved taste have produced a great change, but as it appears to me--in trying from the mock heroic, he has overleaped nature, and is in danger if ending in apathy.

As regards the thinness of the house during Mr. Cooper's engagement it would be well to remember that the public mind had recently been abundantly gratified by dramatic representation . . . and that his representations have long since lost the all attractive charm of novelty.

A Philadelphian completes his article by expressing "repugnance" at some remarks printed in the 4 January 1821 American. This heralds the beginning of more exchanges between the Evening Post and the American.

It is with great repugnance, and after much hesitation, that I take the liberty to advert to a singular and sarcastic article which appears in the "American" this evening. An honest difference of opinion does not necessarily constitute matter of reprobation: and it is for a just and discerning public, and not for a solitary individual, to determine whether it be fit, and becoming to compare Mr. Cooper to "the tragic muse in good health, and her sober senses," and Mr. Kean "to the same lady labouring under an attack of the palsy, or a visitation of St. Vitus;" whether it be respectful and decorous to stigmatize the community with "bad taste" as favouring "the superiority of fingers and feet over the voice and the countenance" and "legalizing the most unnatural union between tragedy and farce"--as the editor of the "American" has been pleased to allege. Whether this be generous or just I believe this insulted public have already determined in a manner the most satisfactory; and in characters that are quite legible: these characters are inscribed in the books at the Box office, and may be consulted by the curious or the doubting, at reasonable hours, free of expense, and that manner has consisted in the ample recompense which Mr Kean has received as the reward of his histrionic labors: and the numerous testimonials of regard, public and private, which his transcendant talents, and private worth have ensured. But the editor of the American as if dissatisfied with his own wretched caricature, after enumerating certain pretended causes of the extaordinary success of Mr. Kean, adds:--"and all efficient 'bravos', which by the way, we beg Mr. Kean, as he appears to have brought them as his appendages, to take back with him when he goes. We have seen bad effects from them already: they annoy the ladies, &c." Now I can state positively, from personal observation, that this editor of the "American," and five or six gentlemen, whose names I can mention, all professed and devoted admirers of Mr. Cooper, took their places in the pit on the evening of the representation of "Macbeth," and that among other "vociferous demonstrations of pleasure" that party was distinguished by the frequency and loudness of their "bravos." These "appendages of Mr. Kean" were assuredly extremely well managed in honor of Mr. Cooper: without much "annoyance to the ladies," as unfortunately there were not many more than half a dozen in the house.[5]

No sooner had the Evening Post published A Philadelphian's report, the American responded. The

American of January 9 reproves A Philadelphian's communication:

> We doubt the nativity of "Philadelphian." He has not even a pun to vouch for his birthright. He is but a sham American--some travelling shadow of Mr. Kean that is now a New Yorker in Philadelphia, and will follow him the round of our cities in as many shapes as his patron has muscular emotions. We shall soon detect him in Philadelphia, and to trace the critic shall need but to follow the footsteps of the actor. If we are mistaken let Crito or A Philadelphian" give some token that he is now in this city--. . . Whosoever, or of whatsoever country, he may be, he is a man of sagacity in a particular where men are not usually sagacious--he knows his own strength, and wisely rests his opinion of Mr. Cooper on an argument which it would puzzle us to controvert, viz. the thinness of the houses drawn by Mr. Cooper's acting. This is a strong and undeniable fact, and be altogether overpowering, if we did not recollect that Garrick once acted to empty houses, while the opposing theatre was crowded to witness a pageant of the coronation of George III. We shall not defend Mr. Cooper from this or any other reasoning; public taste in this city is a capricious sort of a thing, and it would be useless to attempt to direct a current that will soon turn of its own accord. Novelty is the pole that attracts it and Mr. Kean will find that he owes more to this, and the impulse of fashion, than to his own qualifications. When that time arrives, it may be useful to draw a parallel between him and Mr. Cooper; in the mean while we shall offer no arguments to disprove the assumption that empty boxes make a bad actor, or crowded houses a good one. As to what immeditely concerns ourselves in the communication to the Post, the assertion that we were loud or vociferous in applauding Mr. Coooper, is not true: on the contrary, we were impressed with an opinion that noisy approbation from a thin auditory would be no compliment to the actor, and were engaged in quieting our neighbors, who were dealing out their bravos with as much zeal, and, we think, more discrimination, than we have known these noisy manifestations of pleasure used in behalf of Mr. Kean.[6]

Interestingly, the American speaks of a "capricious" public attracted by "novelty" and "the impulse of fashion." This view may partially account for the

diminishing coverage of succeeding performances during Kean's second New York engagement (March 12-April 6). Moreover, it, perhaps, signals the almost instantaneous shift in public sentiment by the end of May 1821.

William Coleman, the editor of the Evening Post, reluctantly published on 11 January 1821 an article which was submitted by a writer calling himself A New-Yorker:

> To provide against the supposition that the insertion of the following critique upon the comparative theatrical merits of Messrs. Kean and Cooper, meets with my approbation, I think it proper to remark, that in complying with the Writer's solicitation, it was not without extreme reluctance & much hesitation, & when at length I yielded, it was solely to evince my impartiality, and by no means from a conviction of its candor or its justice.[7]

The writer asserts his impartiality by claiming that he intends "no invidious" comparisons between Cooper and Kean. Nevertheless, he does make comparisons, ultimately favoring Cooper:

> Mr. Cooper has just finished an engagement of no ordinary interest. We would make no invidious comparisons: it is useless, however, to deny that Mr. Kean and Mr. Cooper have come into competition at the bar of Public taste, and that the town has been gradually forming its estimate of the histrionic power and talent of these gentlemen, during the past four weeks. In a discussion like the present, not only great delicacy of perception and refinement of taste, but equal calmness and courtesy of demeanour, are required from every one, . . . We should not have volunteered, if some other person had favoured the public with any general remarks on the drama, and not even now, unless we felt assured of our entire impartiality, and believed that the interests of truth, good taste and just feeling, were paramount to every consideration, which novelty, fashion, or even the warm emotions of hospitality might afford.
>
> Before we enter upon the individual merits and faults of either actor, it is necessary to settle a preliminary question--a question which now divides the

English, literary republic, and will ultimately determine whose brows the palm of Thespian honour shall encircle with its bright and perenial verdure. We have heard it sagely remarked by those people, who have neither sufficient strength of mind or decision of character to be of any one opinion, that no comparison could be instituted between Mr. Cooper and Mr. Kean--that their beauties were distinct, and that we might equally admire both. To those persons, whose critical perception only extends to the appreciation of the merit of a single passage or scene, this may perhaps be true. But to those persons, who regard the drama as embodying a vast variety of human character, as displaying to us the interior sections of our own hearts, as containing a treasury of rich and noble thoughts and feelings--to such as contemplate it as a complicated whole, governed by the laws which taste and just discrimination have enacted,--these gentlemen can never afford equal pleasure. They belong to different sects, they are guided by different principles, they therefore cannot both be right. It is to this question that we propose to devote a few moments.

Tragedy is generally employed on subjects where the fiercest and most licentious passions are delineated, . . . Such passions, such wild emotions must from their violence be rare, and the parties to them be far removed from our common observation, or otherwise they would be destitute of novelty, as well as devoid of interest . . . Tragedy, therefore, while it pains the workings of the human heart, necessarily throws the mantle of its stateliness and dignity, around the persons of those being whom it exhibits to our admiration. The noble Coriolanus treads the stage with majesty, and speaks in a style far more measured than his plebeian revilers . . . John Kemble . . . illustrated this principle, with the most splendid exhibitions of dignified nature, and graceful and affecting elocution. Talma, at this moment, owes a large portion of his name to his just and noble personation of Roman character . . . It would be to offer violence to some of our best feelings, and to destroy the most delightful visions, which are presented to our minds even to imagine, that "Brutus," or the "noble Moor," did not manifest the proud character of their exploits, in the loftiest mien, or the force and beauty of their language. No: Fancy gives them a commanding presence, nor degrades the nobility of their souls by consigning them to the prisonhouse of a mishapen, hideous form . . .

Such was the character which the English drama sustained, as long as Kemble, the successor of the illustrious Garrick, continued its ornament and its

glory. It was towards the close of his splendid career, when time had in some degree destroyed his physical energies, . . .--It was at this time that Mr. Kean appeared a candidate for the highest honors of theatrical reputation. His style of playing was altogether new, and of course excited attention from its novelty. The newspapers were soon filled with puffs, (a cheap vehicle of fame in London), and those who had no better authority for their judgment, and even some who had, were found suddenly to hold up Mr. Kean as not only superior to Kemble, but far surpassing Garrick himself. Sides were taken on the subject, and to this day Mr. Kean is the actor of a party. But he professes to give us nature--pure nature. The grace and dignity of the old school are, with him and his admirers, mere stiffness and formality, without sentiment or feeling: its classic elocution and touching pathos, mere declamation and wretched affectation, destitute of that soul which a generous and enthusiastic nature pours into all its effusions. When we consider that Mr. Kean is at the head of this innovating attempt, we cannot but imagine that his discovery of these supposed defects of the old school, was intimately connected with a knowledge of his own incapacity. Finding, after a long trial on the provincial boards, that he could never hope to succeed, under the direction which Kemble had given to the public taste, he endeavored to undermine the edifice, whose proportions & whose excellence he could never equal. He, in fine, introduced a style of acting, which, under the seducing promise of following nature, was founded on his own physical defects. Mr. Kean had little or no grace of gesture, therefore his predecessors were cold, stiff and stately. He had no voice, (or as the Examiner uncourteously says, one "between an apoplexy and a cough,") and therefore their recitation was too measured and continuous. Such we do sincerely believe to be the foundation of this new system of playing: a system, forsooth, of nature, which is to be palmed off on the American public, because it has been lauded by those admirable British critics, who trumpeted forth the magnificent and enduring genius of master Betty [master Betty was a child prodigy who competed with Kean during his early days in the provinces]! A style of acting which depends on the sudden changes of the voice, on violent and outrageous action, on grimace and start and trick, is but a caricature of nature, is a deformity which, though it may now find a few admirers, the caustic of time & truth will most assuredly remove.

If there be any truth in what we have stated, Mr. Kean is certainly altogether mistaken in the road he selected, and he must retrace his steps and start from

> the point whence Cooper and Kemble commenced their career. We contend that he has manifested, by the choice he has made, both a vicious taste and a bad judgment, and is therefore in no way to be classed with either of those gentlemen.[8]

While a New-Yorker was denigrating Kean in the Evening Post, the American, on the same date (January 11), printed a disparaging article denying the impression that

> he has brought with him from the land of taste and science a wreath without one blighted leaf, "or in plain English, that his merit as an actor is universally admitted in his native country."

However,

> This is far from being the case; the opinions entertained and expressed of Mr. Kean in England are even more opposite than they are here. By some he is extolled as superhuman, by others ridiculed as a mere mountebank . . . during Mr. Kean's engagement at Drury Lane the loss of the Theatre was about 9,000 L. sterl.: that at his last benefit in London he was driven to the necessity of advertising himself as Harlequin in the after-piece; and that in Liverpool, during a late engagement, he played to empty houses. These facts may be of use to those who are not in the habit of thinking for themselves, and who seeing in Mr. Kean what they never saw before, take it for granted that it is all very fine here, because it thought so in England.[9]

The American concluded with a deprecating "extract from a poem" entitled "Actors and Editors" that was published "one or two years" before Kean's New York engagement. "He raves, he croaks, he storms, till voice quite spent" is but one example of its disdainful contents.[10]

On 12 January 1821, Coleman, once again, published an article by "A New-Yorker," but this time repudiated the printed statements:

> We, this evening, give the conclusion of A New-Yorker, and confess we are pleased to dismiss it.

It may coincide with the tastes of some, but it must "make the judicious grieve." Mr. Kean is called puny, and so was Garrick, by those critics who made his person the criterion, but a poet who looked to the mind, has recorded that Garrick "was six feet high."--In the first paragraph of our unprejudiced correspondent, "Mr. Kean's voice is hoarse, and when exerted perfectly inarticulate," and in the next, "Mr. Kean is heard in every line." Unfortunate actor, whose voice is "between an apoplexy and a cough," (an apoplectic voice!) and at the same time has "a sweetness in its lower tones which break most agreeably on the ear." I shall leave the writer in his undisturbed eulogy upon Mr. Cooper, nor question his amazing comic powers, although I certainly never heard of them before. After all that may be written respecting these two actors, their merits must abide that only test from which there is no appeal, the emotions and tears of an audience.[11]

As usual, A New-Yorker writes a contemptuous piece of criticism:

Having thus pointed out some measure, upon what ground this school of nature and its disciple, claim our approbation and support, we shall proceed to another part of our proposed undertaking. Mr. Kean's figure is diminutive and insignificant; in "Brutus" when he rushes thro' the gate of the city: in "Othello," when he quells the brawl between the drunken Cassio and the guard, we look in vain for the imposing mien of Mr. Cooper. The contrast was unfortunate for the puny, affected dignity of Mr. Kean. Mr. K's voice is hoarse, and when exerted, perfectly inarticulate. You therefore lose entirely, many of those fine bursts of passion, which give interest to the piece, and often afford the noblest field for the actor. His Richard is a lamentable instance of this defect. That play of the fingers and tapping the breast and forehead, are all contemptible tricks, which would disgrace a man of far inferior talents. They are an insult to an audience, who regard the expressions of the countenance, rather than the convolutions of the fingers. Mr. K. is not always chaste or natural--he overacts and is full of the trickery of the stage. He has received many an unmerited plaudit, for those sudden changes of voice, from the distinct and full, to the quick and hurried tone. When Garrick came to London, he abolished this piece of affectation, and Davies says, in his account of him, that the critics "had been long accustomed to an elevation of the voice, with a mechanical

> depression of its tones, calculated to excite admiration and to entrap appplause." This passage is a perfect description of one of Mr. K's capital faults, and one would suppose had been written expressly to reprove this disingenuous trick. But we are silenced by the information, that it is nature!
>
> That horrid, disgusting hysteric laugh of Mr. K. has had its admirers, for the same reason, we imagine, tht the rumbling hoarseness of his voice has been considered a beauty. It would have been dismissed long ago, if the defects had been cured, which this monstrous exhibition was adopted to conceal. It is one of the greatest merits of any theatrical representation, that the individual actor should be merged in the character he personates. Now Mr. K. is never lost to our view: the hunch-back of Richard or the swarthy visage of Othello afford no concealment. It is too often Mr. Kean who enacts the tyrant, or stalks before us, the dupe of Iago's villainy--He is too frequently himself, and not the character. Mr. Kean is heard in every line, and seen in every step.

In the next instance the writer vacillates by saying,

> Nevertheless Mr. K. is a man of talent, and we think not insensible to those admirable displays of human character, and all those varied excellencies which are to be found in Shakespeare. In those parts where there is no tumult of passion, he is generally correct, and the sweetness of the lower tones of his voice break most agreeably on the ear. He has a fine expressive eye, which is never idle, and some of his steady, fixed looks of affection, remind us of one of the richest traits of Kemble's acting. His Sir Edward Mortimer and Sir Giles Overreach are calculated to show his merits, while they give little scope for his errors. They are in our opinion his best parts, and we have witnessed his exertion in these characters with no stinted pleasure.

Finally, A New-Yorker concludes his article by rhapsodizing the skills and merits of Cooper.

> Mr. Cooper offers himself to our notice with the most admirable personal advantages. He has a fine form, graceful gesture, a most powerful and musical voice, a countenance manly, noble and expessive--We imagine that no actor ever brought to the stage so great physical capacity. Garrick was below the middle size, while Kemble had a tremulous, perhaps a whining voice. To a cultivated taste Mr. Cooper adds an enunciation most clear and distinct. Study seems to

> have ripened his delivery into a classic dignity, which by some is deemed too formal and stately. The extravagance of youth is passed away, and he seems to afford us the fairest model of chaste, natural and correct personation. He despises trick, and sacrifices a round of applause to the "modesty of nature." His "feeling" is denied only by those who have no responsive chord in their own bosoms . . . In Othello, Macbeth, Beverly and Brutus, Mr. Cooper almost loses his individual personality, and transfers his whole soul into the character--he becomes roused by the same passions and agitated by the same fears, that the poet has thought at to impress, on the creation of his fancy. If we would even stop here, his unequalled "Leon" would reproach us. His amazing comic power, his irresistible awkwardness, which seems to find its way to the fingers ends, his complete and uncontestable transformation of expression, constitutes a performance, we think, without a rival.
>
> With powers and energies like these, Mr. Cooper might claim an elevated place on the stage of any country. Faults he undoubtedly has--but they are by no means sufficient to neutralize his general excellence. He stands at this moment on a proud elevation of fame, looking down on his compeers either in England or America. The glory and reputation of Mr. C. will remain, when we have learned to appreciate them by his loss, and when all the ephemeral applause which folly, or the ignorant fashion of the day, may lavish on a new face, or a specious but delusive imposture shall have passed into the obscurity prepared for its authors.[12]

In response to A New-Yorker's negative remarks about Kean, a "Knickerbocker," as he called himself, wrote an article, which was published on January 12 in the Evening Post, extolling Coleman's position while disavowing A New-Yorker's assertions:

> Monopoly stints the growth of excellence in every profession: but in none is it so absurd and pernicious, as in the dramatic. It would indeed, be unfortunate for the American stage, if an actor should obtain such a place in the public partiality, as to exclude foreign talent from participation, or leave it to melt its way through the ice of prejudiced criticism. Our country has not been bountiful in the production of theatrical talents: and there is nothing which we can better afford to obtain from

other countries, and nothing perhaps, to whose importation, we can offer so little encouragement. Let us therefore, give it, when it favors us with a visit, a kind, a warm, and a generous reception.

A writer in last evening's Post [January 11], has thought proper to institute a formal comparison of the merits of Mr. Kean and Mr. Cooper. I am happy to see, sir [Coleman], that the nature and spirit of his remarks, do not meet your approbation. Aware that Mr. Kean is the pupil of nature, he undertakes in the beginning, to prove to us, that tragedy is something superior to mere nature . . . Fielding has born testimony to what Garrick was: and Shakespeare has told us what an actor should be, "Whose end, both at the first, and now, was, and is, to hold, as t'were, the mirror up to nature: to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time, her form and pressure." Mr. Kean can ask for no higher praise, than that he resembles the immortal Garrick, nor wish for any other approbation, than that which is bestowed by the eternal judgment of Shakespeare. Nature is the only criterion of acting: and if there is any shadow of justice in the remarks of A New-Yorker, on the stateliness and dignity of tragedy, it is only where they appear in the personation of Roman characters. Indeed no other instances are produced by that writer. There is a loftiness about the Roman character, which may excuse, though it does not require a departure from nature. Nothing, however, but our classical associations, and the almost irrestible delusion that the Romans were a superior order of men, could excuse it. The genius of John Kemble, who, it is well known, made the Roman character his particular and ardent study, gained a popularity for the artificial dignity of its representation, and his success enabled him to translate too much of the same style of acting into the personation of his more modern characters.

But it seems one cannot be allowed to have any "strength of mind," or any "opinion of his own," who can be guilty of being, at the same time, both an admirer of Mr. Kean and Mr. Cooper. "You must admire Mr. Cooper, and you must not admire Mr. Kean"--An ungentle proscription this--to compel us to take physic, and allow us no gargle.

From your correspondent, it should seem, that Mr. Kean tried the experiment of imitating Mr. Kemble at the Provincial theatres, and found it would not do--so he went to London and set up for himself. Now, sir, I am not a travelled gentleman, all my facts are gathered, and the delivery of my perception and refinement of my taste," I am almost ashamed to say

it, have been entirely formed on this side of the Atlantic--yes, in degenerate America. But I am well informed that such is not the fact, by persons well acquainted with Mr. Kean's history; and no man, I should suppose, who had ever seen Mr. Kean would be persuaded that he was ever an imitator. He must have been an ungrateful son to have so much abused those original talents, which nature has so liberally endowed him.

The last remark of your correspondent, which I have time to notice, contains a discovery, which would have made Domine Sampson exclaim, "Prodigious," "Mr. Kean's style of acting is founded on his own physical defects." This, to be sure, is a new way to make a great actor.--From the celeriety [sic] which Mr. Kean has attained in New York, by means of his apopolectic voice, ungraceful action, diminutive person, and hysterical laugh, one might expect, that if a dumb, clumsy, dwarfish idiot should make his appearance on our boards, he would certainly reach the very pinnacle of fame.[13]

The confrontation between the American and the Evening Post intensified on 12 January 1820, when the American censured Coleman's decision to disown statements made by A New-Yorker the previous day (January 11):

> The best general theatrical critique we have lately seen appeared in the Evening Post of yesterday [January 11], accompanied with a protest in general terms by the editor. We would ask Mr. Coleman whether he does not consider it a duty to his readers to reject an article which he thinks calculated to give a wrong bias to their taste, or to accompany it with such strictures as may serve to counteract its tendency? Mr. Coleman has indulged in much vague ecstasy respecting Mr. Kean, but has given no analysis of his performance, to show in what the superior merit of the actor consists--he has now an opportunity of doing so with advantage, and we look with some impatience for an elaborate criticism from this great censor of the Drama, who has supplied the only good things on the subject (according to Mr. Walsh)[14] who hints, however, at being able to give something better himself.
>
> In stating yesterday that the loss at Drury Lane Theatre, during Mr. Kean's engagement, had been 9,000 pounds, we should have been more particular in saying that this loss accrued, during the first season of his engagement in London, while he was yet a novelty, and according to his puffers [a reference to audience

> members or critics who overly eulogize a performer, particularly associated with Kean], a sort of prodigy.[14]

Although most journals and playgoers had acclaimed Kean as the "greatest creature they ever saw," the American remained steadfast in its position that Kean did not deserve undue applause: and, more importantly, he did not meet the standards of their favorite, Thomas Abthorpe Cooper. Fortunately, Kean was supported by the Evening Post and the National Advocate which helped to give Kean his successful first season in New York.

CHAPTER VI

KEAN'S FIRST ENGAGEMENT IN BOSTON

After being warmly received in Philadelphia,[1] Kean went to Boston. Kean wrote in his "MS Diary of his visit to America," that he "arrived in Boston--Friday Feb^{y} 4th--1821."[2] William W. Clapp, the editor of the Boston Evening Gazette, recalls the excitement about Kean's impending visit to Boston:

> The announcement that Kean was to appear in Boston created an excitement quite equalling--when we take into consideration--the population of the city--that caused by the notice of Jenny Lind's[3] approach to our shores.[4]

Even though most Bostonians curiously awaited Kean's arrival, Buckingham's New-England Galaxy was not impressed with the "extravagant comment and oceans of eulogy," which preceded his visit:

> Notwithstanding all that may be said in praise of Mr. Kean, we still doubt the omnipotent of his genius, If half were true that is said of him, he never would have left London--although it is asserted that even there, during his engagement the losses of Drury-lane Theatre were 9000 pounds.[5]

The managers of the Federal Street Theatre, Messrs. Powell and Dickson, engaged Kean "for eight nights,"[6] with a benefit a ninth night. According to Clapp, Kean

"shared with the managers after $1000 per week, . . . and the engagement resulted in his adding to his treasury the neat sum of $3302.68."[7] Because the "rush to see" Kean was so great, "he was re-engaged for six nights more at £50 per night and clear benefit, which gave him $2151.58."[8]

Upon Kean's arrival in Boston, the managers of the Federal Street Theatre prudently decided to limit the sale of boxes to no more than one box per person. This precaution was designed not only to provide adequate seating for all spectators, but, at the same time, to discourage the scalping[9] of tickets.

> Aware of the public curiosity to witness the performances of this celebrated Tragedian, and wishing, as far as possible, to accomodate all, the Managers respectfully announce, that not more than One Box can be taken by any One Person. As the Boxes will contain from eight to twenty each, they presume that this arrangement will meet general approbation, and at the same time prevent that unfair monopoly, which has heretofore been practised by certain individuals, who purchase tickets only for the purpose of selling them again at an advanced price. It rests with the frequenters of the Theatre to remedy this evil, by positively refusing to purchase a Ticket of any one except at the regular price.[10]

Apparently the desire to obtain seats was so great that persons were deliberately employed to procure boxes with

> positive orders to take a stand at the Box-Office on the evening previous to the day assigned for the sale of the tickets, and not to quit their place until the object was obtained. Early in the morning from 2 to 300 people are seen collected near the office--on the opening of which so great is the crowd, and so extreme the pressure, that strong apprehensions of serious consequences have been experienced, though no accident has yet occured.[11]

To this account add this communication by an individual irritated by the "goings on" at the box office:

> Pray tell me Messrs. Editors [of the Boston Patriot], what kind of a man this great English stage player, Kean, is; and what kind of people I am among. I am a plain man; but it appears to me the very spirit of contradiction and madness possesses ye all. Why, there is no accounting for the conduct of any of you.
>
> On Friday [22 February] I accordingly, early in the morning, repaired there [the Theatre] for the purpose of obtaining a ticket; but mercy on my soul, you can have no conception of what I there saw. There were several hundred people crowded round a little one-story building, with each a little piece of paper in his hand; there I was told if I wanted a ticket I must write my name on a similar piece of paper, which I accordingly did. Presently a wooden pane was taken from a window, and then there was such scrambling, such mauling, kicking and swearing; why, sirs, they swore such oaths as almost made my hair stand on end; for my part I was right glad to escape with a whole skin, without getting within two rods of the little hole in the window, where I was directed to deposit my little piece of paper. Bless me, I got such a squeezing as will make the very thoughts of a Theatre throw me into a cold sweat for years to come.

And, besides

> what puzzles me more than all the rest is, that all your critics (and I believe you have a nation many of them here in your town, for we have no less than seventeen in the house where I board) denounce him as no actor; yes, sirs, positively as a mere baby compared to Cook or Cooper.[12]

As Kean "was welcomed and received with bursts of applause from" a "full and overflowing" house to witness his first performance on 12 February 1821.[13] For his debut, Kean performed his highly acclaimed Richard III. "The public expectation was never perhaps more strongly excited than it was to witness Mr. Kean's Richard on Monday evening," said the Boston Patriot on February 14.[14] Unhappily, though, the managers plan to avert the

speculation of tickets failed, as "many not active enough to obtain them on the first attempt, paid an extravagant advance to more fortunate possessors, who were inclined to speculate on public curiosity."[15]

In spite of overwhelming support by playgoers, the press's reaction to Kean's Richard was ambivalent. The mixed reception was probably motivated by persistent memories of George Frederick Cooke's personation of the Crookback, and, most of all, by Kean's novel acting style and his supposedly unharmonious voice. Although the New-England Palladium and Commercial Advertiser warmly welcomed Kean's Richard, it nevertheless made comparisons between Cooke and Kean:

> It seemed as if the audience, generally, has not assembled to see Kean "pois'd with himself," but to compare him with Cooke. This was a tremendous ordeal for a performer to pass; but we think we are correct in asserting, that, notwithstanding the prejudice that existed in favor of the latter, (for in no city in America, were his talents more highly estimated) Mr. K. both in the reading, and business of the character, seldom proved inferior, was often equal, and in some instances, (particularly the tent scene) surpassed his predecessor.[16]

A communication published in the Daily Advertiser on 17 February 1821, written by a writer who simply identified himself as Z, unequivocally declares Kean's Richard a work of genius:

> We write to those who have seen him, attended to him and understood him--who have been engrossed and absorbed with him in Richard. Was not Mr. Kean in that almost preternatural character, entirely dispossessed of himself and totally possessed of his audience? Was he not a true representative of this "Arch Felon"?

> His unceasing occupation--his unabated despatch to his terrible but constant purposes--the fire with which he undertakes and completes all, are the prominent marks of his great genius in this character.[17]

However, the Daily Advertiser's review on the previous day (February 16), was not as praiseworthy as Z's--finding considerable fault with Kean's execution of the character and his voice:

> To Cooke in Richard succeeds Kean, . . . England considers him the best player living of the character, and this country, the great majority here, will entertain the same opinion.
>
> His person, like Garrick's, is better suited for both tragedy and comedy, than Cooke's, but not so well for tragedy alone . . . His voice is a formidable obstacle . . . It is never clear. Its very first accents strike the ear as those of one hoarse from a cold . . . Before the third act of Richard is through, the articulations are inaudible. You hear a mass of sounds, but no syllable distinctly . . .
>
> One general defect pervades his personation of Richard, and it is feared of other parts, rapidity.--There is a motion too rapid for the eye, and an utterance too rapid for the ear to follow . . . Kean forgets or has no power to follow Hamlet's direction. "In the torrent or whirlwind of your passion you are to beget a smoothness that may give it utterance." Does Kean beget smoothness in a whirlwind?
>
> His conception of the character generally, is identified with Cooke's . . . Each conception is defensible. But Cooke's introduces a brilliant variation to the dialogue, and sustains better the pride and the talent of Richard in his majesty . . .
>
> In the pantomime of the part, Kean is perfect with the exception of too great quickness in movement. His elocution is studied, perhaps too much to be colloquial. Occasionally, his utterance is out of nature altogether. In the battle scene he swells out the word hoarse to the length of a trisyllable; and in the dream scene freeze and horror are sounds the existence of which is alike unnaturaly protracted . . . These liberties in him are obviously wilful sacrifices of the approbation of a few to the applause of the million. Such outrages upon good sense, some contend are proofs of great talent. It is proof of great talent to be able to commit them without exciting derision. In an ordinary actor they would be

> perfectly ludicrous. They constitute in Kean the only defect in the most admirable part of his personation of Richard, the dream scene; in which part, if not greater than Cooke, he is at least fully his equal.[18]

On 14 February 1821 the Boston Patriot issued its report about Kean's Richard. Like the Daily Advertiser, the Patriot questioned Kean's interpretation and performance. "Were the powers of this celebrated performer equal to the excitement, which at such trouble and expense had collected so numerous an assembly?" To this the Patriot replied:

> There can be no question that Mr. Kean brings to his profession a strong and accurate mind; but whether in a search for novelty by which these great parts may be diversified, a new light thrown on what has exhausted the genius of the art, he always improves on his predecessors, may we think, be questioned.--He has a fine eye and flexible obedient features; and his stature though of the middling size, is not an obstacle to his success. But nature, with all these favors, has denied him the power without which no audience can be long delighted. He has the very worst voice we ever heard on the stage. It wholly fails, and is totally un-intelligible when exerted above an ordinary compass; and what seems peculiar, it breaks even in the under tones, and becomes husky and indistinct as much in its inferior as its swelling intonations.
>
> The want of an excellent voice may not be insuperable, but a decidedly bad voice destroys much of the gratification which we are accustomed to expect; . . . Whether it be to this or some other deficiency we cannot say, but certain it is that the play went off rather heavily. There was nothing of that electric effect we had anticipated--no enthusiasm was produced even in that crowded house, and the feelings of the audience were kept alive rather by their expectations than by any positive gratification derived from the scene before them.[19]

Despite its grumblings about Kean's voice, the Patriot nevertheless was able to commend some aspects of Kean's performance, though still tempered by other criticism:

> Mr. Kean's reading is in some parts peculiar. Many passages that have almost invariably been expected to draw forth applause, were passed without notice; and many that had never been peculiarly noticed, acquired a new effect. It was a distinguishing, and to us entirely unexpected circumstance, that neither in soliloquy or dialogue, was there any of that pompous declamation that partakes the nature of an oration, and which is so often and so unnaturally spouted to the audience, instead of being uttered as the musings of man alone, or addressed in conversations to the people about him . . .
>
> Of Mr. Kean's manner we think much more highly in the calm, deliberate scenes, than in those of bustle and action. The beginning of the tent scene was exceedingly fine . . . His horror and the exhaustion produced by fright at entrance of his officers, finely depictured. The starting from his couch, and the hysteric laugh or choaking, or whatever other sensation was expressed or intended to be expressed while he was on his knees, appeared to us to be much more ludicrous than imposing.[20]

On 13 February 1821 Kean followed Richard with his powerful impersonation of the Moor of Venice, in Othello. As before, Kean attracted a brilliant and overflowing house.[21] Th Daily Advertiser's second notice was positive in its estimation of Kean. This time there was no caviling and carping. Kean was simply the genius everyone expected him to be:

> It has been the observation of every one who has studied Shakespeare and has mind enough to comprehend him, that though he plays better than any other author, much of what is choicest in him and distinguishes him from every body else is always lost upon the stage. I had thought so till I saw Mr. Kean's Othello the other night. Much as I have had my feelings wrought up by reading the play, and with all the excitement the character of Othello gives to the imagination, it was poor and tame, compared to what was then embodied and made visible to me.
>
> No one of common discernment could have doubted from the moment he entered upon the stage and spoke the first few simple words, that the part was to be played as we had never seen it before. There was a

> simplicity and truth in Mr. Kean's manner which entirely identified him with the character; and I no more thought of Mr. Kean than if he had that moment been in London. This was felt throughout his whole playing. It was as if he to whom the genius was given to conceive the character of Othello, had by some mighty necromancy conjured him up before our eyes, a living, breathing being, . . . There was an intensity in Mr. Kean's acting from first to last which kept every thought and word up to its utmost, yet not in one instance, was it carried too far. The mind and feelings were not left to a moment's rest. This, being of all powerful passions, held up fast through all their changes. And so intense was it that when a scene was ended, we felt exhausted and prostrated, and thought that no power could bring us to feel any more . . . There was no grimace--no stage declamation--not a word of rant, nor any extravagant gesture--it was nature wrought up to its utmost, and simple, sheer passion . . .
>
> His voice is neither strong nor clear. But I have no hesitation in saying that I never heard low tones with a more impressive seriousness in them, nor was I ever so touched as by his tones of love and grief.--His action was the finest I ever saw. I will not call it graceful--it <u>was</u> graceful--but it was a thousand times more--it was eloquent with every emotion of soul. . . .
>
> This is a slight notice, indeed, of the character of Mr. Kean's playing on Tuesday night. Yet to give a just and complete account of it, would require a thorough analysis of Othello. But it is some delight to every fair mind, to give to genius its due praise, as well as we know how; and learn to admire, not envy, what we can never reach.[22]

Like the <u>Daily Advertiser</u>, the <u>Boston Patriot</u> this time also praised Kean:

> The performance of this character, on Tuesday evening, amply made up for the disappointment experienced the first night of his engagement. Mr. Kean seemed to feel himself more at home on strange boards, and before an audience which, although perhaps not inferior in taste to any in the country, is distinguished rather by the coolness of its discretion than the fervor of its zeal. His third act of Othello we pronounce a masterpiece. His defects, compared with the lustre of its beauties, are but motes in the sum beam; and they who would denominate the effervescence of incontrolable passion to be rant, who would assert that the action and the utterance which

> accompanied the sudden transitions of feeling, were but stage trick, are either incapable of appreciating the excellencies of the actor, or permit the honest dictates of their understanding to be blinded by prejudice.
>
> This gentleman evidently appeared under extreme disadvantages in Richard the Third--and it was unfair to criticise when the performer was dissatisfied with himself. But in Othello, we were furnished with a better opportunity of deciding upon his talents, and the result was manifested that the taste of England and America, so far as it has been tried, is not of that imperfect and vitiated nature which some were prematurely disposed to avow.
>
> The fifth act entire--were examples of acting, unparalled in excellence on the Boston stage, to say nothing of the beauty of his attitudes, the correctness of his reading, or the general character of his gesticulation.[23]

Our mysterious Mr. Z returned on 17 February 1821 with another communication for the Boston Patroit. This time he extolled Kean's meritorious efforts as Othello and attempted to allay misconceptions about his voice:

> Mr. Kean's powers as a tragedian were still more vast and profound in Othello. The characteristics of his greatness and unapproached excellence in the two last acts, lay so deep in the minds of an audience, who we believe were, but as one, in admiration, that we refrain from pointing them out. As a great deal has been said concerning the dryness of Mr. Kean's voice, we cannot resist giving a forcible proof of the error of this assertion. His voice wants volume. When pitched too high or too low it becomes harsh or croakes; but when it is on an even key, it is most sweet and touching. We take only the passage where Othello bids farewell to his former occupation and peace of mind.
>
> "O now forever farewell," &c.
>
> The utterance of this was so harmonious, and there was such a mysterious confluence of sounds in it, that "the shrill trump--the spirit stirring drum--the ear piercing fife" were playing in a distant concert on the ear.[24]

And on 15 February 1821 the New-England Palladium and Commercial Advertiser posted a favorable review of Kean's Othello with some statements comparing Kean's performance to that of Cooper's:

> On Tuesday, Mr. Kean performed the character of Othello, and had again to encounter a torrent of prejudice, in favour of Mr. Cooper, whose chef d'ouvre is undoubtedly the Moor of Venice. It may appear paradoxical, but it is nevertheless fact, that although Mr. K. and Mr. C. are not alike in the performance of any one scene in the tragedy, yet they are both excellent. The satisfaction of the audience was expressed this evening, by loud and reiterated applause, and frequent cries of bravo, bravo! from both boxes and pit.[25]

Because of "the unprecedented demand for tickets" for Kean's first performance as Richard III, "many families and individuals, were disappointed," having been turned away from the box-office.[26] To remedy this situation, Kean repeated his performance as Richard on 15 February 1821, to which was added, "the favorite Musical Afterpiece, called Of Age To-Morrow."[27] For his second performance as Richard, the house was "crowded with intelligence, taste, and beauty," and he was "peculiarly successful in his personation of Richard."[28]

On 16 February 1821 Kean played Shylock in the Merchant of Venice. Aurelian, writing for the Boston Patriot, felt that Kean's "execution was accurate and powerful," but unnatural:

> Mr. Kean's conception of Shylock is essentially different from his predecessors. He is no immitator, and claims in many respects the credit of novelty. He makes the character more odious. He represents the most infernal villain that ever trod the earth, and

> gives to this dark and horrible picture the relief of no single trait of goodness or feeling; and as it is susceptible of no elevation in point of talent, the Jew that he represents is the most vile and detestable monster that ever called himself man. We have no sympathy for such a being. . . .
>
> Such extravagance of delineation does not seem to us to be natural . . . Savageness and ferocity without one alleviating trait of kindness or any gentle emotion, are descriptive of no state or condition of life, of no class or nation, of no sect or individual.[29]

After remarking on some of Kean's disagreeable readings, Aurelian said:

> Mr. Kean is unquestionably considered as at the head of his profession in England, and as filling the place of the successors of Garrick, before the critical and refined audience of a British metropolis . . . We have then some standard by which to ascertain the correctness of our own taste, and to determine whether in those performances we have formerly admired, we have been pleased with humble and inferior talent and given the character of excellence to the exertions of humble mediocrity.[30]

The Daily Advertiser's account of Kean's Shylock merely stated that he "excelled," especially in the "trial scene."[31]

On 19 February 1821 Kean personated Hamlet. After the performance, "the favorite Farce, called Fortune's Frolics" was added to the evenings entertainment.[32] The Daily Advertiser reported that "Kean performed Hamlet . . . to the most crowded, splendid, and admiring audience ever before witnessed in our Theatre."[33] The Columbian Centinel added:

> Besides the original excellency of Mr. Kean in Hamlet, the whole play on Monday evening was well sustained. Mrs. Duff in Ophelia was uncommonly impressive; and Mrs. Powell "looked and acted the Queen." Mr. Pelby in Laertes, and Mr. Duff, in

> Horatio, exerted themselves very successfully. The house was brilliant and full.[34]

In two separate communications, dated 21 February 1821 and 23 February 1821, Talma apprises Mr. Hale, the editor of the Daily Advertiser, that among Kean's "numerous merits as a performer, his scrupulous attention to propriety of language, is, . . . not one of the least."[35] for the fortunate who have "seen him act" they "must have observed his solicitude to suppress those improper passages, which unfortunately are found in many of our plays," and which are, to say the least, not only immoral but "surely not very consistent with either good taste or politeness."[36] Moveover,

> The best actors we have ever had here, have been careful to suppress and avoid as far as possible, all improper and indelicate expressions or allusions; they have apparently thought it compatible with their profession to appear, while on the stage, as much like gentlemen as possible. Mr. Kean is a present and a striking instance.[37]

In the lone review of Kean's Mortimer in the Iron Chest [February 20] the New-England Palladium exclaimed:

> Mortimer, by this great actor, in the Iron Chest, was, truly speaking, "naked nature and the living truth." Conception or expression could not surpass it.--Fictions seemed lost in reality; and were what we beheld--sympathy associated us with imaginary suffering; its grief, its horrors, and its fears, were all our own!--It was the climax of scenic exhibition, and the highest test of genius,--This part alone, would have established Kean beyond all power of controversy.--He talked to the heart, and spoke with "most miraculous organ."
>
> We feel it would be injustice to select him, in particular scenes; it was a surprising whole.--Still we must advert to the secret conference in the Library, and to that memorable trial and exposition in the hall of justice, as among the most acute,

> appalling, and agonizing pictures ever drawn by the pencil of inspiration. A momentary shock, suspended all breath, and held each pulsation, as it were, in petrified bondage!--The audience seemed to start as from a thralldom; and to simultaneously burst into a fever of admiration.
>
> Kean's minstrelsy lies within the bosom of nature--his harp is in the breast of Humanity; it breathes a music long buried and forgotten;--its chords, at the harper's approach, mingle, by a sort of intuition;--and
>
> "voluntarily move harmonious numbers"
>
> The Passions, as concourses of the minstrels' hand, rise in obedience and intuitively obey the fingers of their "mighty master."[38]

Kean played Macbeth following the Iron Chest on 22 February 1821. On 23 February 1821, Kean portrayed his renowned Sir Giles Overreach in A New Way to Pay Old Debts. Both performances were reviewed by the Columbian Centinel on 24 February 1821.

> On Thursday Mr. Kean played "Macbeth," and last evening "Sir Giles Overreach," in the "New Way to Pay Old Debts." A correspondent assures us, he entirely failed in Macbeth. "Index" enumerates nine defects, and only six excellencies, in his personation.

But

> Has he not omitted a very powerful one?--its animal magnetism--the power of which is continually on the increase, and has produced effects in and out of the theatre, unparalled by anything which has occurred in our day.[39]

Throughout Kean's first seven performances, the unprecendented rush to obtain tickets often resulted in "riotous scenes" at the box office.[40] To prevent the repetition of such proceedings, and perhaps to discourage the purchase of box seats for the sole purpose of reselling them at a profit,

> the Managers directed that the box tickets of the whole lower tier, and fourteen of the second of the row next to the stage . . . be sold at Public Auction.

for Kean's performance in A New Way to Pay Old Debts.[41] "The premiums for the choice" of boxes "to be appropriated to the Massachusetts General Hospital," and the "sums bidden are exclusive of the dollar paid for each ticket."[42] According to the Columbian Centinel, "the whole sum paid for the choice" of boxes amounted "to 400.50."[43] Because of the resounding success of their plan, the managers happily notified the public that they planned to continue the sale of boxes at auction, and donate the "proceeds to [various] Charitable Institutions," for the remainder of Kean's engagement.[44] It is very likely that this is the first time that such a scheme was devised which is, to say the least, a tribute to the enormous drawing power of Kean. The box seats were offered for sale "by auction, on the floor of Merchant's Hall,"[45] at 11 o'clock for each of Kean's remaining performances.

For Kean's benefit performance in King Lear on 26 February 1821, which was followed by the "favourite Farce, called The Weathercock,"[46] the premiums were donated to the Boston Dispensary and totalled $563.50.[47] The Centinel reported that the house was "full and overflowing" for this performance.[48] Following Kean's benefit performance, the managers announced that they had

"renewed their engagement with Mr. Kean for Six Nights."[49]

Kean commenced his renewed engagement on 27 February 1821 as Sir Edward Mortimer in the Iron Chest. Because of "some causes"[50] the sums paid for box seats amounted to only "136 dollars."[51] In spite of this, however, Kean's performance still attracted a full house. The Boston Patriot "did not hesitate" in pronouncing his Mortimer a consummate piece of acting:

> It is not often that we see acting, properly so called. We mean by this something more than the dress and voice and strut of an ordinary mechanical player, a man tricked out in the green room to support his part, that is, all that part of it, which is on his shoulders . . . the character is stamped in every feature of his countenance, yet still under different aspects, now concealing, then choaking with his passion; exhibiting on every occasion in some form or other, the effect of passion on the mind and countenance . . . the personation is perfect; the "Victim of Honor" is acted by Mr. Kean, in a manner which forces on the imagination of the auditor almost a conviction of its reality.[52]

In the same review, the Patriot took issue with those who criticised Kean's voice, saying that although "it is not so full and appalling as the voice of some players," it is nevertheless "better governed and better adapted, by his perfect command of it, to all the variety of tone and accent required, within its compass."[53] And yes, Mr. Kean does have some minor faults, "he has a little of the stage strut, and occasionally overdoes his part;" yet, it cannot "be expected that any performer will, in every respect, realize the expectations of his audience."[54]

The following evening, 28 February 1821, Kean performed Othello. Othello was accompanied by the "favourite Farce, called Where Shall I Dine?"[55]. The Daily Advertiser published a communication about Kean's Othello on March 2. This time, however, the paper was displeased:

> Mr. Kean's Othello is a negro. His visage not merely tawny, like the Moor's but blackened instantly and involuntarily, excites in us that disgust which the likeness of our slaves naturally gives rise to in our imaginations. This enhances a thousand fold, one of the principal difficulties in this admirable drama, that of sympathising fully in the misery of the gentle Desdemona, consequent on her unnatural love, and alliance with one whose complexion her own countrymen, like ourselves, consider the livery of degradation.

Besides this,

> to play Othello demands a manly statute, distinguished dignity, commanding voice, and heroic grandeur, benefitting the military leader whose merits have overcome the prejudices of the most cultivated European nation of the day, and elevated him to the exalted station of their commander in chief.

But, instead, what do we find?

> A diminutive person, ill-bread hurry and bustle, a feeble, broken voice, condemned, according to the poet's execration, "never to answer to his red faced rage; and for heroic grandeur, a cockpit style taunting, that he could fight without a prompter, and most misplaced, ill-timed laugh at the conclusion of his superb, dignified, artful and finished defence before the "most potent, grave and reverend Seignors."

However, we do find that Mr. Kean's Othello

> has its merits, besides those we have already acknowledged--there is a keeping in his character of a furious, savage, black, a perfect truth and force in his passions, and magical transition in his emotions, which will ever rank him among the first performers.[56]

On 5 March 1821 the Boston Patriot published some remarks

that concurred with the Advertiser's "cursory remarker" of 2 March 1820:

> Who that possesses one particle of refinement of taste, but must agree with a "cursory" remarker in the Daily Advertiser of Friday last, that Mr. Kean's darkening his face for Othello, was alike revolting to our sensibilities, and a deviation from the intention of the author. Besides, how ill judged of Mr. Kean, at this moment when the public mind is so much agitated by the Missouri question, to appear before an audience in such a guise as to bring our minds "instantly and involuntarily" to a recollection of a slave population. It is imagined by some that Mr. Kean adopted this course in consideration for those, who, seated in the back seats of the boxes, might have their view of him obstructed by the Ostrich feathers, worn by the ladies--deeming that a black face, from a force of contrast, would be distinctly visible through white down plumage. However charitable this construction for Mr. Kean it is by no means satisfactory to us . . . Allowing that "Mr. Kean's Othello is a negro," "garbed in the livery of degradation," "blackened instantly and involuntarily," and "condemned never to answer to his red face rage," it "however has its merits, besides those we have already acknowledged"--That "superb, dignified, artful, and finished defence before the most potent, grave and reverend seigniors," was endurable, for in delivering it, he turned his "black" face from the audience.[57]

Kean next performed Brutus on 1 March 1821. No comments, however, appeared in the newspapers. On 28 February 1821 the Columbian Centinel noted that the premiums for the Iron Chest (February 27), Othello (February 28), and Brutus (March 1), were "distributed equally to the asylum for Indigent boys, the Female Asylum, the Society for employing the Poor, and the Howard Benevolent Society."[58]

Following Kean's prformance as Brutus, the New-England Galaxy acknowledged that it could not understand all the fuss that had been made about Kean:

> We have been wished (Heaven forgive us for the impiety!) that we might become subjects of the Kean Fever, that we might know from experience the exquisite delight, it imparts to the senses. But alas! the thickness of our skull, the obtusiveness of our intellect, and above all, the unfashionableness of our "temperment," have hitherto resisted the contagion. We have never been able to perceive any natural beauty in the tricks that Mr. Kean is eternally playing with his fingers, among the ringlets of his hair, and on his forehead; nor have his hoarse ravings, barking and croaking excited any other sensation than that which usually follows the taking of an emetic. But--"heaven's above all"--and as "some souls must be saved"--we hope (no offence to others) that ours will be among the number.[59]

On 23 February 1821 the New-England Galaxy printed a long article written by a correspondent calling himself Mossop. After telling his readers that Kean has distinguished himself "like Mr. Garrick, for having introduced a new style of acting," he then said that after "the lapse of many years," Kean, unlike Garrick, has not been able to disarm "the clamours of honest prejudice."[60] Why, asks Mossop, has Kean been unable to allay the opposition? It must be, says Mossop, that Kean "has some radical defects as an actor."[61] But, in spite of these defects, many critics especially those in New York, have lavished undeserving praise upon him:

> But whatever may be the merits of Mr. Kean, no actor, before his first appearance, ever so excited the curiosity, and engrossed the attention of the people of Boston. As for ourselves, who long ago have given him a liberal credit for his abilities, we waited in anxious suspense to behold the man who has so often been declared the lawful successor of Garrick, and though we did not look for perfection, we expected, superior excellence. Have his performances corresponded with our expectations? We are bound to answer in the negative. Have they been equal to those of the public? We are confident that we speak the

> sentiments of a considerable number, when we say, No.[62]

And what are some of Kean's defects?

> We admire as much as any man his unconstrained air and manner, and we shall feel ourselves indebted to him, if his example should banish from the stage the miserable formality which has so long usurped it. The colloquial style of speaking, which on some occasions he adopts, may sometimes be safely commended; but, though we admit that the sudden changing of his voice, "from the fiercest passion, to the familiar tones of conversation," is often consistent with perfect propriety, we affirm, it is often a gross outrage on nature. His pauses are sometimes natural, but, their frequent occurence betrays a wretched design. They are often so long (we do not judge by the stop watch) as to be tedious in the extreme, and they are not always filled up by any look or any action. Mr. Kean frequently counteracts the influence he has begun to exert upon our feelings, by an unmeaning laugh or cry, which he designs, we presume, to express excess of rage or grief.

Mr. Kean, however, does have one "distinguishing feature" in his acting, and that is,

> without a doubt, his energy. He appears to throw his whole soul into his characters; but, the evidence that he does so, rests principally upon his excessive action.[63]

Mossop followed his February 23 essay with another one on 23 March 1821. In this article,[64] he declared that "Mr. Kean possesses many prominent excellencies as an actor, but that they are accompanied wit great faults and great defects."[65]

Kean repeated his Sir Giles Overreach on 2 March 1821 in A New Way to Pay Old Debts. Unfortunately, there is no recorded comment of this performance. On 5 March 1821, which was the "Last Night, but One of the Engagement of Mr. Kean," Kean presented King Lear.[66] "The comic opera,

called The Poor Soldier," completed the evenings entertainment.[67] The Centinel informed the public that Kean was unable to renew his engagement, at this time, because of "arrangements to perform in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore."[68] Although Bertram officially terminated Kean's engagement on 6 March 1821 it was followed by his benefit performance (March 7) in the rarely performed tragedy, "called the Distressed Mother," not seen in Boston "for 15 years."[69] Kean enacted the character of Orestes in the Distressed Mother, which was followed by "a Petit Comedy, in 1 act, called Ladies at Home.[70]

After his performance of Orestes in the Distressed Mother, "loud calls of 'Kean,' 'Kean," resounded "from every part of the house," and "were answered by his reappearance on the stage."[71] He, then, addressed the audience:

> Ladies and Gentlemen--I am sorry it is not in my power, to comply with what I understand is the general wish, of extending my engagement for another night; but in a very short interval of time I again shall have the honor of offering myself a candidate for your further favors. In expressing my acknowledgements for the great attentions paid to me in Boston, I must say, that this extraordinary need of my exertions was rather my hope than my expectation.--The justly acquired character of this town as the Literary Emporium of the new world, must fill the breast of an adventurer with feelings of anxiety and apprehension, and under such influences had I the honor of first presenting my humble talents to your investigation. The result has exceeded my most sanguine expectation; and your approbation comes with double relish, as I am convinced the ingredients have been examined with Philological precision. I hope, Ladies and Gentlemen, that on my return by endeavoring to deserve, I shall

> obtain a continuation of this flattering attention and encouragement; till which time, I respectfully and gratefully take my leave![72]

Upon hearing Kean's address, the New-England Palladium said the following about his "compliment" to the citizens of Boston:

> This compliment, from so great a man, will unquestionably establish our literary reputation; and we shall expect to hear no more of the vile slanders of the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews, Blackwood's Magazine. &c.[73] Our only fear is that those wicked and envious wags the New Yorkers, will, in "some pliant hour," draw from Mr. Kean a similar compliment on their city; in which case nothing short of a civil war will be the consequence. If such a contest should ensue, Heaven send us a good deliverance.[74]

The premium bid for the box seats at Kean's benefit "was $640. The highest price of a choice of boxes, was $38. And the lowest price given for any box in the lower row, was $17. The lowest premium for a box in the second row, was $6."[75] "This amount," said the Daily Advertiser, "is exclusive of the regular price of tickets."[76] According to the Columbian Centinel

> the whole amount of the premium bidden for the nine nights, was $3000. 75 cents; the receipts of which have been distributed to the under Benevolent Institutions: --
>
> To the General Hospital,--$390
> Boston Dispensary---------$550
> Reimbursement of the losses
> at the Theatre Fire-------$500
> And to the following institutions, viz:--
> Asylum for Indigent Boys --Female Asylum--Society for Employing the Poor--Howard Benevolent Society--Fatherless and Widows Society--Fragment Society--Poor Prisoners in jail--Friendly Female Sewing Society--British Benevolent Society--Scotch do. do.--Irish do. do.--Grand Lodge Charity Fund--In various sums, from $90 to $20, absorbing the whole amount, excepting incidental charges.[77]

The New-England Palladium, on 9 March 1821, posited the opinion that "had the same mode of disposing the boxes been adopted at the commencement of Mr. Kean's engagement, it is supposed about $2000 more would have been obtained."[78] On 8 March 1821 a communication was sent to the Boston Patriot, by "One who has known Mr. Kean, only on the Stage," requesting that Kean should be accorded some honor to reward him for the generous donations made to the various charities:

> As so many charitable institutions have lately reaped great benefits from the competition for seats in the Theatre, created by the universal and strong desire in the public to witness the splendid displays of talent exhibited by this celebrated actor; and as his reputation and genius may fairly be considered the source of all these advantages, would it not be a deserved compliment to this gentleman, that these institutions should join in presenting him with a piece of plate with appropriate inscriptions, or in honoring him with some notice of this nature . . . We think such a compliment would reflect great credit on those institutions; would display a proper admiration of talents, and a spirit of liberality in this part of the country; and would unquestionably be more gratifying to the feelings of a man like Mr. Kean than public dinners or any ostentatious displays.[79]

The various charitable institutions were not the only ones who benefited from Kean's engagement, Kean himself "gained 5000 dollars by his visit" to Boston.[80] Kean recorded in his "MS Diary of his visit to America," on

> tuesday--6th of March Received from the hands of Mr. Tibsten from the Managers four thousand four hundred & fourty four dollars. Making one thousand pounds Sterling--in New England Bank March 6th 1821
> "Pay to the order of Le Roy & Bayard"
> "Four thousand, four hundred-forty four dollars" to the cashier of the--------Bank.[81]

And upon his arrival in New York, after completing his Boston engagement, Kean entered the following in his "American Diary:"

> New York--March 10th arrived from Boston, & placed in the hands of Le Roy & Bayard--1100 L Sterling.[82]

The management of the Federal Street theatre also reaped benefits from Kean's prosperous engagements by taking in "forty-five hundred dollars," which was "cheerfully expended during his short visit, to obtain a preference of seats, and an opportunity to witness his representations."[83]

About Kean's departure from Boston on 8 March 1821, the Columbian Centinel related the following:

> We add, with pleasure, that during his stay here, Mr. Kean has received invitations to visit our first circles, and been noticed by our most distinguished citizens; and, notwithstanding it was not known that he was to leave town on Thursday [March 8], immediately after his carriage reached the lodgings, it was surrounded by several hundred citizens who, on his departure, gave him a round of hearty cheers. Thus much we have deemed it our duty to state, as a small return for the gratification we have received from his performances.[84]

On 31 March 1821, the Columbian Centinel presented a poem, written by one "Yankee Doodle," "on Mr. Kean receiving three cheers on his departure from the 'populace of Boston,' in return for three thousand dollars, bestowed on them from the extra profits of the Theatre during his performances."[85]

> Keen are the Boston folks as I have heard say
> They know which side their bread is butter'd--Hey!
> For though a Keen one came to deal with them,
> They were to Kean for him I guess--ahem!

'Twas diamond against diamond--cut and slash;
They gave him praises and he brought them cash:
They got three thousand dollars it appears.
And he--God help poor Kean--got three loud cheers!
"Twas a tight bargain, faith on either side,
And worthy to be copied far and wide.
Since Kean gave nothing of his own away.
Which they with less than nothing did repay.[86]

In response to those critics who had "assailed" some of Kean's performances, in spite of the immeasurable success of his engagements--drawing and captivating audiences as no performer had ever done before in Boston, the Columbian Centinel printed these comments:

> Mr. Kean, the English Roscius, closed a very interesting successful, and, we hope, profitable engagement in this town, on Wednesday Evening [March 7] . . . The attraction of his peculiar talent and tact, continued to increase in power from his first representation to the last act of his performances. The boxes and pit were continually crowded, and the interest to obtain tickets has never been equalled in this place . . . The intelligence, science, taste and beauty of this town, and vicinity, were constant and delighted auditors and spectators of them [his representations]. This constancy of attendance and patronage is considered the best comment on the criticisms and hypercriticisms, which have assailed his performances, of many who but imperfectly saw them, or were determined to condemn them before seen [such as the New-England Galaxy]. the great body of the community was resolved to be eye and ear witnesses--of his "mannerisms," his "bursting impetuosities," his "hurried flows," "fiery activity," "sarcastic murmurings," and "rancorous snarlings."--his "pauses," his "inflections of voice," and "gladatorial battle deaths." They heard and saw what have thus been denominated, and they were satisfied they were the "mannerisms,"and "pauses" and exhibitions of genius, and profound knowledge of human action in extraordinary cases; and seeing and hearing, were resolved to see and hear again. They were satisfied they could better rely on his mature observation and high responsibility, than on their own conception of the personified characters, or on the clouds of irresponsible, hypercritical locusts, which so often attempt to obscure the sun of genius and originality.[87]

Perhaps in response to the Centinel's flattering remarks about Kean, the New-England Palladium circulated two protracted articles (one dated 13 March 1821 and the other 20 March 1821) in the latter denouncing Kean's reputation as mere tinsel:

> The great reputation, which, like some herald of triumph, preceded Mr. Kean to this country, and which is urged with a zeal that almost betrays its own fictious source, has not the weight of a feather in our scale of estimation--because it presented itself in a doubtful shape, with no other credentials than the reported shouts of a multitude, as often evoked by questionable as by fair means, and recorded encomiums too inflated to be received as proofs of confirmed distinction.[88]

As perhaps not to be outdone by either the Centinel or the Palladium, the Boston Patriot wrote an extensive article listing the primary causes for Kean's resounding success:

> This gentleman, having closed his engagements with the Boston managers, it may not be uninteresting to take a slight view of the causes which have enabled him more than any other actor who has preceded him, at all times to command an overflowing house. One of two things must be true, either Mr. Kean has attractions of a very superior order, or the Boston audience and in fact every audience before whom he has played, are woefully deficient in taste.--The latter position, I presume, no man will venture to maintain. Yet many gentlemen of great critical knowledge, contend, that Mr. K. is far inferior both to Cooke and Cooper. But neither of these gentlemen were able to keep up, for the same length of time, that delerium of admiration, if I may be allowed the expression, which Mr. Kean has. Much may have been done here by the novelty of witnessing an actor of Kean's professional eminence, as the legitimate successor of Garrick and Kemble; and who, with the exception of Talma, stands this day at the head of his profession. But this cannot be all, there must be other causes to which Mr. K. is indebted for his unparalled success. . . .
>
> It is Mr. Kean's wild and original conceptions of his characters, the bold and masterly manner in which

he exhibits his conceptions to the audience; the perfect identity which is maintained throughout the representation of them, which give them so strong a hold on his audience. True, when judged by the rules of fastidious criticism, he is found wanting, and so was Shakespeare and Garrick. To attempt to direct the conceptions and representation of poetic enthusiasm, by the rigid rules of criticism, is as chimerical as to attempt to reason with the whirlwind, and direct the lightnings of Heaven. The very disregard of the rules of criticism, is one among the many causes of his success. Critics may cavil and carp, and promulgate their musty rules as long as they please it is all in vain; the laws of universal nature will prevail, and quickly respond to the masterly hand which strikes the hidden chord of sympathy, which mysteriously connects with heart of all the human family . . . but true genius, disdaining these obstacles, bursts forth in its native energy, and exhibits the grandness and boldness of its conceptions, unrestrained by the forms and modes of those who have gone before.

It is objected to Mr. Kean, that many of his exhibitions of the passions are overdone; but how few of us are qualified to be accurate judges; how few of us have seen those terrible displays of the passions which sometimes take place in life. If there is any man who has been present at one of these terrific scenes, and whose nerves enabled him to look calmly on, we venture to assert that he will tell us that Mr. Kean does not, in these representations overstep the bounds of nature. In speaking of Mr. Kean's performances, in comparison with those of Cooke and Cooper, we ought constantly to bear in mind that one of these gentlemen is dead, and the other an old and favorite actor. The shadow of death passing over friend or foe, softens and ameliorates those defects of character, which, in the life, were subjects of censure and remark. We look upon the character of those who have gone to a happier and better world as upon a distant landscape, whose rough and craggy points appear round and smoothe to the view. The same, with some limitations, may be said of those who have long commended our admiration and respect, and with whose merits we have long been familiar.

We are not among those who believe it impossible fully to appreciate and applaud the merits of one man without derogating from the merits of others. Excellence is not the less worthy of admiration because it may not always happen to be found alone. We doubt whether since the days of Garrick, there has been a man whose genius so well qualified him as does that of Mr. K. to draw on all occasions a full and

> overflowing house. If asked what particular parts of his acting which are calculated to produce this effect, all answer they cannot tell. But we feel, in witnessing his happiest efforts, the witchery and charms of his genius, which compel us to press with eagerness again to witness what has given us so much delight.[89]

Now that Kean had dazzled the Boston populace like no other actor before him, with his peculiar talents and genius, he readied himself for yet another splendid and prosperous engagement in New York.

CHAPTER VII

KEAN'S SECOND NEW YORK ENGAGEMENT

After his successful Boston engagement, Kean entered upon a second New York engagement from 12 March 1821 to 6 April 1821 for a total of nine nights (including his benefit). Kean records in his "Diary" for "March 10th arrived from Boston, & placed in the hands of Le Roy & Bayard-1100£ Sterling."[1] From the contents of the following letter, it is apparent that Kean, while in the United States, was very interested in the goings on at Drury Lane Theatre--particularly the fortunes of any newcomer. Kean, the self-proclaimed monarch of the English stage, was probably concerned about the possibility of someone usurping his crown. Furthermore, from the letter, Kean reveals that he is making lots of money. In the letter, "post-marked" 9 March 1821, Kean tells Charlotte Cox:

> I have received your enchanting little epistle, though I am almost angry with you, to suppose for a moment I could cease to love you. Do believe me, when I tell you, that every hour of absence I feel more and more the influence you have over my heart; one moment I think of my folly in not encouraging your proposal of coming with me, and the next, applaud my fortitude in repelling the foremost of my wishes; but we shall

meet again, sweet. I hear of all the adventures at Drury-lane theatre; in your next tell me their successes, whether the humble spark of talent of the Kean still glows in the dramatic world; or if some unexpected meteor has dazzled the perception to the total extinction of the minor light. I am almost tempted to say, "Come over and tell me all yourself;" but then, you could never return, and I must; besides you would by such an act lose your rank in society, which you are so well qualified to adorn. I fancy I have you near me, and cannot help, boylike, kissing the paper that I know will shortly be in your hands. What project for the summer do you allude to darling? I shall not quit the United States till the following year; I wish you could prevail on some one to come and look after a lost property. On, dear, dear, dear girl, if I had but you in my arms, amidst the acclamation that attend my professional career, I should thank this the promised Elysium (the United States). Everything both on and off the stage, in this country, has exceeded my most sanguine expectations. I am getting a great deal of money, and all is going well. Give my love to my aunt [Tidswell], and tell her I am as prosperous as I wish to be, which I know will be pleasing to her. Remember me with affection and gratitude to sister Ann, and, my dear, dear, dear little girl,

"Doubt that the stars are fire,
Doubt that the sun doth move,
Doubt truth to be a liar,
But never doubt I love."[2]

Apparently Kean was transmitting 1,000 pounds per month to his bankers in England, because in another letter, dated 5 April 1821, Kean writes to Charlotte Cox telling her about his financial success:

How shall I thank my darling little girl, for all her solicitude and affection, and how shall I tell her how much I love her, and how great my desire to have her once more in my arms? in [sic] my heart she reigns triumphant, and ever will reign there, while one pulsation throbs to recollection. Indeed, love, I sincerely repent of my folly in restraining you from your wishes; there is not a night or day passes but some pleasing remembrance makes me say, "if she was but here!" Indeed, Charlotte, I love you--dearly love you, and though I always thought I did, the mortification of abscence most powerfully convinces

> me; your charming letters are a great source of delight and instruction to me, as of course my feelings are deeply interested in the success of Drury-lane. I shall sail from New York to Liverpool on the 16th of next April, anno 1822. Oh, what joy I shall then feel in clasping my dear, dear Charlotte to my heart! You ask me what money I am making; My love, it is almost incredible. I am living in the best of style, travelling magnificently, and transmitting to England one thousand pounds each month. Well, how but how do you do? Are you in health? Are you in spirits? What are your occupations? No flatterers about you, I hope. Do not let any one rival--or, at all events, supersede in your affections. I have now Charlotte, dispassionately and reflectively placed my whole heart and soul upon you!!! It may perhaps be burdensome to you, for I am jealous; - very jealous. I know, as yet, I have no cause; but abscence is sometimes dangerous.[3]

On March 19, Kean wrote a letter to Douglas Kinnaird saying, "I am making money & fame by bushels"[4]--that Elliston should grant him a year's extension of leave; and that if he gets it, will earn him fifteen or sixteen thousand pounds. If he is granted the leave, he would then say, "& then farewell Critics Authors--Greasy Corps of Whistlers."[5]

From the above, it is evident that Kean was making much money with his American engagement; very likely more than he could earn in England.[6]

Except for the National Advocate and New York Evening Post, no other journals covered Kean's performances during his second engagement. This circumstance is a continuation of the trend that had been established during Kean's first engagement.

There is information about admission prices which reflects the possibility that enthusiasm was waning. On

the first day of the second engagement, 12 March 1821, an advertisement appears in the Evening Post that says "the public is respectfully informed, that the admission to the Pit is restored to the original price of 75 cts."[7] However, a curious memo for 13 March 1821 states:

> A correspondent wishes to know why the Pit seats in the Theatre are raised to 75 cents during Mr. Kean's performance. We [the Advocate] cannot answer with any certainty, but presume it is done with the intention of raising the reputation of our city to a level with that of Boston, by applying the additional proceeds to charitable purposes. If this be the case, the result apprehended by our correspondent will not take place.[8]

In 1819, the price of admission to the pit was fifty cents, and the price of admission to box seats one dollar. It was to be presumed, that the price of admission for Kean's first engagement was raised from the standard fifty cents to seventh five cents. Subsequently, the managers raised pit admission prices to, possibly, one dollar during Kean's reengagement. But then, the managers, sensing dwindling attendance, lowered the admission back to the already high seventy five cents. This may explain the complaint made by the above correspondent, because the admission to the pit still remained higher than the customary fifty cents.

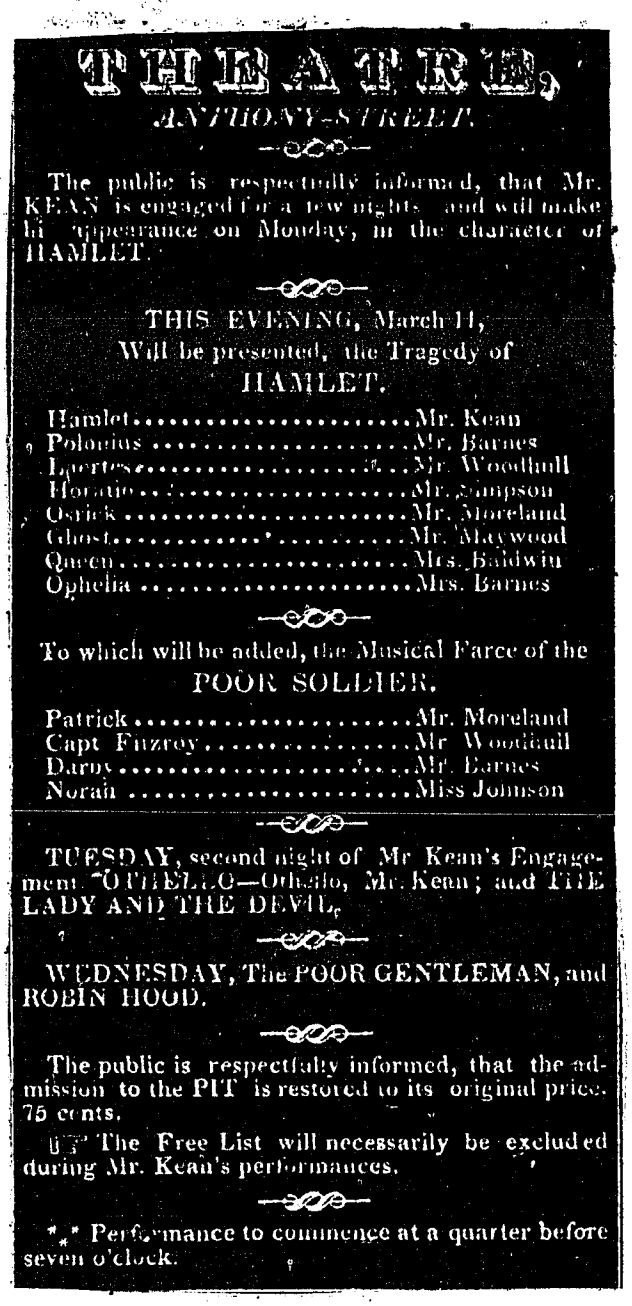
If declining enthusiasm may be given as a viable reason for the diminishing coverage by the press, an 3 April 1821 article, published in the National Advocate, apparently shows that the American's reason for withdrawal may have been linked to admiration of Cooper:

> One of the London magazines takes some notice of Mr. Kean's reception in this city, and states that his excellencies and defects are viewed much in the same light as they were in England. The London writer says, that, from private letters from New York, it appears the only Editor opposed to Mr. Kean is the Editor of the American, and ascribes his hostility to a relationship with Mr. Cooper. It is true that the American has not expressed a favourable opinion of Mr. Kean; we should rather say, that Mr. Kean has not been viewed with that frankness to which his very extraordinary merit entitle him: but we think it is very unfair to ascribe motives so unhandsome to any gentleman, and more unhandsome for any person to write letters to this effect. The press in this country should be free. Men judge for themselves, and put forth that judgment fearlessly to the world. Walsh [editor of Philadelphia's National Gazette] don't admire Kean: but men of more taste and judgment than Walsh, in Boston, think highly of his talents. The American speaks dispraisingly of those parts which the Democratic Press highly extols. Putting our own prepossessions in favour of Kean entirely out of view, and unbiased by his correct and esteemed deportment, we can only say that he will excite great interest wherever he goes; and those who have seen him once perform will unquestionably go again to see him.[9]

As before, the Evening Post remained the only New York newspaper to publish an account of Kean's Hamlet. Of Kean's first performance 12 March 1821 in the new engagement, the Post said:

> Mr. Kean last evening appeared for the first time of his new engagement in the character of Hamlet, and was received by the audience with numerous rounds of applause that made the welkin ring. In our judgment it was the best personation of Hamlet he has ever exhibited in New-York. The low and solemn tones in which his soliloquies were delivered, seemed to reach the heart of every spectator, as was evinced by the agitations and emotions they produced. The scene with Ophelia, which he finished by returning and pressing her hand to his lips, quite electrified the whole audience, and they were not to be hushed short of three distinct rounds of applause.[10]

On 14 March 1821, Kean personated Othello to an



THEATRE,
ANTHONY-STREET.

The public is respectfully informed, that Mr. KEAN is engaged for a few nights and will make his appearance on Monday, in the character of HAMLET.

THIS EVENING, March 11,
Will be presented, the Tragedy of
HAMLET.

Hamlet.....Mr. Kean
Polonius.....Mr. Barnes
Laertes.....Mr. Woodhull
Horatio.....Mr. Simpson
Osrick.....Mr. Moreland
Ghost.....Mr. Maywood
Queen.....Mrs. Baldwin
Ophelia.....Mrs. Barnes

To which will be added, the Musical Farce of the
POOR SOLDIER.

Patrick.....Mr. Moreland
Capt Fitzroy.....Mr Woodhull
Darby.....Mr. Barnes
Norah.....Miss Johnson

TUESDAY, second night of Mr Kean's Engagement. OTHELLO—Othello, Mr. Kean; and THE LADY AND THE DEVIL.

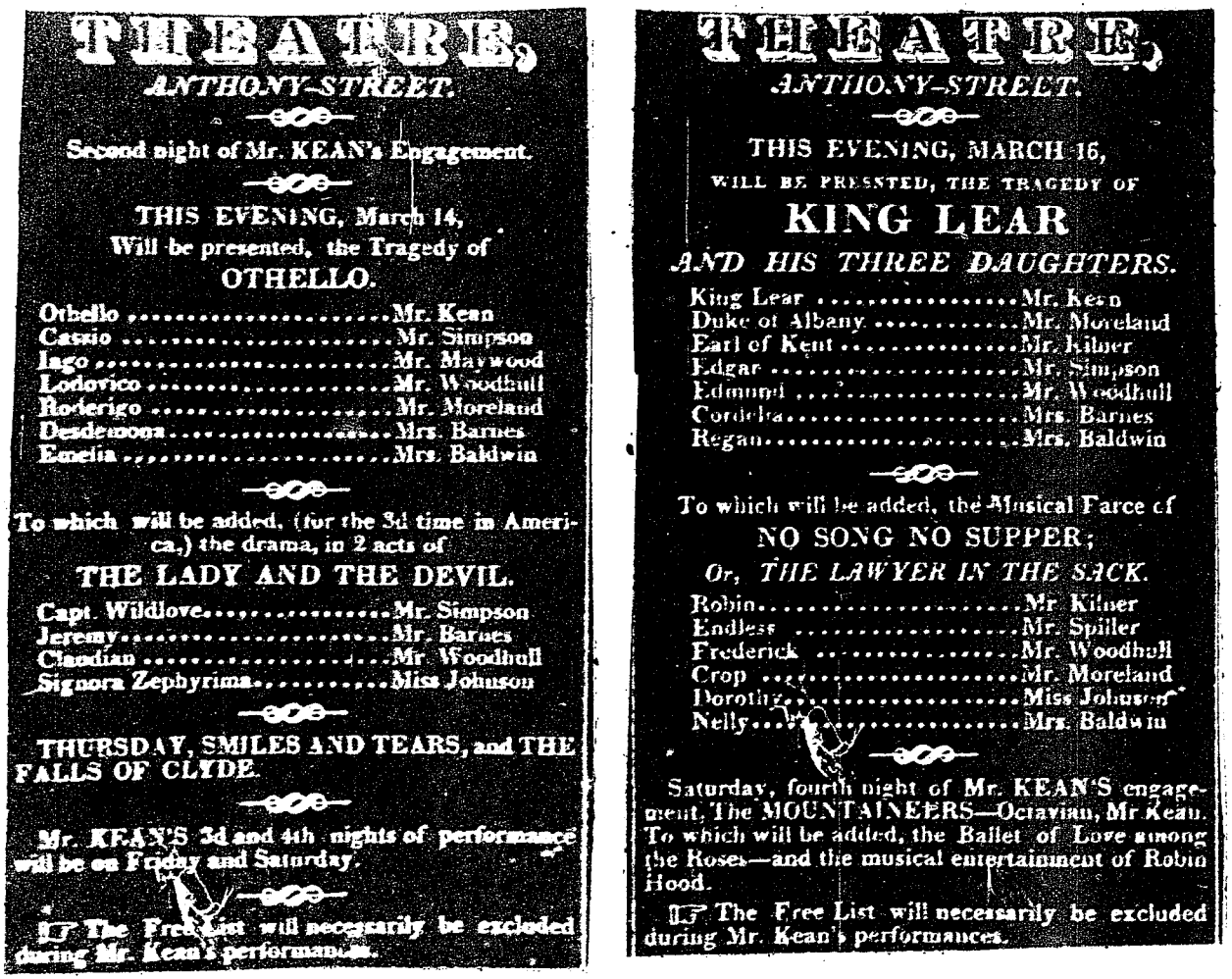
WEDNESDAY, The POOR GENTLEMAN, and ROBIN HOOD.

The public is respectfully informed, that the admission to the PIT is restored to its original price. 75 cents.

☞ The Free List will necessarily be excluded during Mr. Kean's performances.

*** Performance to commence at a quarter before seven o'clock.

Fig. 19. Hamlet advertisement from the New York American. This performance marks the beginning of the second engagement.



THEATRE,
ANTHONY-STREET.

Second night of Mr. KEAN's Engagement.

THIS EVENING, March 14,
Will be presented, the Tragedy of
OTHELLO.

Othello .....Mr. Kean
Cassio .....Mr. Simpson
Iago .....Mr. Maywood
Lodovico .....Mr. Woodhull
Roderigo .....Mr. Moreland
Desdemona .....Mrs. Barnes
Emelia .....Mrs. Baldwin

To which will be added, (for the 3d time in America,) the drama, in 2 acts of
THE LADY AND THE DEVIL.

Capt. Wildlove .....Mr. Simpson
Jeremy .....Mr. Barnes
Claudian .....Mr. Woodhull
Signora Zephyrima .....Miss Johnson

THURSDAY, SMILES AND TEARS, and THE FALLS OF CLYDE.

Mr. KEAN'S 3d and 4th nights of performance will be on Friday and Saturday.

☞ The Free List will necessarily be excluded during Mr. Kean's performances.

THEATRE,
ANTHONY-STREET.

THIS EVENING, MARCH 16,
WILL BE PRESNTED, THE TRAGEDY OF
KING LEAR
AND HIS THREE DAUGHTERS.

King Lear .....Mr. Kean
Duke of Albany .....Mr. Moreland
Earl of Kent .....Mr. Kilner
Edgar .....Mr. Simpson
Edmund .....Mr. Woodhull
Cordelia .....Mrs. Barnes
Regan .....Mrs. Baldwin

To which will be added, the Musical Farce of
NO SONG NO SUPPER;
Or, THE LAWYER IN THE SACK.

Robin .....Mr. Kilner
Endless .....Mr. Spiller
Frederick .....Mr. Woodhull
Crop .....Mr. Moreland
Dorothy .....Miss Johnson
Nelly .....Mrs. Baldwin

Saturday, fourth night of Mr. KEAN'S engagement, The MOUNTAINEERS—Octavian, Mr Kean. To which will be added, the Ballet of Love among the Roses—and the musical entertainment of Robin Hood.

☞ The Free List will necessarily be excluded during Mr. Kean's performances.

Fig. 20.. Othello and King Lear advertisements from the New York American.

enthusiastic audience which included a bevy of "fashionable" females:

> Mr. Kean's Othello attracted a very crowded audience on Wednesday [March 14] Evening; indeed we have seldom witnessed a more fashionable and elegant display of female beauty. We have before noticed the masterly effects of Kean in this character--his second representation was, if possible, more perfect than the first--he entered fully into the part of the character--identified himself with the feelings, passions, and all those extraordinary transitions so remarkable in Othello, producing at times the most enthusiastic bursts of applause. So far from the interest felt in his performance being the least diminished, it appears to have heightned by his absence. He never looked or played better.[11]

On March 16 Kean portrayed King Lear. The Evening Post on 17 March ebulliently declared that Kean's Lear would never be forgotten by the New York audience:

> Last evening Mr. Kean once more appeared before a full and fashionable house in the character of King Lear. It is creditable to the good taste of the town that this play continues to draw the largest and most refined audiences . . . Mr. Kean is the actor, who, alone, since Garrick, is capable of doing complete justice to the author. So closely did he identify himself last evening with the character he personated, from beginning to end, that there could be traced not even a distant resemblance to himself individually, or to any other character in the drama he has ever assumed. He very early excited a high degree of interest, which never flagged to the end. In the course of his personation he exhibited every gradation of human passion and human weakness, affliction and infirmity--whether he exhibited the melting tenderness of parental affection, or the excesses of unrestrained rage; the imbecility of old age, or the paroxism [sic] of passion; the impotency of idiotism or the ravings of phrensy[sic], he was equally faithful to truth and nature. To select passages in support of the justice of these remarks, would be to follow him through the whole play--The imprecation on his daughter Goneril, is the most terrible and appalling that was ever conceived by the imagination of the poet, was uttered with so shuddering an effect that no adequate idea can be conveyed of it by verbal description. His attitude when "grief had crazed his wits," the listless

> position of his arms, and the expression of his face, as he fixed his eyes upon Edgar, disguised, and listened to his ravings, were among the first representations of the drama. In a word, we may say, without reserve, that the powerful exhibition of this character, by this actor, and the effect it produced last evening will never be forgotten by those who have witnessed it. He was regarded by speaking stillness of attention which was only interrupted by applauses which could no longer be restrained, but broke out occasionally in tumultuous plaudits and shouts from every part of the house. It is now apparent, that Lear is, of all his parts, decidedly the favorite of the New-York audience.[12]

The National Advocate did not have much to say about Kean's Lear on 19 March 1821:

> Mr. Kean's Lear attracted an overflowing house on Friday evening; there was no abatement of talent, genius, and exertion; no diminution of interest and sympathy; it was a masterly performance in every scene.[13]

On 22 March 1821 the Advocate published an extensive article congratulations Kean on his success in America. There is only a cursory discussion of some of his performances, with the exception of Lear:

> The professional celebrity acquired in Europe by this gentleman in the histrionic art, has been the passport to an introduction to the lovers of the drama in this country, which I hope will be attended with profit to himself, and delight to the crowded audience, who nightly witness the extraordinary powers of this great actor. The prejudice that existed against the physical defects of Mr. Kean is gradually disappearing, and we unconsciously find ourselves so led astray by the irresistable[sic] powers of his genius, that though we sometimes feel disposed to censure, we find ourselves compelled more frequently to applaud.
>
> It is unecessary to dwell on the different characters which Mr. Kean has performed with such distinguished eclat, in this city. His Richard, Othello, Bertram, Brutus, Shylock, Hamlet, Macbeth, and Lear, have only to be seen to be admired, and once seen will never be forgotten. Whether, in accomplishing the projects of the ambitious

Richard--pourtraying his hypocrisy, or battling in Bosworth field; or racked with the tormenting pangs of jealousy, by which the frank and open hearted Moor is urged to commit the murder of Desdemona.--Whether in Bertram, when he prevails on Imogen to grant him a last interview, or in Brutus, as the stern, and inflexible judge is overcome by the feeling as a father; he seizes on the imaginations of his hearers; and hurries them with him through the various gradations of the passions which influence the characters: nor does the interest flag, or magic spell dissolve, until we are roused from this breathless attention by the rapturous applause of an admiring audience.

It is not our intention at this time, to enter into a critical detail of Mr. Kean's performances, though we cannot forbear adverting to a few of the most prominent beauties observable in the presentation of Lear. This character is peculiarly adapted to the powers of this gentleman; and here those sudden transitions from hate to tenderness, from boisterous rage to overwhelming pathos, were given with an effect we will venture to say, never before seen on our boards. To those who have never had an opportunity of witnessing his voice and manner, when pronouncing the awful curse on Goneril,

> that she may feel
> How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is! To have a thankless child,"

these remarks are intended directly to apply; and we would advise them, as we have often done, not to delay enriching their stock of ideas concerning the plays of the immortal bard, as we have no other actor in this country capable of giving his conceptions of character, so proper and astonishing an effect.

We have frequently heard a few of the opponents of Kean's manner of acting (and we respect their judgment too well not to notice their objections) speak in rather a doubtful manner of his hysteric laugh, as particularly bordering so much between a laugh and a cry, as to leave the hearer in doubt whether it was intended for the one or the other--But here we beg leave to differ; we have felt our blood so tingle, when he declares "Othello's occupations gone," and in Lear, where he bursts from his unnatural daughters with the same horrible manner, that we question whether anything Mr. Kean says or does, can so rivit the attention. Let them but see his Octavian, and hear this "maniac laugh" or his interview with Floranthe, when madness yields to returning reason,

> and say how they can remain unmoved at this chef d'ouvre of his art.[14]

Kean followed King Lear with a performance of Octavian in the Mountaineers (by Charles Colman the Younger) on 17 March 1821. Of this performance, the National Advocate briefly remarked that Kean

> appeared in Octavian [the Mountaneers], a short but highly interesting part exhibiting new beauties in almost every line. The madness of Lear and Octavian is peculiarly distinct; the one overpowered with age and misfortune, the other frantic in youth and desperate in love; and the distinction was admirably preserved throughout both parts.[15]

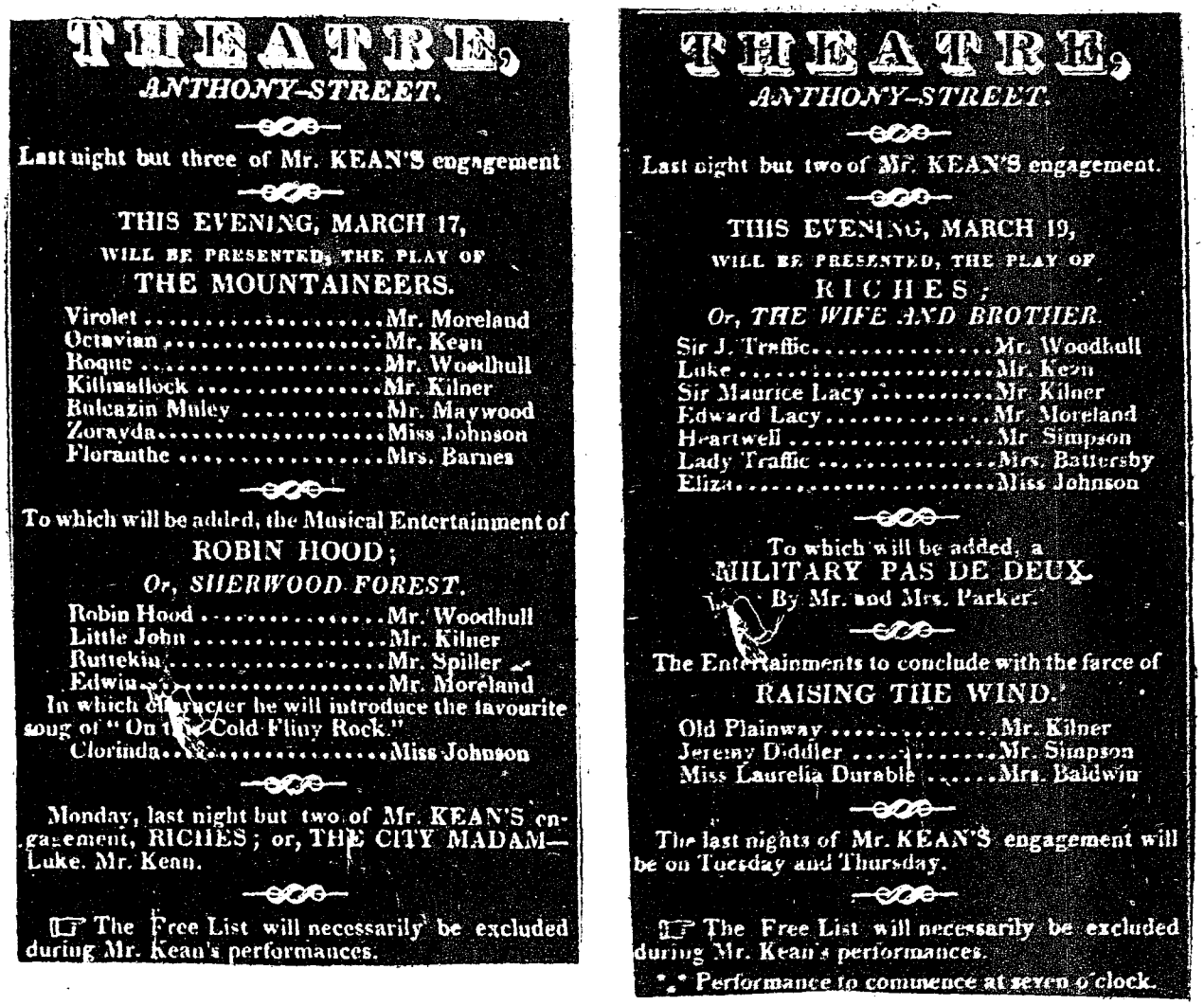
On 19 March 1821 Kean personated Luke in Philip Massinger's Riches; and on March 20 he enacted Brutus in the play of the same name by John Howard Payne. Neither performance was reviewed by either the Evening Post or the National Advocate.

Following Brutus, Kean portrayed Bertram (by Charles Robert Maturin) on 22 March 1821. On 26 March 1821, the National Advocate presented the only account of Kean's Bertram:

> We should not omit noticing the repetition of Bertram, which excites uncommon interest and applause. In that passage where the infant of Imogene first breaks upon his sight, and where after an expressive pause he exclaims "God bless thee my Child," his opponents and warm admirers united in declaring that it was the greatest his ever before witnessed.[16]

On 23 March 1821 Kean repeated for the fourth time his favorite role, Richard III. As usual, the press was enthralled with his portrayal. This time, the National Advocate emphatically states that Kean's Richard The Third

> has never been equalled--he exerted all his powers--his dream, and his fight with Richmond, and



THEATRE,
ANTHONY-STREET.

Last night but three of Mr. KEAN'S engagement

THIS EVENING, MARCH 17,
WILL BE PRESENTED, THE PLAY OF
THE MOUNTAINEERS.

Virolet ..... Mr. Moreland
Octavian ..... Mr. Kean
Roque ..... Mr. Woodhull
Kilmallock ..... Mr. Kilner
Bulcazin Muley ..... Mr. Maywood
Zorayda ..... Miss Johnson
Floranthe ..... Mrs. Barnes

To which will be added, the Musical Entertainment of
ROBIN HOOD;
Or, SHERWOOD FOREST.

Robin Hood ..... Mr. Woodhull
Little John ..... Mr. Kilner
Ruttekin ..... Mr. Spiller
Edwin ..... Mr. Moreland
In which character he will introduce the favourite song of "On the Cold Fliny Rock."
Clorinda ..... Miss Johnson

Monday, last night but two of Mr. KEAN'S engagement, RICHES; or, THE CITY MADAM—Luke. Mr. Kean.

☞ The Free List will necessarily be excluded during Mr. Kean's performances.

THEATRE,
ANTHONY-STREET.

Last night but two of Mr. KEAN'S engagement.

THIS EVENING, MARCH 19,
WILL BE PRESENTED, THE PLAY OF
RICHES;
Or, THE WIFE AND BROTHER.

Sir J. Traffic ..... Mr. Woodhull
Luke ..... Mr. Kean
Sir Maurice Lacy ..... Mr. Kilner
Edward Lacy ..... Mr. Moreland
Heartwell ..... Mr. Simpson
Lady Traffic ..... Mrs. Battersby
Eliza ..... Miss Johnson

To which will be added, a
MILITARY PAS DE DEUX,
By Mr. and Mrs. Parker.

The Entertainments to conclude with the farce of
RAISING THE WIND.

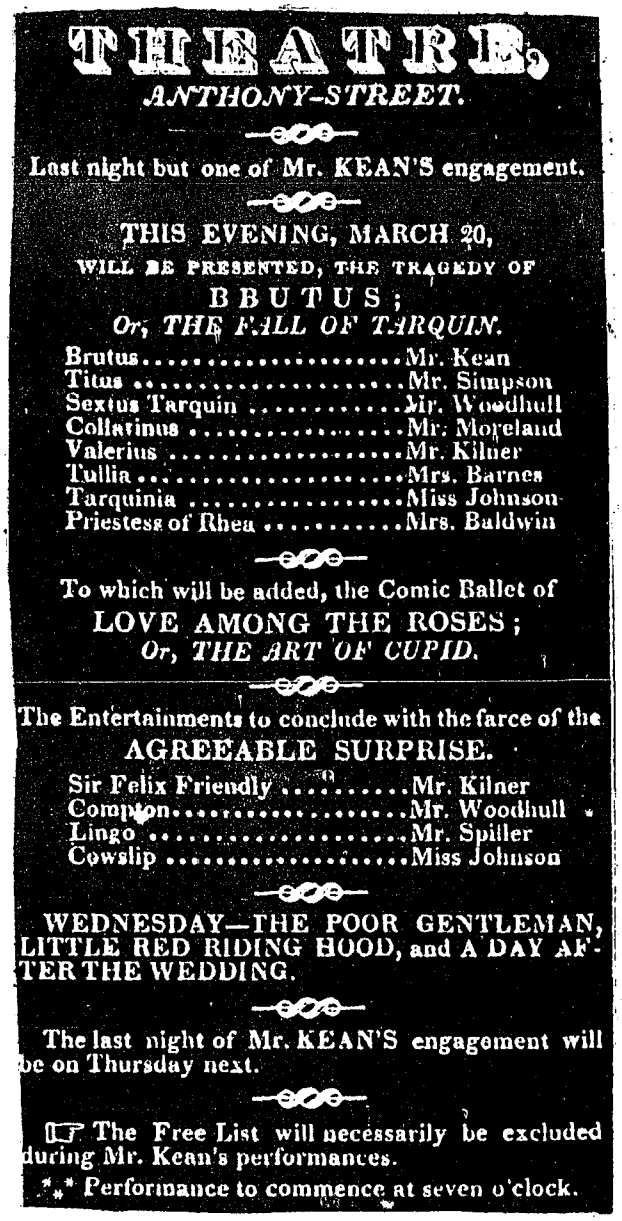
Old Plainway ..... Mr. Kilner
Jeremy Diddler ..... Mr. Simpson
Miss Laurelia Durable ..... Mrs. Baldwin

The last nights of Mr. KEAN'S engagement will be on Tuesday and Thursday.

☞ The Free List will necessarily be excluded during Mr. Kean's performances.

. Performance to commence at seven o'clock.

Fig. 21. The Mountaineers and Riches advertisements from the New York American.



THEATRE,
ANTHONY-STREET.

Last night but one of Mr. KEAN'S engagement.

THIS EVENING, MARCH 20,
WILL BE PRESENTED, THE TRAGEDY OF
BBUTUS;
Or, THE FALL OF TARQUIN.

Brutus.....Mr. Kean
Titus.....Mr. Simpson
Sextus Tarquin.....Mr. Woodhull
Collatinus.....Mr. Moreland
Valerius.....Mr. Kilner
Tullia.....Mrs. Barnes
Tarquinia.....Miss Johnson
Priestess of Rhea.....Mrs. Baldwin

To which will be added, the Comic Ballet of
LOVE AMONG THE ROSES;
Or, THE ART OF CUPID.

The Entertainments to conclude with the farce of the
AGREEABLE SURPRISE.

Sir Felix Friendly.....Mr. Kilner
Compton.....Mr. Woodhull
Lingo.....Mr. Spiller
Cowslip.....Miss Johnson

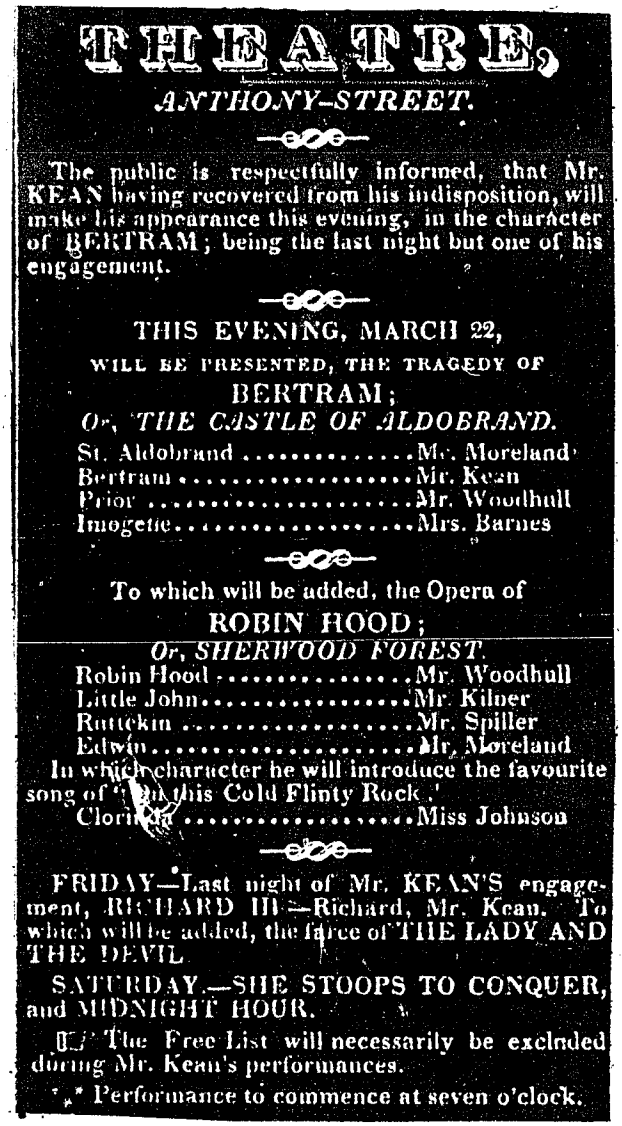
WEDNESDAY—THE POOR GENTLEMAN, LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD, and A DAY AFTER THE WEDDING.

The last night of Mr. KEAN'S engagement will be on Thursday next.

☞ The Free List will necessarily be excluded during Mr. Kean's performances.

*** Performance to commence at seven o'clock.

Fig. 22. Brutus advertisement from the New York American.



THEATRE,

ANTHONY-STREET.

The public is respectfully informed, that Mr. KEAN having recovered from his indisposition, will make his appearance this evening, in the character of BERTRAM; being the last night but one of his engagement.

THIS EVENING, MARCH 22,

WILL BE PRESENTED, THE TRAGEDY OF

BERTRAM;

Or, THE CASTLE OF ALDOBRAND.

St. Aldobrand .....Mr. Moreland
Bertram .....Mr. Kean
Prior .....Mr. Woodhull
Imogene .....Mrs. Barnes

To which will be added, the Opera of

ROBIN HOOD;

Or, SHERWOOD FOREST.

Robin Hood .....Mr. Woodhull
Little John .....Mr. Kilner
Ruttekin .....Mr. Spiller
Edwin .....Mr. Moreland

In which character he will introduce the favourite song of 'On this Cold Flinty Rock.'

Clorinda .....Miss Johnson

FRIDAY—Last night of Mr. KEAN'S engagement, RICHARD III.—Richard, Mr. Kean. To which will be added, the farce of THE LADY AND THE DEVIL.

SATURDAY.—SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER, and MIDNIGHT HOUR.

☞ The Free List will necessarily be excluded during Mr. Kean's performances.

*** Performance to commence at seven o'clock.

Fig. 23. Bertram advertisement from the New York American.

> last dying speech beggar description. Such a picture of terror, rage, despair, fury, pride, and bitter malovelence has been seldom if ever witnessed. We have witnessed the best efforts of Talma, the Garrick of the French stage--he is by no means equal to Kean in genius and mechanical power.[17]

The Evening Post gushed equally over Kean's Richard:

> Last evening Mr. Kean appeared in Richard 3d, for the fourth time, and the house was filled to overflow in every part to witness the exhibitions of this accomplished actor; which, unlike the exhibitions of all others, never tire by repetition; but, on the contrary, impart increased pleasure at every renewal.[18]

"Orestes," writing for the March 24 edition of the Evening Post, gives some additional clues about the lessened coverage of Kean's performances:

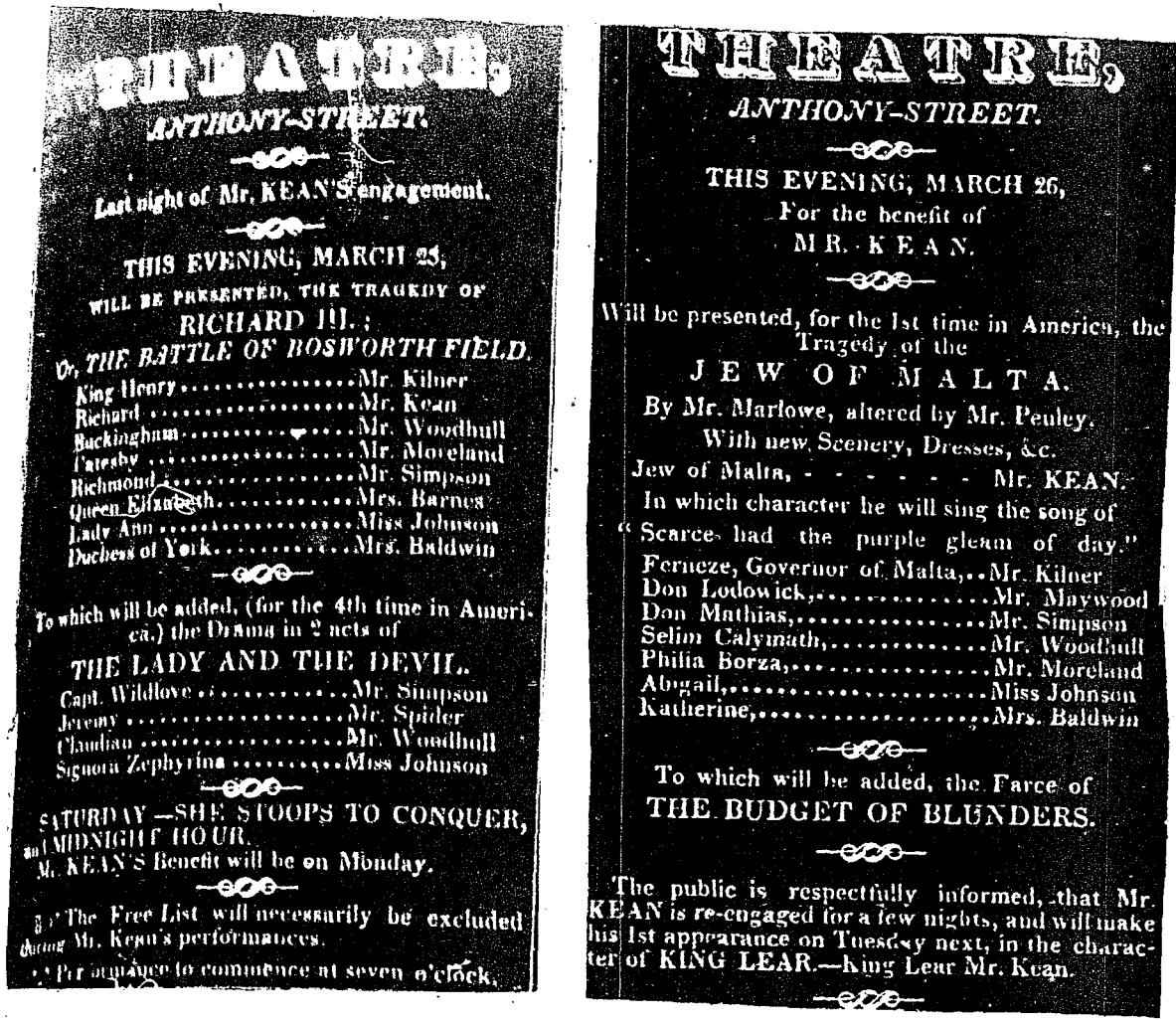
> The distinguished actor whose name I have taken the liberty to place at the head of this article, after the most brilliant and successful exhibitions of his admirable histrionic powers in Philadelphia and Boston, has returned to New York. He has already repeated some of his former characters, and has appeared in two that were new--"Octavian," in the Mountaineers, and "Luke," in Massinger's comedy "Riches." Neither of these do we consider sufficiently important for the display of his great and impressive talents, as selected characters for a short engagement; although they might prove abundantly interesting in their turn during the regular alternation of a winter's performance; at same time, there can be no hesitation in pronouncing them highly finished and true to nature.
>
> The more that we have seen of Mr. Kean, the more we have been satisfied of the accuracy of our early impressions in favor of his peculiar merits and general excellence; and it is highly gratifying to know that there is now but little difference of opinion on these points.
>
> A few ingenious critics, and some literary persons from the continent of Europe, who have formed their judgments after the models of the French stage, it is true, still dissent from the general tenor of opinion; forgetful, perhaps, that the French and English drama, both acted and written, are very dissimilar in construction and character. . . . No great resemblance, or apposite comparison, can,

> therefore, well exist between the representation of Talma and Kean.
>
> As it is not my intention at this time to attempt any critical exposition of the recent performances of this distinguished actor, I beg leave to close this article by a quotation from the January number of the New Monthly Magazine, edited by the celebrated Campbell, author of the "Pleasures of Hope;" a writer whose capacity of judgment, fine taste and just discrimination, will not readily be called in question.
>
> "In tragedy, if all the new performers, (Wallack, Cooper and Booth), have not among them half the genius of their great predecessor (Kean), they are able to achieve what of course was beyond his power, the consistent and harmonious representation of entire dramas.
>
> The actors about him were rarely better, and often worse than mere automatons, necessary to the effect of his performance, but wholly unworthy of notice of their own qualities. All trace of illusion was thus destroyed by the very excellence of his acting; for his close approaches to nature served only to show the miserable distance of his companions. Now, on the contrary, the spectator who can reduce the pitch of his expectations to the standard of them before named, may enjoy an equable representation of a good play, and be half cheated into a belief in the reality of the fiction."[19]

Following Richard III, Kean played in Marlowe's the Jew of Malta on 26 March 1821--a play rarely performed on the American stage. This was Kean's benefit performance; and for it more ladies attended the theatre than usual. On 27 March 1821 the Evening Post notes:

> Last evening was attended by an audience much more numerous than the house had seats to accommodate, and consisting of a greater number of ladies than we have before seen this season. This reflects equal honor on the actor, and our city. The play finished with the most striking incident we ever witnessed in a theatrical exhibition, and electrified every spectator.[20]

Kean was reengaged on March 27 which "promises to be equally as profitable to himself and the managers as his former ones."[21] The reengagement called for eight



THEATRE,
ANTHONY-STREET.

Last night of Mr. KEAN'S engagement.

THIS EVENING, MARCH 25,
WILL BE PRESENTED, THE TRAGEDY OF
RICHARD III.;
Or, THE BATTLE OF BOSWORTH FIELD.

King Henry.....Mr. Kilner
Richard.....Mr. Kean
Buckingham.....Mr. Woodhull
Catesby.....Mr. Moreland
Richmond.....Mr. Simpson
Queen Elizabeth.....Mrs. Barnes
Lady Ann.....Miss Johnson
Duchess of York.....Mrs. Baldwin

To which will be added, (for the 4th time in America,) the Drama in 2 acts of
THE LADY AND THE DEVIL.

Capt. Wildlove.....Mr. Simpson
Jeremy.....Mr. Spider
Claudian.....Mr. Woodhull
Signora Zephyrina.....Miss Johnson

SATURDAY—SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER,
and MIDNIGHT HOUR.
Mr. KEAN'S Benefit will be on Monday.

☞ The Free List will necessarily be excluded during Mr. Kean's performances.

☞ Performance to commence at seven o'clock.

THEATRE,
ANTHONY-STREET.

THIS EVENING, MARCH 26,
For the benefit of
MR. KEAN.

Will be presented, for the 1st time in America, the Tragedy of the
JEW OF MALTA.
By Mr. Marlowe, altered by Mr. Peuley.
With new Scenery, Dresses, &c.

Jew of Malta, - - - - - - Mr. KEAN.

In which character he will sing the song of "Scarce had the purple gleam of day."

Ferneze, Governor of Malta,..Mr. Kilner
Don Lodowick,.....Mr. Maywood
Don Mathias,.....Mr. Simpson
Selim Calymath,.....Mr. Woodhull
Philia Borza,.....Mr. Moreland
Abigail,.....Miss Johnson
Katherine,.....Mrs. Baldwin

To which will be added, the Farce of
THE BUDGET OF BLUNDERS.

The public is respectfully informed, that Mr. KEAN is re-engaged for a few nights, and will make his 1st appearance on Tuesday next, in the character of KING LEAR.—king Lear Mr. Kean.

Fig. 24. Richard III and the Jew of Malta advertisements from the New York American. The Jew of Malta was here performed for the first time in America.

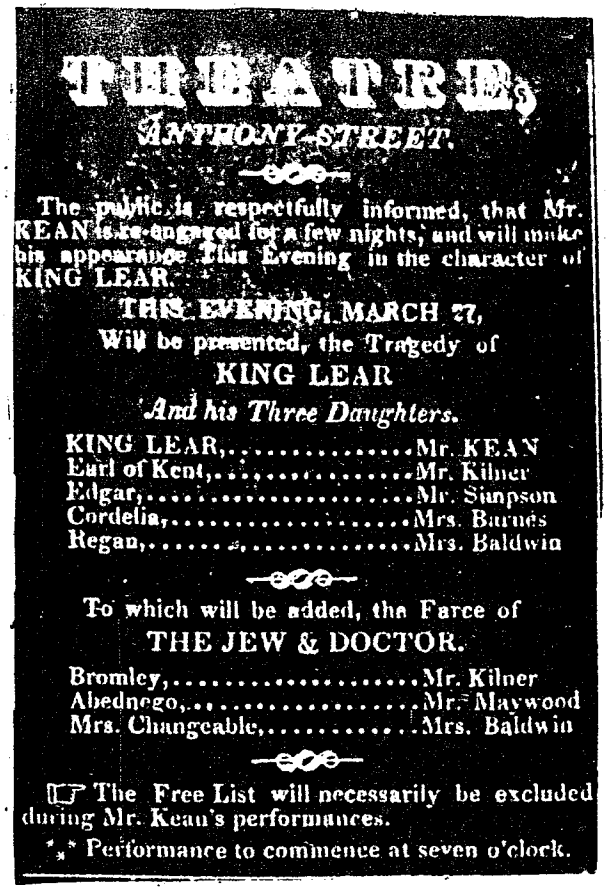
nights--the eighth night set aside for Kean's benefit. The reengagement commenced with King Lear on 27 March 1821, which "attracted a full house,"[22] and ended with the benefit performance as Jaffier in Venice Preserved on 6 April 1821. Unfortunately, except for the brief statement about Lear and a lengthy review of Venice Preserved, there remain no extant reviews of the intervening performances, which were as follows:

March 29 . . .Merchant of Venice
March 30 . . .Macbeth
April 2 . . .Othello
April 3 . . .A New Way to Pay Old Debts
April 4 . . .Alexander the Great
April 5 . . .King Lear

On 29 March 1821 Kean logs in his diary "place in Bayards & Le Roy hands --2116-dollars for New York engagement."[23] Money was still flowing to Kean's bankers in London.

On 6 April 1821 Kean performed Jaffier in Otway's Venice Preserved to an enthusiastic audience. The press considered his enactment second only to his portrayal of Lear:

> Last evening, as we anticipated, Mr. Kean received a benefit, equally creditable to him and to his audience; the boxes exhibiting the appearance of a rich parterre.--He was fortunate in the selection of Venice Preserved, instead of the Distressed Mother, for the play of the evening. Jaffier is one of his very best characters, and only second to his Lear; which must ever be considered, in our judgment, as his master-piece. But we have no difficulty in saying that last evening he gave us specimens of the perfection of his art. He began in a subdued tone both of voice & action, which with occasional scintillations he maintained through the three first acts, until the latter part of the fourth, when he



THEATRE,

ANTHONY-STREET.

The public is respectfully informed, that Mr. KEAN is re-engaged for a few nights, and will make his appearance This Evening in the character of KING LEAR.

THIS EVENING, MARCH 27,

Will be presented, the Tragedy of

KING LEAR

And his Three Daughters.

KING LEAR,.....Mr. KEAN
Earl of Kent,.....Mr. Kilner
Edgar,.....Mr. Simpson
Cordelia,.....Mrs. Barnes
Regan,.....Mrs. Baldwin

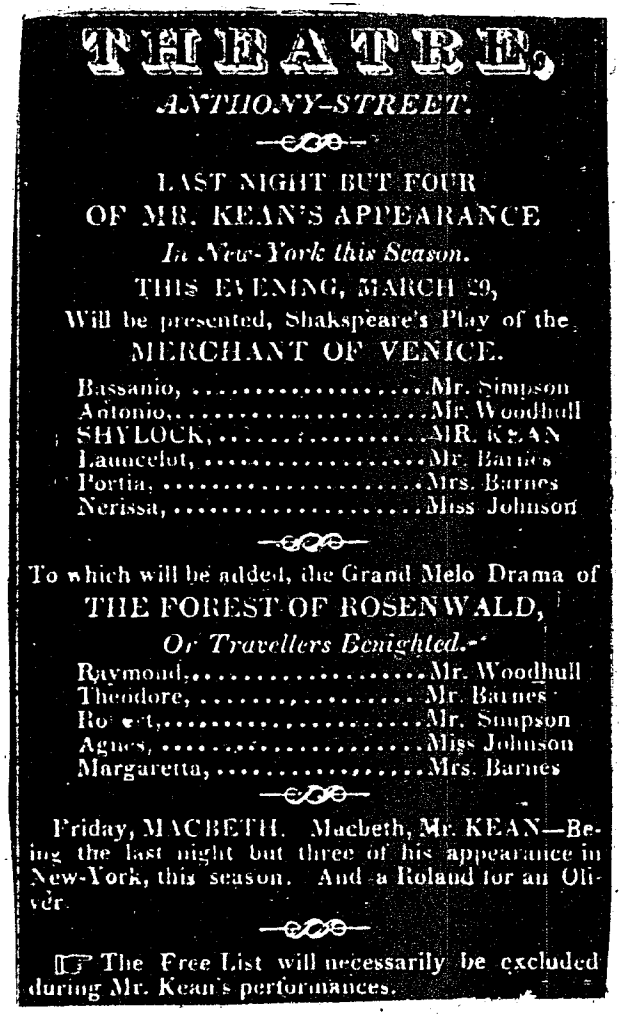
To which will be added, the Farce of

THE JEW & DOCTOR.

Bromley,.....Mr. Kilner
Abednego,.....Mr. Maywood
Mrs. Changeable,.....Mrs. Baldwin

☞ The Free List will necessarily be excluded during Mr. Kean's performances.

*** Performance to commence at seven o'clock.



THEATRE,

ANTHONY-STREET.

LAST NIGHT BUT FOUR

OF MR. KEAN'S APPEARANCE

In New-York this Season.

THIS EVENING, MARCH 29,

Will be presented, Shakspeare's Play of the

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

Bassanio,.....Mr. Simpson
Antonio,.....Mr. Woodhull
SHYLOCK,.....MR. KEAN
Launcelot,.....Mr. Barnes
Portia,.....Mrs. Barnes
Nerissa,.....Miss Johnson

To which will be added, the Grand Melo Drama of

THE FOREST OF ROSENWALD,

Or Travellers Benighted.

Raymond,.....Mr. Woodhull
Theodore,.....Mr. Barnes
Robert,.....Mr. Simpson
Agnes,.....Miss Johnson
Margaretta,.....Mrs. Barnes

Friday, MACBETH. Macbeth, Mr. KEAN—Being the last night but three of his appearance in New-York, this season. And a Roland for an Oliver.

☞ The Free List will necessarily be excluded during Mr. Kean's performances.

Fig. 25. King Lear and the Merchant of Venice advertisements from the New York American.



[illegible] THEATRE.

ANTHONY-STREET.

LAST NIGHT BUT THREE

Of Mr. Kean's appearance in N. York this Season.

THIS EVENING, MARCH 30,

WILL BE PRESENTED, THE TRAGEDY OF

MACBETH.

Duncan.....Mr. Anderson
MACBETH.....MR KEAN
Macduff.....Mr. Simpson
Malcolm.....Mr. Moreland
Banquo.....Mr. Woodhull
1st Witch.....Mr. Barnes
2d Witch.....Mr. Kilner
3d Witch.....Mrs. Baldwin
Lady Macbeth.....Mrs. Barnes

To which will be added, the Farce of

TURN OUT.

Somerville.....Mr. Moreland
Gregory.....Mr Barnes
Marian Ramsay.....Miss Johnson

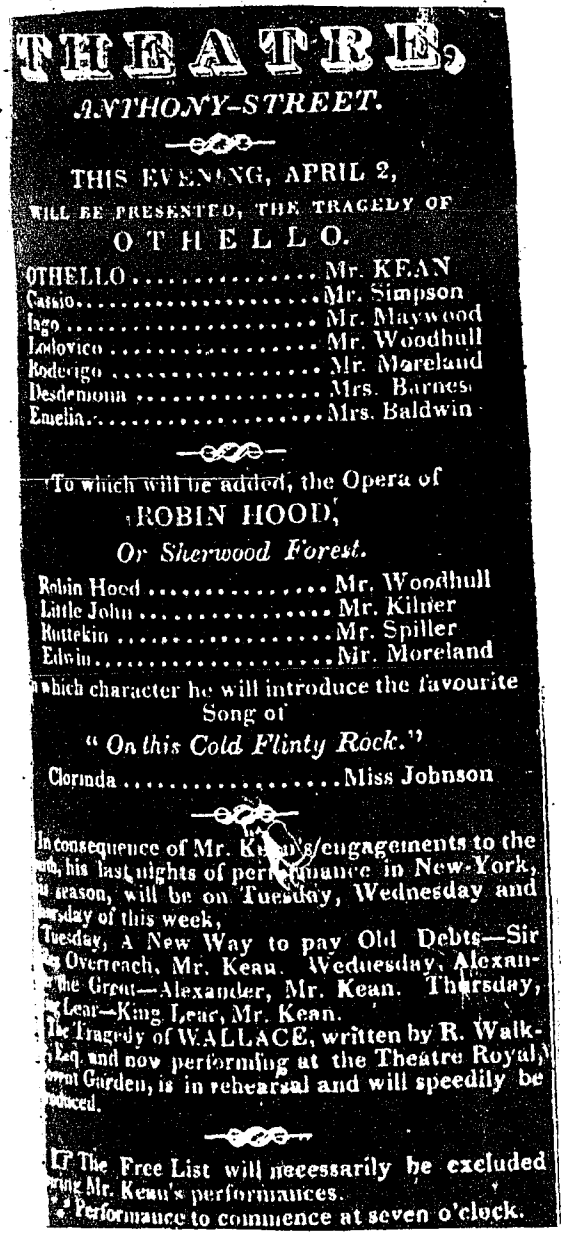
Saturday, Cure for the Heart-Ache, Red Riding Hood, and the Sprigs of Laurel

Monday, OTHELLO. Othello, Mr. KEAN, being the last night but two of his appearance in New-York this season.

☞ The Free List will necessarily be excluded during Mr. Kean's performances.

*** Performance to commence at seven o'clock.

Fig. 26. Macbeth advertisement from the New York American.



THEATRE,

ANTHONY-STREET.

THIS EVENING, APRIL 2,

WILL BE PRESENTED, THE TRAGEDY OF

OTHELLO.

OTHELLO ..... Mr. KEAN
Cassio ..... Mr. Simpson
Iago ..... Mr. Maywood
Lodovico ..... Mr. Woodhull
Roderigo ..... Mr. Moreland
Desdemona ..... Mrs. Barnes
Emelia ..... Mrs. Baldwin

To which will be added, the Opera of

ROBIN HOOD,

Or Sherwood Forest.

Robin Hood ..... Mr. Woodhull
Little John ..... Mr. Kilner
Ruttekin ..... Mr. Spiller
Edwin ..... Mr. Moreland

In which character he will introduce the favourite Song of

"*On this Cold Flinty Rock.*"

Clorinda ..... Miss Johnson

In consequence of Mr. Kean's engagements to the ..., his last nights of performance in New-York, ... season, will be on Tuesday, Wednesday and ...sday of this week,

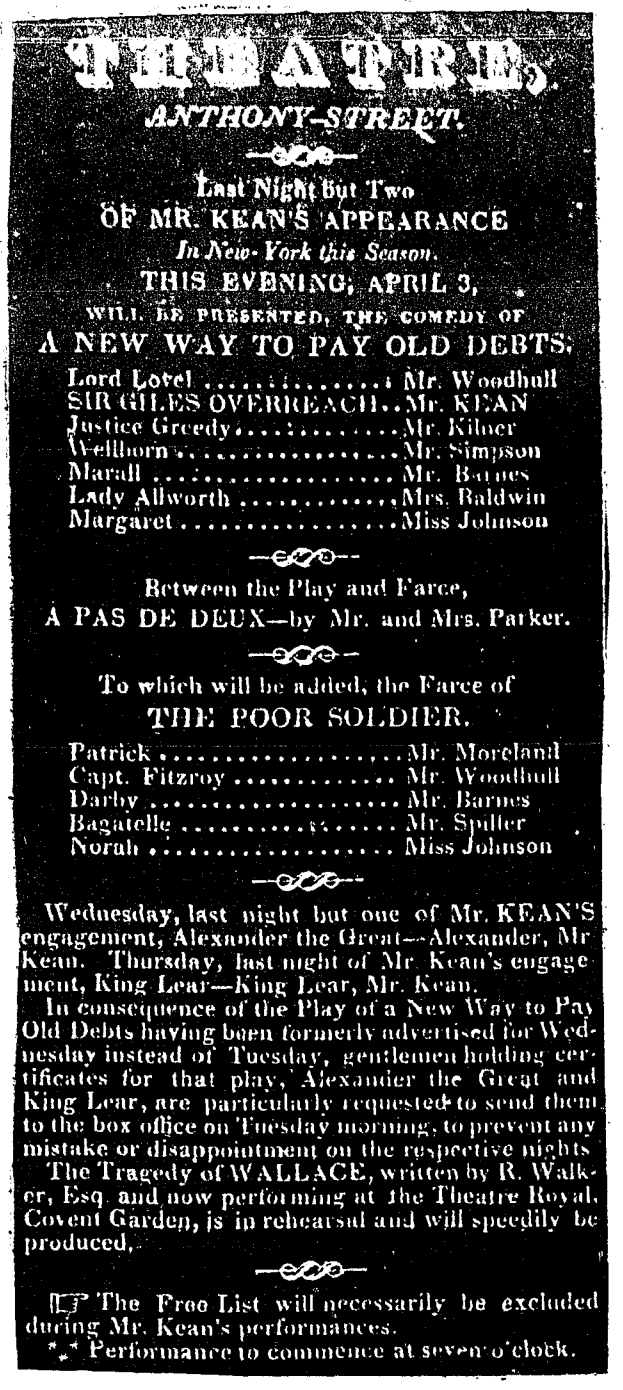
Tuesday, A New Way to pay Old Debts—Sir ... Overreach, Mr. Kean. Wednesday, Alexander the Great—Alexander, Mr. Kean. Thursday, ... Lear—King Lear, Mr. Kean.

The Tragedy of WALLACE, written by R. Walk..., Esq. and now performing at the Theatre Royal, ... Garden, is in rehearsal and will speedily be ...duced.

☞ The Free List will necessarily be excluded ...ring Mr. Kean's performances.

☞ Performance to commence at seven o'clock.

Fig. 27. Othello advertisement from the New York American.



THEATRE,
ANTHONY-STREET.

Last Night but Two
OF MR. KEAN'S APPEARANCE
In New-York this Season.
THIS EVENING, APRIL 3,
WILL BE PRESENTED, THE COMEDY OF
A NEW WAY TO PAY OLD DEBTS.

Lord Lovel ..... Mr. Woodhull
SIR GILES OVERREACH.. Mr. KEAN
Justice Greedy ..... Mr. Kilner
Wellborn ..... Mr. Simpson
Marall ..... Mr. Barnes
Lady Allworth ..... Mrs. Baldwin
Margaret ..... Miss Johnson

Between the Play and Farce,
A PAS DE DEUX—by Mr. and Mrs. Parker.

To which will be added, the Farce of
THE POOR SOLDIER.

Patrick ..... Mr. Moreland
Capt. Fitzroy ..... Mr. Woodhull
Darby ..... Mr. Barnes
Bagatelle ..... Mr. Spiller
Norah ..... Miss Johnson

Wednesday, last night but one of Mr. KEAN'S engagement, Alexander the Great—Alexander, Mr Kean. Thursday, last night of Mr. Kean's engagement, King Lear—King Lear, Mr. Kean.

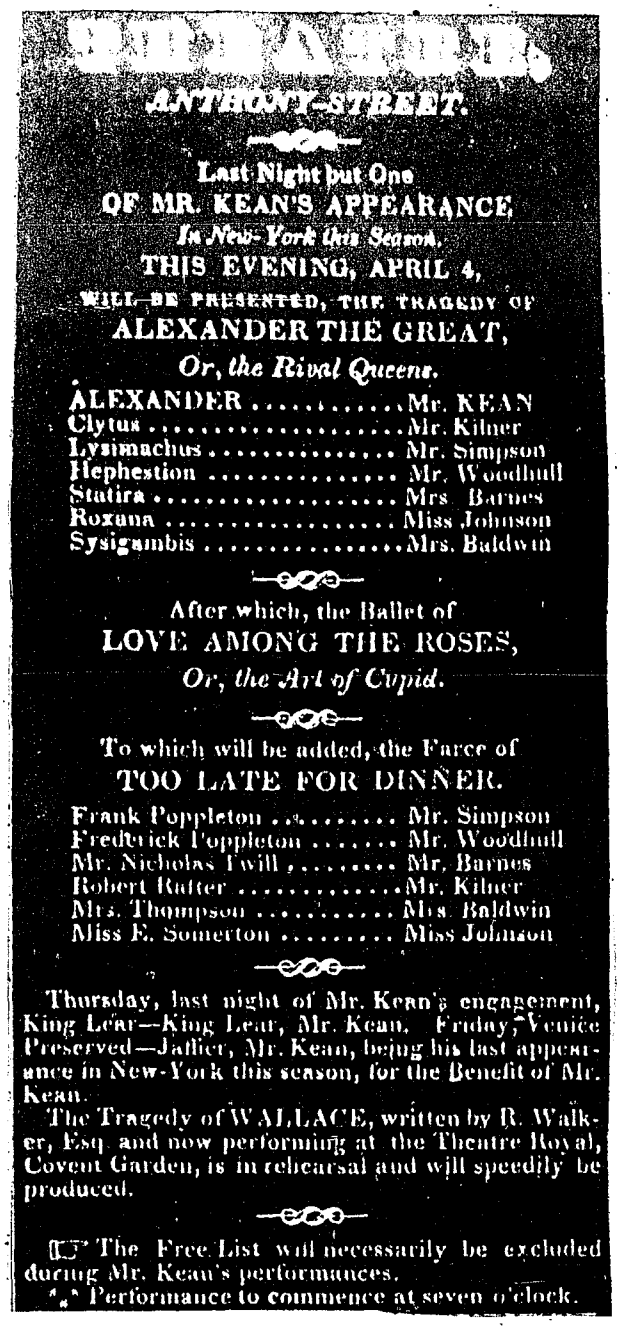
In consequence of the Play of a New Way to Pay Old Debts having been formerly advertised for Wednesday instead of Tuesday, gentlemen holding certificates for that play, Alexander the Great and King Lear, are particularly requested to send them to the box office on Tuesday morning, to prevent any mistake or disappointment on the respective nights.

The Tragedy of WALLACE, written by R. Walker, Esq. and now performing at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, is in rehearsal and will speedily be produced.

☞ The Free List will necessarily be excluded during Mr. Kean's performances.

*** Performance to commence at seven o'clock.

Fig. 28. A New Way to Pay Old Debts advertisement from the New York American.



ANTHONY-STREET.

Last Night but One
OF MR. KEAN'S APPEARANCE,
In New-York this Season.
THIS EVENING, APRIL 4,
WILL BE PRESENTED, THE TRAGEDY OF
ALEXANDER THE GREAT,
Or, the Rival Queens.

ALEXANDER ..... Mr. KEAN
Clytus ..... Mr. Kilner
Lysimachus ..... Mr. Simpson
Hephestion ..... Mr. Woodhull
Statira ..... Mrs. Barnes
Roxana ..... Miss Johnson
Sysigambis ..... Mrs. Baldwin

After which, the Ballet of
LOVE AMONG THE ROSES,
Or, the Art of Cupid.

To which will be added, the Farce of
TOO LATE FOR DINNER.

Frank Poppleton ..... Mr. Simpson
Frederick Poppleton ..... Mr. Woodhull
Mr. Nicholas Twill ..... Mr. Barnes
Robert Rutter ..... Mr. Kilner
Mrs. Thompson ..... Mrs. Baldwin
Miss E. Somerton ..... Miss Johnson

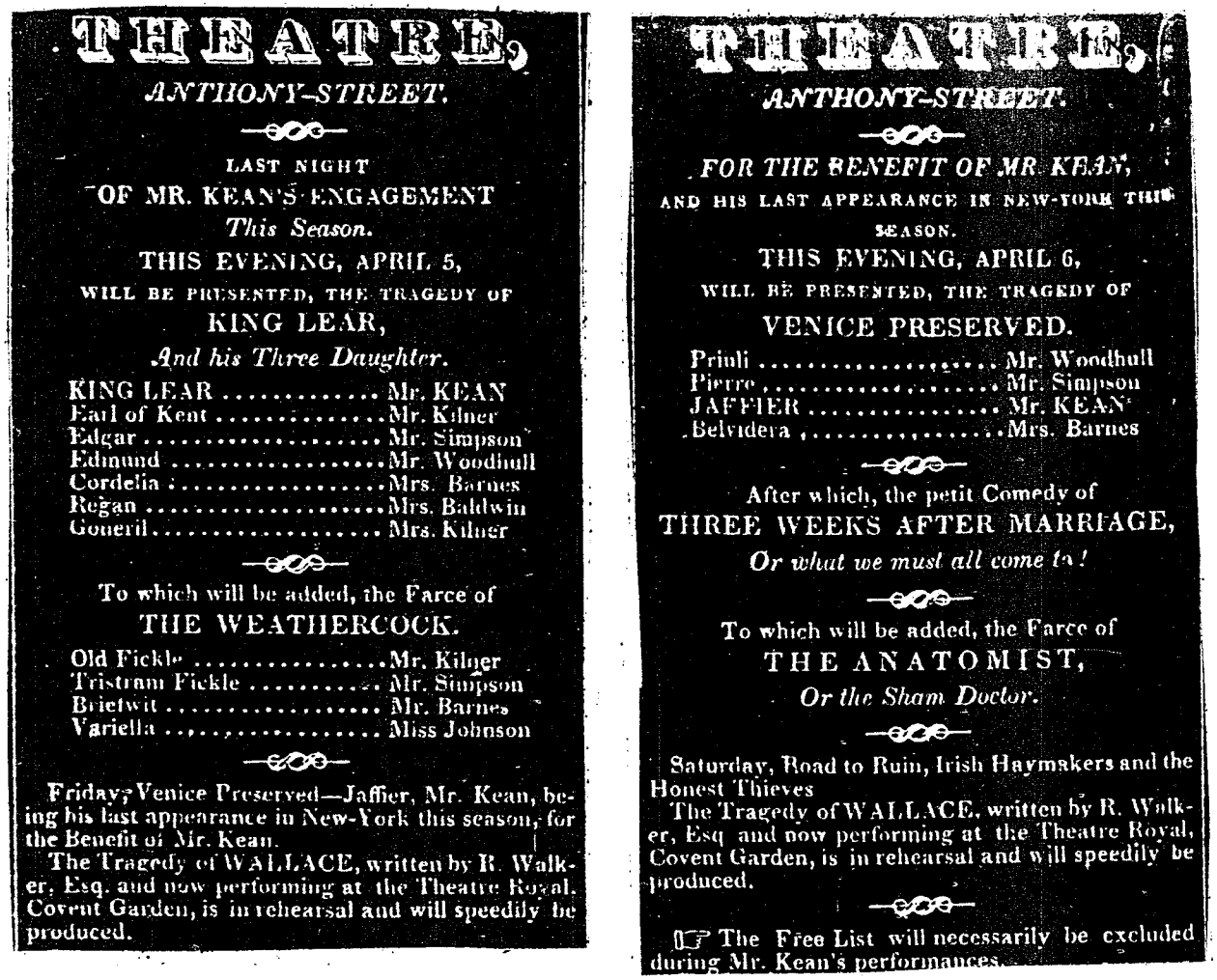
Thursday, last night of Mr. Kean's engagement, King Lear—King Lear, Mr. Kean. Friday, Venice Preserved—Jaffier, Mr. Kean, being his last appearance in New-York this season, for the Benefit of Mr. Kean.

The Tragedy of WALLACE, written by R. Walker, Esq. and now performing at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, is in rehearsal and will speedily be produced.

☞ The Free List will necessarily be excluded during Mr. Kean's performances.

*** Performance to commence at seven o'clock.

Fig. 29. Alexander the Great advertisement from the New York American.



THEATRE,

ANTHONY-STREET.

LAST NIGHT
OF MR. KEAN'S ENGAGEMENT
This Season.
THIS EVENING, APRIL 5,
WILL BE PRESENTED, THE TRAGEDY OF
KING LEAR,
And his Three Daughter.

KING LEAR ..... Mr. KEAN
Earl of Kent ..... Mr. Kilner
Edgar ..... Mr. Simpson
Edmund ..... Mr. Woodhull
Cordelia ..... Mrs. Barnes
Regan ..... Mrs. Baldwin
Goneril ..... Mrs. Kilner

To which will be added, the Farce of
THE WEATHERCOCK.

Old Fickle ..... Mr. Kilner
Tristram Fickle ..... Mr. Simpson
Brietwit ..... Mr. Barnes
Variella ..... Miss Johnson

Friday, Venice Preserved—Jaffier, Mr. Kean, being his last appearance in New-York this season, for the Benefit of Mr. Kean.

The Tragedy of WALLACE, written by R. Walker, Esq. and now performing at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, is in rehearsal and will speedily be produced.

THEATRE,

ANTHONY-STREET.

FOR THE BENEFIT OF MR. KEAN,
AND HIS LAST APPEARANCE IN NEW-YORK THIS SEASON.
THIS EVENING, APRIL 6,
WILL BE PRESENTED, THE TRAGEDY OF
VENICE PRESERVED.

Priuli ..... Mr. Woodhull
Pierre ..... Mr. Simpson
JAFFIER ..... Mr. KEAN
Belvidera ..... Mrs. Barnes

After which, the petit Comedy of
THREE WEEKS AFTER MARRIAGE,
Or what we must all come to!

To which will be added, the Farce of
THE ANATOMIST,
Or the Sham Doctor.

Saturday, Road to Ruin, Irish Haymakers and the Honest Thieves

The Tragedy of WALLACE, written by R. Walker, Esq and now performing at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, is in rehearsal and will speedily be produced.

☞ The Free List will necessarily be excluded during Mr. Kean's performances.

Fig. 30. King Lear and Venice Preserved advertisements from the New York American. Venice Preserved is the benefit performance.

> burst upon us in all the fullness of his genius. In his interview with Belvidera, after he had, through her persuasions, betrayed his companions to the Senate, the sudden alterations from rage and phrenzy [sic] and the uplifted dagger, to the heart-touching relentings of tenderness, in which he fell upon her neck, dissolved in love and grief, was a picture so true to nature and refinement, that it thrilled through the audience like electric shocks, and brought down thunders of applause, followed by loud and animate cheering.[24]

At the end of the performance, Kean was summoned to appear before the audience. Kean made a speech that should be remembered when he makes his final appearance in Boston at the end of May:

> At the fall of the curtain the audience as if by one voice, from the pit and boxes, clamorously called for Mr. Kean, nor would be pacified till he appeared before them. As soon as quiet was restored, he gracefully addressed himself to them in a short and eloquent speech, in which he expressed his unbounded gratitude for the reception he first met with in America, from a New York audience; and for the generous encouragement they had ever continued to afford by their tokens of applause, and which he must say, were necessary to stimulate the actor's exertions and promote his interest. These he declared had left a lasting impression, which no time could ever wear away. That he entertained the hope that he should have the honor of appearing before them ere he departed to his native country; for the present he took his leave, with his heart bearing with the warmest wishes for their health and happiness. The house rose by a similar impulse and gave three unanimous cheers.[25]

As soon as Kean completed his New York engagement, he left for Philadelphia to fulfill a second engagement there. He was engaged for six performances from April 9 to April 18. Kean began his second engagement in Philadelphia as Richard III--the same role with which he opened the first season. In each of the various cities,

Kean traditionally commenced his engagement with Richard III. In spite of the short run, the second engagement went off well. It was followed by an equally successful engagement in Baltimore. Like the Philadelphia engagements, the Baltimore engagement was arranged by W. B. Wood, the manager of the Philadelphia and Baltimore theatres. At the Baltimore theatre, Kean opened with the usual Richard III on 23 April 1821--playing for 14 nights--concluding on 15 May 1821. After a mixed reception as Richard III, as with the first performance of the first season in New York and Philadelphia, all doubts were effaced by the second performance as Othello.

According to the New York Evening Post of 10 April 1821, Kean was considering staying in the United States until February 1822--making arrangements to perform for thirty five nights in southern cities. He, also, was engaged to play six nights at Richmond in October.[26]

On 19 May 1821, the Evening Post published a fascinating and informative account of Kean's most successful performances in the different cities. Essentially, what we have here, is a listing of what each city preferred:

> Mr. Kean, having completed his engagements with our Southern Theatres for the present season, arrived in this City [New York] yesterday [10 May], whence he immediately departs for Boston, where he will again perform his principal characters before the Theatre in that place closes. Mr. Kean, in his excursion to the south, has been received with every attention due his great professional talents and private worth. There is some diversity in the theatrical taste of our

different cities. His most successful exhibition of the histrionic art in New-York have been supposed to be Lear, Othello, and Richard 3d. In Philadelphia, Richard and Shylock claimed the greatest admiration. In Baltimore we find that the preference upon the whole Mr. Kean has far surpassed in popularity his illustrious predecessor, Cooke, his Hamlet, take it for all in all, was the most decided favorite.

We are happy to learn from the best sources, that Mr. Kean has determined to continue at least a part of the ensuing season in this country, and has written letters to that effect to his friends in Europe.[27]

In a letter dated 20 May 1821, Kean corresponded with a friend expressing a desire to extend his stay in the United States to the following year:

My brilliant career in this country induces me to yield to the importunities of the public and stay with them another twelvemonth. In doing this, my friends in England will, I here, conceive I make no slight sacrifice of feeling, for whatever may be my gratitude and admiration for a land that has so liberally adopted me, there is a certain charm about the character of Englishmen I would not forego for all the wealth of gold mines. There is much for the impartial observer to admire in America; for the philosopher an ample field of research; for the artist the most desirable encouragement and protection. With such conspicuous beauties in the picture of these, the liberal connoisseur might overlook the ruggedness and shading of adolescence. My provincial engagements terminate for the summer at Boston, on the 1st of June. I shall then seek the grand points of observation--the Falls of Niagra, the Lakes, the Canadas, and what my romantic fancy paints more interesting, the Indians. If you will allow me, I will write a full account of the tour; I promise myself a great deal of pleasure and improvement from it; and I need not say, I hope, what pleasure I shall have in communicating to you anything that will be of the least interest. If you will do me the favour of acknowledging the receipt of this, it will find me in New York previous to my departure. I am quite rejoiced at the flourishing condition of Old Drury, not only as it is connected with my feelings and ambition, but from the great regard I entertain for Mr. Elliston, to whom I consider myself under the most essential obligations. I hope that my return to the theatre will be a circumstance as profitable to him as

> gratifying to myself, and I am still vain enough to think that my countrymen will be glad to see me.[28]

Unknown to Kean at the time, his wish to prolong his visit in the United States, which included engagements in New Orleans, and Richmond, would be thwarted by a series of events originating in Boston at the end of May.

CHAPTER VIII

KEAN'S SECOND BOSTON ENGAGEMENT

After his successful Baltimore engagement, Kean returned to Boston for a second engagement--the city he had proclaimed the "literary emporium of the new world." The newspaper reports announcing his second engagement were positive. The Columbian Centinel published two memorandums announcing Kean's prospective engagement. The first, on 16 May 1821, says:

> This celebrated and excellent performer will commence a new engagement in this town on Monday next [May 21]. He will perform two weeks, and as he intends to return to Europe in the autumn, this will be the last opportunity our fellow citizens will have to witness personations which have been extolled by the soundest heads, and best judges of the heights and depths to which the human passions can be excited or depressed. He will repeat the principal characters he represented during his former visit, with several new ones.[1]

On 19 May 1821, the Centinel announced:

> The public are respectfully informed, that Mr. Kean is engaged for Eight Nights, and will make his first appearance on Monday Evening, May 21, 1821, When Will be Performed, Shakespeare's admired Tragedy, in five acts, called King Lear, and his Three Daughters . . . To which will be added, the favorite Farce, called Raising The Wind.[2]

Although the Centinel and other newspapers were enthusiastic about Kean's return, managers Dickson and Duff were not. According to William Clapp, editor of the Boston Evening Gazette, the managers attempted to dissuade Kean from commencing a second engagement at this time. Dickson wrote Kean a letter explaining that the warmer months were not conducive for theatrical entertainment.[3] "It was the dull season and many were out of town," says Clapp. The managers "urged him to postpone his visit till fall."[4] However, Kean would have none of this. The managers relented. After being "detained two days at New-York, by sickness and fatigue,"[5] Kean opened his new engagement on 23 May 1821 as King Lear. Although the Centinel anticipated a "full" house,[6] Kean performed "to a fair house."[7]

Unfortunately, none of the Boston journals reviewed Kean's performance as Lear. There is a statement about King Lear in the 24 May 1821 notice in the Boston Patriot, which catalogues Kean's future plans:

> MR. KEAN, Commenced his second engagement in Boston last evening, in the arduous character of Lear. We understand that he is under engagements to return to New-York, Philadelphia and Baltimore; after that he will perform in Richmond, Charleston, S.C. Savannah, &c. and then embark for England. The present, therefore, will be the last opportunity that we shall have of witnessing the performances of this distinguished son of Melpomene. As he is to appear for a very limited number of nights, and in a variety of new characters, the Theatre will undoubtedly be fully and fashionably attended.[8]

Apparently, this was not to be. For his second performance on 24 May 1821, as Jaffier in Otway's Venice Preserved, Clapp remarks that he played "to a slim house."[9] None of the Boston newspapers reviewed Venice Preserved.

On 25 May 1821 Kean was scheduled to appear as Richard III, but due to the following unusual circumstances, he did not. William Clapp reports:

> Kean went to the theatre at the usual time, and was much chagrined to find only a very few present, and, instead of performing his duty of dressing, walked round, stating that he should not play to bare walls. The time for the curtain to rise having arrived, Kean was solicited by the managers to prepare, but walking to the front, and taking a view of the house--which was quite thin--he declared it would be impossible for him to play. Mr. Dickson urged him to perform that night, and keep good faith with the public, offering to release him from his engagement; but Kean refused, and extended his hand, invited the manager to take a parting drink, as it was his intention to leave Boston early the next day. Mr. Kean then left for his hotel, and he had been absent but a short time, when the boxes filled up, and there was a fair house. Mr. Dickson sent word to Kean that Col. Perkins and other distinguished citizens had come in, and requested him to return, as the house was as good as some that Cooke had played to; but he was inexorable, and declined. Among the audience considerable impatience was manifested, in consequence of the unusual delay in the time of the rising of the curtain, and about ten minutes before eight o'clock, Mr. Duff went in front and addressed the assembly. He stated it was with extreme regret and embarrassment, he was under the necessity of declaring that Mr. Kean, after repeated importunities to the contrary, had positively refused to perform that night, and he was preparing to leave town. Mr. Duff then expressed a wish that the audience would decide whether the performances should go on without the aid of Kean. This was answered by loud affirmitives from all parts of the house; and Mr. Duff remarked in conclusion, that those who desired it, could have their money returned on application at the box-office. On the rising of the curtain, there was another call for the manager, and the performers

> were directed to leave the stage. Mr. Duff again appeared, and asked the pleasure of the audience. He was requested to state the reasons of Mr. Kean's refusal to play, to which he replied, it was for the want of patronage. There were a few disposed to stop the play, . . . but order was soon restored, and the play proceeded--Brown sustaining the part of Richard. Early the next morning, Kean left in a private carriage, and proceeded to a neighboring town, where he awaited the arrival of the mail stage.[10]

The Boston newspapers were indignant at Kean's behavior--lashing out with a series of articles expressing disgust for his questionable and inexcusable action. The Columbian Centinel, on Saturday, the 26 of May, exclaimed:

> Gratitude!--After a very respectable audience, and more numerous than some of those which the truly great Cooke played before, had assembled at the Theatre, to see Richard the Third, Mr. Kean took it in his head that the audience was unworthy of his merit, bolted from the theatre, announcing to the Manager that he should play no more, and that he was preparing to leave town. The audience received this specimen of rude supercilliousness[sic.] with marked contempt, and many called out for the substitution of the eccentric Kemble, (who was in the pit) for the fugitive Kean. The play proceeded without interruption, Mr. Brown amply supplying the piece of the runaway.[11]

On the same date, the Boston Patriot presented the following brief account of the incident:

> A few minutes before eight o'clock last evening, Mr. Duff appeard on the stage, and announced to the audience that Mr. Kean had refused to take the part cast him (Richard III) without assigning any reason for so doing, and that he was then preparing to leave town. On the rising of the curtain, there being some slight disturbance, and a call for the Manager, Mr. Duff again appeared, and stated, that Mr. Kean had been during the day repeatedly importuned by the Manager, and his friends, to appear in the part, but that he absolutely declined. Mr. D. on being questioned, said he believed the reason of Mr. K's conduct was want of patronage.[12]

The Boston Daily Advertiser published a long editorial on 28 May 1821 that more fully explains Kean's unusual behavior, expressing chagrin at his decision:

> The predicament in which this gentleman has placed himself, and those who have patronized his exhibitions in this town, seems to call for a few remarks. He was here last winter, for a short engagement, under circumstances, which independently of his acknowledged merits, excited an unusual degree of curiosity. There was, in consequence, a greater number of persons who wished to see him, than could be accomodated in the best seats of our theatre. A competition therefore arose for seats, which led to an unusual, though a very judicious mode, of settling the claims of precedence, viz. by auction. The sums raised by the bidding for the choice of seats, and which were appropriated to charitable purposes, were justly considered a high compliment to the merits of the actor, who was the object of all this excitement. But this flattering tribute has been we imagine generally much overrated; and it now seems that it was by Mr. Kean himself. It is not remarkable for all the seats of the theatre to be filled--the less commodious as well as the best; and when it is considered how little disposed, persons bent upon their own amusement, are, to regard a trifling expense, it will not appear very remarkable that a person who has once made up his mind to sit three or four hours in the theatre, should be willing to pay a trifling premium for the choice of a seat in that part of it where he may most advantageously see and hear the actor. Mr. Kean therefore was mistaken when he inferred from this proof of our zeal to witness his performances, that our admiration knew no bounds and would exhibit itself under all circumstances. He had no right to conclude, because he found the theatre filled with gratified auditors, on his first short visit, in the appropriate season for theatrical entertainments, that he should find an equal number of persons, at a time when other amusements had succeeded to those of winter, ready to toil with him through the summer nights, in a repetition of the same performances. No one could have reasonably expected that he would at this season draw full houses, in any characters, much less when he had failed of appearing as was expected, in some new parts. Yet after all--after we had been called on to take our seats at the theatre for Monday night, and been obliged to submit to the disappointment of being told that Mr. Kean was still loitering in Baltimore in violation of his engagement here--our hero appeared

> before a larger audience on Wednesday night [performance of King Lear] than it was his fortune always to witness in Philadelphia in mid winter. But this was not sufficient for him, and after having appeared before two thin houses, and after having drawn together on the third night, we presume, a larger house than he has frequently played to before in other cities, he saw fit to say he would not come forward, and for the second time in the week to disappoint those who had taken seats to see him. He has given no reason for not performing his engagement, but that the houses were thin. It may be a good reason; but we have thought this explanation due to the citizens of this town, lest the incident, which is a little farcical, should fix upon us the imputation of inconsistency and frivolity, which the circumstances do not warrant. We have mentioned only circumstances to account for the diminished zeal to see Mr. Kean, which might have been foreseen by him. There were undoubtedly accidental ones, which prevented the attendance last week, but which would not have continued to operate; and there is every reason to suppose that if he had proceeded in his engagement, he would have been honoured by "very respectable" houses.[13]

Boston was not the only city angered by Kean's behavior. New York newspapers told the incident, while condemning it. On 28 May 1821, the New York Commercial Advertiser published a letter from Boston, and at the same time informed readers of the paper's irritation with Kean's behavior:

> We have received this morning the following letter from a gentleman in Boston. It seems Mr. Kean has taken his departure from that place in quite a different temper from what he did a few weeks since, when he pronounced it the "literary emporium of the western world." What occasioned this unexpected "blow-up" we have yet to learn. In his farewell address to the people of Baltimore, a short time since, Mr. Kean very modestly told the audience, in substance, that, since the days of Cooke, we, poor American backwoodsmen, have never had among us (himself excepted, of course) any one capable of exhibiting the beauties of Shakespeare. We cannot, therefore, but sympathise with the Bostonians for the loss they have experienced on this occasion. Not

being able to discover the beauties of the immortal bard of Avon, without looking through Mr. Kean's spectacles, or to relish his excellencies, without Mr. Kean's dressing, they may now pack off their volumes of Shakespeare to the auction-room. The loss will no doubt be Kean-ly felt:

"Mr. Kean, the great tragedian, was to have personated the character of Richard The Third, last evening [May 25], at the Federal-street Theatre. At the usual time of raising the curtain, a very respectable, though not a crowded, auditory, had assembled. After waiting till nearly 8 o'clock, considerable uneasiness was displayed by the audience, and loud calls for the manager were heard from several parts of the house. Mr. Duff immediately came forward, and stated that "it was with extreme regret he was obliged to say, that Mr. Kean had positively refused to appear again on the Boston boards!" This information was, certainly, very disagreeable; and an awful silence pervaded the house for the space of two minutes. Mr. Duff requested the indulgence of the audience, and the play was accordingly permitted to proceed, Mr. Brown performing the part of Richard. Mr. Kean has been treated in Boston, as well as he could reasonably expect to have been treated, and if he had checked his passion "one little week" longer, he would not only have fulfilled his private contract, and made one or two thousand dollars, but retired from our stage, beloved and respected. But now, he is universally despised. He left town this forenoon, privately, for New-York, as we suppose, where we hope he will receive such treatment as his imprudence entitles him to."

P.S. We understand, (says the Boston Daily Advertiser,) "that Mr. Kean, who was announced for the part of Richard the Third, last evening declined playing on account of the thinness of the house."

No doubt this was owing to the circumstance, that the boxes were not put up at auction. The Bostonians have too exalted an opinion of Mr. Kean's merits to attend the play, unless they can have the privilege of paying three or four times as much as other people.[14]

On 29 May 1821, the New York American expressed its usual negative views on Kean, this time concurring with an article, published in a Boston journal in which the writer contends that the public will eventually alter its attitude about Kean:

> The following character of Kean, appeared some time since in one of the Boston papers, and may, perhaps, be among the causes of offence towards the inhabitants of the metropolis of literature. In its justness we fully coincide, and with the writer, have not doubted that the ebb of fashion would leave the mock Roscius stranded on the shoals of thin houses, and sleepy hearers. He seems to be under the same apprehension himself, and to have set sail for a harbour while there is yet popularity enough to keep him afloat.
>
> Kean - I have seen him in Richard, Othello, Shylock, and Sir Giles Overreach and am heartily tired of him. He carricatures [sic] every passion, every emotion. He is a compound of violent transition, stage trick, and exagerration. His wonderful parts are indeed wonderful. But they are made by himself--unmeant and unrequired by the poet--or the character. Were he to come out a stranger, unheralded, he would be hissed off the stage twenty times a night. He always disappoints us--and always aims to disappoint us. He is always great in little things, and little in great ones. Where others have been great, he affects to disdain all resemblance, and outrages all decency. Witness-"Bind up my wounds"--"A horse, horse"--"A flourish, trumpets"--"Be sure you prove my love," &c. &c. he is execrable. But where nothing is expected, there he always startles you. Why? Because he cannot--he knows he cannot out-do the parts of Garrick, Cooke and Cooper have been great--and so he affects to overlook them; knowing well that if he should throw a somerset in a soliloquy where they stood still--or whispered where they shouted--and vice versa--he would find many to applaud, and all to wonder. This is his aim. In one word, he holds no comparison with Cooper in majesty, propriety or energy of acting. So much for Kean. I am disappointed and heart sick of him; and so will the multitude be after the fashion changes--that is, in a few weeks.[15]

Meanwhile, Boston papers continued their assault on Kean. On 4 May 1821 the Boston Gazette circulated a mock advertisement calling upon the public to abhor Kean. This advertisement subsequently appeared in other Boston daily newspapers:

ONE CENT REWARD!

> RUN away from the "Literary Emporium of the New World," a stage-player, calling himself Kean. He may be easily recognized by his misshapen trunk, his coxcomical, cockney manners, and his bladder actions. His face is as white as his own froth, and his eyes are as dark as indigo. All persons are cautioned against harboring the aforesaid vagrant, as the undersigned pays no more debts of his contracting, after this date. As he has violated his pledged faith to me, I deem it my duty thus to put my neighbors on their guard against him. Peter Public.[16]

Several New York journals objected to the impropriety of the advertisement. The Commercial Advertiser republished the "paragraph" on 30 May 1821. The paper did not "approve of it" but rather they "deem it very unamiable and objectionable."[17] The Commercial Advertiser preceded their condemnation of the "paragraph" with the following:

> The good people of Boston are in a wonderful passion in regard to Mr. Kean; and some of them are now as extravagant in their abuse of him; as they were in praise of him last winter. Mr. K. was so much caressed and flattered--
>
> For flattery never seems absurd;
> The flatter'd always takes your word--
>
> when in Boston last winter, and the houses were so crowded, that he imagined there could be no end to his popularity. But on his return thither this Spring, the bustling season of business having arrived, the houses were not so crowded. Mr. K. was probably somewhat mortified, and he suddenly and inconsiderately broke his engagement and left the town.[18]

The National Advocate on 4 June 1821 objected to the "scurrilous" nature of the "paragraph:"

> We are sorry to see a very scurrilous paragraph in the form of an advertisement respecting Mr. Kean, the Tragedian going the rounds of the daily papers.

> Whatever may have been the impropriety and indiscretion of his conduct at Boston, a gross personal lampoon is a vulgar and base revenge, unworthy of the American press and certain to recoil upon our national character. The Editor of the Boston Gazette who first published the advertisement, and those Editors who have copied it without comment, have exposed themselves to the reproach of being sadly wanting in refinement of taste and generosity of sentiment. The race of eminent actors and singers may be regarded, like the race of poets, as an irritable one, they are almost proverbially capricious and petulant; allowance is to be made accordingly for their sallies of extravagance under the influences of disappointment and mortification. It seems that the contrast between the events of Mr. Kean's first and second visits to Boston, was sufficient to try the sensibility of any here of public life; and we do not yet as know what circumstances of a palliative nature may be forth coming in addition to the information now extant.[19]

From the information available, the New York Gazette published "a private letter" on 29 May 1821, sent from Boston, which carefully gives reasons why the Boston audience did not come to see Kean en masse:

> Some degree of excitement is produced through the town in consequence of Mr. Kean's contemptuous conduct in refusing to play last evening [25 May,] in Richard the Third, because of the thinness of the house. I understand he left town this forenoon, in a private carriage for the South. He had made an engagement with the Managers of our Theatre to perform eight nights--he had performed two nights (not, however, to as full houses as when here before, in the winter season,) to respectable houses, and last evening the house contained about $400. When the curtain rose, Mr. Duff, one of the managers, appeared, and stated to the astonishment of the audience, that Mr. Kean positively refused appearing before them, not on account of any disagreement between the managers and him, but solely on account of the thinness of the house; and that he was about preparing to leave town immediately. This information was received with great indignation, considering themselves grossly insulted by Mr. Kean. The play, however, went on, and Mr. Brown performed the part of Richard very well.--It was the duty of Mr. Kean to have performed the eight nights according to his engagement, if there had not

been half a dozen persons in the house each night; but if he did not choose to finish the engagement, he should have performed last evening, and then he might have excused himself from performing the remaining five nights, and retired with some degree of honor to himself, and no one would have called in question his pretensions to the character of a gentleman. But refusing to play because the house was not full, and leaving the town in such an abrupt manner, has left an impression very unfavorable to his character, on the mind of almost every one.

To account for the thinness of the houses, Mr. Kean should have taken into consideration the season of the year; that it is extremely inconvenient for many persons to attend the Theatre; that many families have removed out of town to their summer residences: that the days are very long, and many persons feel themselves too much fatigued to attend the Theatre, particularly with the knowledge that the performance will not be over till very late, say one o'clock; that the house will be very-warm, owing to its construction; that it cannot be sufficiently ventilated to be cool and comfortable; that the excitement produced on his first visit was over; and that the curiosity of almost everyone had been gratified in witnessing his representations. All these causes should have been sufficient, notwithstanding the attractions he possesses, (which, by the bye, I think are not sufficient to warrant the extraordinary excitement produced when last here,) to convince him that many people will not attend the Theatre to witness his, or the performance of a greater man, at the expense of health, comfort, and convenience, and it should have dictated to him a different course of conduct.

I think that Mr. Kean acted a wise part in leaving town so suddenly, as unpleasant consequences might have resulted from his continuance among us.[20]

The American on 31 May 1821 published another account of Kean's walk-out. The letter was submitted to the editor of the American by a writer who simply named himself "A Friend:"

> We doubt whether a parallel can be offered to the insulting deportment of this actor toward a Boston audience, during his late visit there, and it appears to admit of no excuse or palliation. . . .
>
> As might naturally be expected, but one sentiment existed in the minds of those who were assembled.

Foreigners and natives, friends and foes, alike indiscriminantly expressed their sense of the man who had undertaken to insult them.--No one could satisfactorily, or even plausibly, account for his deportment, and all were vehement in denouncing him. It appeared that he went to the Theatre at the usual hour for dressing, and about 7 o'clock (fifteen minutes only before the performance) was observed in his ordinary apparel walking the stage. The actors generally were in readiness, and on seeing him were at a loss to account for the procedure. Shortly after, however, Messrs. Duff and Dickson, the managers, remarking the circumstance, asked him why he was not attired for his character? His answer was, because he did not intend to perform it. His reasons for so doing were then enquired; when he replied, that he had formed a determination not to appear before bare walls, and should at once close his engagement. No considerations of respect for the audience, or of their claims upon his services, could induce him to alter his resolve.--He was informed that, if dissatisfied with the support bestowed on him by the public, he would have an opportunity the following morning of announcing that his engagement in consequence was at end, or in fact that an explanation might be made of his views from the stage on that evening, at the close of the performance. Disregarding these and other circumstances, he persisted in opposition to every argument, and as evidence of the little regard he had for the interests of others as well as for his own reputation, he turned the whole business into a laugh and invited the managers to step into a tavern hard by, and partake of a glass of brandy and water! They declined the invitation, notwithstanding the extreme politeness of him who gave it, observing they had sufficient employment on the other hand to tranquilize the audience, and prepare for a representation. Mr. Kean then left the managers, saying he should be happy to see them and give them a good glass of brandy and water at his own lodgings, where they would find him at any time during the evening.--The next day at eleven o'clock this great tragedian departed from the "literary emporium of the new world," with very different emotions, it is believed, from those he experienced on entering it, and leaving behind equally different impressions as to his conduct and character. It is said that he intends to take passage in the June packet from New-York, for England on the 10th of the ensuing month. Should such be the fact, the course would be dictated by extreme wisdom. He cannot too soon depart from a country where his professional reputation, eminent as it may be deemed

> among his own people, is of comparative nothingness when contrasted with the sacrifice of that which is "the inmost jewel of the soul."

"A Friend" concludes his piece with some comments about the house receipts for Kean's engagement, and, also, speaks about a peculiar circumstance that took place between Kean and Dickson before the final performance (Richard III):

> On the first night of Mr. Kean's engagement, the receipts of the house [King Lear] were about four hundred and fifty dollars; the second [Venice Preserved], . . . they fell short of two hundred dollars, and on the third night [Richard III] and last night of his performance they might be fairly estimated at four hundred dollars. Before the play, Mr. Dickson called on him at Concert Hall, and during a conversation on the subject, Kean manifested a disposition to fight the manager. A particular friend of the fugitive was urged to set down his conduct the account of intoxication, as the best apology he could make for him. This he declined, denying the existence of the fact, and maintaining that Kean was, as it regarded liquor, in his sober senses. No individual not physically or mentally intoxicated, however, would have exerted himself so much to his own disgrace, and that of a few of his infatuated admirers, who, it is understood, after the first gust of disappointment was over, sat down with him to a supper, and complimented him on the proper spirit he had displayed.[21]

In the New England Galaxy of 1 June 1821, an excessively long article defamed the talents and character of Kean. This diatribe represents one of the severest criticisms of Kean from Boston, or anywhere else, for that matter. In the main, the writer candidly asserts

> that the public.--the "real public"-- . . . have never thought so highly of Kean, since they first saw him as when they estimated his worth from common fame . . . They did see and they did judge, and their judgment was decidedly against the man who came with such extravagant claims upon their approbation.[22]

He, also, concludes that Kean "is destitute of the most important and amiable qualities that give weight and dignity and worth to the human character, . . . He has no sense of moral obligation."[23]

On 31 May 1821, Major Noah in the National Advocate denounced the scurrilous and dissimulating criticism making the rounds of the New York and Boston newspapers:

> A great fuss is making in the papers because Kean refused to play, and attempts are made to produce great national excitement on the occasion. Ridiculous. Cook [sic] did the same, over and over again, and still everybody went to see him. Nothing is more common in England. A hundred circumstances unknown to an audience, may lead to that result. Mr. Kean was wrong, no doubt; but that is an affair for him to settle with the Boston audience. He fulfilled all his engagements here, and we only visit the theatre to see the performance. The best of the joke is, that some of our wise acres now pretend to discover, that Kean has no talent; now that he is the worst actor in the world. What sagacity! When he serves our audience so, we shall complain. At all events, his genius and wonderful powers suffer no dimunition by his eccentricities. We think the Boston papers are unnecessarily severe on the subject.[24]

Kean unceremoniously arrived back in New York on 29 May 1821. The Mercantile Advertiser, the Commercial Advertiser, and the National Advocate reported on 30 May 1821 that Kean had been robbed of certain papers and valuables during his journey from Boston to New York. Of this occurrence, the National Advocate stated:

> Mr. Kean arrived yesterday morning [29 May] from Boston. On his arrival at the City Hotel with his baggage, he discovered that his trunk or case, which contained all his valuable papers, and a considerable sum of money had been stolen. A case was left very similar to the one belonging to Mr. K. Among the papers were some receipts, signed by Le Roy, Bayard & Co. Mr. K's engagements with several managers, and

> numerous letters. There was also among other valuable papers and articles, two bank notes of $100 each, and quantity of specie in English gold. The case (somewhat resembling a better trunk), left in the place of that of Mr. K. and which is now in his possession, was filled with stones, an old pair of pantaloons, and a vest.
>
> It is suspected that the robbery was committed on board of the Steam-boat, as Mr. K. knows that his trunk was safe with him at Hartford. He thinks it probable he was followed by some person from Boston.[25]

The Boston Centinel rejoined with the following comment about the robbery:

> It will be seen by a New York paragraph, that this performer was robbed of money and papers to a considerable amount, on his late journey from Boston to New York. We know not what is intended by the remark, that he was probably robbed by some one who followed him from Boston. We thought the sorest of his late complaints was that he was not followed, but be this as it may, we hope this will be the last visitation he will receive for the sin of ingratitude.[26]

With Kean back in New York, the New York and Boston newspapers awaited a response from him. The New York Evening Post remarked:

> Unless something satisfactory should appear on the part of Mr. Kean, it may safely be predicted that his career in this country has arrived at a premature termination. The American stage is, and we have his own word for it, liberally encouraged, and histrionic merit is no sooner known than it receives its full reward, both of plaudits and something more solid, but can it be supposed that we are insensible to contumelious treatment? We will not, however, be too precipitate in our condemnation; perhaps Mr. Kean's conduct may admit of explanation, if so, he has the opportunity to make it; if not, he cannot too soon bid a farewell, a long farewell, to his American popularity.[27]

In an effort to curb the attacks on him and to gain support for his seemingly rash action, Kean sent a letter

to the editor (Major Noah) of the National Advocate:

> As I have yet some months to remain in this country, it is my earnest wish to preserve the good opinion of those friends who have so generously and nobly manifested their approbation of my character and talents. As the servant of the public, I am aware that I am amenable to public opinion and censure; and if the public voice declare that I have been in error, I am ready to apologize with all due submission. But, Sir, is it not extraordinary, that the offence with which I am charged took place at Boston, with the concurrence of the managers; with the approbation of friends, with whom I afterwards spent the evening, gentlemen of fortune and literary acquirements; and that I should not hear any dissatisfaction expressed until I arrive in this city? I passed the following morning at Boston tranquilly; and on my arrival in New York, murmurs of disapprobation were heard, when appeared to me like an overwhelming Avalanche at the termination of brilliant harvest.
>
> At an immoderate expense, and with all that additional cost which falls to the lot of a stranger, I repaired to Boston to fulfill my engagements. Had I been acquainted with the customs of the country, I should have made different arrangements; but my advisers never intimated to me that theatres were only visited in certain months of the year; that when curiosity had subsided, dramatic talent was not in estimation. I never could or would believe that the arts in this country were only encouraged periodically, or that there could be any season in which Shakespeare was diminished in value; but as I am now initiated in these mysteries, I shall hereafter profit by my experience.
>
> Sir, I live by my professional exertions. Innumerable family claims are satisfied by each month's disbursements; I cannot afford to give those talents away. I had performed two of my principal characters without hopes of remuneration in that town, where my efforts had, two months before, contributed largely to augment the public charities. I repeat, I had acted two characters to the very extent of my abilities without profit. On looking through the curtain, at seven o'clock, on the night I was to represent Richard the Third, (that character which has been the foundation of my fame and fortune,) I counted twenty persons in front of the theatre. I then decided, hastily if you please, that it was better to husband my resources for a more favourable season, and, in this decision, no disrespect was contemplated to the audience, slender as it was. The managers apparently concurred with me, deplored the unfortunate

state of the times, and we parted in perfect harmony and confidence.

It was my intention to leave America on the close of my southern engagements. I now think it my duty to return again to Boston, and, in person, vindicate my cause at the season when those who most patronise the theatre are assembled. The public have treated me with the greatest liberality, and I shall ever acknowledge its favours with pride and gratitude. At the latest hour I shall remember those friends by whom I have been encircled and whose amity and confidence I am convinced I have not forfeited. But I may be permitted to say, that the present hostility is not the voice of the public; it is that spirit of detraction ever attendant on little minds--a spirit which watches for its prey, and seizes upon transient and accidental occurrences to defame and destroy. That respectable presses in this country should have been influenced by such feelings, and denounce with such acrimony and bitterness, is to me extraordinary. "There is something in it more than natural, if philosophy could find it out."

I understand some gentlemen have asserted that I have acted to equally bad houses in England. I lament that they are driven to such extremities, or, rather, that they should compel me to declare that their assertions are untrue. The present existence of the first theatre in Europe is founded on the abilities which they affect to despise. The provincial managers of England, Scotland, and Ireland, have thankfully rewarded my efforts by sums equal to what I receive from my friend Mr. Price, the worthy and efficient manager of the theatre in this city. For the first three years of a career unprecedented in dramatic annals, I was in receipt of double that sum in every theatre in which I acted, and, even allowing a trifling diminution in the space of seven years, what am I to think of a city in which I have been received with equal enthusiasm, and witness a total desertion in the space of three months? But the public say I was too precipitate,--that I should have performed that evening, and then closed my engagement. Granted. Our feelings frequently mar our better judgments, and from trifling causes lead to results which we subsequently regret. The error was venal, for who is exempt from error? But all unprejudiced people will, I trust, take into consideration the unprofitable labour of acting Richard the Third to a solitary few, who subsequently acknowledged themselves perfectly contented with the gentleman who represented the character.

I am now convinced that the fine weather was my chief enemy, and shall again resume my station in the

> Boston theatre before I return to England.
>
> I beg leave, Sir, to submit this "round unvarnished tale" to the consideration and decision of the public; and I have too exalted an opinion of their justice and liberality, not to anticipate a verdict in my favour.[28]

Kean's apology served little or no end. His attitude was not gracious, and the public now saw the other side of Kean--the Kean that considered himself the supreme representative of Shakespeare. Americans were familiar with Kean's egotism but his behavior had been exemplary up to his abrupt departure from Boston and the publication of this letter. What Kean had done was to give the press something they could truly use against him.

The New York Commercial Advertiser, although willing to give Kean the opportunity to exonerate himself, felt that Kean's apology was not sufficiently "frank." In an article headed by "Hear both sides," the Commercial Advertiser said:

> Mr. Kean has addressed a letter to the Editor of the National Advocate, in vindication of his recent conduct at Boston, and we deem it an act of justice to him, to publish it. We do not think, however, that the manner and tone of this appeal to the public, will have the desired effect. The people of Boston are not only placed entirely in the fault, but they are sarcastically told that they cannot duly appreciate the beauties of Shakespeare, except during three months in the year. Why did not Mr. Kean, instead of boasting so much of his talents and former exploits, come out frankly at once, and acknowledge his fault--say that in a moment of passion--without reflection, he had illused the audience at Boston--and that he was sorry for it. A frank and ingenious course of conduct like this, would have atoned for his error, and restored him again to the favor of the public. The American people will not quietly pocket an insult, although when the amende honorable is made, none are more ready to forgive.[29]

Following the Commercial Advertiser's statement, the Evening Post on 1 June 1821 acknowledged Kean's apology as a "polite note." They had some reservations about his avowal:

> We always think that fairness requires at our hands to hear both sides. This is a caution enjoined and commanded by justice and liberality. Mr. Kean admits, that, in the stinging mortification of the moment, he was betrayed into conduct which he regrets as inconsiderate; but when he makes this painful confession, he should also have said with strict truth, that he did not reflect on the great difference between his situation on the American Boards, where he and the audience are in a measure strangers to each other, and that of a London Theatre, where an occasional aberration of an old favorite is sometimes overlooked, in a good-natured remembrance of the pleasure that has so often been received from the exhibition of his histrionic talents; and where his audiences are always disposed to exercise towards him the benevolence recommended in the couplet of Prior's"
>
> "Be to his faults a little blind,
> "And to his virtues very kind."[30]

On 2 June 1821 the National Advocate stated that they were waiting

> to hear what is said in the Boston papers on the subject of Mr. Kean's explanations, and think it will turn out, in the sequel, that Mr. Kean's difficulties are attributable to the managers, who we suspect, were not averse to setting the current the other way. A few words as to the custom of this country, and the impropriety of declining to perform after the audience had assembled, would, we think, have produced a different result. At all events, Mr. Kean expressed regrets which, we believe, he sincerely feels. We are too familiar with public feeling and justice to doubt the cordial acceptance of his apology.[31]

The Boston Patriot, on 5 June 1821, reprinted a portion of Noah's declaration, but disagreed with Noah's assessment of the situation:

> In reply we will merely state, that the Managers were to receive a stipulated sum, for eight nights, before Mr. Kean received a single dollar, and were to share equally with him whatever there might be over that amount, giving Mr. Kean the receipts of the 9th night clear, for his Benefit.--This being the case, there could be no possible motive for the Managers wishing "to set the current the other way," and thus deprive themselves of Mr. K.'s attraction, when in reality they paid nothing for his name or services, until there was a certain sum in the house, more than double in amount, perhaps, to what they could get, at this season of the year, without him.[32]

Most other Boston newspapers also considered Kean's apology insufficient--feeling that he had shifted blame to the managers and to the customs of the city. This, of course, was regarded as a gross insult to the inhabitants of Boston. On 4 June 1821, the Boston Patriot called Kean's apology "lame and impotent," saying it

> Only evinces, what all before knew, that under the sudden impulse of disappointed pride and mortified vanity, Mr. Kean pursued a course, of which he in his cooler moments heartily repents, and which, if he were able, he would joyfully retrace. Giving himself up to the guidance of his passions, at a moment when he should have acted with deliberation and the greatest caution, the consequence was that he insulted, almost unpardonably insulted a respectable and discriminating audience--insulted a town proud of its own institutions, and distinguished for its honorable patronage of literature and the arts.

Yet the Patriot completes its report by asking "Bostonians" if the course adopted by Kean's former admirers is apropos, because they now ostracise and ridicule Kean:

> But is Mr. Kean to be held condemned, irretrievably condemned, because his feelings of mortified and disappointed pride overcame his better judgment? And was it dignified, was it respectable, was it consistent that the same men, who once extolled this tragedian to the skies, made him a demi god,

> attributed to him almost, (if not quite) superhuman talents, paid him the tribute of fulsome adulation, and when about to leave our town after his first visit, assembled round his lodgings and rent the air with the huzzas of their approbation, that men who had carried their admiration of his talents to this ridiculous extreme, should at once change the sweet sounds of approbation into the sharp notes of bitter, acrimonius denunciation, and not content with this should add to it insult and scandalous libels, should assail his private character, his morals, and advertise him as a runaway? We leave the answer to this question with the good sense of Bostonians.--Some may call it wit, and consider it very smart, but we can view it only as disgraceful to the community where it is tolerated. With these remarks we leave Mr. Kean and his vindication to the public.[33]

The New England Palladium told its readers on 5 June 1821 that Kean's "explanatory letter" was an "unbroken piece of misrepresentation." The Palladium, however, had not praised Kean during his first engagement either:

> There never was an epistle, or by whatever other name it should be called, which did such ample justice to its writer, as regards morals, habits, manners, talent at composition or professional merit. The far-famed "philological" address to "the literary emporium of the new world" is nothing to it. That shewed only the silly attempt of a would-be author where materials were wanting to even make a really decent actor; this besides the wonted garnish of vanity and the glare of "trumpet-tongued" egotism, has the singular merit of being an entire unbroken piece of misrepresentation, the gentlest term we can apply to it.
>
> The "concurrence" of the Managers must be disproved by themselves. It is a duty they owe to the public and to their own respectability.--We leave them to do what is thus expected from them, only pledging themselves ourselves that so far from the assertion being true, the reverse of it will be found to have been the fact. The "approbation of friends of fortune and literary acquirements" until confirmed by themselves, we take the liberty of not only doubting but of denying, as we do also his pretended ignorance of dissatisfaction, and tranquility, most strangely exemplified the one in his impudent and justly contemned message to a respectable editor in consequence of a paragraph very properly reflecting upon his conduct, and the other in his decamping at

eleven o'clock on the very morning of the day passed so "tranquilly," leaving his baggage and the stage to overtake him as they may upon the road.

We could also contradict, in the most convincing manner, Mr. Kean's misstatement concerning the thinness of the audience, by naming the actual receipts in the house for that night, were we not sensible that any argument on this point would be the concession of a plea for evading a public engagement, which no actor, who suffers his name to appear in the bills of the day, has a right to do without the consent of the audience itself, should it consist of but two individuals, unless it be in cases of illness and other unforeseen casualties, which are lawful excuses in themselves, and for which there was not even a pretext made on the occasion in question.

His boasted engagements in England and the double profits he attaches to them, we disbelieve in toto--and, on the contrary, from being somewhat acquainted with the nature of those engagements, and particularly with the salaries he himself received, we will venture to assert, that he has gained here more in one season, than there in two and even three, and dare him to disprove the assertion by proper vouchers. We will also hazard the question by proper vouchers. We will also hazard the prediction, that he will no longer reap there that "brilliant harvest" which on his return, he will find destroyed by the "avalanche" of Macready and other actors better than himself.

We know not how his matchless modesty, in proclaiming that to his merits alone the first Theatre in the world," meaning that of Drury-lane, owes its existence and prosperity, will be relished by John Bull; but this we knew, upon a very good authority, that Mr. Kean, notwithstanding his ipse dixit, has played there to thinner houses than in America, so thin and dull withal, that many gentlemen left it for the other Theatre; that John Bull himself, though a plain unsuspecting personage, is not always to be led by the nose; that "the first Theatre in the world" will not pass for such either in Covent Garden, or on the continent of Europe; and that, in short, the real taste and literary talents of the British metropolis never at any time confounded the mere mob-actor with a patrician Kemble or an inspired Cooke.[34]

In a conciliatory letter addressed to the Boston public on 4 June 1821, managers Dickson and Duff deny that they concurred with Kean about his leaving the theatre:

> The managers of the Boston Theatre, having suffered not only severe mortification, from the disappointment experienced by the public, but a heavy pecuniary loss, from Mr. Kean's non-fulfillment of his engagement with them, indulged the hope that they should not, in addition, be accused of "concurring in any offence to the public;" Mr. Kean's statement, however, re-published in the Boston paper of to-day, has reduced them to the unpleasant alternative of either by silence admitting the truth of that statement, or of publicly disavowing it. They, therefore, respectfully state, that Mr. Kean's refusal to perform the part of Richard the Third, was not only without their concurrence, but met from them all the opposition in their power, which they thought decorous and gentlemanly. This course was dictated by a sense of duty that they owed to the patrons of the drama, and when they add, that he was not to receive any specific sum for his services, but was to share the receipts of the eight nights, if they exceeded a certain sum, and to have the ninth night clear for his benefit, it will appear evident, that interest as well as duty would prevent them from concurring.
>
> The managers submit this statement in duty to the public and themselves, not from any hostility to Mr. Kean.[35]

Kean addressed an undated letter to manager Dickson sometime after his departure from Boston in which his egotism comes to the fore:

> I must regret the occasion of my abrupt departure, but you must feel with me that my professional reputation must not be trifled with. Any indifferent house to such plays as "Venice Preserved," etc. however well acted, may be found in the catalogue of histrionic events, but a total desertion of the public to that character which has been the foundation of my fame and fortune, requires a greater portion of philosophy than I am master of. I must lament to find that curiosity alone was the incitement of the apparent enthusiasm that attended my efforts on the first engagement. I had vainly conceived the talent not the novelty had attracted. Be kind enough to pay into Mr. Tileston's hands my portion of the first night's receipts.[36]

The Boston Gazette had published several articles denouncing Kean's behavior--including the mock

advertisement ("One-Cent Reward") that first appeared in their journal, and was later inserted in other journals. On 4 June 1821 the Gazette thought it "an act of common courtesy to re-publish his (Kean's) apology for an explanation." The Gazette, felt, however,

> that his publication abstracted from the everweening vanity of self conceipt, which distinguishes it, is totally irrelevant to the subject, and is absolutely a misrepresentation.

As to Kean's statement that the "offence took place with the concurrence of the Managers," they said it was untrue:

> It is a pitiful attempt to shift the burden of indignity from his shoulders, and to involve the respectable Managers of our Theatre in the odium which is so generally felt in Boston towards this "Colossus of the drama." The truth is, that the Managers used all their influence to dissuade Mr. Kean from taking this rash step, and followed him out of the Theatre, urging him to return--requesting him to play only that night, and perhaps he would not insist upon breaking off his engagement the next day . . . but all their entreaties were unavailing, as Mr. Kean persisted in his refusal to perform.

However, the managers

> chose to let him depart, without enforcing, by law, what he was bound in honor to perform--a fulfillment of his engagement.

If Kean has outraged any other audience but a Boston audience, he would have been treated in a different manner.

> The natural propensity in our citizens to quiet and orderly expressions of their indignation, and their detestation of mobs, only prevented him from falling in with the same trouble and rough handling, that he would have experienced in any provincial town in his own country, if he dared to perform a similar trick.

After additional comments refuting Kean's assertions that all was quiet in Boston the morning following his

desertion, that he passed the "next morning tranquilly," and that "he heard no dissatisfaction until he arrived at New York," the Gazette closes its article by frankly admitting,

> In fine, we have said too much about this affair. His communication is a tissue of absurdity, arrogance, inflated vanity, and gross misrepresentation. He is virtually wrong; and notwithstanding his vaunts of again appearing in Boston we doubt whether he still retains a sufficient number of greedy admirers, who will in any event, be over anxious to obtain seats for his benefit . . . Our advice to Mr. Kean is, not to return to Boston at any season, as he may be mistaken, as to his ideas of periodical encouragement, and that fine weather is not his chief enemy.[37]

If "fine weather" was not Kean's chief enemy, what was? Why was Kean treated so contemptuously? Why this seemingly endless avalanche of searing criticism from Boston and New York--denigrating a man so highly esteemed just months before? Apparently, there must have been present an underlying resentment waiting for Kean to make an improper move. Perhaps they thought they had been deceived by Kean's previously charming and decorous behavior, the contrary of what they had expected. The pretender, the impostor had at last shown himself for what he really was: a charletan, "a vagrant," "an erratic genius," and the "worst actor in the world." If he pretended to be moral, he also pretended to be a great actor. Suddenly Kean did not deserve to be compared with Cooke. He did not deserve to be compared with Cooper. He did not deserve to be compared with any other favorite of theirs. Kean had certainly not endeared himself to them.

Perhaps the press and certain members of the audience even resented Kean because he was not a "native genius"--one of their own. Instead, he was an English tragedian--an English genius. On 7 June 1821, the Boston Patriot felt that it was its solemn duty to publicly censure Kean, since the public has a right to demand "pointed" expressions "of disapprobation:"

> We had once resolved never again to bring this individual before the public, considering him too far lost to any self respect to be longer worthy of its notice; but upon farther reflection we have been led to doubt the propriety of this course, and feel it is a duty to ourselves and our fellow citizens, to make a public expression of their indignation, at the pitiable conduct of this distinguished tragedian. Had Mr. Kean no more than ordinary claims upon the public notice, his conduct might then be treated with salient contempt; but having occupied a lofty and conspicuous place among the eminent men in his profession, however he may humble himself in our estimation, the community which he has insulted have a right to demand of us a plain and pointed expression of disapprobation. His improper conduct and his feeble attempt at its palliation can hardly be considered an affair merely between him and a theatrical audience; the public is interested, since it is at issue with Mr. K. upon important points, involving its character for taste, consistency and discrimination.
>
> We consider Mr. Kean to acknowledge himself guilty of an unjustifiable breach of his engagement, and of a disregard and contempt for the feelings of our audience. . . He attributes it to the impetuosity of his excited feelings. If this were true, we believe our citisens would be disposed to pardon his error: . . . What estimate shall we place upon that man, who first insults a large and respectable town, and then by falsehood attempts to shift the blame from himself to two innocent individuals [managers Dickson and Duff]? . . . we must regard him as charged before the tribunal of the American public, with deliberately asserting, what he knew to be false. . . .
>
> That he should take to himself any credit, as aiding the public charities of our town is not only surprising but consumately ridiculous. . . . Many individuals, who are concientiously loath to visit the theatre, but who did not escape the general curiosity

> to see that man, whom magazines and newspapers had described to us as an eighth wonder, were willing to gratify their curiosity and to contribute at the same time to those institutions, which confer honor upon our town and our state.
>
> Whether Mr. Kean returns to Boston or not, whether he ever again makes his appearance upon an American stage, will be for him and his "advisors" to decide. He may rest assured that the patronage of the arts in Boston is not periodical, and that the outraged feelings of its citizens must be appeased, before it would be safe for him to appear upon its stage. . . . Swollen with vanity, who will be wild enough to believe that he can have the magnanimity to acknowlege his errors and ask forgiveness?
>
> These observations have been prompted by a sense of duty to the character of our community; and not by any hostility to Mr. Kean. We should have perhaps witnessed the performances of Mr. Kean with more intense delight, had they been the efforts of native genius; we are not satisfied that England should tax us even for the support of her tragedian;--but as England supports half a dozen American painters, we may perhaps afford to support for a twelve month a single player. We acknowledge all Mr. K's claims to attention and patronage, and shall sincerely rejoice, if it should be in his power to remove the foul blemish, which now rests upon his character. If any thing of this kind should transpire we shall again bring Mr. Kean before the public; but with this exception, we bid adieu to an unpleasant and profitless subject.[38]

During all the discussions in Boston and New York about Kean's hasty flight from Boston, the Philadelphia National Gazette, which had previously been a severe, though fair judge of Kean's professional talents, maintained a position calling for compromise:

> We really wish to see this gentleman indulgently treated. It was fair to criticise his professional merit; it is not unjust nor harsh to make merry with his egotism, when thus displayed in a printed address: we may pity his weakness in sneering at the public who, he acknowledges, had treated him "with the greatest liberality." But it is coarse and despicable to circulate lampoons on his person, and ridiculous to manifest resentment at his freaks.[39]

Kean's intention to extend his engagement in New York, Boston, Philadelphia and several southern cities through 1822, was aborted because of the Boston fiasco. Although the incident occurred in Boston, there was a rumor that opposition was rising in New York to prevent Kean from performing on the New York stage. Some of the opposition were prepared to hiss Kean from the stage in the event he was foolish enough to act there. The same fate, perhaps worse, awaited him if he reappeared on the Boston stage. Realizing the futility and folly of pursuing another engagement in New York, and of making a personal appearance in Boston to make amends, Kean prudently chose to leave New York on 6 June 1821. He sailed to Liverpool in the same ship, the "Martha," that brought him here, with "capt. Sketchley" setting sail.[40] "Thus has a trifling error been so severely unmercifully resented," said the National Advocate on June 6, "as to deprive the American stage of an actor who has no equal in his line."[41] The Providence Journal gave vent to its feelings of disgust regarding the unfair treatment of Kean by saying that

> all circumstances considered, we think, Mr. Kean has been treated with too much bitterness and asperity in a town [Boston] where his talents had contributed more than two thousand dollars to charitable institutions.[42]

Kean's name continued to appear in the newspapers for some time after his departure for Europe. On 8 June 1821, the National Advocate published the first of Kean's two

farewells to the American public. Presumably, this first letter was written shortly before Kean left New York on 6 June 1821. Kean sent the letters to Major Noah, his steadfast and trusted ally. Although Kean's letter admits of wrong doing, it, nevertheless, retains the stamp of rhetoric and vanity common to his other public statements. From this first letter, we learn that Kean left the United States because he felt himself unable to contend with the uncustomary behavior of the audience and the unvaunted power of the American press:

> As I find it impossible for individual efforts to stem the torrent of opposition with which I have to contend, and as I likewise consider it inconsistent with my feelings and character to make additional apologies, I have resolved to return to my native country, and beg leave to offer to the public my thanks for that portion of favor bestowed on me, and respectfully bid them farewell.
>
> Had I been aware of the enormity of the offence which has excited so much indignation, I certainly should not have permitted my feelings to interfere with my interest.
>
> The "very head and front of my offending" amounts to this: an actor, honored, patronized by his native country, and enjoying a high rank in the drama, withheld his services under the impression that they were not duly appreciated; and so much do I fear the frailty of my nature, that it is not improbable, under the same circumstances, I might be tempted to act in the same manner. I therefore think it proper to leave the theatre open to such compeers, whose interests it may be to study the customs, and not offend them by my presence any longer.

Kean completes his parting address by citing the "severity and injustice" of the press, and the indignity he has suffered at their hands:

> Before I left England, I was apprised how powerful an agent the press was in a free country, and I was admonished to be patient under the lashes that awaited

> me; and, at a great sacrifice of feeling, I have submitted to their unparalled severity and injustice. I was too proud to complain, and suffered in silence; but I have no hesitation in saying, that the conduct I pursued was that which every man of reputation would pursue under the same circumstances, in that country where Shakespeare was born and Garrick acted.
>
> Again, I disclaim any intention of offending; and although every natural domestic tie, as well as the public love, await me on my own shores, it is with reluctance and regret I leave my friends in America.[43]

Although Major Noah did not condone Kean's rash behavior, he felt that Kean's punishment was not commensurate with the act: Kean was unduly and unmercifully punished for a trivial affront to the public. Throughout the entire aftermath of Kean's walkout from Boston, Major Noah was Kean's most faithful supporter. Others, like William Coleman, abandoned Kean--criticising him and leaving him to fend for himself in a hostile venue. On 8 June 1821, Noah printed an article in the National Advocate expostulating on Kean's departure from America. He reproaches the press for its treatment of Kean, and questions whether other performers of genius would now come to America:

> This distinguished performer has taken his departure for England [6 June], and, as he intimated in his letter [1 June], that it was his intention to return to Boston, it may be well to account for this change in his original determination.
>
> I believe I may venture to declare, without fear of contradiction, that any national or personal affront offered by a performer to an audience, would never meet with my approbation--on the contrary, no person is more likely to resent it with promptness; but every offence must bear a proportionate punishment. It is discreditable to a magnanimous nation to punish without mercy, and to persecute without feeling.

> Mr. Kean acted manifestly wrong in refusing to appear before a limited audience, and a proper punishment would have been an unfavorable reception when he next appeared; because every profession has its peculiar rewards and punishments. But if I may judge from some of the Boston prints, and certainly from the most abusive anonymous letters now in my possession, a more dreadful fate awaited him. Had he robbed the Banks; burnt all the books in the "Literary Emporium;" seduced all the women--and thrown the Printers type into the river, he would not have been more roughly handled than for giving vent to vain feelings, and, in a moment of peevish fretfullness, refusing to play on a certain night, and disappointing a slender audience. Hodgkinson, Fennel, Cooper, and Cooke, have done the same many a time, and what was the result? Were they hooted, pelted and abused? Did the audience forever forbid them to appear, and deprive themselves of the gratification arising from their acting? By no means: they explained--they apologized, or no notice was taken of it; but in the case of this unrivalled performer, no mercy was to be shown him; he was to be trampeled upon; driven indignantly from the country; no apology was to be received; and even in this city [New York] where he had fulfilled his engagements, a party was made up to hiss him from the stage.
>
> What man of merit and feeling will emigrate to this country, if a pardonable error is to be thus furiously resented? Who will trust himself to an audience thus sensitive, thus unforgiving? . . .
>
> The Boston Galaxy speaking of the style in which the managers should have treated Kean, says
>
> > "They ought to have taken this insolent pretender, this inflated, self conceited, unprincipled vagabond by the nose, and dragged him before the curtain to make his excuses for his conduct himself."
>
> I am far from believing that this language is approved by the respectable portion of Boston; they are incapable of grand gross and vulgar revenge.

In the final two paragraphs, Noah sums up Kean's reasons for his departure:

> Viewing this increased hostility, and not being desirous of exposing himself to the ill will and asperity of such persons, Mr. Kean wisely determined to return to his native country, where no temporary disappointment could overwhelm him, and where some

charity would be afforded to his errors.

I have very little personal knowledge of Mr. Kean; I have not spokèn fifty words with him. I only know him as an actor, and unquestionably the greatest since the days of Garrick. I wish men of genius to visit our country; I wish them to admire it, and to esteem the people; and this can only be effected by a liberal and enlightned policy.[44]

On the evening of 8 June 1821, Coleman, speaking directly to Noah, disavows Noah's defense of Kean, claiming that Noah's statement about Cooper, Fennel, Hodgkinson, and Cooke is untrue. It is clear from his rebuttal, that Coleman has reverted to his original "prejudices and prepossessions" about Kean, which had been temporarily abated by the novelty and impact of his acting style:

Noah, in his indiscreet zeal to apologize for Mr. Kean, this morning, says, among other things, that "Hodgkinson, Fennel, Cooper, and Cooke, have done the same many times." In saying this, he speaks without the least color of truth, as relates to Messrs. Cooper, and Hodgkinson: and to Fennel also, we are told; nor do we believe he is correct as to Cooke since he came to America. How strange it would be in any other man than Noah to venture upon statements thus at random, without giving himself the trouble to enquire into their truth?[45]

The American made several observations about Kean and his departure in their June 8 edition. Surprised by Kean's "parting address," finding it "less exceptional than might have been anticipated," they, nevertheless, felt that Kean's acting style was equally as extravagant as the admiration lavished upon him--calling him "the mere child of vanity and caprice."[46] "He is gone however," says the American, "and we are as little inclined to lament his departure as to make any further comment on

what he has done or written."[47] In the same piece, however, the American makes a harsh statement about Kean, the actor:

> As to his merits as an actor, there being no standard of taste to regulate our judgments, every one will of course entertain his own; and while we express an opinion that he is little more than an able mountebank, we are quite satisfied that others should suppose him a Roscius.[48]

The American concludes its editorial with a disavowal of Noah's assertion about Cooper refusing to perform on certain occasions:

> In palliating the conduct of Mr. Kean, we observe an error into which Mr. Noah has fallen respecting Mr. Cooper, which ought to be corrected. In no instance has Mr. Cooper refused to perform his part to an audience, however thin; neither have his exertions to please been at any time regulated by the number of those who were to censure or applaud him.[49]

Now that Coleman had repudiated Noah's claims about the delinquency of Hodgkinson, Fennel, Cooper and Cooke as untrue, there were ample grounds for a small scale war between Noah's National Advocate and Coleman's Evening Post. Noah, the astute editor that he was, did not let Coleman have the last say in the matter. In the 9 June 1821 publication of the National Advocate, Noah discredits Coleman's remarks and reprimands Coleman's double standard in the Kean affair:

> When Mr. Coleman pretends that neither Hodgkinson, Fennel, Cooper, nor Cooke, have declined performing, after being announced in the bills, he says what he knows, from his own experience, to be untrue. They may have been justified; at all events, the public never treated them as Mr. Kean has been treated. A reference to old files will prove the fact. If Mr. Fennel had a party to dine with him, he sent a message

> to the manager that he could not come. Why pretend to this great fidelity and punctuality on the part of our actors? I believe, however, that it has seldom happened to Cooper. As to my "indiscreet zeal" in behalf of Kean, as Coleman calls it, I beg leave to inform that Editor, that I do not follow his example, viz: fall in with the current and assist in persecuting and prescribing the unfortunate.[50]

Walsh, the editor of Philadelphia's National Gazette, published some remarks about Kean that sought to undermine his credibility. These comments, written in June, purport to be an impending, though hypothetical, "grand manifesto" from Kean:

> The American world will have, no doubt, to encounter the shock of a grand manifesto, dated London, &c. from the mighty master of the histrionic art, tending to show that this art is not "only in its infancy" throughout these States, but unconceived, underated and even insulted in "the literary emporium" of the Western hemisphere. Let the Yankees tremble and confess.[51]

Partly in response to Walsh's remarks, and partly to render a service to Kean, Noah printed Kean's second letter, this time, written "off Sandy-Hook, June 7, 1821," the day after he left New York for Liverpool. Kean, perhaps, sent a second letter to Noah in order to soften any bitterness that remained in the wake of his departure, and hoping for an eventual return to the United States:

> Dear Sir,--Impress upon the public mind that I do not leave America but with the most sincere impressions of admiration and respect; and though I have temporarily yielded to the torrent of hostility, which I was too proud to contend against, still, on the termination of my Drury Lane engagement, I shall return again to share the favor of those friends, whom I shall ever rank foremost in my affections, in whatever climate fortune may dispose me.[52]

In the 12 June 1821 Evening Post, Coleman makes some remarks that indirectly accuse Noah, and other friends of Kean, of "indiscreet zeal" on the behalf of Kean. However, Coleman does admit that Kean's "rash action" is not "entirely destitute of palliation:"

> Mr. Kean has done a rash action, which no judicious friend ought to attempt to justify, but which is not, in my judgment, entirely destitute of palliation. He has, I think, suffered more, and is in danger of being more injured, by the indiscreet zeal of certain precipitate friends, than by the attacks of his open enemies. If he feels a proper degree of self-abasement, and will personally declare it on the Boards, (and what lover ever disgraced by submission?) he will find, that in a generous oblivion of the past, a Boston audience is second to none in the world.[53]

A day after Coleman published this last remonstrance, Noah on 13 June 1821 denounced Coleman for his suggestion that Kean should return to Boston to make proper amends:

> Mr. Coleman is pleased to back out respecting Mr. Kean; and graciously condescends to say, that "if he feels a proper degree of self-abasement, and will personally declare it on the boards, he will find that, in a generous oblivion of the past, a Boston audience is second to none in the world." I think that if Mr. Kean ever appears in Boston, after the ferocious treatment he has experienced for the error he committed there, he will indeed be debased.
>
> None had a higher opinion of a Boston audience than I had until this affair took place. It is a fact, which I record with shame for the "literary emporium," that ballad singers were carrying about the streets, "the last dying speech of Stephen Merril Clark, executed at Salem for Arson," and "Kean's flight from Boston," at the same moment, and for the same price. An association at once cruel, ungenerous and unmanly.[54]

Noah's indictment of the Boston press and his unswerving support for Kean was sharply censured by the

New-England Galaxy on 15 June 1821. The paper was particularly incensed by Noah's assertions that Cooper, Fennel, Hodgkinson and Cooke had failed to fulfill some of their engagements. The battle between the newspapers was not confined to New York alone. The Galaxy begins its article with some derisive comments about Kean:

> This gentleman has written a second and a third letter to his friend Mr. Noah of New-York, which, for egotism, conceit and inconsistency, may claim an equality with the first. They would hardly be worth noticing, did they come before the public unattended by the remarks of Mr. Noah, who labours with great eagerness to extenuate the folly of Mr. Kean--justifying where he can, and palliating where he cannot justify. Mr. Noah very magnanimously admits that his friend "acted wrong in refusing to appear before a limited audience, and a proper punishment would have been an unfavorable reception when he next appeared." He intimated that he has in his possession "anonymous letters," from which, as well as the Boston prints, he judges that "a more dreadful fate awaited him"--i.e., more dreadful than an unfavourable reception!
>
> Mr. Noah has been an editor long enough to know what sort of importance ought to be attached to anonymous letters, and we will not pay so ill a complement to his understanding as to believe that he seriously brings forward the errors of one performer to justify those of another. Yet he says "Hodgkinson, Fennel, Cooper, and Cooke, have done the same many a time." It is a pity that Mr. Noah should have found it necessary or thought it proper to hazard so broad an assertion and one which startles so many sober people with an unexpected and hitherto unknown fact.

The Galaxy continues by challenging Noah to prove his assertions:

> Come forward, Mr. Noah, if you please, and show us when and where these distinguished actors have "done the same" and show us, too, that they have done it "many a time." Your favourite's cause is in a sorry plight, if you cannot support it without resorting to such pitiful expedients.

The balance of the Galaxy's article is devoted to Noah's unflattering remarks about "Bostonians," to denying they ever "idolized and revered" Kean, and to closing comments about Kean's letters:

> The tenor of Mr. Noah's remarks is not very complimentary to the Bostonians, although a short time since he allowed that they set competition at defiance when they undertook a handsome thing. Perhaps this revolution in his feelings may be accounted for by those who remember the indifferent reception of a play called The Siege of Tripoli. There was no squeezing and pulling to get tickets--no sale of boxes at auction--although it was brought out while the Kean fever was raging and known to be the production of a Keanite.
>
> In relation to the paragraph Mr. Noah has done us the honour to extract from our paper [refers to 8 June 1821 article in the National Advocate], we have a favor to ask him. If he intends his readers should infer that it was taken from a paper, whose editor had "a few months before, idolized and revered Mr. K.," we beg of him to do us the justice to say that such an inference is neither fair nor equitable. We have never "idolized" or "reverenced the man." Thanks be to heaven and our own want of taste, our soul has not that crime to account for. To us, his acting has always appeared ridiculous, his pretensions baseless, his manners vulgar, his genius doubtful, his understanding feeble, his vanity excessive, his principles detestable, and we are not yet convinced that the valuation is erroneous in the aggregate.

At the end of the article, the Galaxy printed Kean's letters which they believe

> exhibit his mind and his heart in their natural deformity--conceited, impertinent and vain. The absurdities and contradictions which they contain are too gross and palpable even to be pointed at.

However,

> It is only necessary to say that the second letter was written after he had embarked for England, where we hope he may safely arrive, and enjoy all the distinction he deserves.[55]

In response to the continuing castigation of Kean in the Boston newspapers, the Providence Journal published a candid and critical article deploring the policies of the press and their suggestions of violence with respect to Kean:

> Why should popular violence be encouraged by the Press? Is this servility consistent with the freedom of opinion and discussion? Will conductors of papers increase their own authority, or gain a single friend by such conduct? We cannot believe it! By suffering their papers to become vehicles of the most abusive billingsgate language, they lower their own credit with the reflecting part of the community, while their syncophancy is despised even by the Hydra whose favour they would propitiate. If Mr. Kean was under a legal engagement with the managers of the Boston Theatre, they have the remedy at law. If the engagement was merely honourable they must put up with the amende honorable which he has tendered them.[56]

Before Kean abruptly left the United States, he had fulfilled a task which he hoped would make amends for his postponed engagements: he arranged for the erection of a monument commemorating the memory of the late George Frederick Cooke (Cooke had died in 1812).[57] After Cooke's death, his remains had been placed in the strangers' vault in St. Paul's Church at Vesey street, lower Manhattan.[58] Kean requested that Cooke's remains be removed from the vault and buried in the open grounds in the churchyard.[59] His request was granted. On 4 June 1821 the project was completed.[60] Commemorative lines inscribed on the marble monument read:

> Three Kingdons claim his birth,
> Both Hemispheres pronounce his worth.[61]

Dr. Francis, Kean's close friend and admirer, said that Kean "was extremely pleased with the eulogistic lines on Cooke."[62]

In spite of the unfortunate incident in Boston and the widespread condemnation that followed, the Boston Palladium, elaborating on Kean's order for the erection of a monument for Cooke, commented favorably on Kean's deportment in social circles--paralleling the assessment made by both Edmund Simpson and William B. Wood:

> Notwithstanding the contrariant opinions of Mr. Kean's performances on the stage, and the general condemnation of a particular proceeding, yet there were undoubtedly estimable traits in his character. In the social circle, so far was he from being arrogant and assuming, that he was noticed as unobtrusive in his opinions, and diffident in his deportment--and those who condemned his acting, after being in his company spoke praise of his manners.[63]

Probably as Kean sailed towards Liverpool and hopefully to a friendlier and more hospitable English audience--an audience more willing to tolerate his indiscretions--he contemplated the sad turn of events. Unquestionably he was disappointed in not being able to continue his performances, but he must have been painfully aware as well of the considerable loss of revenue. One thousand pounds per month was not attainable at Drury Lane or any other theatre in Great Britain. In the meantime, Kean would plan ahead for his second voyage to America, with the hope of making amends and replenishing his coffers.

CHAPTER IX

KEAN PREPARES FOR ANOTHER VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES

Immediately after Kean's sudden departure from New York in June 1821, he attempted to regain his position as one of England's foremost tragedians. He arrived in Liverpool on 19 July 1821, the date on which George IV was crowned. From Liverpool Kean sent a letter, which was delivered by a friend, to Elliston (the manager of Drury Lane):

> My Dear Elliston,--With those feelings which an Englishman can alone understand, I have touched once again my native land. I shall be at the stage-door of Drury at noon, on Monday next. Do you think a few nights now would be of advantage to you? I am full of health and ambition, both of which are at your service, or they will run riot.[1]

A few days later, on Monday 23 July 1821, Kean inaugurated his homecoming with a performance as Richard III: his perennial choice for opening new seasons at Drury Lane and other theatres, which had included New York's Anthony Street theatre in 1821. If there were any doubts about Kean's ability to regain the support of the Drury Lane audience, they were effaced by the plaudits he received.

On the morning, shortly before noon, preceding the performance, Kean was led to the theatre in a manner befitting royalty. When the above letter had been delivered to Elliston, it was suggested to Elliston that Kean's entrance into London be given special attention. A cavalcade of carriages (one for Elliston and one for Kean) and a troop of horsemen were formed to carry Kean and his entourage through London to the steps of Drury Lane:

> Six outriders, in a medley of all nations of the earth that do not go absolutely tattooed, constituted the vanguard; then came Elliston himself in solitary grandeur in his own carriage, drawn by four greys. The hero of the triumph next--Kean himself, likewise in his own carriage, . . . drawn by four blacks. . . .A troop of horsemen formed the flank, composed of bruisers, jockers, tavern-keepers, dog-fighters, and other friends of the drama; and the whole was brought up by the heterogeneous rabble which the progressive affair had, from pillar to post, enlisted in its service.[2]

This spectacle, doubtless, fanned the flames of Kean's insatiable ego.

Although Kean's return to Drury Lane was heralded with "pomp and circumstance," matters soon changed. Unbeknownst to Kean, troubles lay ahead which threatened his preeminence at Drury Lane: skirmishes with management and the infamous Cox scandal.[3] Furthermore, to worsen matters, the public did not flock to Kean's performances as they had during his first few seasons. Clashes with management, principally with Elliston, had provided Kean with incentive to leave England. Ultimately, however, it was the unrelenting criticism about his unpopular affair

with Alderman Cox's wife that truly compelled Kean to seek refuge in the United States for a second time.Since his return to Drury Lane, Kean had periodically threatened to leave that theatre over his disagreements with management. The first of these disagreements took place during the fall season in 1822.

At the beginning of the 1822 season, the major London theatres faced a serious challenge. Both Drury Lane and Covent Garden were losing patrons to the exotic extravaganzas and melodramas staged in the other theatres.[4] In order to prevent further loss of patronage, Elliston wanted to engage the services of Covent Garden's Charles Mayne Young.[5] According to an agreement regulating the two theatres, neither was permitted to negotiate with players from the rival theatre until after one year's termination of contract. Young was unhappy with his contract at Covent Garden, however, and demanded an increase in salary from 20 pounds a week to 25 pounds.[6] Covent Garden denied Young's request--provoking the tragedian to sever relations with the theatre. Elliston, disregarding the agreement[7] between the two theatres, offered Young the enormous salary of "£20 a night for thirty nights."[8]

With Young in his pocket, and Kean in the wings,[9] Elliston envisioned full houses with the two heroes of the buskin captivating Drury Lane audiences. But, alas! Kean was outraged by Elliston's latest attempt to improve the

theatre's sagging box office, and presumably at his expense. Elliston had promised Young equal status with Kean. Kean was annoyed, and in an outburst reminiscent of his response to the May 1821 Boston audience, Kean told Elliston

> The throne is mine!--mine! I say--no one shall come near it; and I will maintain it even at the expense of expatriation. To whatever quarter of the globe I may sail, all shall acknowledge me the first English actor. Nil ortum tale, fatentes.[10]

The American press, especially the Boston and New York press, was familiar with such declarations. When later Kean announced his intention to leave England permanently for the United States, the statement must have supported the American press's conviction about Kean's arrogance and ill-tempered behavior. Kean was also informed that Young would perform, not only on his own in starring roles, but occasionally in concert with Kean. If Young was to act with him, Kean wanted to dictate the terms and selection of parts, and he so warned Elliston:

> When I come to London, Elliston, I open in Richard the Third--my second character, Othello.--Hamlet--Lear; and so through my principal cast. If Young is ambitious to act with me, he must commence with Iago and when the whole of my characters is exhausted, we may then turn our thoughts to "Cymbeline" and "Venice Preserved." If you think Young will answer your purpose better than Kean--take him.[11]

Elliston ignored Kean's plea to change the order of the plays--knowing that Kean could not refuse to fulfill his engagement without breaking his contract. If Kean reneged on his contract, Elliston could fine Kean 1000

pounds. In spite of this possible forfeiture of 1000 pounds, Kean delayed his return to Drury Lane and remained at his Scottish retreat on the Isle of Bute.

In the meantime, Young made his first appearance at Drury Lane on 17 October 1822. He opened his season as Hamlet "and, a few nights later, he followed" Hamlet "with Macbeth."[12] Although Young's Kemble-like acting style differed from Kean's,[13] he drew better houses than Kean had for years. That Young played to better houses in both principal roles disturbed Kean. Formerly, both parts had been allocated to Kean alone. This change also unsettled Kean. Young was playing <u>his</u> roles--roles which he thought rightfully belonged to him. Moreover, Kean was intimidated by Young's stately manner and comfortable association with the aristocracy. Consequently, Kean feared the inevitable confrontation with Young. This fact is born out in Kean's 23 October 1822 letter sent to Elliston in response to Elliston's demand that Kean report to the theatre:

> I cannot according to the arrangements I have made, be in London till Monday, the 11th. You can if you please advertise me for Richard on that night--You must forgive my being jealous of my hard earned laurels. I know how brittle is the ground I stand upon--how transient is public favor--Mr. Young has many advantages that I have not: a commanding figure, sonorous voice--above all Lordly connexion--I had too much regard for my own happiness not to kick all such trash[?] to the devil. I am therefore coming to meet an opposition, made up of my own enemies (which like locusts--can almost darken the sun) Mr. Young's <u>friends</u>--& his very great abilities--with nothing but humble genius to support me, a mere ephemera--always at the command of caprice--& the same breath that

nourishes the flame this day--to-morrow put it out. Aut Caesar, Aut Nullus, is my text. If I become secondary in any point of view, I shrink into insignificance, I shall not trouble the world longer than the two years I am engaged to you--I have taken a house in Scotland for the purpose of retirement with my family at the termination of my engagement & all I ask of you--is to let me retire with my reputation Undiminished, that I may enjoy the retrospection, when I am the world forgetting, & by the world forgot--as the Covent Garden Hero--comes upon my ground, the Challenger--I have doubtless my choice of weapons, he must play Iago!--before I act Jaffier I am told he is extraordinarily great in Pierre--if so--I am beaten--this must not be--I cannot bear it I wou'd rather go in chains to Botany Bay--I am not ashamed to say--I am afraid of the contest. Will you take the thousand pounds & dismiss me--I shall be at Dumfried from the 28 to the 30.[14]

Elliston did not "take the thousand pounds" and dismiss Kean. Instead he continued to avoid giving Kean a forthright response. Elliston's prevarication deeply troubled Kean, who felt, more and more, that Elliston planned to oust him from Drury Lane in favor of Young. Angered by Elliston's disingenuous replies, Kean wrote to him from Carlisle on 31 October:

> Elliston. My dear Elliston, I know you--I see the deep entangled web you have extended for me but that Providence which has guided me through all the perils of world Chicanery--fights for me now & will defeat the plot though Coutts Bank flowed into the coffers of my enemy--& his Suite composed of Lords & Auctioneers. I am prepared for war.[15]

Despite Kean's protestations and "call to arms," Elliston did not budge. After months of semi-retirement in Scotland, Kean reluctantly returned to Drury Lane on 11 November 1822.[16] Even if Kean was losing his contractual squabble with Elliston, he expected to make

some gains by successfully "waging war" with Young on stage.

The fateful day was 27 November 1822; Kean and Young met head on in Othello.[17] Kean played Othello to Young's Iago, a replay of the event that virtually annihilated Junius Brutus Booth in February of 1817. The London Magazine cautioned Young not to confront Kean in Othello:

> Let him [Young] not play Iago to Kean's Othello. We saw Booth . . . try a fall . . . with Kean!--If Mr. Young should contest the ground with that ardent creature, he will learn a lesson which will be useful to him as long as he remains on the stage.[18]

Through the first two acts Young performed well, but in the third act Kean's superiority became evident. The London Magazine's warning proved prophetic as Kean's intense, impassioned acting completely overwhelmed Young's deliberate declamation. Young had been

> completely overshadowed by the superior radiance of Kean. In the first and second acts, . . . Young stood forth prominently enough on the canvas, but in the subsequent parts he seemed to disappear from the stage, and to be altogether lost to view amidst the overwhelming splendour of the other. Edmund was great, . . . he never acquitted himself so nobly.[19]

In William Hazlitt's view

> Kean was great, . . . surpassingly great. In the third act he let himself loose on the ocean of his passion, and drove on in darkness and in tempest, like an abandoned barque. The agony of heart was the fiery Moorish agony! not cramped in within an actor's or a schoolman's confines, but fierce, ungovernable, dangerous. . . . Mr. Young wisely kept to his preconcerted rule, and acted by rule steadily. . . . We think Mr. Kean played more intensely on Mr. Booth's Benefit, but then he had a motive and a cue for passion, which with Mr. Young was wanting. He had to show that Mr. Booth was not of his quality. No one accuses Mr. Young of approaching him.[20]

Having secured a "victory" over Young, Kean now devoted his attention to Elliston, attempting to renegotiate his contract. Throughout the spring season of 1823, Kean repeatedly threatened to leave Drury Lane if his demands were not met. Elliston was pleased with his successful pairing of Kean and Young in Othello, Venice Preserved and Cymbeline. The box office was thriving as it had not for years. He did not want to disrupt this profitable combination. Kean, however, was incensed at the prospect of performing with Young for yet another season. Moreover, he became increasingly disturbed by Elliston's insistence that Young continue starring in Hamlet and Macbeth. Kean reminded Elliston on 26 May 1823 that Young's performance of Hamlet and Macbeth were depriving "him of half his fame," and "that he [Elliston] might as well when he was out of town go into his house and take away his furniture and take them from him."[21] Kean apprised Elliston that if his demands were not met, "he would there give a check for £1,000 to be let off and he would be attractive elsewhere, etc., etc."[22] Elliston, however, refused to accede to Kean's demands. Kean then gave James Winston, one of Elliston's officers, a paper that "contained an extract from his [Kean's] articles saying that he was to direct and superintend the getting up of the pieces he acted in and that, in virtue of that, he directed Hamlet to be acted on Friday next," in place of Town and Country.[23]

On 28 May 1823, Winston and Elliston met with Kean's "solicitor and friend;" Mr. Broughton. Broughton told Winston and Elliston that Kean was most anxious "to make some arrangements to cancel the articles."[24] Broughton admitted that Kean misconstrued his right to "direct" his own plays, and after some deliberation, Elliston, said Winston, agreed

> to further Mr. Kean's views as far as he consistently could and that perhaps he might agree to his going to America next year [1824] and enter into fresh agreement with Kean for two seasons, or three if he liked, for a limited number of nights, forty or fifty as he pleased--his characters to be specified, to play if he wished it, by himself, with an arrangement as to new characters, etc.[25]

In spite of Elliston's willingness to enter into a "fresh agreement with Kean," Kean was still not satisfied. On 28 July 1823 Kean told Winston

> to communicate with Mr. Elliston that he came to town for the purpose of deciding whether he was to be at Drury Lane next season or if he should sell off his property and retire to America. These were his conditions: that we might engage your Mr. Macready and Mr. Young for Rolla (in Pizzaro) and Sir Edward Mortimer [in the Iron Chest], but Hamlet, Macbeth, etc., were his characters and, although he did not wish it should be done yet, he did object to his characters being played when he was out of London. Shakespeare's and Massinger's characters (by the acting of which he saved Drury Lane) were his, and he would not give them up.[26]

Kean informed Winston that he wanted an immediate reply from Elliston. Winston approached Elliston with Kean's request and then (Winston) met with Kean on July 28 to tell him that Elliston agreed to meet his demands. Winston concluded that Kean was satisfied, and

> on going away he [Kean] gave me a paper with six parts written on it: Hamlet, Lear, Richard, Macbeth, Shylock, Sir Giles, which he wished not to be played while he was from town, but if any of them were, then he should repeat those when he arrived that had been played in his absence.[27]

After Kean left Winston, he returned an hour later--requesting to see Elliston's letter. Winston gave Kean the letter, which Kean said was meant "to satisfy his wife."[28] Upon reading the letter, Kean returned to see Winston later in the evening, telling him (Winston) that

> [there] was something in the letter that induced him to wish a fresh arrangement, namely, that Mr. Kane [sic] should be advertised [in] his last season of acting in England and that he would go through the whole of Garrick's characters: Scrub, Archer, Able Drugger, etc.--no new parts. Then he would retire to American where, if he could have his house surrounded by walls to let in only those he wished, he should be happy. He had been in companies where he had only three shillings a week and to that he would rather return (though there was no chance of that) than be second where he did expect to be first, etc. By this arrangement he would be himself, etc., "Fill your plays as you choose."[29]

At the conclusion of the spring 1823 season another series of events precipitated still another falling out between Elliston and Kean.

After Charles Mayne Young had completed his first season at Drury Lane, he decided to return to Covent Garden. Young was evidently overwhelmed "by Kean's greatness."[30] To replace him Elliston sought to lure William Charles Macready from Covent Garden. Macready was also dissatisfied with his current Covent Garden contract, and chose not to renew it. Instead, he accepted Elliston's generous offer of "£20 per night for the

ensuing Drury lane season."[31] To appease Kean, Elliston raised his salary from "£30 per week to L20 a night."[32]

During Kean's absence from Drury Lane in August, September and part of October 1823, he toured "Cork and southern Ireland in August and September; Belfast in mid-October."[33] While Kean was touring Ireland, he received a letter from Dunn,[34] another of Elliston's officers, telling Kean that Macready was about to perform at Drury Lane. He also informed Kean that they would act together. Kean was infuriated at the thought, but was powerless to do anything about it. Despite the turn of events, Kean was not prepared to let Elliston have an absolute victory. In a letter dated 1 October, addressed to an official (probably Winston) of Drury Lane, Kean candidly admits his displeasure with Elliston and expresses his desire to leave Drury Lane:

> Sir/ as far as regards the twenty pounds per night I accede to Mr. Ellistons proposals. For the ensuing season, with the proviso--that he does not expect me to act in farce--interlude &c on the night of my benefit.
>
> With the respect to the other points of your letter I shall only say--I hope Mr. Elliston will not deceive himself in the belief of my renewal of engagement for Drury Lane Theatre. The frequent usurpations of my right--the forgetfulness of my former Services. & above all the violation of word, must have excited disgust in a less irritable mind than mine--& I assure you Sir--no Galley slave--ever signed for emancipation, more deeply than I. To bid farewell--to Elliston & his management. Novelty--is the weapon, which he teaches me to adopt--& by carrying my merchandise to the rival market--I doubt not but the novelty will excite a more than common sensation I shall now publicly avow my intention of closing my Theatrical career, at Covent Garden Theatre. By going through the whole routine of my

> characters. Previous to my departure for America--the effects of this I am vain enough to believe will require very very novel attractions in Mr. Elliston to counteract but his is the speculation--not mine . . . [Postscript] As Mr. Macready is occupying my Situation my Services will not perhaps be wanted so early as the--3d--I am making a vast deal of money in this country--I have no wish to give it up. While it chooses to flow your answer on this subject will oblige me.
>
> I stay at Londonerry--till the 11.[35]

Kean's frankness about the "vast deal of money" that he was making in Ireland is not an understatement since his "Irish tour was prosperous to the sum of £4,000 and more."[36] Whether this was reason to delay Kean's return to Drury Lane is questionable since other factors later emerge.

Macready began his Drury Lane engagement on 13 October 1823 as Virginius in Sheridan Knowles' play of the same name.[37] Other roles soon followed: Hamlet, Macbeth, Rob Roy, Leontes, and all his other great roles.[38] Macready managed to attract full houses whenever he performed, although these were not entirely attributable to his superior thespian ability. On many nights when Macready was advertised for one of his tragic roles, Elliston cleverly added an elaborate afterpiece to allure playgoers. Frequently this enterprise included the presentation of the sumptuous melodrama The Cataract of the Ganges, by Moncrieff.[39] This opulent production incorporated a magnificent cataract with cascading waterfall at the "center of Drury Lane stage,"[40] and,

also, included parading horses and the din of military bands.[41]

While Macready was beguiling playgoers, Kean remained at his Scottish retreat on the isle of Bute to mull over his latest predicament. Should he meet the challenge or not? This question was inferred in two letters sent to Kean's secretary, Phillips, from The Isle of Bute in mid-November. The two letters, the first dated 14 November 1823 and the second dated 18 November 1823, sufficiently define his reservations:

> Mrs. Kean wrote to Elliston on the 8th, telling him that I have not above one week to live. All is well by my keeping away. Dam the Ganges, to prevent further overflow: send to hell the Prometheus that animated the statue: set fire to Bun Row; and then I will return--at any time very reluctantly--for this is the most beautiful place in the world. Write and send me play-bills <u>every day</u>. How was the box-plan for the 17th? I can get another doctor's certificate if it is necessary.[42]

The second letter shows that Kean was enjoined by Phillips to take up the challenge with Macready:

> I thank you for your prompt attention. I must differ with you, about my coming to London. Fabius Maximus conquered not by fighting a powerful enemy, but by avoiding him. He weakened his resources, and saved the city of Rome.
>
> I shall not move from this heavenly spot, till Caius Cracchus meets his fate,--till Weare's murderers are hung,--the Christmas pantomine over,--and a general stagnation of public excitement: and <u>then</u>--like a hawk I'll pounce upon my prey. Write and send bills, or those penny critiques, <u>every day</u>!!![43]

There is sufficient evidence from other sources, including the <u>Theatrical Observer</u>;[44] to indicate that Kean was indeed plagued by ill-health. However, as the 18

November letter shows, Kean, more than likely, was simply intimidated by Macready's presence. Pleading poor health may have provided him with a convenient excuse. Although Young's imposing appearance and gentlemanly deportment frightened Kean, Macready's accomplished ability posed still a greater threat. Even though, at this time, Macready had not yet attained equal footing with Kean, in spite of his energetic delivery and frequent comparisons to Kean. It was not until Kean's death in 1833 that Macready would at last achieve recognition as England's leading tragedian.

In December 1823 Macready fulfilled the first part of his engagement and then left Drury Lane for a three month tour of the provinces. His decision was actuated by the "chaos and immoralities of Drury Lane: the drunken Elliston forever coupling with some actress in a private box; the filthy state of the corridors and dressing-rooms; the prostitutes enquiring about the return of Kean."[45] Two days after Macready's departure, Kean returned to Drury Lane from his self-exile. Although Winston records in his diary for 17 December 1823 that Kean again threatened to abrogate his contract and go to America,[46] Kean appeared at Drury Lane "regularly" from 8 December 1823 through 6 April 1824.[47] In January, 1824 Kean interrupted his schedule with an engagement ath an engagement at Portsmouth.[48] The honeymoon, however, between Kean and Drury Lane was shortlived. When Macready reappeared at

Drury Lane after the Easter break, Kean disappeared.[49] There is reason to believe that Kean spent some time in Brighton before appearing in the provinces in a brief tour. However, an entry in Winston's diary for 2 February 1824 states that

> Kean desired me to propose to Elliston that he did intend leaving England for America for two years and then returning to England to be engaged by the best bidder, but he now proposed to take a tour <u>for one year</u> to Rome and Italy <u>for one year</u> [<u>sic</u>] and not play, return the next, and then play a few nights at £50 a night.[50]

It appears that Kean quit London because of an alleged illness, and "left no address nor any indication of his place of retirement."[51] When Elliston heard that Kean was at Brighton, he dispatched a letter to him.[52] Soon after, the letter was returned to Elliston by the landlord of the Regent Hotel at Brighton telling him that Kean had been there but was now on his way to Dieppe. It is evident that Kean left for the provinces; "we find him [Kean] at Manchester, April 20-25; Lincoln, April 26-May 1; Derby in May."[53]

On 10 May 1824 Kean was advertised to play Richard III at Drury Lane; however, true to form, Kean did not show up. On 8 May 1824 Phillips, Kean's secretary, "wrote word," to Winston, "that Kean spat blood and could not act next Monday," in <u>Richard III</u>.[54] Two days later, on May 10, Winston received another "letter from Phillips saying, with certificate, Kean could not play."[55] On May 15 Kean, said Winston, wrote another letter, this time

to Bunn (an assistant of Elliston's), enclosing certificate of illness from Carlisle saying "he could not play, would not play with Macready--pointed out the only parts [he] would act and said he was ordered to Brighton for his health."[56] Macready was substituted in his stead.

Elliston pondered the situation: he was in debt and desperately needed to locate Kean. He probably wanted to team Kean with Macready in order to diminish his escalating bills. To want him was one thing, but to find him was another. Having been told that Kean was possibly at the Regent Hotel in Brighton, Elliston discharged Dunn to Brighton to look for Kean. Once in Brighton, Dunn went to the hotel to find Kean but was told by the proprietor that Kean had left for France. Convinced that Kean was still at the hotel, Dunn made plans with an acquaintance to leave a note for Kean. He told the landlord that he was friendly with Kean and wanted to leave a message for him, which he did. The message was then conveyed to Kean. In it Kean read: "Mr. Elliston with friendly inquiries after the health of Mr. Kean."[57] The subterfuge worked. Kean was enraged by Elliston's latest ruse and two days later angrily wrote the following:

> Elliston,--I hate a trickster: you have employed unworthy means to disturb me in my solitude. This was neither manly nor open. It was necessary I should have repose--my health has suffered materially. Elliston, I must not be spoken to; you know what I am equal to when in vigour; but remember also, Ad nullum consurgit opus cum corpore languet. You have pursued

> me by a trick, and I should deign you no reply; but I am here, sir, under the direction of Sir Anthony Carlisle, and will not stir from this place until I have gone through all the routine of medicine and sea-bathing, prescribed for me by that great man. The medical gentlemen of Brighton declare also I need repose--on that question there is no dissentient voice: "Kean must have repose." If I am pursued, either by tricks or openly, I shall retire to "La Belle France," for some weeks.
>
> I leave you in no distress--you have Macready! Macready, Elliston!--why should you be anxious about poor Kean? Yet, a breath--a breath, I say, of Kean shall confound a generation of Youngs and Macreadys.[58]

Because of mounting pressure from creditors, Elliston continued to pursue Kean. But, true to his threat, Kean left England for France. From Dieppe, in another incompletely dated letter, on 31 May, Kean wrote to his friend Jack Hughes revealing his plans about going to France and therafter leaving England "for ever:"

> Dear Jack/ the closer they pursue, the further I shall recede--by the time you receive this Mrs. Kean & myself are on our way to Paris--where I shall remain, till I see the last night advertised of Drury Lane Theatre, the day after you will see me in London. Settle all bills for me: I will discharge them on the instant I return--I shall then quit England for ever--but I carry with me the reputation of the first English actor. Which if I had allowed them to have their way, I cou'd not have done, if I had acted--I know hundreds were prepared for hostility, & in the bad parts they were forcing me to play with Macready he must have skimmed the cream of my professional dish.--he may now take the whole.--& the Public may talk and be damned I shall be soon out of hearing--& change of Country--I hope will destroy every feeling however it was not artifice. I was so ill, that if I had attempted to act I am convinced I shoul'd have fallen on the stage.--Dunn was sent to Brighton & I immediately got into the Packet & sailed--I shall not act any where now till August--My Dublin engagement & then--Vale Patria.[59]

Kean was not to perform at Drury Lane until January 1825, approximately ten months after his last performance on 6 April 1824.

Before Kean left for France, however, there came the public disclosure of his affair with Alderman John Albion Cox's wife. In March 1824, to his supposed dismay,[60] Cox discovered 80 letters poignantly detailing Kean's liaison with his wife. Cox publicly sued Kean for two thousand pounds in damages "for criminal conversation" with his wife.[61] According to evidence, principally furnished by Kean's correspondence with Charlotte Cox, Kean had been secretly seeing Mrs. Cox for nearly seven years:[62] it is conceivable, however, that their relationship began in 1813 or 1814--the first years of their acquaintance. Kean first met both Alderman Cox and his wife at a provincial theatre in Dorsetshire in 1813[63] and subsequently at Drury Lane in 1814--Kean's first year at Drury. At Drury Lane in 1814, Cox apparently applied his influence as one of the shareholders and later as a committee member to aid Kean's cause. In spite of the seriousness of the matter, Kean lightly dismissed it--evidently assured a victory at the forthcoming public trial in January 1825. During the time that Kean was touring France and Switzerland in the summer [June] of 1824,[64] newspapers spoke about the affair and the lurid nature of the letters--claiming that the letters would incriminate Kean. On his way back to England, Kean

stopped at Boulogne-sur-Mer to see an old acquaintance, T.C. Grattan. Grattan and Kean had originally met during Kean's struggling years in the provinces--years before his London debut at Drury Lane. During his visit with Grattan, Kean spoke about the pending trial:

> He [Kean] spoke of the affair as one which gave him no uneasiness; said he had no fears for the result; and he seemed quite unconscious of the ruinous risk that awaited him.[65]

Kean came back to England in June and afterwards went to The Isle of Bute in Scotland to supervise "additions to his house and building roads."[66] Meanwhile on 17 July 1824 Kean's "attorney," Henry Sigel, made arrangements with Elliston, Winston and George Robins, a member of the committee, to discuss the approaching trial; but, unfortunately, Kean was not present. None of them knew his whereabouts.[67] Kean, of course, was comfortably secure at his Isle retreat.

On 20 July 1824 Kean returned to London to see Elliston about his contract:

> He reminded Elliston that the contract between them expired within six days, when the present season ended. He swore that never again would he endure the humiliations of the past two years. From this day on, he declared his independence; he would play in any theatre he wished, on a nightly basis only and the fee for each night would be not less than L50. These were the only conditions on which he would act again at Drury Lane.[68]

At first Elliston was unwilling to accede to Kean's considerable demands. However, after giving it some thought, he consented to pay Kean the fifty pounds per

night, a sum heretofore not paid to any actor in England. Interestingly enough, this amount of money was identical to the sum he received for his first tour of America.[69] Kean's agreement with Elliston set forth a 23-night engagement at fifty pounds per performance. The dates were 16 January to 15 March 1825. Kean could select his roles from a list of twenty six, which included all the major tragic roles.[70] On the evenings Kean played, he was not obliged to share the stage with any other star performer, such as Young or Macready. Under Kean's previous contract, he had received "30£. on terms to play thrice a week, and, if required to do more, 10£. extra for every additional night."[71]

From "August 2-30" Kean played in Dublin and afterwards appeared at "Limerick and Galway in September; . . . Liverpool in October, . . . Glasgow in November" and "Belfast late in November."[72] Upon the termination of his 23 night engagement at Drury Lane, Kean expected to tour America for a second time. In the meantime, however, 15 January 1825 was assigned as the proposed date for his defense against Cox. In anticipation of the "great contest" Kean lightheartedly wrote to Elliston from Belfast:

> How do you do? Where are all my women? Tell Newman to get some good brandy against the fifteenth of January--to drink damnation to whores and Alderman.[73]

On 17 January 1825 the long awaited trial pitting Edmund Kean against John Albion Cox began. The case was

heard by Lord Chief Justice Abbot at the Court of the King's Bench "of the New Court, at Guildhall."[74] The "large gallery" was filled almost to capacity to witness the proceedings.[75] Cox, as stated earlier, sued Kean for two thousand pounds in damages[76] "for criminal conversation with his . . . wife."[77]

Evidence was presented by both sides. Denman began the inquiry by extolling Mrs. Cox's "considerable mental accomplishments and attainments."[78] He spoke of her marriage to Cox in 1795 and the ensuing meeting between the Coxes and Kean in 1813. Denman, also, commended Cox's upright reputation. Furthermore, he alleged Kean's chicanery and dissolute conduct. Since letters written by Kean were the principal evidence in the litigation, selections from some of the letters were read aloud by Denman to stress Kean's duplicity. Two letters were especially damaging to Kean's defense. One letter was addressed to Mrs. Cox and dated 6 January 1823, the other letter, bearing the same date, was sent to Mr. Cox. Because the letters exhibited the same date, Denman called them the "twin letters."[79] Both letters were written by Kean to allay the suspicions of Cox about his alleged misconduct at Salisbury the day before the letters were postmarked.

Kean had accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Cox, Miss Wickstead (Mrs. Cox's niece) and Miss Tidswell (Kean's aunt) to Salisbury.[80] During their visit to Salisbury,

Cox "openly accused"[81] Kean of misconduct, whereupon he challenged Kean to a duel. Pistols were allegedly brandished during the altercation; however, when Mr. Scarlett summoned Miss Wickstead to the stand, she did not recall the use of pistols by her uncle (Cox) and Kean.[82] Ironically, Kean gave Cox ten pounds in order to return to London after the dispute. What's more, Kean had paid the expenses for the entire week at Salisbury.[83]

The first of the two letters was sent to Mrs. Cox. The specious contents of the letter blatantly exposed Kean's clandestine relationship with Mrs. Cox:

> My dear little imprudent girl.--your incaution has been very near bringing our acquaintance to the most lamentable crisis. Of course he will shew you the letter I have written him; appear to countenance it; and let him think we are never to meet again, and in so doing he has lost a friend. Leave all further arrangements to me.[84]

To the husband he wrote:

> I have been seriously considering the mass of nonsense uttered by us the two last nights at Salisbury. I must own likewise it has given me great uneasiness. If I have paid more attention to your family than any others of my acquaintance, the simple motive was to shew the world that I valued my friends as much in adversity as when I shared their hospitality in their prosperity. I am sorry my conduct has been misconstrued, as the inference is unworthy of yourself, me, and a being whose conduct, I am sure, is unimpeachable. To remove all doubts upon the subject, and to counteract the effects of insidious men, I shall beg leave to withdraw a friendship rendered unworthy by suspicion. I must be the worst of villians, if I could take that man by the hand while meditating towards him an act of injustice. You do not know me, Cox--mine are follies, not vices. It has been my text to do all the good I could in the world, and when I am called to a superior bourne, my memory may be blamed, but not despised.

Wishing you and your family every blessing the world can give you, believe me nothing less than

Yours most sincerely, Edmund Kean[85]

The disclosure of the aforementioned letters wrecked Kean's defense.

Besides these two significant letters, others were read aloud in court. All of the letters were directed to Charlotte Cox under various pseudonyms: Some were addressed to Mrs. Allen, others to Mrs. Simpson, and still others to Mrs. Elbe. Invariably the letters were sent in care of Kean's aunt Miss Tidswell. Of course this was done as a precaution "for the purpose of eluding detection."[86]

Many of the letters did not have dates but were evidently written years before the trial because of the plays mentioned in them. Most of the letters were chiefly designed by Kean to make appointments with Mrs. Cox, "stating where she was to come to him."[87] The appointments were usually set for twelve or one o'clock in the day. The letters were most often written with "ardent" expressions, "calling her his dear, dear, dear little love."[88] Some of the correspondence included the endearing name "Little Breeches" which was assigned to Mrs. Cox by Kean "by reason of his having presented her with a sailor's uniform, in which she often arrayed herself when she accompanied" him "in an amorous excursion."[89]

Although the letters did not specifically identify Kean as their author, some of the contents may have. A significant portion of the letters indirectly linked Kean to Charlotte Cox because many of the letters were forwarded to his aunt, Miss Tidswell (Other times different names were used, in place of "Tidswell", that made identification difficult). However, a few of the letters did include his first name. One such letter, printed in the Times on 18 January 1825, and postmarked 21 January 1824, includes not only Kean's first name in the closing, but, also, references to his anticipated second trip to America and difficulties he was encountering in his affair with Mrs. Cox:

> Too plainly I perceive, still dear L.B.[90] an obvious change in the tenour of your letters, and a less observer of the world could easily interpret that change of circumstances effects a change of sentiment.
>
> Six months ago, I was the only subject of your epistles, every page assurances of your love, and your terminations the hope of passing your life with me. It seems now as if you had become weary of the subject, but I think it necessary to fill the paper, that I may not too suddenly perceive a change of feeling. You now tell me of concerts, going to plays, give me long critiques of singers and actors, to whose merits or defects I am totally indifferent, and seem very clearly to have made up your mind to a circumstance, which once I was vain enough to think would have broken your heart--that of parting to meet no more; if such is your feeling, depend upon it. I shall release you from your bonds before my departure for America. That simple style of writing that you had, and which, I use to clasp to my heart, kiss with my lips, and sleep with on my pillow, is changed to the slang of fashionable coquetry. I did not give the Colonel one smile to night. Why any night, if those smiles belong to me? But above all, dearest, for I must still call you so, you have betrayed a littleness of mind, which, if I had not read under your own hand, I never could have believed.

> Your rejection of his offers, upon the plea of giving up House, servants, and society--is this my Charlotte? No, I will believe that some fiend has usurped her character; for if you can so cooly balance the world's enjoyment against your love for me, I have been mistaken in you, and think with uninterested observers that it was passion, and not love. Mark the difference, I could, for you, banish every pleasure of this life; shut myself in the most dreary cavern; undergo every privation, lose even the recollection of my language for want of use, if even at the end of 20 years I was sure of possessing you for ever--that is with the mind that has captivated me for the last six years. I shall say no, more; there seemed but one way to secure our after happiness, and that it seems you have rejected, I shall never again repeat it, nor tempt you for a moment to make such powerful sacrifices as houses, servants, concerts, and colonels. Farewell!
>
> Your unhappy, but fortunately proud, Edmund!
>
> "Mrs. Elbe, care of Miss Tidswell,
> 12, Tavistock-row, Covent-garden, London-Post-paid[91]

During the course of the proceedings, Denman was unable to establish with certainty the exact period when the "guilty intercourse" between Mrs. Cox and Kean began.[92] It was believed that Cox was unaware of the relationship until he discovered the letters in March 1824: upon returning from a business trip, he found the letters in his wife's cabinet. Shortly thereafter Cox was supposedly told by members of his household about the "fatal connexion."[93] The servants and a "young lady,"
who was a relation of Cox, observed a particular occurrence when Cox was in Wellington on business. Kean was secretly ushered into the house by Mrs. Cox. This circumstance, which apparently established a connection between Kean and Mrs. Cox, was concealed for a time by the servants and Cox's relations for fear of making "their

master miserable."[94] Although Denman did not give a specific date for the commencement of the intrigue, it is obvious from the above letter that the relationship had begun at least seven years before the trial. Denman conducted his remarks by expressing the hope that the court would grant Cox full restitution for damages. He then brought several witnesses to the stand to verify his statements.

Scarlett presented Kean's defense, by referring to several factors which he believed were injurious to Denman's assertions and evidence. He attempted to show that Cox had acted in collusion with his wife to obtain financial gain and possibly a separation, and, moreover, that Cox did not adequately protect his wife's honor. Before addressing the central issues, Scarlett contended that there was no evidence to show that any of the letters had been found in the cabinet of Mrs. Cox; that there was no evidence to connect any of the letters to the defendant, "but in a solitary instance," and that the jury had no right to assume "that Mrs. Allen meant Mrs. Cox, or that the signature of 'Little Breeches' was that of Mr. Kean."[95] Furthermore, he questioned the inability of the plaintiff to provide some person "to prove that at the date of some one of the letters Mrs. Cox had received a letter."[96] Scarlett then proceeded with his points about the possibility of collusion.

He then suggested that Cox allowed his wife to be offered "at the shrine of pollution" [Drury Lane] while he (Cox) retired "to Mr. Kean's box while his wife was in his [Kean's] dressing room."[97] Scarlett bolstered his argument by telling the jury about the time when Kean and Mr. and Mrs. Cox travelled to Croydon. Kean customarily visited the Coxes "at all hours of the night," and "on one occasion," the defense claimed, "Mr. Cox went with him [Kean] to Croydon, in company with Mrs. Cox and Miss Wickstead, at an early hour in the morning, and left the two ladies under the protection of Mr. Kean." The defense reasoned that if this was not sufficient evidence of collusion, it at least, indicated weakness such as could not be found "in any Alderman in London."[98] The defense also called the jury's attention to the fact that Cox's ex-employee Watmore, "who was apparently paying his addresses to Miss Wickstead," may have been actually intriguing with Mrs. Cox.[99] If so, Cox was not entitled to any award for damages.

Other points were raised by the defense such as the charge that "Mr. and Mrs. Cox had been seen walking very lovingly together since the commencement" of the trial.[100] And, moreover, that Kean "had produced a sum of money and paid his [Cox's] rent for him."[101] "What could be inferred from such facts," said Scarlett, "but Mr. Cox had been in collusion with his wife from beginning to end, in order to get a sum of money or else a

divorce."[102] And if this can be confirmed, surmised Scarlett, Cox was not entitled to an award for damages, especially "if he became the pander to his own dishonour."[103] Scarlett concluded by saying that Cox "had, after all the warnings of Mrs. Kean, invited Mr. Kean to his house, made him sleep there, and has left home the next morning."[104] The counsel thereupon presented several witnesses to corroborate his points.

In response to Scarlett's accusations, Denman rejoined that

> every circumstance which could even imply a collusion, was directly contradicted by evidence, and more particularly by the evidence of the letters themselves, by which it appeared that the guilty parties were constantly apprehensive of Mr. Cox's discovering their intimacy; so that the first to the last it was a foul calumny to say that he had connived at his own dishonour.[105]

After assessing the facts, the Lord Chief Justice directed the jury's attention to two items. If the plaintiff had "connived at his own dishonour" he would not be entitled to remuneration. If, however, the plaintiff was guilty of "gross negligence" in not protecting the honor of his wife, he would be entitled to a lesser sum. After consulting for about half an hour, the jury returned a verdict for damages at £800.[106]

The public humiliation of the trial created numerous difficulties for Kean. The press expressed their dissatisfaction with Kean's behavior and his decision to return to the London stage soon after the trial.

Moreover, Kean no longer commanded the enormous respect he once did as an actor; in addition, his reputation or private worth was already sullied from previously indecorous behavior both on and off the stage. This time, however, he had gone too far. The public, although ready to forgive, could not be expected to shrug off Kean's latest escapade as they had so often done previously. In addition, Kean's health was affected by the trauma of the trial and the ensuing criticism. Furthermore, the revelation of the scandalous affair caused an irreparable schism between Kean and his wife, Mary. Also, as some would have it, Kean's powers as an actor were declining, and, if so, that's why he finally decided to go once more to America.

In our opinion, all of these things contributed to Kean's ultimate decision to hazard a second visit to America, this in spite of both American knowledge of the affair and predilection against it. But, in the final analysis, it will be seen that inordinate pressure and castigation by the press, more than anything else, compelled Kean to try to renew his lost fame and spirits in the United States.

No sooner had the trial ended, then Kean brazenly chose to return to Drury Lane after months of absence. January 24, 1825 had been set as the prodigal's return to Drury Lane. However, three days before the scheduled event, Elliston was advised by Sir Richard Birnie, as

directed by "Mr. Secretary Peel," to defer Kean's reappearance so soon after the trial.[107] Elliston hastened to see Kean in Croydon, where Kean was frolicking and cavorting with various women; drinking brandy; and smoking cigars, to inform him about Birnie's suggestion. In spite of Elliston's exhortations, Kean positively declined to postpone his performance. Kean

> would listen to no suggestion of the kind--he declared himself ready for war, and on the 24th would meet his enemies on that ground [Drury Lane], which, by the assent of all England, was his own.[108]

The publicity engendered by the trial spawned a series of "pamphlets, ballads, and ribaldries."[109] The pamphlets, such as Fairburn's edition, published the letters in all their searing glory. Many of the letters were deftly placed in numerous journals both during and after the trial; the Times was one of the prominent purveyors of the letters. Ballads were sung on street corners lewdly chronicling Kean's affair. However, the most outspoken and virulent commentary was printed in diverse newspapers and journals. They were especially indignant at Kean's decision to act at Drury Lane without at least a temporary respite from the stage. On the eve of Kean's reappearance at Drury Lane, Bell's Weekly Messenger expressed its opinion about the entire situation, an evaluation which reflected the sentiment of other journals, even if less malicious. Kean, it was

noted, should be censured, his actions, an affront to public decency:

> It is perfectly wrong to say, that the public have no interest or concern in the morals or demeanor of its public servants . . . In the vices of individuals in private life, the public have no concern, because such vices, generally speaking, do not assail any public interest; but where they do actually affect such interest,--where they shock moral feeling, or act as pernicious example,--the public, even in the vices of private individuals, possess an unquestioned right, and frequently exercise it . . . the public possess this right in the case of its own servants, in the case of those who are obtruded, or who obtrude themselves, upon its pleasures and its amusements. The manner and conduct of such men become mixed up in one general example, which is recommended to the young and thoughtless, by the external circumstances of gaiety and splendour with which the drama invests them. . . . It becomes necessary to teach the culprit himself, that some degree of decency and morality is necessary in the servants of the public; and it is still more necessary to teach the young and inexperienced, that no circumstances can rescue the adulterer from abhorrence, . . .
>
> We do not wish, however, that this man [Kean] should be entirely driven from the stage. But surely he well, very well deserves the banishment of at least one season. Surely, public example requires this--Let him consult his own feelings, and retire from the stage for a time at least.[110]

Other papers were less sparing in their vilification of Kean. One publication demanded that Kean be driven from the stage:

> His [Kean's] conduct, in truth, admits of no palliation or apology. . . . By trampling on the dearest relations of society--by planting arrows of affliction into the depths of that heart which yearned in love and in kindness towards him and his fortunes--by rendering the object of his baseness an outlaw from social intercourse--and by grossly insulting the moral feelings of that public who have fed and enriched him--he has become a character utterly despicable and undeserving of future patronage and support. Should he venture to appear again upon the stage, it is the imperative duty of all who witness his re-appearance to hoot him from the boards;

> and be his talents ever so great, they and their possessor ought alike to be forgotten under the load of guilt which has been contracted. We call, therefore, upon every one whose heart is in the right place, to unite with us in freeing the drama from characters such as those of Edmund Kean; for we have come to a pretty pass, indeed, if the monies which an indulgent public heap upon a favourite are to be thus perverted to pander to passions so flagrant, and to be employed in unknitting the most powerful ties in domestic life.[111]

This writer concludes his denunciation of Kean with a plea to purify the stage of profligate actors and actresses:

> It would be well, indeed, if the stage were to undergo some purification. Night after night we are doomed to listen to the polished speeches of men who have disgraced themselves by their immoralities; and to hear homilies on virtuous love from the lips of females who glory in their "liasons." Much as we admire dramatic entertainments, we love to see its heroes and heroines free from blame. . . . At this moment, however, among the female corps there are many dark examples. Some of the highest favourites of the public have fallen victims to the seductive arts of Senators, Noblemen, and Colonels of regiments; . . . Among the male performers, there are not a few who make it a constant practice to ridicule the restraints of virtue, and who are not abashed when their delinquencies are published to the world. Whence comes all this license? . . . It is, in our opinion, because the public do not exercise their undoubted prerogative of chasing these violators of morality from the stage; and if this were to be a standing rule, few would be found hardy enough to beard their indignation with impunity.
>
> Two opportunities now offer themselves for acting on this principle: with one the public is familiar; the other, is in the reported appearance of Kean. If both are allowed to be let slip--if the two histrionists be ushered into their old places with loud plaudits of welcome--<u>then</u>, we say, that a full license is granted to both to contract as much moral guilt as they choose and to insult their patrons by any actions which may enter into their depraved and vitiated inclinations.[112]

Beginning 18 January 1825 the Times waged a campaign to rid the English stage of Edmund Kean. Times criticism of Kean, throughout the week before and during his public appearances, was inexorable and acrimonious. Ironically, it should be noted that the editor of the Times was himself an adulterer:

> The conduct of persons who appear on the stage has never been the most irreproachable; and it may be doubted whether such a mass of living vice as the actors and actresses but too generally present in their private lives is not more injurious to public morals, than the splendid examples of virtue which they exhibit in their theatrical characters are useful. It appears, however, that Kean, the defendant in the cause which was tried yesterday, is advanced many steps in profligacy beyond the most profligate of his sisters and brethren of the stage. The public may take his own character as he gives it himself, in the letter dated January 6, 1823, and addressed to Cox the husband. In that letter, written with the express view to deceive the husband, he says that he should be "the worst of villains if he could take that man by the hand, while meditating towards him an act of injustice"--were he capable of the crime which in truth he was committing all the while. The woman herself was one well worthy of being protected by such a man and by such arts. Some of Kean's letters to her are of so filthy a description that we cannot insert them. Yet have the managers of Drury-lane Theatre the effrontery to present, or to attempt presenting, such a creature as this to the gaze of a British audience, on Monday next [24 January]. It is of little consequence to the nation whether the character of King Richard or Othello be well or ill acted; but it is of importance that public feeling be not shocked, and public decency be not outraged.[113]

Not satisfied with the condemnation of Kean of 18 January, the Times issued another proclamation on 21 January 1825 that surpassed even their previous indictment:

> If Mr. Kean had not himself produced before the public the transactions of his private life, we should have abstained from all notice of his individual character. Our feeling towards him has always been

> kind: we considered him an ornament to his profession; and in the teeth of his most persevering and rancorous hostility, we have supported him constantly, strenuously, and, we think, effectively. Even now, if we saw that he had any sense of shame, any of that decent reluctance which every gentleman feels at exposing himself to public and even private observation, after the disclosure of any offence against the necessary decorum and morals of society, we should have refrained from all observation. But the case is far different: Mr. Kean is not merely an adulterer, but he is an adulterer anxious to shew himself before the public with all the disgrace of the verdict of guilty about his neck, because that very disgrace is calculated to excite the sympathies of the profligate, and to fill the theatre with all that numerous class of morbidly curious idlers who flock to a play or an execution to see how a man looks when he is hanged, or deserves to be hanged. If we had seen no intimation of Mr. Kean's immediate appearance on the stage, we should have made no remark on his private conduct; but when we see the very day se'nnight [sic] on which on which he is convicted of adultery, chosen as his first appearance after a long absence--when every person who can read knows that his offense is aggravated by the most shocking circumstance of indecency, brutality, obscenity, perfidy, and hypocrisy--we do say that the public, who have become legally and inevitably acquainted with the conduct of such a man, ought not to be insulted by his immediate obtrusion before them as a candidate for their applause. Let him hide himself for a reasonable time; his immediate appearance is as great an outrage to decency, as if he were to walk naked through the streets at mid-day.[114]

Amid the heated discussion about Kean, the Morning Post maintained a cool silence. The Morning Chronicle, however, asked for "fair play"[115]--believing that no man, regardless of occupation, should be held accountable to the public. On 19 January 1825 the Chronicle said:

> We have abstained from all remarks on the trial, Cox v. Kean, because we do not think the mere circumstance of the defendent being an actor, deprives him of the benefit of the rule to which others lay claim, that no man is amenable for his vices to the tribunal of the public.[116]

A few days later, on 21 January 1825, the Morning Chronicle presented a lengthy article especially aimed at discrediting the Times as a judge of social behavior. The Chronicle felt that the press, in general, did not have the right to speak for the public. It was especially disturbed by the press's penchant for delivering "up society bound hand and foot," so that it "might select individuals ad libitum for animadversion or euology."[117] The following quote more fully illustrates their view point with Kean used as a model:

> It is made a charge against Mr. Kean that he has himself said "I must be the worst of villains if I could take a man by the hand while meditating towards him an act of injustice."--Mr. Kean not only denied to the husband his guilty connection, but denied it with a solemnity which it is thought was by no means called for. But in ninety-nine Crim. Cons. out of a hundred, there is evidence of treachery, and black, long-continued treachery. The confidence of the husband is always abused, and the adulterer seldom scruples to add falsehood to his other sins, when the husband's suspicion leads him to accuse him of improper intimacy. Nay, we will go farther, we say distinctly, that so depraved is the moral sense of what is called good society in this country, that if the offender, on being charged by the husband with dishonouring him, were to confess, he would be in imminent danger of being cut by all his acquaintance as a poltroon, for not being prepared to defend the honour of the woman he had seduced in whatever expense of fraud or falsehood.[118]

Although the Examiner was critical of Kean's shameful conduct, like the Morning Chronicle, it opposed the drive to expel Kean from the stage:

> For our own parts whatever opinion we may form of the prudence or propriety of so prompt an appearance on the part of Mr. Kean, we shall deem his expulsion from the stage looking to the parallel cases in higher quarters which passed over the perfect indifference,

> as one of the grossest instances of cant and oppression ever witnessed, in an age which affords but too many instances of their union.[119]

On 24 January 1825 Kean "tempted the furies" by appearing at Drury Lane in the title role of Richard III. His return signified an end to his self-imposed ten-month hiatus from the theatre. Kean's appearance at Drury unleashed a torrent of disturbances both within and without the theatre, much like the later tumultuous reception at New York's Park Theatre on 14 November 1825,[120] as playgoers, in massive numbers, gained entry into the hallowed halls of Drury Lane to witness the performance. In anticipation of a melee, the managers, hours before the performance, made arrangements with the magistrates to secure a police force "within the house."[121] Before the raising of the curtain, "there was a continual roar of 'Kean, for ever!' mingled with yells and hisses."[122] All was noise and clamour before the raising of the curtain," said the Times, "and . . . all was noise and clamour after it."[123] The entire house, from the pit to the slips, was filled with walls of cascading humanity.

According to the News, the theatre was divided between carefully organized claques set up to either applaud or boo Kean:

> Before the play began, and before Mr. Kean made his appearance, the adverse parties seemed to measure their strength, and prepared their throats for battle. We noticed, at a very early period, that

> there was a sort or organization preserved: and some persons were silent, or made a loud noise, as they were instructed by signals.
>
> The same system existed in the boxes, and waving of hands or handkerchiefs set a great number of tongues in motion. With such a crowd there was of course nothing but noise and commotion.[124]

According to some accounts, the pit and galleries were heavily strewn with Kean's supporters. Kean's adversaries were scattered throughout the house, but the majority, it seems, were seated in the boxes. The slips, the resort of prostitutes and drunkards, was necessarily off limits to the supposed respectable spectators who opposed Kean. The News said that "the pit was closely packed with men and boys, who seemed to have been sent there solely for the purpose of defending the culprit from the assaults of his enemies."[125] The Times, on the other hand, gives us a much clearer, though grimmer picture of the audience:

> The audience was one dark, dingy mass of combatants--many applauding him who had betrayed and dishonoured his friend, and many (for virtue is not dead among us) exhibiting a different feeling. We had heard, and truly the scene did not belie the report, that a great effort would be made to fill the pit and galleries with those who, for a pint of porter, would applaud the worst, or abuse the best, man in society. We cannot speak very decidedly of the company in the pit (although from the numerous quarrels and fights, incited by "Kean-for-ever Boys,") we may guess at their respectability; but of the audience which filled the two galleries we must say that they gave us a most perfect idea of Falstaff's "ragged regiment." The two-shilling gallery, from the time of Addison downward, has been looked upon as the place to which the respectable tradesman has resorted when he wished to have a little theatrical amusement. Respectability was banished from it last night. Could the ghost of "Addison's "Trunkmaker" have revisited the "glimpses of the lamps," it would last night have been

> astonished at such a congregation of "rags and rogues." The audience in the boxes were greatly divided: one portion of them viewed the scene in sullen silence; another vociferated the praises of Kean; while a third amused themselves with an imperfect rehearsal of the "hark follow" chorus in Der Freischutz, occasionally interspersed with exclamations (which we will not repeat) gleaned from Mr. Kean's most indecently published letters. We are now merely giving to the public a general idea of the scene which the house presented, and probably a more disgusting scene never met the eye of moralist or of libertine.[126]

From the moment Kean stepped onto the stage, the commotion was unabated. Bedlam prevailed. "Uproar was the beginning, the middle, and the end; . . . the audience were so completely the exclusive performers, that not even a speech was heard by way diversyfing the amusement," said one newspaper.[127] At the end of the first act, after "Richard murders King Harry," Kean attempted to address the audience, but the cries of "'Off, off!' were so vehement" that his entreaties fell to the wayside.[128] At the commencement of the scene between Lady Ann and Richard, near the beginning of the second act, Kean once more came forward to address the "noisy multitude" but, as before, to no avail. He "proceeded to court her in dumb show, amidst shouts of laughter, horrible groanings, hisses, yells and clappings of hands."[129] From then on, the play "was all dumb show." Scarcely a word could be heard "except one hysteric laugh from Mrs. West."[130]

Throughout the performance the opposing factions vocalized various epithets and howlings. "Where's your morality, Kean?"; "Little Breeches;" "Go and take care of

Mother Cox;" "Off, off;" "Bravo;" "Go on, Kean;" "Kean for ever;" "Turn out the Alderman'" and "Turn out the Society for the Suppression of Vice" are some examples of the outbursts bellowed during the performance.[131] Also, throughout the play, oranges and orange peels were thrown onto the stage from the galleries and slips. At other times unfortunate spectators were the object of these actions. One unlucky fellow, seated in a private box and unfortunately mistaken for Alderman Cox, was belted with a barrage of orange missiles "by some blackguards in the Pit."[132]

Some passages in the play, especially the "scene with Lady Ann and the entrance of the Alderman," elicited lusty responses from the audience.[133] Apparently very few females attended the performance; that any attended at all is a fact lamented by the Times since they "appeared strenuous in the cause of Mr. Kean."[134] About the "few women" who attended the theatre the News said:

> Those who were present were warm applauders of Kean. Had they been silent spectators, it might have been supposed that they were respectable persons who had inconsiderately ventured to the theatre.--As it was, they made it perfectly clear that they had lost all sense of common decency.[135]

The Times thought that Kean was possibly "forced" by Elliston to act at Drury Lane "to insure a full house." If this was so "the public ought to know the fact, and, knowing it, said the Times, "the public will visit the

delinquent [Elliston] as he deserves to be visited."[136]

However, the Times then issued Kean a warning:

> Let not Mr. Kean imagine that he has achieved a victory over public opinion--let him not suppose that the waving of sundry dirty pocket handkerchiefs, or the throwing up of various greasy hats, has secured to him the battle. If he fancy this, he is wholly mistaken. Until he show that he is compelled to play--until he prove to the public that he is not impudently bearding them--all his performances, like that of last night, will be matters of dumb show.[137]

The mayhem precipitated by Kean's appearance at Drury Lane was based on the exposure of his illicit relationship with Alderman Cox's wife. It was probably the press, however, that was largely responsible for the raucous reception Kean endured during this performance and succeeding ones. At the conclusion of the play, the Chronicle reported a Kean "extremely agitated, at the same time struggling to maintain the firmness which belongs to his character."[138] Fortunately for Kean, however, he was not yet aware of the uphill battle which lay ahead before he left for America to restore his health, fame and fortune.

Although the confusion which prevailed during Richard III was considerable, it was not the first serious disturbance at an English theatre. There were the infamous O.P. riots dating back to John Philip Kemble's tenure as manager of Covent Garden in 1809. Unlike the hullabaloo during Kean's performance, the tumult at Covent Garden was a protest against the raising of the price of admission to the theatre. The racket incited by Kean's

reappearance at Drury Lane was the worst since these O.P. riots. "Since the O.P. row of famous memory," said the News, we never witnessed anything like the confusion of noises which prevailed upon this occasion."[139] Later, in November and December 1825, while in the United States, Kean would precipitate not one but two riots, establishing a precedent for the famous Astor Place riot of 1846. The Boston tumult in December surpassed both the New York (November) and London disturbances both in manner and intensity.

In spite of the tumultuous reception given him on the 24, Kean resumed his 20 night engagement on January 28 with one of his finest roles, Othello. However, on the morning of 28 January 1825, the Times continued to make caustic statements about Kean:

> That obscene little personage (Mr. Kean) is, we see announced to make another appearance this evening. The ladies of the lobby, and the "Wolves" from the Coal-Hole, have undertaken to bear him triumphantly through his ordeal, and he--fit head for such a band--once more ventures to brave the indignation of the respectable and decent part of society. Some of his defenders allege, . . . that Mr. Kean does not offend against decency, because decent people never go to the theatre. We are ready to allow, that if persons like Mr. Kean continue to exhibit themselves, decent people must stay away; but we were not aware that the theatre had hitherto become quite an interdicted place of amusement for modest persons of either sex. And we question whether there is more strength in another position . . . that people who do not like the actor or actress, have nothing to do with the matter except to stay away. . . . It is equally wrong . . . to say, that we have nothing to do with Mr. Kean's private conduct. His conduct is no longer private; while it was, we never alluded to it, but it now has become, through legal and regular channels, a matter of notoriety to the whole nation;

> and is, therefore, a fit subject for public animadversion. Mr. Kean has, however, chosen his side; his real friends and supporters, who have hitherto upheld him because they thought his frailities overbalanced by his talents, must now desert him, when they see him dead even to that lowest degree of shame which distinguishes human from animal nature.[140]

On 29 January 1825 the Times gave its assessment of the previous evening in two separate accounts. The shorter piece illustrated moments in the play where the audience seized opportunities to make "libidinous applications, which the Times seized on with a fury beyond any it has shown before:"[141]

> The character of persons who were employed to support Kean through the test of the theatre, may be judged from this fact,--that whenever the incidents of the play brought him into such a situation that he had to touch Mrs. West, (the Desdemona of the night, and we believe a respectable woman), the savage tribe roared as if in triumph at this insult offered to the innate feelings of female purity. It was like the yell of Caliban, when the prospect of violating Miranda occurred to his lascivious mind. "Would I have done it!" We ask Elliston . . . what woman, who are they, and from whence do they come--what women, we again say, are They, whom Elliston WILL bring forward on the stage, to be fawned on and caressed by this obscene mimic? . . . Is it not shocking that women should be forced to undergo this process with such a creature, for the sake of bread, before an assembled people?[142]

In the extensive second article, the Times dismisses the notion posited by supporters of Kean that since "he has been punished by a court of justice, the public ought not to notice his conduct."[143] The Times supports its premise by giving an example:

> Suppose a player was convicted of felony, like Hunt the friend of Thurtell and joint murder of Weare (which murder, by the way, was as much a private transaction as Kean's adultery), would it be endured,

> even by the persons who are most attached to this argument because the culprit had undergone the punishment awarded to him, (transportation, for instance), that therefore he should be tolerated on the boards of a public theatre? We think they would not endure it; and we think farther, that the violator of friendship, the betrayer of sacred confidence, is, in point of moral turpitude, a more debased character than the felon.[144]

According to the Times the house was not as full as it had been for Kean's previous performance. But, as before, "the appearance of Kean on the stage was the signal for one general shout, which lasted, without intermission, from the beginning to the end of each of the scenes." The Times gave the following picture of the composition of the house:

> The pit was thronged; but even at half-price there was abundance of room in the boxes. In the dress-circle there was not a single lady--there were a few females in the pit and the other parts of the house. The audience in the dress-circle took very little part in the dispute; neither was the galleries very active. The great scene of contention was in the pit; and a good deal of partisanship was displayed in the upper tiers of boxes. From the moment the doors were opened, the demon of noise took possession of the house. The friends of Mr. Kean mustered in great strength, and it was quite evident, on the other hand, that those who felt disgusted at his conduct were far more numerous than they were on his first appearance.[145]

As soon as the performance ended, there was a general shout for the manager to appear. After several choruses of "Elliston! Elliston!," the manager made his way to the stage and addressed the audience:

> I stand before you as the servant of the public; I come forward as a peacemaker, and I hope what I shall say will not lower Mr. Kean or myself in your estimation. The engagement which Mr. Kean is now endeavouring to fulfil was made in July last. At that

> time it was not expected that the question which now agitates the public mind would have undergone any discussion. The engagement was for a period of 20 nights, at 50£. a night, to commence on the 16th of January, and end on the 16th of March. . . . I give you my word as a man--as the manager of this theatre--and, as I trust you have always found me, as an honourable gentleman--(loud laughter)--that I have stated nothing but the truth. I could not break this engagement. . . . Could I, Ladies and Gentlemen, withdraw Mr. Kean's name under these circumstances? (Mingled applause and diapprobation.) If I had done so, I should have made a party against Mr. Kean, and that I will never do. . . . I can assure you, Ladies and Gentlemen, that the best feelings have always subsisted between Mr. Kean and myself. I have assisted him, and he has assisted me. . . . I can assure you, Ladies and Gentlemen, that I have not endeavoured, directly or indirectly, by any influence in favour of Mr. Kean. . . . Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Kean is in the house, and if you will have the condescension to hear him, I hope every thing may yet be amicably arranged.[146]

Elliston thereupon left the stage to fetch Kean. After "an interval of nearly quarter of an hour," Elliston "returned leading Kean by the hand."[147] After much difficulty, Kean was able to obtain a hearing:

> Ladies and Gentlemen,--if you expect from me a vindication of my own private conduct, I am certainly unable to satisfy you. (Applause and disapprobation.) I stand before you as the representative of Shakespeare's heroes. (Much contention between the parties favouring and disapproving of Mr. Kean.) The errors I have committed have been scanned before a public tribunal; and--(here the uproar was so great that we could not collect the termination of the sentence)--On the occasion, Ladies and Gentlemen, to which I have alluded, I have withheld circumstances from delicacy. (Much laughter, applause, and hisses.) If, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have withheld circumstances from motives of delicacy (laughter), it was from regard to the feelings of others--not of myself. (Clamours of applause, mingled with hisses.) It appears at this moment I am a professional victim. (Laughter.) If this is the work of a hostile press, I shall endeavour with firmness to withstand it; but if it proceeds from your verdict and decision, I will at once bow to it,

> and shall retire with deep regret, and with a grateful sense of all the favours which your patronage has hitherto conferred on me.[148]

After delivering this speech, apparently visibly agitated by the events of the evening, Kean "staggered to the back of the stage," said the News, "and seemed in the act of falling when Elliston came forward and led him off."[149] The Times said that Elliston's speech "is a specimen of that description of eloquence, which 'the learn'd call "rigmarole."[150] About Kean's speech the Times added: "Mr. Kean . . . endeavours to excite a feeling in his favour, by declaring that he witheld circumstances out of delicacy (hear it, ye Gods!) to the feelings of others. We do not believe it."[151] When Elliston explained to the audience that he had not used his power to influence them on Kean's behalf, a spectator shouted "it is the Times newspaper has done it all."[152]

Following the repetition of yet another uproar on January 31 during a performance of A New Way To Old Debts, Kean made a brief announcement to the Drury Lane audience about his intention of definitely leaving England for America. According to one source, the speech was preceded by "noise and tumult" which "was equal to what occurred on the two preceding occasions:"[153]

> Ladies and Gentlemen,--I have made as much concession to the British audience as a British actor ought--(Applauses and disapprobation)--I hope, for the honour of my country, that I shall be permitted to perform during the remainder of twenty nights; after which I shall take my leave for ever.--(Loud cries of 'No, no, Kean--you shall not leave us! Never,

> never!')--I also hope, for the honour of my country that this persecution will never reach foreign annals [American?][154]

If Kean was hoping that his domestic troubles would play to deaf ears in America, he was soon to hear differently.

By Kean's fourth appearance on 4 February 1825 as Macbeth, the considerable resistance had dissipated. The Times reports, on 5 February 1825, that the house was "ill attended" and that

> the opposition to Mr. Kean was not, on this occasion, so violent as it had previously been. There were, however, a number of persons, chiefly in the boxes, who saluted him occasionally with hisses, and cries of "Off, off." These were, of course, answered by his stentorian friends.[155]

In another report published in the same issue, the Times vented its frustration at the relatively friendly reception accorded Kean, and at the same time, issued a warning to the management:

> Mr. Kean kept his promise yesterday evening, by publishing himself, for the fourth time, at Drury-lane theatre; and the result of this attempt to defy public opinion and common decency, was just what it deserved to be . . . The pit was tolerably well filled-not crowded, until after half price, but chiefly, we should imagine, with Mr. Kean's friends, "the wolves," judging from the howlings that the people in it made, and the Witney coats, dirty handkerchiefs, and "milling crops," of which they were ostentatious; and these excellent persons at intervals disported themselves, when the task of constant applause and roaring became tedious, by alternately laughing at their own client, and throwing orange-peel at any individual in the boxes who was suspected of being hostile to him. It is easy, of course, to perceive that all this will not suit the manager; . . . We can tell him, and those who produce him, that they are mistaken if they suppose the public will be gulled by any such farce in the way of submission . . . they miscalculate if they believe that such adherents as Jews, bullies, brothel-keepers, and prize-fighters,

> can (as long as such an officer as the ward-beadle exists) enable them to quash the feeling of a community, or to resist its expression. The mere appearance of these miscreants, on his behalf, has done Mr. Kean, . . . serious mischief.[156]

From February 7 to his final performance on March 26, the houses were reasonably peaceable. Attendance had steadily improved from a performance of the Merchant of Venice on 11 February 1825. Thenceforth, the houses were serene. The receipts varied from four hundred pounds to five hundred seventy-eight pounds for Brutus on 24 March 1825.[157] It was evident with the Times February 18 review of a new play, especially written for Kean, entitled Masaniello by Milner, that it had resigned from the fray. Putting aside its contempt for his "private worth," the Times praised Kean's performance, but damned the play. "The audience proved, by their hisses, that they wanted character and action--two points in which this tragedy is miserably deficient . . . we perceived no merit in the tragedy," said the Times.[158] The play was later removed from the repertory.

In anticipation of Kean's planned visit to Manchester, the Manchester [Courier] printed a derogatory statement about what was to be but was not Kean's final appearance at Drury Lane on 26 March 1825, as Othello. The journal begins its uncomplimentary comments with some mention about Kean reaping the "golden fruits" of his "offences against morality."[159] It was, moreover, rankled by Kean's "audacity" at making another "appearance

. . . on the boards of Drury-lane theatre; and, furthermore, piqued by his rapturous reception.[160]

Before making additional unfavourable comments about Kean, the paper included the Morning Chronicle's review of the March 26 Othello, in which was inserted Kean's farewell speech to the Drury Lane audience.

The Morning Chronicle stated that at an early hour Drury Lane was crowded to witness what was possibly Kean's farewell performance on the London stage. At the end of Othello, Kean was lauded with "great applause" and then called upon to make an appearance. Thereupon he addressed the audience:

> Ladies and Gentlemen--(some words seemed to escape his lips, but it was impossible, from the uproar that prevailed, to catch a single sentence; the shouts of applause were immense, and the pit stood up and waved their hats, the females waved their handkerchiefs); silence being restored, Mr. Kean proceeded--It must readily be supposed how powerful is the conflict of gratifying sensations that renders me incapable of expressing those feelings which glow in my heart on the present occasion (loud applause). From the candour and liberality of a British audience (here the speaker was prevented from being heard; he bowed repeatedly as the audience cheered); I have, ladies and gentlemen, been enabled to repel one of the most malignant attacks to which a professional man has ever been subjected (loud shouts of applause, and voice in the boxes vociferated "The rascally Times.") Without alluding to past circumstances, I consider it a most base plan for my destruction (hear, hear!), and under the influence of your displeasure, which my powerful enemies have endeavored to augment, I must have submitted, had not the public protected me from their malignity (loud cheers, and cries of bravo, Kean!) My earliest recollections, connected with the British stage, are those of the deepest gratitude, and which, having bloomed in my earlier dawn, have ripened into the fullest perfection. It is to you, ladies and gentlemen, that I am indebted for the dramatic character which I have attained, and which will never

> be effaced from memory (loud cheers, "Kean for ever!") On the present occasion I will not further enter into the circumstances to which I have alluded, and will only say that my gratitude is indelible, and my endeavours to merit your favours shall be unceasing (cheers.) With the most profound truth I must add, that I look upon a British audience as my best friend, and even as a parent; and it is to it I am indebted for every thing (thunders of applause.) I cannot let this opportunity pass without speaking of the present spirited manager, Mr. Elliston, who has acted towards me as a father, brother and friend (applause). With these feelings I now take my temporary leave (hear, hear, hear! bravo, bravo, bravo!) until I shall have the honour of appearing before you again.[161]

The Manchester [Courier] concluded its denunciation of Kean with some blistering remarks which questioned the character and judgment of the audience:

> What, we ask, must have been the character of this audience--and above all, of the LADIES who waved their white handkerchiefs on the occasion? Here is a fellow openly convicted of an adulterous intercourse with another man's wife; whose habits appear to have been uniformly more grossly immoral and indecent than those of almost any person ever brought into a court of justice, under similar circumstances, who has the audacity to complain of having been "malignantly persecuted" because the more respectable members of the newspaper press have gibbeted him to universal scorn and detestation in their columns. People are his "enemies" forsooth, because, as guardians of public decency, they will not suffer his unparalleled shamelessness to pass unchastised! . . . In the face of such facts as these, it is not astonishing that respectable people now forego the amusement of the theatre, and that histrionic exhibitions are becoming so unfashionable throughout England. . . .

And if Kean thinks that he will be "rapturously received" and he has been at several other places,

> we know enough of Manchester to anticipate a very different reception for him, should his vulgar effrontery ever again induce him to present himself on these boards.[162]

From London Kean went to the provinces, playing at "Chichester (April 9 and following), Manchester (April 18-20), Lincoln (six performances beginning April 26), Glasgow (May), Dublin (May 31), and Liverpool (June 18)."[163] Somewhere between his Chichester and Manchester engagements Kean also played at Brighton. In addition, Kean was scheduled to perform at Edinburgh, however, because of some opposition to his proposed appearance, the management cancelled the engagement.

Despite the ominous predictions made by the Manchester newspaper on April 2, Kean's presence in Manchester did not produce "a row that was so confidently expected to take place at the theatre . . . all ended in smoke."[164] Instead Kean was subjected to the usual mixture of hisses and bravos accorded him elsewhere. As elsewhere, not many females attended the performance. The Manchester Courier surmised that "curiosity, and the expectation of a 'row" deterred respectable females from visiting the theatre.[165] Only six females were seated in the lower boxes, and one of them, of "very questionable, or rather unquestionable reputation" was compelled to withdraw from the boxes.[166] "Females of this class are generally known to the persons of the theatre, and how, or why she gained admittance to the boxes we are left to conjecture," said the Courier.[167] As had happened in London, the play (Richard III) was occasionally halted by "interruptions as were occasioned

by the recurrence of passages, having some allusion to recent circumstances."[168]

In Glasgow, where Kean was received in much the same manner as at Manchester and other places, spectators reacted to several lines in Richard III, "such as 'I'll have her, but I'll not keep her long."[169] The kind of reception that Kean received both in London and in the provinces was ever so slowly dimming the glean of his professional armor and lacerating his pride with "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." There is some evidence which indicates that Kean may have been bereft of reason during his provincial tour, if so, doubtless caused by the continual assaults on his senses. Lehman Rede, who probably saw Kean in the provinces, declared that "after the trial . . . he was certainly insane; he went through the provinces talking in the course of his characters to the audiences on the subject of his private affairs."[170] This can be corroborated from an instance in Manchester where Kean made demeaning allusions to his private character. In the

> interlude of Sylvester Daggerwood he made abundant use of the ad libitum which it affords the actor; and introduced some allusions to himself . . . Among other points in the dialogue was the confession tht he had been "endeavouring for the last three nights to draw an audience but without success;" and the portentious announcement that he was "about to retire at least for a few years; after which (he added) he should perhaps meet with better success." He also told us that he should "then be as great a buffoon as any of them;" and that he "would continue to be so all his life." Now, dunces that we are, we can not for the life of us see the "point" of this . . . unless, indeed, Mr. Kean

> meant to tell us that he is so much enamoured of his buffoonery on the stage, that he purports to carry it with him into private life. If so we wish him all the satisfaction he can derive from being the merry-andrew of his company.[171]

Also, "whilst playing Daggerwood elsewhere, he [Kean] threw somersets, handsprings, &.C. exclaiming, 'I may as well practice, for I suppose I must go back to this."[172] And at "Cheltenham the editor of a journal animadverted severely on his character. Kean played Sylvester Daggerwood for his benefit and performed the part of a horsewhip in his hand, saying aloud, 'I'll keep this little instrument to punish cheating aldermen and lying editors."[173]

After traveling round the provinces, Kean returned to Drury Lane for a second and final engagement "from June 20 to July 9."[174] Afterwards he went back to the provinces appearing once again at Manchester and Liverpool. Unlike his first engagement at Manchester, Kean was enthusiastically received there during a performance of Richard II. Apparently, at the last minute, Richard II was substituted for Richard III. When the curtain dropped, the audience rhythmically chanted "Kean, Kean!" until he finally walked back onto the stage. Kean then addressed the audience:

> It is impossible to withstand so gratifying a call; particularly at a time when the corrupt parts of the press are bribed to ruin my professional reputation. If the press of this country be allowed to visit the public characters of professional men with the punishments due to their private ones, the arts and sciences of this country will very soon sink

> into insignificance. I admit that I have been a "froward child;" but I have repented me of my error--(tremendous applause)--and I think it hard that I should receive such unabated and vindictive persecution. I am driven from my native country, to which I may probably never return.--(Cries of 'No, no, you shall not go!)--I have ever found Manchester my warmest friend and advocate--(loud applause)--and I shall treasure in my exile the grateful remembrance of the kindness I have received at your hands. In reference to the stigma which has been cast upon me as a public character, I would beg my friends to bear in mind, that there are none of us without our faults. In every station of life, we find the traces of the corruption of human nature. Even the great ministers of state have their faults--(loud applause)--and if we approach the foot of the Throne, we shall find errors.--(Loud applause.)--I now bid you farewell for ever.--(Cries of 'No, no, we won't hear that.)--You have my warmest wishes for your welfare and happiness, and I trust that in my pilgrimage, should a cloud pass over me, the remembrance of my Manchester friends will operate like a sun-beam, and chase away the saddening gloom.[175]

From Manchester Kean went to Liverpool (August 22-26) where he gave what he believed would be his final engagement in England before sailing to the United States. The New York Evening Post reported that Kean had been most enthusiastically applauded in Liverpool.[176] At the conclusion of his benefit performance, Kean delivered what he thought to be his final address to an English audience:

> I should be lost to every feeling of sensitivity if I did not most respectfully thank you for this expression of kindness. At this moment, when I am about to leave my country, perhaps for ever, (loud cries of No, No.) such an exhibition of your feelings is of particular value to me. Driven as I am from England by the machinations of scoundrels,--by a combination of ruffians, who seem determined to destroy me, I receive, on the eve of my departure, the highest gratification from what I now see. No absence, no contumely, no sorrow, none of the numerous indignities to which professional men, in all

> countries, are obliged to submit, will ever efface from my mind the gratitude I feel to my countrymen.[177]

Although Kean had intended to set sail for America at the end of the Liverpool engagement, his benefit prevented it from happening. The New York Evening Post said: "Mr. Kean did not come out in the Canada. He took his benefit at Liverpool on the Friday previous to the sailing of the ship."[178] After his benefit (August 26) at Liverpool, Kean apparently went on another tour of the provinces (sometime in September) before finally sailing from Liverpool for America.

The John Bull, a longtime detractor of Kean, wrote a piece which they believe told the true story as to why Kean was driven from England:

> Mr. Kean, wrecked in health and fortune, his spirits broken and his temper soured, is acting "for a little," previous to his departure for America; . . the once idolized Roscius of the Coal-hole is quitting his native land, as he says, and we believe, for ever. . . . Mr. Kean acts as well now as he did ten years since; and he is absolutely driven out of the country by want of support and patronage. The strange part of the thing is this--he and many other persons attribute his fall to the part he played about Mrs. Cox but that it is not attributable to any such cause is the truth; because long before the denouement of that highly creditable affair, . . . we verily believe, however opportunely the affair of Mr. and Mrs. Cox terminated to justify the total decadence of Kean's popularity, upon the score of fine feeling, that the bubble had already burst, and that the world--we mean, the world of Russell-court and Bow-street had awoke to the true sense of Mr. Kean's acting.[179]

Just before his departure from Liverpool, Kean met Junius Brutus Booth who had been performing in the United States for the "past four years."[180] Whilst at

Liverpool, where he met Kean, Booth wrote a letter to his father telling him how sickly Kean looked:

> Kean sails the day after to-morrow by the Silas Richards for New York. Strange that he should meet me here [Liverpool]--he ready to embark, and to that very country I have just left. He has been quite ill, and looks wretched. I passed an hour with him last night at his quarters, and reconciled our ancient misunderstanding . . . I really wish he may meet with success. He has been all along a victim to sharpers and flatterers, who buoyed him up with the notion of omnipotence, which now he awakens from and perceives the hollowness of those on whom he most relied.[181]

A few days before Kean departed from Liverpool for the United States, Kean's old acquaintance T.C. Grattan called on him in London. Grattan was appalled by Kean's physical condition and lowly state of affairs. He recalled:

> I called on him in London, on my arrival there, soon after the business had subsided, and when he was on the point of his self-exile to America. I never saw a man so changed; he had all the air of desperation about him. He looked bloated with rage and brandy; his nose was red, his cheeks blotched, his eyes bloodshot; I really pitied him. He had lodgings in Regent-street; but I believe very few of his former friends, of any respectability, now noticed him. The day I saw him he sat down to the piano, notwithstanding the agitated state of his mind, and sang for me "Lord Ullin's daughter," with a depth, and power, and sweetness that quite electrified me. I had not heard him sing for many years; his improvement was almost incredible; his accompaniment was also far superior to his former style of playing. I could not repress a deep sentiment of sorrow at the wreck he presented of genius, fame, and wealth. At this period I believe he had not one hundred pounds left of the many thousands he had received. His mind seemed shattered; he was an outcast on the world. He left England a few days afterwards, and I never dreamt of seeing him again.[182]

Kean, impoverished both physically and monetarily, happily welcomed a second voyage to America. Where else

could he earn a thousand pounds a month; where else, he thought, could he be forgiven past sins and present transgressions; where else might he establish a new life and a new home away from the frenzy and disappointments in his homeland; and, where else might he forget the pain of both his wife and son deserting him--leaving him destitute of love.[183] America, he hoped, would warmly and graciously respond to his needs. But he was ignorant of the true feelings of the American press.

In dedication to Kean, Scriblerus, a journeyman poet, wrote a fanciful poem conjuring images of Kean traveling on the high seas--an actor "unjustly banished" from his native country. The heading of the poem says, "Addressed to Edmund Kean, Esq., on his departure for America:"

A bark is on the ocean
She fast pursues her way;
With swift receding motion,
She dwindles into grey.

Now the bark has vanish'd
Whom does she contain?
One unjustly banish'd
O'er the rolling main.

His proud heart is heaving,
In echo to the main;
and the sigh he's breathing,
Rends that heart in twain.

No tears are in his eye,
They sink upon his heart;
He's fain withold the sigh,
But, oh! too great's the smart!

I have marked the seasons,

In their wond'rous range;
There are hidden reasons,
For their bighting change.

Spring, thy path long decking,
Summer will soon appear,
Autumn's smile is wrecking,
Winter's blight is drear.

But, though cold and clouded
Scened may Winter bring,
Thy prospects are but shrouded,
To ope in brighter spring.

The very foes who fell'd thee,
In thy absence yearn;
And those who drove thee hence,
Now long for thy return.

Farewell! another Phoebus
You grace the scenic dawn;
And only set at eve,
To rise more bright at morn.[184]

EDMUND KEAN IN NEW YORK AND BOSTON: THE 1820s

by

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CHAPTER X

AMERICAN PRESS REACTION TO KEAN'S IMPENDING VISIT

The American press, like its British cousins, was generally against Kean's vainglorious and immoral behavior. The press was carefully attuned to all that had been going on in England. The press was cognizant of Kean's relationship with Cox's wife, his obstinate return to Drury Lane immediately after the trial, and the subsequent commotion stirred up by his appearance at Drury Lane and in the provinces. The ensuing matter clearly shows that the American press was on the trail of Kean's every move in England and when it became settled that Kean was indeed coming to America for a second time, many American newspapers vehemently denounced his intention as unwise and his character as morally unfit.[1]

On 20 August 1825 Boston's Evening Gazette made some mention about Kean's affair and his return to the stage:

> Kean the performer appears to have survived his disgrace and has resumed his engagement at Drury Lane, . . . after having taken leave of the London stage for years. He performed Richard III with great eclat, and all active opposition to him is at an end.[2]

The Independent Chronicle and Boston Patriot, on 5 March 1825, reported the results of the Cox trial by specifically citing the contents of two letters written by Kean in 1821 during his first visit to America.[3] On 3 March 1825 the New York Evening Post stated that "the letter he [Kean] wrote to the husband to lull his suspicions is certainly the basest attempt of deception that we ever met with."[4] And on March 5 the Post printed an elaborate account of the trial taken from the London Globe and Traveller. The report included numerous letters written by Kean to Mrs. Cox.[5] On 7 March 1825 both the New York Gazette and Evening Post gave their accounts of Kean's January 24 performance as Richard III. The Gazette began its review of Richard III with a brief statement about Kean's conviction because of "crim. con. with the wife of Alderman Cox."[6] Although the Evening Post said nothing about Kean's conviction, it stated that "it was the intention of Kean to move the court of King's Bench for a new trial."[7] This, of course, did not happen.

On 10 March 1825 the Boston Daily Advertiser told its readers about Kean's first two appearances, as Richard II and Othello, at Drury Lane. The Daily Advertiser closed its piece with a perfunctory statement about Kean's address given on 28 January 1825: "This address was received in a cold manner, and the peace that it provided appeared to be only temporary."[8] The New York Evening

Post on 8 March 1825 printed three pieces about Kean. Two of the three columns referred to Kean's appearances at Drury Lane. One item stated that Kean had not as yet succeeded "in making peace with the public," and that the receipts for the first night of his reappearance (January 24) totalled "720 sterling.--Except on one evening when the king visited the theatre, it was never known to be so crowded." Another column gave some "Recollections of Mr. Kean," while the third column gave a brief, albeit comprehensive, report about Kean's February 4 appearance in Macbeth.[9]

With the following reports from the New York Evening Post and Major Noah's New York National Advocate about Kean's expected engagement at Edinburgh in April or May, his engagement in Manchester in April, and Junius Brutus Booth's intention to return to England as soon as Kean left, the American press continued to show that it was carefully watching Kean's movements in England. On 17 May 1825 the Gazette said:

> Some excitement had been produced at the Theatre in Edinburgh, in consequence of an annunciation from the manager that Kean was engaged. One gentleman rose from his seat in one of the boxes, and told the manager if Kean ever should perform on those boards, he would withdraw his patronage.[10]

And on 20 May 1825 the Gazette reported that "Kean had been playing at Manchester, but no ladies [that is,respectable females] appeared in the Theatre." Feeling that this was proper, the Gazette's closing observation parenthetically

declares "this is right."[11] Back in February, when it was learned that Kean was planning to come to the United States, Noah's Advocate told its readers that Booth, who had been performing in the United States for four years, "is determined to return to England, the moment Kean leaves England for America," and adds "the transmigration may be profitable to Booth, as he resembles Kean, very closely in appearance and manner."[12]

Shortly before Kean arrived in New York, newspapers maintained a constant vigil--monitoring his imminent arrival. The New York Gazette wrote: "Mr. Kean is hourly expected to arrive in this city."[13] The Independent Chronicle and Boston Patriot said that "Kean had taken passage in the Canada for New York to sail Sept. 1st," and then snidely remarked "it is not mentioned whether he is accompanied by his wife or by some Alderman's lady."[14] Some newspapers wondered how Kean would be received. The Gazette said: "Whether he will be well received is dubious."[15]

Before Kean sailed on the Silas Richards for New York, there had been some speculation as to whether or not he would come to the United States. Evidently, for a time, Kean had not received a contract from Stephen Price, the manager of New York's Park Theatre. Since Price was responsible for negotiating Kean's contract for other American theatres, it was supposed that if Kean did not sign an agreement with Price, either he would not come to

the United States or be left on his own as a free agent to negotiate with the various theatres. This possibility was conveyed to the New York National Advocate by a writer from London:

> You are expecting several eminent performers on the other side of the water, but from the names mentioned, I think you will be disappointed. The American manager, Mr. Price, told me that he had not engaged Kean, if, therefore, he should visit America, (and from late declarations made by himself and council, I should rather think he will make the voyage.) he will come on his own account, and be left as a free agent, to make his own terms with all your theatrical establishments.[16]

When, however, it became known that Kean was definitely on his way to New York, many newspapers both in New York and Boston protested his coming.

The New York Commercial Advertiser communicated the sentiment of many of the newspapers and journals that objected to Kean's reappearance on an American stage:

> We regret that Kean makes his appearance among the passengers of the Silas Richards. We hope, however, that he will not be permitted to make his appearance on any stage in the country, unless it be the top of a mail stage. Let it not be said that the American public is behind the British, in their respect for the principles of morality, virtue, and honor.[17]

If Kean, "a lump of moral pollution," should be permitted "to contaminate the boards" then "let every female of character avoid the play, and let the males, if they will go, hiss him off with indignation. No virtuous lady can countenance a man like Kean," advised the Commercial Advertiser.[18]

By all accounts, the Commercial Advertiser led the opposition to Kean's reappearance in New York. Some papers, such as the New York Evening Post, the New York Statement, and even the American, Kean's severest critic in 1821, said little or nothing about the propriety of permitting Kean to perform. Although the editor of the Post, William Coleman, declared on 1 November 1825 "to admit nothing to be published in the Evening Post relating to" Kean, he, nonetheless, advised his readers

> who feel inimical to his [Kean's] public appearance, would better consult propriety by confining their indications of dissatisfaction to keeping away altogether from the house, than to go there to breed a riot and break the peace by unwarrantable acts of tumult and violence, as has been rashly and injudiciously advised by some one or two of our editors of newspapers.[19]

The New York Daily Advertiser, like the Commercial Advertiser and the Evening Post, told New Yorkers to withhold their support of Kean by staying away from the theatre. This theme recurs over and over again:

> Theatres are said, by those who frequent them, to be "schools of morality." We trust that all those of our citizens who consider them in this light, will withold their countenance and support from the above named [Kean] personage, should he be employed in his profession in this city, as his qualifications as a teacher of morals are very questionable. A London audience hissed from the stage; and in Edinburgh he met with no better success. We presume our countrymen will not be found less scrupulous on a point of this kind than the inhabitants of the before mentioned cities.[20]

All of the American newspapers were familiar with Kean's farewell speech at Liverpool where he denounced those who opposed him as "scoundrels and ruffians." The

Commercial Advertiser was appalled by what it considered a degrading speech. If the British had the sense to drive Kean from the stage, so should Americans:

> Very modest, Mr. Kean. "Scoundrels" and "Ruffians," eh! And who are the people thus stigmatized? They are those who have set their faces against the bold adulterer--the man who deserted his own family and bed of his bosom [sic] friend.--This is the man, who, because the British people have had virtue and firmness enough to drive him from the stage--and thus prevent him from triumphing in his wickedness, has the unparalleled audacity to denounce them as scoundrels, and ruffians. We hope he will be suitably treated here. And if so, his reception will give them no reason to exclaim, in his favourite character: "Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer by the sons of York."[21]

The Independent Chronicle and Boston Patriot believed that if Kean was impudent enough to act before a "sufficiently pure and elevated audience," it should be expected that he would be driven from the stage:

> Mr. Kean, in taking leave of the Liverpool stage, says he is driven from England by "ruffians and scoundrels." We hope if his impudence shall induce him to brave the feelings sufficiently pure and elevated to drive him from he stage and afford him an opportunity of finding out, that people who set their faces against adultery are not to be stigmatized as ruffians and scoundrels with impunity.[22]

But, queried the Boston Courier, were American morals "sufficiently pure and elevated" to drive Kean from the stage?

> Although he [Kean] has not been able to sustain himself in London, Edinburgh, and other cities in Great-Britain, it is much doubted whether the moral sense of the public in some of our cities is sufficiently pure to drive him from the stage. It is a melancholy truth that there are too many persons, and too many conductors of presses, who hold to the doctrine that the public have nothing to do with the private characters or conduct of actors and actresses,

> and who will doubtless contend that the disgusting, beastly propensities of Kean, are matters with which the public have no concern.[23]

Two days later, on 5 October 1825, a reader sent a letter to the editor of the Boston Courier expressing the opinion that the Courier was mistaken:

> I think you are wrong in admitting the possiblity that the reception of Mr. Kean in this country will be any other than that which is due to the atrocious criminality of which he has been publicly convicted. Is the moral sense of this community lower than that of the English? We know it to be higher. Are we less capable of acting consistently with our perceptions of what is due to the great cause of morality? We think no one will readily acknowledge this . . . He has been driven from the English stage. Shall we hesitate at making a sacrifice to the great interest of society, its morality, if indeed it can be called a sacrifice to refuse to witness the exhibition of the talents of an individual with whom such revolting associations of depravity are connected must admit of no feeling in his presence, but those of disgust and abhorrence. The idea of separating the man from the profession does not deserve a moment's notice, it is enough to say that the conduct of men in the affairs of life constantly and universally contradicts it.[24]

Not only will Kean not find an audience to act before, but

> No American manager will be guilty of so insulting an estimate of the judgment of his fellow-citizens on a subject like this, as to form an engagement with him; we shall sincerely pity the man, if such there be, who may be tempted thus to purchase for himself an infamous notoriety.[25]

Some American newspapers republished the John Bull declaration, informing American readers that Kean was driven from England because of lack of support and patronage. On 28 October 1825 the New England Galaxy pronounced that

> This "man of mighty name but little soul," is probably now on the seas, steering his way to New-York. We will not say "there let him sink, and be the seas on

> him," for we wish him no violent or premature exit; but he has not yet tasted all the "ingredients of his poisoned chalice," and we are willing that he should come to America to drink off the dregs at the bottom of the cup. Kean leaves his native country, as he says, driven from it by ruffians and scoundrels, which means nothing more than that all those who are disgusted with his private conduct or are tired with his equally disgusting arrogance as an actor, and who, of course, either keep away from the theatre when he plays or go there to express their disapprobation, are neither more nor less than "ruffians and scoundrels." The truth is, Kean is worn out as an actor, and if his moral character was as pure as that of the first vestal, the people of England would be glad to be rid of him.[26]

However, contrary to the opinion communicated by both the John Bull and the New-England Galaxy, a spectator writes to Boston's Columbian Centinel telling its editor that others have wrongly assumed that Kean was forced to leave the English stage for want of patronage:

> Having been in England the last summer, I can contradict the assertion so frequently made, that Kean was compelled to leave the British stage for want of patronage. As far as my observation extended his houses were crowded in London and Liverpool.--The lovers of dramatic excellence only saw in him the Representative of the characters he personated, and he would not condescend to notice his private walks of life; nor did they consider their moral feelings injured by witnessing his public performances.

The writer then goes on to say that Kean's "great annoyance" was

> the Public Press, the most powerful engine in the world. A continued attack on him was kept up, for putting public opinion at defiance, in making a public appearance immediately after his trial.--This act was considered a gross insult to the public, which no man, however talented, ought to be permitted to commit with impunity, however he might be followed by those who in the excellence of the actor chose to forget the misconduct of the private man. His punishment from this quarter was insupportable, and the cause of his leaving the country.

But

> it was the opinion of the most respectable part of the community, that had he retired from notoriety a few months, and have shown any marks of contrition, his offence would have been charitably absolved; and the renewal of his histrionic talents have been invited. He, it appears, thought otherwise, and is now reaping the bad harvest of his presumption, and false judgment.[27]

The National Advocate, too, questioned the assertion that Kean was compelled to leave Britain because of lack of support:

> We should judge from . . . an English paper, called the John Bull, that we are all in error in believing that Kean's morality ever induced the British audience to discountenance him. It was a falling off, or rather a want of dramatic talent. If it be so, let us judge of his talent, and if he does not merit encouragement, he will have no audience to listen to him.[28]

On 29 October 1825 the Commercial Advertiser printed a protracted article by Tenax who declared that too much has been made about Kean's indiscretions by the press. Simply put, it is folly to belabor a discussion about the propriety of permitting Kean to appear on the stage. Said the writer:

> The question is not then of any such great importance as has been assumed. Stripped of its adventitious circumstances it is simply this; ought a man, confessedly possessed of extroardinary powers, but of profligate principles and broken reputation, to be received favorably, encouraged and rewarded as an actor?

But, of course

> This statement necessarily excludes all idea of private countenance and reception in good society--that being abandoned by common consent.[29]

Tenax concludes his discourse with the declaration that Kean's immoral behavior precludes his right to appear on the stage. Respectable New Yorkers should not countenance his presence:

> My conclusion therefore is, that Mr. Kean is not, as an actor or a man, entitled to be received or supported by a New-York audience . . . The insolent despiser of public opinion, the traitor to friendship and gratitude, the unprincipled seducer of the wife of his confiding patron, cannot receive favor or profit here. But this must be effected by temperate and manly firmness, by abstaining from the Theatre, and leaving "Little Breeches" to fret his hour before an empty house. This is the discreet, and proper, and lawful course of manifesting disappropriation. Respect for the laws, for common propriety, for the decencies of life, and the interests of morality, require this course, and I trust it will be observed.[30]

On the same day (Sunday, October 29) that Tenax debated the appropriateness of permitting Kean to appear before a New York audience, a writer in the New York National Advocate expressed his dismay at the unusually harsh criticism of Kean, which he thought was designed specifically to excite public feeling; and attributed it "to the enemies of the stage in general."[31] In response to the Advocate's article, the Commercial Advertiser retorts:

> And what sort of a man is this writer, who can feel as much satisfaction in filling the purse of--Kean, as in rewarding the exertions of deserving, honourable and moral men? He hopes Mr. Kean will be permitted to perform, and that the managers of the theatre will take measures to prevent disturbance. The managers have a question to decide, and we cannot permit a doubt that they will be led astray. They are informed of Kean's history, and are aware of the sentiments entertained by a large portion of their respectable friends; if they give the matter due reflection, no

> fears need to felt that their decision will be against the plain dictates of virtue and decorum.

And

> whatever may be the managers' determination, in regard to Mr. Kean, no disturbance is apprehended; for it is presumed that those who truly wish to discountenance him, only desire that their feelings (should he appear) may be manifested by empty boxes.[32]

On 14 October 1825 the New-England Palladium, which, like the Boston Courier, was edited by William Buckingham--an attested opponent of Kean, printed two articles which discussed the suitability of letting Kean perform on stage. The first one, written by "Truth" elaborated on the criminality of Kean's actions and the absurdity of a virtuous community allowing itself to enjoy good acting at the expense of losing its virtuous character:

> To the "Lover of good acting" we would say, that we love good acting much, but we love virtue more; we love the honor and moral character of the community, which we do not hesitate to say, (particularly since the cognizance which has been taken of this criminality by the English public), is now at stake.[33]

In the second piece, Thespis, who had written various articles for the New York Evening Post in 1820 and 1821 whilst covering Kean's performances, advocates a more sensible approach than that suggested by truth and other critics of Kean:

> I wish it to be understood, that I am no avowed apologist for the character or conduct of Kean! Concerning the first, I conceive, so far as it relates to public adminadversion, I have nothing to do--it 3 capacity, he associates, and to whom his influence extends,--and with the second, it remains the same, with the exception of its being professional, in which

> case it belongs to the public--to whose tribunal he is amenable, and by whom he must stand or fall.--

However, with respect to the discussions that have taken place about Kean's private conduct

> It is my belief, that the freedom which has been taken with the private conduct, and the opposition expressed respecting the appearance of Kean, will tend, if anything, to soften the asperities against him, laboured to be produced.--It is likewise giving the man a kind of consequence which does not belong to him; causing him to occupy a share of general notice to which he has no claim, and to become obtrusive upon the public eye.

If, however, Kean should

> make an attempt to offer an apology for his ill-advised unseemly and abrupt conduct while here, I hope he will have a hearing, and if that apology is ample, dictated by a proper spirit of submission, I hope it will be admitted, and that the man will be endured, and allowed to go on,--Bostonians have the reputation of being liberal and good natured. Let them maintain their character.[34]

From some of the above criticism, it can be seen that the nineteenth-century American press had great difficulty in separating the private life, or to put it in nineteenth-century vernacular the "private worth" of the actor from his/or her profession. The press, writing on behalf of the American public, was not willing to suspend its personal quibble regardless of Kean's exceptional talents as the "representative of Shakespeare's heroes." However, there were some individuals who did not agree with the rhetoric of the Stones in New York and the Buckinghams in Boston. One such individual wrote to William Clapp, the editor of Boston's Evening Gazette,

demanding fair play for Kean despite his "comtemptible character:"

> I have been much amused by the editorial sneers and scoffs that have been going the rounds of the public journals, respecting the re-appearance of Mr. Kean on our boards. Certain of this honourable corps, have thought the present a good opportunity of evincing their delicate perceptions of morality--their purity of moral principle, by exclaiming most stoutly against his admission among us as an actor. We should apprehend a little inconsistency in all this preaching.--Take him at the worst, and why should we exclude him from appearing on our stage?--Because a man has discovered a contemptible character, shall he not, forsooth, be permitted to earn his bread? Shall he be deprived of all means of subsistence because he has shown himself unworthy to associate with honest and honorable men? Let these same preachers look round within the circle of their acquaintance, and see if they cannot find some, for whose principles they have as little respect as they pretend to entertain for Mr. Kean, with whom they would, notwithstanding, think it intolerable disgrace to do business, to make a profitable bargain.

However,

> despise the man if you will--admit him not at your firesides--as a man shun his society--but do not consider yourselves polluted by approaching to purchase such goods as no other man in Europe can offer for your acceptance--do not tell the man that he shall starve because he has sinned as thousands before him have sinned and yet maintained their standing in society . . . We hope our Managers will not be so "refined and delicate" in their morality as to refuse him an engagement.[35]

Back in New York, Major Noah, the editor of the New York National Advocate and a faithful supporter of Kean, circulated an editorial that took pains to disparage what was in his opinion the scornful and malicious position maintained by some other journals:

> The bitterness and malevolence with much, Mr. Kean has been attacked in some of our journals, both before and since his arrival compel us, whatever may have

been our resolution, to make common cause with that gentleman against his enemies. Every dictate of justice and generosity demands us to side with the weak and solitary stranger. We cannot see him, hunted round the world, driven from country to country by his ferocious persecutors, asking in vain for quiet and protection in a land which boasts itself the refuge and asylum of the oppressed.

And who are they who have, on this side of the Atlantic, re-commenced this ware of extermination against an individual. Have they been the friends and patrons, who now set themselves up as the sovereigns of the drama? Have they not uniformly denounced the theatre as the broad road of vice, ranking it with stews and infamy, who now, for a base and diabolical purpose, claim it as a school for morality.?

But,

Who now offer themselves as guardians of its purity, and tremble for its profanation as if it were a church? Away with these hypocritical pharisees. Let honest men, and men of sense, and men of the world, have some little hand at least in the management of their own affairs. Mr. Kean has not come here to learn us morals; he comes with no such pretension: he is not to officiate at church, nor in the lecture room, but at the theatre: He came for what we want him; to amuse and please us; And for these purposes he brings with him eminent qualifications; and we look for no other. We beseech you, gentlemen, let us have Mr. Kean, such as he is. The Theatre does not please you; and, were he an angel, Mr. Kean would not please you, so long as he is an actor. We like Mr. Kean! Leave us to our raptures; we will not interfere with yours.

However, it is said that

Mr. Kean is not a moral man: We lament his follies, as we have no doubt he himself does, sincerely. We stand not here to justify him: Perish the theatre and all its train of pleasures, rather than that our pen should varnish his crime; but we demand for Mr. Kean the same law by which others are judged; most heartily would we join in framing another code; but universal consent has ordained, that an actor shall not be driven from the stage, any more than a gentleman from the society of his fellows, for certain non-enumerated offences. "Tis true, tis pity, and pity tis, tis true." We wish that a different practice had been established; but, so long as this remains unchanged,

> we enter our protest against this ex post facto legislation towards Mr. Kean.

If we give it some thought

> Do we enquire after the morals of those whom we employ to transact our business, or to labour for us, further than as concerns their occupation? And why more after the morals of an actor? Because, it is said, the exposure is greater. Base, undignified, humiliating assertion; equally false and groundless. It is for a moment to be supposed that the contagion of the stage does or can extend to the circle of proud and virtuous matrons of innocent well born, and well educated maidens who adorn the boxes? Where have been our husbands and fathers, while the females of this city have been so long imbibing the poisonous infection? . . .
>
> It is said, however, that the notoriety of this subject gives the whole affair a different aspect. And who has given it its notoriety, but these same self constituted guardians of our theatrical morals. It is they who furnish vice with her hydra heads. A thousand evils spring up where falls the awkward club of these modern monster hunters. But for them, much, perhaps all would have soon been forgotten, or at least not remembered.[36]

The Boston press and its constituents had greater cause than other domestic papers to denounce Kean's arrival in America and to remark on his private conduct. Boston's generally inflexible attitude towards Kean was actuated by several factors. One was Boston's strict and puritanical view of social and relious mores; which, in the main, was intolerant of misguided social graces. Another was Kean's unwarranted desertion of a Boston audience in May of 1821. The majority of Boston newspapers preferred that Kean should not be engaged by any manager of an American theatre; however, if he was to be engaged, he should at least make an apology acceptable

to the Boston populace to atone for his callous and unseemly behavior.

A number of Boston newspapers hoped, and some demanded, that Kean would make some kind of apology before he appeared on the stage, assuming, of course, that the managers engaged him. The New-England Galaxy was one of several newspapers that believed that Kean should make an apology, and, moreover, if he did, it should be heard. But some, such as the Galaxy, still retained some misgivings about granting Kean an opportunity to make an apology:

> For our own part, having no personal acquaintance with Kean, and of course no personal animosity, we should not hesitate to say, if he comes here with a suitable apology for the insult he put upon us, that apology ought to be received. But we know not what he can say in extenuation of the disgrace he has brought upon the profession by his subsequent conduct, nor how he can atone to an insulted world for the meaness, licentiousness, and pollution of his general character. We sincerely hope that our managers will not engage him. They can make little or nothing of him in a pecuniary point of view; and for the reputation of the whole concern, the less they have to do with such a shameless adulterer, the better.[37]

The Boston Daily Advertiser, on 2 November 1825, admitted that they could not foretell what sort of reception Kean would receive at the Park Theatre, but

> Of the public sentiment here [Boston], respecting what is due to this man, and what is due to ourselves in relation to him, we can speak with more confidence. We have heard gentlemen who are much more frequent visitors of the theatre than we are, express their opinions in relation to him, . . . and we have heard very little that could gratify his vanity, or encourage his expectations of a kind reception here. We cannot of course undertake to say what is the universal sentiment, but we know there are many strong

> friends of the stage, who will not carry their families to bestow their approbation and applause on a man, who has not only most grossly insulted the Boston public, and done all in his power to subject them to derision abroad, but who comes among us, whom he has thus disdainfully treated, merely as a refuge from the indignation of the British public, for his violation of the decencies of private live. . . .

The Boston public

> Do not consider his conduct here on a former occasion, a fit recommendation of him to the favour of the people of Boston; nor the scandalous and notorious indecorum of his private life, a recommendation of him to public favour anywhere, whatever may be the epithets bestowed by him on the tokens of disapprobation which he is likely to meet with in every refined society.[38]

On 4 November 1825, the New-England Galaxy reported that Kean had arrived in New York [October 28], and that "the propriety of his being permitted to appear on the stage is made a topic of considerable discussion in the prints" of New York City.[39] It then issued a stern warning to Kean:

> We offer Mr. Kean a word or two of advice--gratuitously. Come at once to Boston, which has the honour [sic] of receiving from your mouth its fashionable name of "literary emporium"--and if you can satisfy the public here, that it is not their business to inquire into the private character of a man who claims to be a prominent leader in public amusements, you will of course have achieved a victory, and have nothing to fear in other theatres of the United States. If you should not be able to convince them of the truth of this proposition, . . . then clear out for Botany Bay;--the inhabitants of that colony, transported from their native country for crimes less atrocious in a moral point of view,--than yours, will doubtless be competent to settle the disputed question to your entire satisfaction.[40]

As Kean was sailing towards New York on the Silas Richards, he was not aware of the debate taking place in

the various American journals. Despite the intense debate and the prospect of "no" engagement, Kean did make his debut at New York's Park Theatre[41] on 14 November 1825 in his customary opening role of Richard III. The reception he received at the Park Theatre and later at Boston's Federal Street Theatre established new precedents in the American theatre.

CHAPTER XI

KEAN RETURNS TO THE UNITED STATES IN NEW YORK CITY, ALBANY, BOSTON AND PHILADELPHIA

Kean arrived in New York on 28 October 1825 "in the Silas Richards."[1] Since he had last appeared in the United States many things had changed. During his absence other eminent English performers in America established reputations that may have lessened the impact of Kean's reappearance in 1825. Moreover, in September 1825, Kean was preceded by the world-renowned Garcia Opera Company.[2] This was the first time that an opera company had appeared in New York. Kean was obliged to share the limelight at the Park Theatre with this prestigious Spanish group from November 1825 through September 1826,[3] a circumstance that probably detracted somewhat from his presence in New York.[4]

As has been noted previously, knowledge of Kean's affair with Cox's wife had created a considerable stir in newspapers in (and out of) New York City both before and immediately after his arrival. Although Kean's first

appearance in the United States had been greeted with some skepticism,[5] the press, by and large, reviewed most of his performances. However, in 1825, primarily because of Kean's immoral relationship with Alderman Cox's wife and his disdainful treatment of a Boston audience in 1821,[6] a substantial portion of the press not only refrained from making statements about the propriety of permitting Kean to perform,[7] but, at the same time, chose to ignore his performances or, if they said anything, used "outside correspondence" as a source of information. Frequently the "outside correspondence" was provided by other newspapers or from free agents, such as Thespis who wrote articles for Coleman's New York Evening Post. the two New York National Advocates,[8] one published by Major Noah, the other by Thomas Snowden, were the only newspapers that consistently published favorable comments about the propriety of permitting Kean to act on an American stage and also published reports about Kean's performances, written by their own correspondents. Other publications, such as the New York Statesman and the Albion, periodically issued accounts of Kean's performances, but made no statements about the propriety of allowing Kean to perform. In Boston, the Courier, like the Commercial Advertiser in New York, led the opposition protesting Kean's reappearance.

It took two riots, one in New York during Kean's first performance (14 November 1825), and a second in

Boston (25 December 1825) to goad the press into providing the public with some information about a Kean performance. Of course, neither the New York Commercial Advertiser nor the Boston Courier needed riots to protest Kean's reappearance. In 1826, Kean received even fewer reviews.[9]

Press notices (or lack of them) aside, Kean's pre-eminence was undoubtedly challenged by other English actors. Soon after Kean completed his first tour in the United States, Junius Brutus Booth came to these shores, performing for four consecutive years and returning to England only shortly before Kean's second tour in 1825. Booth made his American debut at the Richmond Theatre in Virginia in July of 1821. He was enthusiastically received by the Richmond press, especially the Richmond Compiler. The Compiler to the dismay of the New York National Advocate, favored Booth over Kean:

> The Richmond Compiler continues its high panegyric on Mr. Booth's performance, . . . when a man of talents emigrates to this country and contributes by his acquirements to add to our stock of amusement and improvement, he is fairly entitled to support and to all indulgence to his informities. But we do protest against the indecent attacks on Kean, which the Compiler makes by way of supporting Booth; they are unjust, ungenerous and disgusting. Hear him on the subject.
>
> "He [Mr. Booth] has besides the advantage over Kean, in being less arrogant and irritable in not insulting his audience [refers to 1821 incident in Boston] by refusing to play, or to play with all his spirit--and in observing more successively the maxim of Johnson, that 'those who live to please, must please--to live. He is more modest in all that he says and does--and more tolerant and

> respectful towards the countrymen of a clime different from his own.:"

The Advocate then rejoined,

> The Compiler never saw Kean; and Booth has been but a few days in the country; and yet the Editor ventures thus broadly to answer for his good conduct and friendly dispositions towards this country upon so short an acquaintance, and with the view of detracting from the merit of Kean; it is shameful.[10]

After performing in several other cities, Booth appeared, for the first time, at New York's Park Theatre (newly rebuilt) on 5 October 1821.[11] Thenceforth, Booth "played in the principal cities of the United States."[12] It is clear that the reputed similarity of the Booth and Kean acting styles minimized Kean's uniqueness.

In October 1825, approximately one month before Kean appeared at the Park Theatre, both William Conway and Thomas Abthorpe Cooper[13] were engaged at the Park Theatre--performing both jointly and separately.[14] About their engagement, the Boston Courier said:

> Messrs. Cooper and Conway have completed their engagement at New York, at Conway's benefit he played Rem (the Gamester) to Cooper's Stuckely. At Cooper's benefit, he performed Zanga, with Conway in Alonzo. In Boston, third and fourth rate actors, yea, some actors of no rate at all, would rather give up their week's salaries than play a second part to either Cooper or Conway.[15]

Before his joint engagement with Cooper, Conway completed a highly successful engagement at Boston in September. His resounding success prompted the Boston

Evening Gazette to make a comparison between Conway and Kean:

> This gentleman [Conway] having completed his engagement, which, we may remark by the way, has been an extremely satisfactory one to all parties concerned, we think it will not be amiss to make a few remarks on his general merit as an actor. The crowded audience which have attended the theatre, almost every night of his appearance, and the continued applause with which he has been greeted, are unequivocal tests of the high estimation in which he is held. We regard this favorable opinion on the part of the public as the more flattering to Mr. Conway, because his acting is entirely different from that of Kean, whose unrivalled genius had drawn forth such general, and even rapturous admiration. The approbation bestowed on both, while it evinces a flattering share of impartial discrimination in the public mind between the respective lines of acting of the two, adds no little value to the applause bestowed on the former gentleman. We are far from pretending to say that Mr. Conway has the fire or the genius of Kean, but we are free to assert he is undoubtedly a more chaste and accomplished actor. What he fails to effect by the striking and irrestible impulse of those powers which Kean knows so well how to concentrate, on individual points he frequently attains by his more faultless delineation of the tout ensemble of a character. And if Kean excite more lively enthusiasm, and strike deeper into the sympathies of his audience, the effect is perhaps more transient, and, like all powerful emotions, quickly subsides.

However,

> The representation of Conway, on the other hand, chaste and studied to an extreme, produces an equable and moderate impression of delight, which is the more lasting as it is the less violent, and will more easily bear the test of subsequent analysis.[16]

Thomas Sowerby Hamblin, another respected English actor (from the Drury Lane Theatre,) made his debut at the Park Theatre on 1 November 1825. His debut, as Hamlet, was warmly received by the press:

> Mr. Hamblin last evening [1 November] appeared for the first time before an American audience, in the

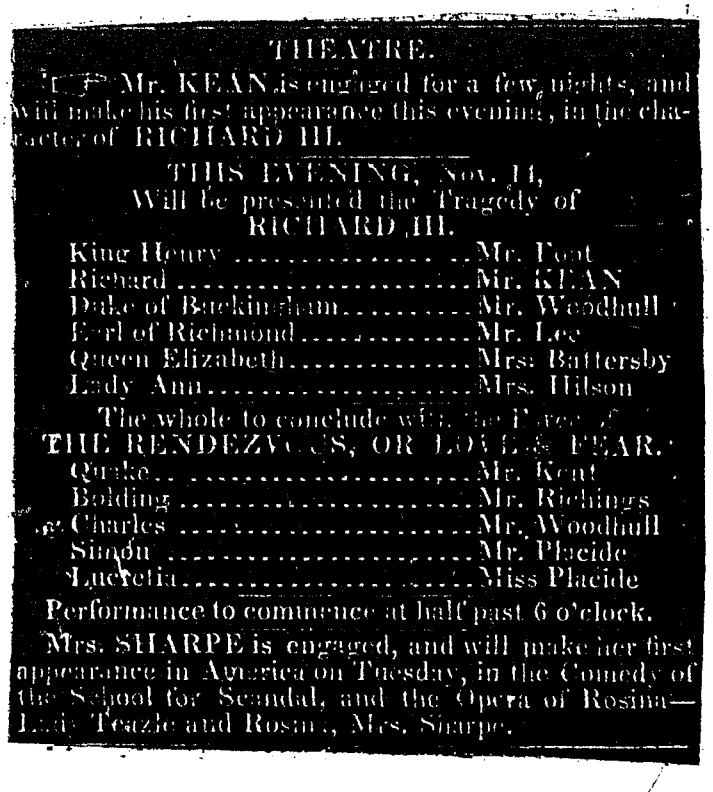
> character of Hamlet. Possessing a figure and countenance admirably suited to the character, with a voice of much melody, it was certainly the finest representation of the Prince of Denmark we have ever seen. We speak advisedly. We do not forget that Mr. Conway has, also, attempted this character; but Mr. Conway's genius, however brilliant, lies more toward the Roman character.[17]

Besides these noteworthy English performers, the Garcia Opera Company, fresh from Spain, arrived in New York in early September, heralded by the New York American:

> In the New York have arrived some of the most distinguished artists of Europe, who come to this new world to make a first attempt to introduce amongst us one of the highest & most costly entertainments of the old, the legitimate Italian opera. The individuals composing the company are so arranged with respect to their various powers, that neither London, nor Paris, nor Naples, can exhibit superior performers; and in respect to some of them, we use the language of a most competent judge, himself an accomplished musician, when we say, that "the first Soprano, the first Tenor, and the first Basse Taille of all Europe," are now in New York. Of the Signorina Garcia, the same gentleman says, "she is the finest singer in Europe, Pasta herself not excepted; and for her relative standing in England with all their singers, I refer you to the account of the great musical festival at York, where you will find she received £345; and the next highest was £262. If I were to rate them, I should put her far higher."[18]

On 29 November 1825 the Garcia Opera Company appeared at the Park Theatre for the first time.[19] From that date through September 1826, Kean, who opened on November 14, shared the Park Theatre with the Garcias.

Kean's appearance at the Park Theatre on 14 November 1825, in Richard III, was the first of his four engagements in New York through December 1826, and resulted in the first riot at a public theatre in an American city.[20] Although most journals abstained from



THEATRE.

☞ Mr. KEAN is engaged for a few nights, and will make his first appearance this evening, in the character of RICHARD III.

THIS EVENING, Nov. 11,
Will be presented the Tragedy of
RICHARD III.

King Henry .....Mr. Foot
Richard .....Mr. KEAN
Duke of Buckingham.....Mr. Woodhull
Earl of Richmond.....Mr. Lee
Queen Elizabeth.....Mrs. Battersby
Lady Ann.....Mrs. Hilson

The whole to conclude with the Farce of
THE RENDEZVOUS, OR LOVE & FEAR.

Quake.....Mr. Kent
Bolding.....Mr. Richings
Charles.....Mr. Woodhull
Simon.....Mr. Placide
Lucretia.....Miss Placide

Performance to commence at half past 6 o'clock.

Mrs. SHARPE is engaged, and will make her first appearance in America on Tuesday, in the Comedy of the School for Scandal, and the Opera of Rosina—Lady Teazle and Rosina, Mrs. Sharpe.

Fig. 31. Richard III advertisement from the New York American.

comments and personal observations of Kean's later performances, a substantial number sent correspondents to view Kean's first performance. The New York Evening Post, however, maintained its policy of "non-involvement" by only publishing accounts of Richard III from other newspapers, including the New York National Advocate, Snowden's National Advocate, and the New York Gazette:

> For the gratification for the public curiosity, we have allotted much of this evening's paper, to the accounts of the riot, last evening, at the Theatre on the appearance of Kean, as taken from several of the morning papers; it being the first successful effort of the kind ever attempted in an American Theatre.[21]

The New York Commercial Advertiser, like the Evening Post, did not send correspondents to the performance--choosing instead to print an extensive account of Richard III supplied by the New York Gazette.[22]

According to many newspapers, groups of people gathered outside the theatre an hour before the scheduled six-thirty performance. The Commercial Advertiser, the most virulent and persistent opponent of Kean,[23] claimed that great pains had been taken weeks before Richard "to assure" Kean "a favourable reception."[24] The Advertiser went so far as to say that money had been distributed "at groceries, to hire persons to go and applaud" Kean.[25] As it happened, Kean's opening night was mayhem from beginning to end, with friends of Kean vying with his opponents to outdo each other.

Snowden's National Advocate, which adopted a friendly attitude towards Kean, reported that Kean's appearance in Richard III resulted in the largest audience it "ever saw put into the Park Theatre."[26] The New York National Advocate, edited by Kean's old friend Major Noah, corroborated Snowden's account. "Upwards of 2,000 persons were in the Theatre last evening, and half that number could not obtain seats."[27] The New York Daily Advertiser reports that

> the boxes on the first on the first and second row had been previously taken by his [Kean's] friends, and early on Monday [14 November] all the pit tickets were disposed of, and notice placed on the outside of the doors that no tickets could be had. About an hour before the time of performance all the avenues leading to the doors were choaked up, and the rush to obtain admittance was very great. All parts of the house were crammed long before the curtain rose, and it was evident that it was composed of materials which would not remain quiet.[28]

The following statement from Snowden's National Advocate gives an even more comprehensive account of the rush to gain admittance to the theatre:

> At half an hour past five in the afternoon the doors were opened, and immediately crowds of people who had collected around, burst through the entrances in one continued stream, which continued without intermission, until every part of the house from the pit to the gallery was one complete mass of faces. At six o'clock, which is half an hour before the curtain rises, every part of the house was full except the two first tiers of boxes, the seats of which had been engaged, and therefore were kept for those persons until the hour of raising the curtain. The gallery and the pit kept up a continual round of applause until the orchestra began, and then played the airs of Washington's March and Yankee Doodle, in which they were joined by the whole house.[29]

Before and soon after the rise of the curtain, the evening's performance was interrupted by interminable applause and hissing which prevented the actors from being heard, especially Kean. Kean's two attempts to address the audience, perhaps to make amends for his behavior in Boston in May of 1821, failed. Throughout the evening various objects were hurled at Kean that had the unfortunate result of interrupting the performance. "It was a continued scene of riot and confusion," said the New York Commercial Advertiser, "and not one word of the play was heard by any mortal in the house."[30] According to the New York American:

> Before the curtain rose, the noise in the house commenced, and it was evident the performance was not intended to be a peacable one. On the ringing of the bell[31] "confusion dire" commenced. The curtain rose, and two of the minor characters appeared, and went through their performance in dumb show. The calls for Kean were tremendous. Mr. Kean at length appeared, and was received with six distinct rounds of applause, intermingled with comparatively a few hisses. He approached the front of the stage bowing, and with an evident wish to address the audience. This was impossible; and after waiting about ten minutes he retired to the side of the stage, and Mr. Simpson appeared. A short silence was not obtained, and Mr. Simpson addressed the audience. He said: "he would most respectfully respect the house to allow Mr. Kean a hearing: it was not the practice of Americans to condemn without a hearing, and he trusted what Mr. Kean had to say would fully satisfy the house."--Mr. Simpson then retired, and Mr. Kean advanced intimating by gesture his wish to be heard. Again the outcry commenced, and after waiting a short time he retired, and the play proceeded in pantomime. The cries through-out were various. In the "Shakespeare," in a inconspicuous position stood a mulatto, straining his voice to its utmost pitch, and bellowing, "Kean, Kean!" Aside of him in the slips, was another inconspicuous fellow in a white hat, crying out "Hurra for the seducer!" "Hurra for the Alderman," says the

> mulatto: "Boston," cried the white-hat fellow: "New York," responded the negro: "Boston," and "Mrs. Cox," says the white hat" "pork and molasses," says the black: "put out that negro:" "put out that white hat," says the black again, and the whole gallery instantly responded to their leader.--The pit was, with one exception, in Kean's favour, and very soon entirely so. The dress boxes were almost unanimously his friends. The principal opposition came from the slips and boxes of the second tier.--

If, however, the opposition,

> Had . . . been exclusively confined to audible marks of disapprobation, it would have been but trifling; but how will it read to an American public that a New York audience insulted an amiable and deserving female in the worst possible manner imagination can conceive? We pass it over with the hope that the infamous offender may be speedily brought to justice. Mr. Hilson[32] who was in the orchestra, alarmed for the safety of his wife, jumped onto the stage and removed her. After a short intermission Mr. Simpson appeared, leading on Mrs. Hilson, and the pantomime was resumed. In the succeeding act, an orange thrown from the gallery struck Mr. Kean on the breast: He picked it up and displayed it to the audience with a countenance betraying grief and indignation, and finally, with a smile of contempt threw it behind the scenes. From this to the end of the performance, and with a few intermissions, the confusion was general, and at length the curtain dropped amid "a din astounding." Mr. Kean was immediately announced for Othello on Wednesday evening, amid uproar and riot. A great majority of the house was evidently in Kean's favour.[33]

Though the New York Statesman had decided not to become embroiled in the controversy about Kean, it, nonetheless, gave a belated account of Kean's performance on 16 November to satisfy "distant subscribers" who "may have some interest to read an account of Mr. Kean's reception."[34] The Statesman wanted to plug up "some omissions, and correct some errors of haste," that "it perceived in other accounts."[35] Contrary to the account

of Snowden's National Advocate that "during the remainder of the tragedy not any other insult [Kean being pelted with an orange in the third act] . . . but incessant shouts of applause whenever he [Kean] apppeared," the Statesman added:

> Matters went on at this rate until the end plaudits and groans were kept up in unison, and the stage was still pelted with oranges, apples and other articles. The actor proceeded in the performance, but in the last scene, just as he was going to engage with Richmond, he was again struck with an apple, and after his fall, while yet dying, he was assailed and hit by several more.[36]

The Statesman made the following statement omitted in other reports about the aftermath of the play:

> On the conclusion of the after piece, loud calls were made for Mr. Kean, in which Mr. Simpson appeared and informed the audience that he had left the house. Some persons began to commit violence, and before all were dispersed, several benches and other articles were broken, and the front of one of the stage-boxes was torn away.[37]

When the New York National Advocate, led by Major Noah, published its report of the tumultuous proceedings of 14 November 1825, it ignited a heated dispute between New York and Boston, stating that an "organized opposition" from Boston was responsible for the commotion during Kean's performance. Moreover, the Advocate pointed out that the majority of the audience supported Kean:

> It was evident that an organized opposition was presented, and still more evident, that seven eighths of the audience were in favor of Kean, and desirous of hearing him tranquilly. On his appearance, the house rose simultaneously and cheered him, but he could not be heard for the cat-calls and shrieks of the opposition. Mr. Simpson came forward, and hoped that Mr. Kean would be permitted to address the audience,

but the noise prevented his being heard, and in this confusion the piece proceeded.

The pit was perfectly calm, so that the first and second tier of boxes, but in each of the slips, the opposition placed itself, and at no time could it have amounted to one hundred, and with their shrieks, and the applause of Kean's friends, the noise was too great to hear the play. It was evident that the rioters did not belong to the city, for they constantly vociferated Boston--send him to Boston.

We have said but little about Kean, considering it but proper for those opposed to him to stay away. We have no objection to the Bostonians avenging their own wrongs on their own ground, but they must not be permitted to disturb the harmony of our audience, nor should a handful of riotous persons be allowed to deprive 2000 people of an evenings amusement for which they have paid.

Kean broke no engagement here; he behaved ill and was punished for it in his own country; he asks for an asylum and protection in America; he is ready and desirous of apologising for his conduct, and soliciting a generous oblivion to the past--Yet a few strangers disown his voice, and will not hear him.--If the New York audience expressed a wish that Kean should not appear, that wish would be respected by the manager; but when they are willing, and attend to hear him, they must not be put down by a handful of men, who probably have been paid for their clamour. We hope, therefore, that on the second night proper officers will be stationed to protect New Yorkers, and place the disturbers of the peace in the place allotted for them by law.[38]

Noah's charge that "Bostonians" were chiefly responsible for the disturbance and that not more than a handful of spectators were against Kean was confirmed in Snowden's National Advocate:

At no one time was there more than one fourth of the house against him, and many are of opinion that the number of his enemies was far less--at least they diminished toward the conclusion. The hissing characters were noted to be nearly all strangers, & the audience hollowed frequently "put the Bostonians out"--"away with the noisy Bostonians"--away with Buckingham[39] [the editor of the Boston Courier]--"off with his head," and such like exclamations. When the play was concluded, the curtain fell amidst reiterated shouts of applause, and

> Mr. Lee, in announcing Mr. Kean's next appearance on Wednesday evening in the character of Othello, was cheered to the very skies.[40]

In spite of the tumult and clamour, Snowden's New York National Advocate believed that Kean's appearance was a success:

> We are positive when we say his reception was most enthusiastic. At the conclusion of the first act, a cry was made to give him three cheers, and it was accordingly given in a most hearty and rapturous manner. His friends and by this we designate the three fourths of the house, prayed to have him only heard, but the pertinacity of those in the slips and third tier prevented it entirely. We are sorry for this, because we think whatever Mr. Kean may be, still he ought to have been heard in his own defense.
>
> On the whole we cannot call last evening by any other name than a triumphant victory for Mr. Kean. All the actors deserve well for the manner in which they conducted themselves and particularly the amiable and resolute Mrs. Hilson.[41]

In addition to their review of Richard III, the New York American claimed that Kean's acting had "improved:"

> Mr. Kean's acting, as far as we could judge from the dumb show of the evening, has improved, and without failing in those points where he is certainly striking, if not great, he maintained through a chasteness and propriety which were altogether foreign to his style of acting.[42]

The Albion, in its 3 December 1825 review of several of Kean's later performances, echoes the American's observation:

> The opinion universally prevails that Mr. Kean has improved in the style of his acting since his first visit to this country.[43]

On 16 November 1825 all of the morning newspapers published an apology written by Kean, which was sent to them by the managers of the Park Theatre (Price and Simpson):[44]

> Mr. Editor--With oppressed feelings, heart-rending to my friends and triumphant to my enemies, I make an appeal to that Country famed for hospitality to the stranger, and mercy to the conquered. Allow me to say, Sir, whatever are my offences, I disclaim any intention of offering any thing in the shape of disrespect towards the inhabitants of New York. They received me from the first with an enthusiasm, grateful in those hours to my price--in the present to my memory. I cannot recall to my mind any act or thought that did not prompt me to an unfeigned acknowledgment of their favours as a Public, and profound admiration of the private worth of those circles in which I had the honour of moving.
>
> That I have committed an error, appears too evident from the all-decisive voice of the Public; but, surely, it is but justice to the delinquent (whatever may be his enormities) to be allowed to make reparation where the offences were committed. My misunderstanding took place in Boston. To Boston, I shall asuredly go, to apologise for my indiscretions.
>
> I visit this Country now under different feelings and auspices than on a former occasion. Then I was an ambitious man, and the proud representative of Shakespeare's heroes--the spark of ambition is extinct--and I merely ask a shelter in which to close my professional and mortal career.
>
> I give the weapon into the hands of my enemies; if they are brave, they will not turn it against the defenceless.
>
> EDMUND KEAN.
>
> Washington-hall, Nov. 15, 1825.[45]

Although playgoers opposition to Kean subsided in succeeding performances,[46] Kean's note did not satisfy all members of the New York and Boston press. On 16 November 1825 the New York Daily Advertiser, the lone New York newspaper that publicly criticised Kean's letter, appended a response to Kean's apology:

> We received the foregoing note last evening [15 November], accompanied by a request from the manager of the Park theatre, that it might be inserted in our paper this morning.
>
> If by the remark, "that he has committed an error appears too evident from the decisive voice of the

> Public," Mr. Kean alludes to his conduct at Boston, and supposes that to be the ground of the unfavourable reception he has met with here, we have no doubt be labours under a very serious mistake. It is primarily his moral conduct which excites the opposition of so large a portion of the citizens of New York to his appearance on the stage. How far this apology will satisfy the Public, we pretend not to say.[47]

The Advertiser's statement that it was Kean's "moral conduct" that had excited public reaction to him, is, at least partially correct. Correspondence later published in the New York Commercial Advertiser, substantiates the statement. However, the New York Daily Advertiser, the New York Commercial Advertiser, and other publications in Boston were largely airing their own views. Moreover, they had been opposed to Kean's visit from the onset. As subsequent performances revealed, it was the press, not the public, that was obsessed with Kean's "moral conduct."

On 19 November 1825 the Boston Daily Advertiser published an article that agreed with the New York Daily Advertiser's opinion that Kean had deluded himself into supposing that it was his indiscretion in Boston that had created public opposition to him:

> It would be quite out of place to say anything, by way of comment upon the very humble note of Mr. Kean to the Editors of the New York papers. He declares his intention of coming to Boston to make an apology. It is entirely unnecessary. There is nothing to be said. This letter shows it, for he cannot even allude to the principle charge against him. The Boston people do not call him to account, much less do they wish to make war upon him in the humble posture which he assumes. But this is far from an admission that it would be wise in him to present himself before them as a candidate for their patronage and applause. The rest of the world is to be hoped is wide enough for him, and he has enough to do, without attempting to

> make his peace with us, for offences which five years ago he thought quite lightly of and which, however he may flatter himself, are not the chief cause of his present embarrassment.[48]

On the same date, the Boston Courier expressed a reaction to Kean's intended apology to Boston. Again, there are indications that Kean's "vices and crimes committed in Europe" were the basis for castigating him:

> We speak now for ourselves. Kean was never our favourite, his acting appeared to possess more of trick and quackery than of genius; and his arrogance and vanity were intolerable. Should he return to our stage, we should remark on his acting with the same freedom as before. For his ungentlemanly deportment he says he means to apologize. Let us then hear his apology. If it be satisfactory, let him play; if not, insist upon another. For his vices and crimes committed in Europe, it does not belong to us to inflict any other punishment than neglect. He sets up no claim to innocence, to purity of moral character. He asks not to be admitted to our dwellings; he solicits no social intercourse. To such privilege he is no doubt conscious that he has forfeited all claim. But he asks an asylum; he seeks a refuge; from the depths of humiliation, he implores a shelter, under which he may end his professional and mortal career. Now we undertake to say, that when Mr. Kean has made a gentlemanly apology for the insult he put upon the public, there is not a man in Boston, who will attempt to drive him from the stage. His expressions of respect for the Americans may be, and doubtless are, mere affectation, and will pass for their true value. No one can sincerely respect him; no one can love him. But every one can pity while he condemns, and no one can carry his resentment so far as to drive from the face of the earth the wretched fallen creature on whom the Almighty seems to have set the seal of his displeasure, and who craves a shelter till that same Almighty Being shall otherwise dispose of him.
>
> In fine--we pretend not to utter the public voice, for we have no other nor better means of ascertaining the public sentiment, than any other individual. But we feel confident that the Bostonians will not be unjust to Kean. When they have received atonement for the insult he offered to them, they will inflict no severe punishment for the wrongs he has done to the

> world in general, than leaving him to settle down quietly into his original obscurity.[49]

On 16 November 1825 Noah's New York National Advocate, like all the morning papers, posted Kean's letter. However, unlike the New York Daily Advertiser, Kean's apology received favorable comment:

> After reading the above, we should hope, and indeed believe, that the apology will prove acceptable to every generous mind. It could not be more ample and conclusive; it is an appear that Americans should not disregard.[50]

Kean's apology had arrived "late" at the Advocate, and Noah had already prepared a communication suggesting that if Kean made an "apology," it should be heard. Moreover, Noah's communication, and his review of Richard III, avowing that Bostonians were, in the main, responsible for the riot, infuriated several Boston newspapers--and created a fervent debate:

> Our table is covered with communications, expressive of strong indignation at the riotous proceedings on Monday evening, and calling upon New Yorkers to sustain their rights. We have always endeavoured to cultivate a spirit of good feeling between New York and Boston, and such feeling actually exists among the respectable inhabitants of both cities, but is placed beyond doubt that there would have been no serious interruption on Monday evening, if certain persons from Boston, or in that interest, had not visited the Theatre in this city, to vent their rage for an insult offered to them. They decided that Kean must be put down in New-York, because if he succeeds here, he would not feel desirous of appearing in Boston, and if we allow them to succeed in driving him from that stage, what guarantee have we that at any future time a similar freedom may not be taken with our city? Kean's conduct in this country is a fair subject of complaint; he wishes to make the only amends in his power, he wishes to apologize, to express his sorrow and contrition--is it becoming the character of

> Americans to refuse to hear his atonement? It never has been done in any country. Shall we, while he is contrite--while he throws himself on the clemency and forgiveness of Americans, hunt him down like Cain, and leave him to want bread in a strange land. We know our countrymen better--it is not the spirit of the people.
>
> Those who do not wish to countenance Mr. Kean take a liberal and proper course by staying away; but persons mistake their rights and privileges if they imagine that they can legally confederate to disturb the public peace at a theatre; even at that very Boston, a few days ago, a man was sent ninety days to prison for riotous conduct in the theatre. If in the course of acting a play, scenes should occur which warrant approbation or displeasure, such feelings may be reasonably expressed upon the impulse of the occasion, but if persons are convicted of making a disturbance--of throwing missiles on the stage--of pelting a particular actor, and confederating to drive him from his professional pursuits, he will be fined and imprisoned for it, and so every court will say.[51]

In the same issue, Noah included an article written and signed by A Native of Boston, who happened to be at the theatre during the riot. In the main, the writer objected to the scandalous behavior of certain members of the audience who may have been Bostonians. Whether they were or not, New Yorkers, he said, have a right to hear and see a play undisturbed:

> At the Theatre on Monday, I was exceedingly scandalized to hear the name of my own native Boston so unceremoniously hurled at Mr. Kean. I looked about with some surprise, to make sure whether I was in the Boston Theatre or not, but soon realized where I was, and the character of the clamour . . . Just below me, I heard a constant vociferous cry of "Boston, Boston--send Kean to Boston," &c. All this from the same person, and that a stranger! . . . In the same slip there were some other young men, apparently of the party of the above young stentor; . . . I do not say that these young men were from Boston; I hope they were not . . . I say nothing of Mr. Kean, as an actor; I only object on principle, and in general terms, to a very few restless spirits, usurping the rights of a

New York audience. I would not compel any one to hear-nor would I submit to dictate from others.[52]

After the statement by A Native of Boston, Noah made the following remarks:

> It is a mistaken opinion, if such opinion prevails, that an audience goes to a theatre to countenance or patronise a particular actor excepting on his benefit night; they go to gratify themselves, and should they be disturbed by the enemies of the actor, not the enemies of the play? A performer is in a helpless, defenceless condition on the state, and we should not permit ourselves to take advantage of that situation, unless it is to demand an apology for his conduct, which, if satisfactory, is the only atonement we should ask.
>
> We are not partizans of Kean, though we have said thus much about him, but we own we wished to see him perform his admirable character, and to hear his apology for his conduct in this country, but we consider him now a persecuted man--he has forfeited the former hospitality of his friends, and attempts, are made to deprive him of bread--opposition has been carried too far, and if there is a determination to confederate for the purpose of making riot and disturbance, we hope the managers will take the necessary steps to put it down, and they will be sustained and supported in the discharge of their duty.[53]

The New York Commercial Advertiser, on 18 November 1825, presented one of its carefully selected communications (all opposed to Kean) submitted by ANOTHER NATIVE OF BOSTON. ANOTHER NATIVE OF BOSTON was incensed at the "two advocates" assertions, especially Noah's publication of the above communication by A NATIVE OF BOSTON:

> I hate to mention his name, because his character is so degraded as to be unworthy of the pen of gentlemen. But when my native city is so grossly assailed as it has been in two Advocates, and especially in Mr. Noah's of Wednesday, by a writer under the signature of "A Native of Boston." I cannot refrain from saying, that the attacks are altogether unprovoked, on our part, and equally unmanly and impolite. It is not true that a single individual has

> come from Boston for the purpose of putting Mr. Kean down. No Bostonian would descend to such a course . . . At the house where we put up there are eleven Bostonians, one of whom only went, and he was in favor of Kean. I have conversed with five who were present, and they assure me there were not more than ten faces from Boston in the house, Monday night, and but one of them hissed, whatever might be their feelings.
>
> An English gentleman told me, that one-third of the house were his countrymen, and they were determined to carry him at all events--Pray, has not an American, and especially one from the place which is emphatically called the "CRADLE OF LIBERTY," and which I once heared Kean publicly denominate "THE LITERARY EMPORIUM OF THE WESTERN WORLD," as good a right to express his opinion of talents and character of an actor, as a gentleman from the country which had literally driven him from the soil which he has so grossly polluted?
>
> But it is said that his apology is ample--that the public is satisfied. I do not believe it.--[54]

The Boston Courier, on 18 November 1825, satisfied the requests of some of its subscribers by giving some information about Kean's reception in New York. While providing readers with the necessary information, the Courier indicts Noah's Advocate for "misrepresentation" respecting the accusation that Bostonians wilfully committed riot in New York:

> In a considerable portion of our community some solicitude has been expressed in relation to the reception this actor might meet on his first attempt to play in New-York. We give below all the information we have on the subject, . . . It will be perceived that the editor of the Advocate speaks of the opposition to the actor as if it were got up solely by Bostonians, as if our city had actually sent on to New-York a delegation of citizens to commit a riot in their theatre. Is such an infamous imputation honorable to the dignity, elevated character and magnificent pretensions of the "governor and judge of Israel" [refers to Noah's campaign for the state of Israel in upstate New York][55] Shame on this pitiful and malicious attempt at misrepresentation. It would disgrace an Ishmailite.[56]

The next day, the Boston Courier corroborated a report from the Palladium (like the Courier, edited by Buckingham, also known as Tinkler) that Kean had been seen in Boston "incog." and, moreover, that "he had an interview with the managers of the Federal Street Theatre."[57] After alluding to the rights of readers to think for themselves, the Courier apologizes for adding "to the above a few words" some of their own:

> The subject is disgusting to some and indifferent to many; but there are still many more who feel an intense interest in all that relates to it. We have received almost daily, for several weeks, communications with pressing claims to insertion, all of which we have refused, and have also avoided the expression of any opinion on the propriety of an opposition to Kean, should he attempt to perform on our stage--not because we had not formed an opinion, but we wished if possible to remain as an editor perfectly neutral on a question, which divides our best friends.[58]

The Courier, however, abandoned its so-called neutrality, specifically naming Noah as a misrepresenter of facts:

> The editor of an influential and extensively circulating paper in New-York imputes to the citizens of Boston an attempt to create a riot in the city of New-York, and a stranger unaquainted with that editor's inherent propensity to misrepresent facts and his illiberal prejudices against Bostonians, might be led to suppose that there might be a particle or two of truth in his statement. The actor, too, appears before the public as a suppliant--humiliated and degraded; not as before,--presuming, haughty and insolent. It appears to us, therefore, that there is a propriety in every man's expressing his feeling on this topic, that the calumniator may be shamed, and the actor be enabled to ascertain, if possible, the state of public feeling in respect to himself. Mr. Noah, would plausible apology if Kean should be pelted from But let him pass.[59] circumstance would afford him a plausible apology for his eternal abuse of Boston. But let him pass.[59]

Major Noah responded to the Courier's charges on 22 November 1825--denying that he ever expressed "illiberal prejudices against Boston:"

> It would probably be asking too much of the editor of the Courier (Tinkler) to show a single instance in which I have expressed "illiberal prejudices against Boston." It is utterly out of his power to make good such a charge. Never have I felt such prejudices, I could not indulge in them. My prejudices, if I have any, have ever been in favour of Boston; and I am at a loss to conceive the motive of the above palpable misrepresentation. If it arises from any supposed triumph of Kean, the Courier may rest assured that I participate not in such triumph.[60]

On 18 November 1825 the Boston Daily Advertiser made its own statements regarding the accusation made in the National Advocate:[61]

> This gentleman has made his debut at New-York, with no flattering prospects, especially if it be true, as it has been stated in the New-York papers, that the whole house was taken by his friends. If this is a reception from a house of his friends, we know not what remains in store for him from his enemies . . . The National Advocate would have it understood, that the New Yorkers were nearly all among those who applauded, and those who hissed were Bostonians. This paper says that but few words, during the whole five acts, could be heard, yet maintains that three fourths of the house were anxious to hear, and constantly applauded to drown the hisses.

It does not matter whether the above statement is true of not,

> We do not see the advantage or propriety of giving Mr. Kean a hearing, in relation to his personal affairs. It must rather be an awkward business for him to undertake to defend himself against the charges against him. He has in fact been already tried on a full hearing [Cox trial], and if he proposes to argue his case anew from the stage, he has the singular fancy of wishing to entertain his hearers on a most disgusting topic, on which he is not likely to gain many converts, although he claims the advantage of an exclusive hearing.[62]

A few days later, on 21 November 1825, Noah responded to the "angry feelings" expressed in "some of the presses in Boston." Had my "paper alone made the assertion," which it did not, and "at any time evinced feeling towards the city of Boston other than such as were kind and respectful and such also as Boston deserved," and "had I been at any period distinguished for creating feuds and ill will between city and city, north or south, then indeed I should merit such angry expressions; but in the present case I have stated nothing but the naked fact."[63] Noah, then, supported his argument indicating that some Bostonians had admitted participating in the riot:

> Throughout the whole of this Kean affair I have taken but a trifling part. My opinion was, and I expressed it, that immediately on his arrival in New-York he should have publicly announced his intention of repairing to Boston and making satisfactory atonement for the affront offered to that city on his last visit. On his first appearance here no doubt exists that several persons from Boston took an active part and placed themselves on each side of the slips; they were strangers, and many of them frankly acknowledged that they were Bostonians, and they would drive him from the stage. As this fact was generally admitted, it is not just or reasonable that I alone should be charged with a disposition to criminate the city of Boston.[64]

Noah concluded his defense by subjoining a letter written by Caius and dated "Nov.14." The letter was allegedly sent to Noah by an "Evening paper" in order to show that "his statement was correct." Noah hoped that he "be permitted to state what was the current opinion without incurring displeasure from any quarter." In the letter, the writer forewarns New Yorkers about an

impending riot at the Park Theatre. At the end of the piece, Caius asks for protection of New York City "against Boston, from the police, from the managers and from my fellow citizens."[65] Caius's letter strangely includes mention of Kean making a "beautiful appeal to-day" to Boston in order to express "his intention to go to Boston and apologize for his indiscretions."[66] This statement lacks credibility, however, since Kean's apology was officially dated the 15 and published in all the morning papers on the 16, yet Caius's letter is dated the 14. About the possibility of a falsehood, the Commercial Advertiser exclaimed:

> The Advocate of this morning [21 November] contains, another unhandsome attack upon the citizens of Boston--evidently untrue from beginning to end. it purports to be a communication sent first to an evening paper, and speaks of the Bostonians arming themselves on Monday the 14th, with dirks and missiles, &c. to oppose Kean on that evening. It is dated on the 14th, and yet speaks of Kean's pretended apology, which was not published until the 16th. It is therefore an entire fabrication.[67]

The war of words spread to Philadelphia, where Walsh's National Gazette on 16 November 1825 publicly admonished the "scandalous scene" which took place at the Park Theatre at Kean's first appearance in New York. Whilst the Gazette assailed the rioters for their "unmanly, cowardly" behavior, it, nonetheless, believed that Kean's appearance in the United States had been given too much importance, especially since Kean was

"disgraced"[68] in England. The Gazette terminated its reproof of the rioters by remarking that no matter how

> disreputable may have been his [Kean's] conduct, it is a gross violation of public hospitality as well as decency and honor. It might be viewed in a more favourable light, if we could ascribe it to an honest zeal for public morals; but rioters in a theatre are not to be presumed so scrupulous:--virtue and decorum will not recognise them as champions.[69]

On the following day, the Gazette contained an article about the continuing "hubbub" in New York concerning Kean's appearance, with some reflections about how a Philadelphia audience might receive him:

> The hubbub continues in New-York, with regard to Kean. Our neighbors might select a more worthy object for contention. He should not have been enlisted for the American stage, when spurned from that of Great Britain. . . .
>
> We have already expressed our opinion upon the turmoil in the New York Theatre. We need not apply to it an epithet. It is an example which we hope will not be imitated, as it is itself a very humble and even servile imitation of the ruffian like doings of a London theatrical mob.
>
> Mr. Kean formerly visited Philadelphia, in the fulness of his reputation, swollen even beyond his English dimensions, with the flattery and feasting of New York and Boston. The public of Philadelphia, regarding a player as a player, and deeming themselves withal the exclusive judges of what suited their own taste, gave him a fair hearing upon the stage, his proper province. They did him justice, but they did not like him--and they ventured to say they did not like him, treasonable as it was then though to doubt his pre-eminent powers. They gave him no encouragement to repeat his appearance before a Philadelphia audience.
>
> We do not wish to see him here again. We believe this to be the general sentiment. There may be exceptions. Mr. Kean may have some friends. It is probable, too, that some would be attracted by curiosity to see a man who has made so much noise. But how would he be treated, should he unfortunately come to Philadelphia?

> He is a fallen man--a fallen player--the wreck of what he was, driving before the furiously indignant blast of those who formerly made with their breath the gale of his prosperity. Would the people of Philadelphia attend the theatre for the purpose of hissing and cursing and trampling upon a fallen man? They were just to him in the day of his triumph--they would be just to him now, in his abject condition. They would not generally attend the theatre. They have no occasion to seek an opportunity of shewing their spirit by insulting Kean. They never mingled their character with his, and therefore are not obliged to be outrageously violent in announcing a separation . . . But, assuredly, they would not think it becoming, nor just, nor consistent with the respect they have for themselves, either to assail the theatre with violence from without, or fill it with tumult within. They would not condescend, in short, to be classed with Mr. Kean's friends, nor with Mr. Kean's enemies.[70]

Immediately after the Gazette's comments, the New York Commercial Advertiser upheld the Gazette's censure of the "violence and tumult of the theatre, and also the throwing of the missiles upon the stage."[71] However, the Advertiser reminded the editor (Walsh) of the Gazette that it had advised those who did not wish to countenance Kean's appearance to "stay away" from the theatre. As to the general character of the audience who participated in the disapprobation of Kean, the Advertiser said:

> Many respectable persons opposed to Kean have an interest in the Park Theatre. They did not wish to see it polluted by his presence; and they thought, and justly, too, that they had a right to express their disapprobation. Others felt for the moral character of the city, which they thought was implicated, and attended merely to discountenance his introduction to the public--never intending to offer any further resistance than the ordinary manifestation of their disapprobation would imply. The throwing of missiles was the work of rude and ungovernable boys.[72]

On 11 February 1826 an English newspaper informed its readers about what it considered a "disgraceful" riot "on the American stage," which "eclipsed in blackguardism and fury the O.P. disturbances" in their own country. The newspaper ruminated upon the "deplorable" and "humiliating situation" that Kean depicted in his apology, and condemned both the American and English treatment of Kean--considering the English press's (chiefly the Times) criticism primarily responsible for Kean's current circumstance:

> It is almost impossible to imagine a more deplorable or humiliating situation than the one [Kean's apology] herein depicted by Mr. Kean, and without entering upon the cause of this almost irretrievable ruin, we do think the retribution visited upon him has been really awful, and, in the present instance [riot at Park Theatre], even more unpardonable than on the London stage, the immediate scene of his delinquencies; but in America, the receptacle of every outlaw, where the smallest notion of refinement is a perfect stranger, and where the least approach to civilization is but an aping of this and other polished countries in Europe, to find a squeamishness to this amount, is the most ridiculous and contemptible thing we ever heard of. The situation in which the Times [London] journal has thus placed Mr. Kean is something alarming; for there is no step of desperation that unfortunate man could be blamed for adopting towards its Editor. We uphold not Mr. Kean, privately or publicly--we think him a bad actor; but, of all men breathing, the most injured--his own imprudencies, the style of his letters, the nature of his addresses, are all blameable, nay, sometimes disgusting; but they do not deserve this sad reverse of fortune; and to contemplate, for a moment, that a man who has received, in little less than 12 years, £100,000 by his profession, should, at the end of such period, be not worth as many pence, is quite loss enough, without any other affliction--and, with all these facts on record, we pronounce the fiend who traduced him in the Times, the real and sole cause of his present disasters--one of the most degraded reptiles

> breathing--to be abhorred of all the low chums he is surrounded by, and scouted from every society.[73]

Kean made his second appearance at the Park Theatre on Wednesday evening 16 November 1825 "to a very full though not quite so crowded a house as on Monday" evening.[74] The play was Othello, with Kean personating Othello to Mrs. Hilson's Desdemona. Iago was represented by Mr. Clarke, Cassio by Mr. Lee, Roderigo by Mr. Stanley, Emelia by Mrs. Battersby, and Brabantio by Mr. Foot. The farce Fish out of Water followed.[75] Othello was the second play chosen from a list of eleven for Kean's first of four engagements in New York. Newspaper coverage of this performance was ample, though not as considerable as with the first performance.

With Kean's second appearance, all obvious opposition was firmly a thing of the past. "At four o'clock," reported the New York Globe and Emerald, "the crowd around the theatre was great, and it continued accumulating until six, when the rush was tremendous, and in ten minutes the house was completely thronged, leaving disappointed thousands on the outside."[76] The Commercial Advertiser bemoaned this fact--considering it a triumph for Kean:

> We deeply regret, that in consequence of the preoccupation of the theatre by his friends; the refusal to sell tickets yesterday until 3 o'clock P.M., so that his friends could be ready to throng the doors and prevent his opponents, to any considerable number, from obtaining tickets; and, as we are informed the liberal and gratuitous distribution of

> tickets, his reception was such as will be construed into a triumph.[77]

The audience, as at the first performance, consisted "altogether of males,"[78] an indication, perhaps, that trouble was anticipated. Before the rising of the curtain, there were some "slight expressions of feeling from either one side or the other,"[79] such as the following instance recorded in the New York Globe and Emerald:

> Some slight tumult occurred in the upper boxes; a gentleman of Philadelphia caught the ear of the house, and was listened to with much attention. He began--"Gentlemen, we came here to see a great actor, and not to sit in judgment upon, try, and condemn, and punish a man for an offense, the penalty of which he has already paid! Gentlemen, we are freemen; our minds and our opinions are as free as our bodies; and shall we yield up our reason and our best affections? Shall we consent to be led by the nose by a man who raised and who would perpetuate the outcry against Mr. Kean--a man with a heart of Stone [William L. Stone]--the editor of a daily paper [Commercial Advertiser] in this city, who, while he was abusing Mr. Kean, and prating about his own moral purity and religion, opened his hand to a bribe for the perpetration of a crime closely allied to subornation of perjury! Shall we, I say, Gentlemen, take the tinge of our opinions and mould our feelings after such a puritanical hypocrite as this?" This address was listened to with attention mingled with applauses.[80]

To help insure peace and tranquility throughout the theatre, the management posted large handbills on the pillars of the "second tier of boxes, requesting those who wished to hear the play, and the friends of Mr. Kean, to preserve unbroken silence."[81] Thespis, writing once again for the Evening Post as he did in 1820 and 1821, said that the "fourth tier of boxes, the gallery and

slips, were prudently closed up, and no one entered them during the evening."[82] This precaution, along with the handbills, evidently succeeded since throughout most of the play there were "only slight indications of displeasure."[83] According to the New York Gazette:

> On the entrance of Mr. Kean in the character of Othello, he was met with loud applause, mingled with a very few hisses, which, after he had made his obeisance, subsided into perfect silence. There were, occasionally, a few interruptions to the performance, but, during the greater part of it, such complete silence prevailed, that a pin might have been heard to drop.[84]

Snowden's National Advocate recorded the following information about the minor disturbances which took place during the evening:

> There were perhaps half a dozen noisy fellows in the third tier, who hissed occasionally, but the whole of them, one after the other, were thrust out from their seats by those disposed to hear the actors. The pit, the two tiers of boxes, and the gallery were unanimously in his favor, with the solitary exception of one individual, in the second tier, who was compelled by the persons around him to still his noise and clamour.[85]

"Thespis" gives us an even more comprehensive summation of the events of the evening:

> When he [Kean] came on the stage, "silence" was called from various quarters of the house. He bowed respectfully, and there was neither hissing nor applause to be heard. A single individual faintly cried "apology," but no one seconded it. There seemed to be a general feeling that he had been sufficiently stretched on that rack already.
>
> During the whole first and second acts, there was no disposition manifested to disturb the play. There was considerable hissing each time Kean came on, but it did not prevent his being distinctly heard and soon died away. His friends, imprudently, as we think, rose up on two occasions, as he left the stage and applauded him very loudly. The consequence was, that

> the house began to be excited, and at the commencement of the third act, it was apprehended that the reign of confusion was again to begin. Amidst the clapping and hissing, a person in the pit rose and exclaimed aloud, "let every man who is a friend to Mr. Kean, keep silence."--On which Mr. Kean, who was on the stage, turned and bowed very low to the individual, and the house applauded this expression of his sense of the favor. All appeared to be lost in scene; the actor himself was forgotten, and Othello only was before us. Frequent peels of applause were given without being succeeded by any marks if disapprobation. As the curtain fell, the audience rose and gave loud testimony of their delight, satisfaction and pardon.[86]

The Commercial Advertiser added to Thespis's account the following two incidents, which it claimed took place during the performance:

> We were honored by one fellow who thrust his hands over his face and cried out "three groans for Mr. Stone." The displeasure of those in the box, however, was so marked, that he did not persist. A foreign renegade, who uses types somewhere in this city, attempting once or twice to make a speech against "yankees" and "blue laws," but he was put down.[87]

After the curtain fell, Kean, called for by the audience, returned to the stage and addressed them:

> After the curtain fell, there was a general call from every part of the house for Mr. Kean. He immediately presented himself before the audience, and, after bowing respectfully to them, delivered a short and neat address. He commenced by returning his sincere thanks for the marks of favour which had been bestowed upon him in the course of the evening.--He then alluded to his past misconduct, for which he expressed his sincere regret, and observed that he had suffered enough during the last eight months, to atone for the blackest in the whole catalogue of crimes. In conclusion, he remarked, that if Lethe's stream were permitted to flow over his former faults, there would be no cause of complaint for the future. He then retired, amid the plaudits of the house.
>
> An unanimous call was then made for Richard III, and in a few minutes Mr. Richings came forward and announced that play for repetition this evening, which was received with general applause.[88]

Most of the newspapers that published reports about Kean's second appearance believed that his public address, of the day before, had sufficiently appeased the public's ire. The New York Daily Advertiser said that "the card addressed to the public appeared to have allayed the excitement against him."[89] A similar response in Noah's New York National Advocate simply stated that Kean's "ample apology . . . was evidently accepted."[90] However, in spite of Kean's public "card" and his conciliatory address after Othello, the Commercial Advertiser was not satisfied. That paper printed Kean's speech delivered after Othello, and then offered its version of his "humble" addresses:

> We have heard another version of this address [after Othello]. We have been told that, like this apology for an apology, published yesterday, his address was hypothetical--that he qualified his language by saying, "If I have committed any offence, on this side of the water, I express my regret for it," &c. Now, if this was the fact, where is the apology? Like his letter of yesterday, it is no apology at all. That letter was very humble--humble enough in all conscience. But if it is carefully examined, it will be found as artful as it is humble.[91] He does not acknowledge that he has committed any fault; but only infers from the conduct of the audience on Monday night, that he may have committed an error. But where in either his letter, or his address last night, do we find his apology for his insults of our country--for his contumelious language in regard to America and Americans?[92]

The Advertiser rested its condemnation of Kean on principles of virtue, morality and, above all, patriotism:

> If considerations of virtue and morality have no weight with our citizens, have they no patriotism?--have they no pride in the name and character of Americans? And is it not notorious that

> Kean has not only insulted the nation at large, but most grossly insulted a sister city?. And is not this an insult upon us? Did he not, when embarking for his native shore, shake off the dust from his feet, and tell us we were unworthy of his notice?--and this, too, after pocketing thousands of our dollars? What did he say of us, and how did he represent us, when he landed on the fast-anchored Isle? Did he not say on his return to England, that he had been playing to savages?
>
> Here we leave the matter, with the consciousness of having performed our duty and no more. If, with the facts before the public, husbands, fathers, and brothers, will countenance the conduct of which Kean has been guilty, the consequences must be upon their own heads. And if Americans will tamely submit to such insults, we cannot help it. But let us boast no more of our superior morality, or of our ardent patriotism and love of country.[93]

On the same date, the Commercial Advertiser advised its subscribers that

> We have lost two more subscribers in consequence of our humble efforts in the cause of honor, morality, and virtue. But the sacrifice, upon such a shrine, is not regretted. Our only regret is, that we have men in this community, who not only appear to care for neither of these attributes, but are destitute of every spark of American feeling and possess none of that proud and honourable spirit which can tolerate the freedom of the press.[94]

The Commercial Advertiser informed its readers on 18 November 1825 that its name had been stricken from the "free list" by the managers of the Park Theatre, because of the paper's remarks about Kean:

> The managers, we understand, this morning, have stricken our name from the free list.--They have some years since politely placed our name upon the list, we, as an equivalent, advertised the play. This is one way of punishing the freedom of the press. But as, we have no personal controversy with the managers, we shall not follow their magnanimous course of retaliation.
>
> Things have indeed arrived at a fine pass when the press is to be punished for exposing iniquity,

> defending the cause of morality, and vindicating the insulted honor of our country.[95]

Although the Commercial Advertiser had lost some subscribers on the 17 and been stricken from the managers "free list" on the 18, it, nevertheless, received some encouraging and reassuring letters from numerous subscribers on 18 November. Never before had they received such

> warm and hearty testimony of the public approbation of our editorial conduct, as since the persecution set on foot by the Keanites. We have not only received private communication of the most gratifying character from our friends, but also from gentlemen of the first respectability in this city, who have not heretofore been our supporters.[96]

An excellent example of the kind of "hearty testimony" received by the Advertiser is the following communication which was placed in the Advertiser's November 18 issue. The writer of the letter, Vindex, especially damns the "extraneous aid" which may have been used to buoy Kean's success at the Park Theatre:

> It is true that Mr. Kean has succeeded in the Park Theatre, in defiance of the opinion of the sober sense of the most respectable citizens, the husbands, fathers and brothers, of the virtuous and chaste part of the female community, and against the unanimous disapprobation of that community. If measures had been used to force him upon us, there has been extraneous aid. I heard an English gentleman, who lives upon public patronage from our citizens, swear at a public table, that an association has been formed to carry him, and that he would knock down the first man who dared to hiss.
>
> I heard the Manager of the ------- and ------- Theatres, say publicly, that if he had supreme power in the city, he would not hang the oppressors of Mr. Kean, but would take their heads off in the Theatre, and without trial.--These are the men, supported by a liberal American public, who have created the riot at

> the theatre, and not the Bostonians. The American public is "slow to anger," but will soon rouse, if such men attempt to spurn its opinions and feelings.[97]

On 21 November 1825 another private communication was dispatched to the Commercial Advertiser. The communication, addressed "To the Editor of the Commercial Advertiser," by a A Husband and a father, emphatically applauds the Advertiser's stern policy towards Kean. What is revealing about this letter, however, is the writer's condemnation of Kean's unprincipled conduct in England, which, in the main, may be the rationale for the attacks on Kean in journals such as the Commercial Advertiser and the Boston Courier:

> The course you have taken, in regard to the actor Kean, meets the decided approbation of a very large portion of the community; and you will, doubtless, continue to receive the countenance and support of every man in this city, who has a suitable regard for its welfare. The pitiful attempts to silence you, by withdrawing subscriptions from your paper, deserve the pointed reprehension of every honest man; and let the manager beware how he calculates too hastily on success, in forcing upon the public a man, whom that public has decidedly and unequivocally condemned. I can tell Mr. Simpson, that many persons who have heretofore befriended and patronized him; as manager of the theatre, consider themselves insulted by his attempts to force Kean upon them--and sooner than again enter it, under his management, they would abandon it altogether. Let him beware how he attempts to muzzle the press. In nine cases out of ten, he will find it an unpopular, as well as an unpardonable task. In a free country, a free press will be sustained. What!--Are our public journals to be awed into silence for daring to mark the distinction between moral decency and the vilest profligacy? Shall the traitor to private friendship--the destroyer of domestic peace--the vile adulterer, drive from his own country, unblushingly present himself before the public here, for its patronage--and no warning voice be raised against him? Must the cheeks of our wives

> and our daughters be crimsoned by the support and the plaudits of the community, bestowed upon a character so vile? Must surrounding cities and towns be witness to such moral degradation in the metropolis of our country? Forbid it Justice--forbid it decency--forbid it patriotism--forbid it every sentiment dear to man![98]

If the rationale for the truculent attitude accorded Kean by the Commercial Advertiser and the Boston Courier was primarily motivated by Kean's behavior in England, Snowden's National Advocate offered still another view in a column dated 19 November 1825, attributing the ill-treatment of Kean to the "enemies of the Drama" who have identified their cause (the "destruction of the Drama") with Kean:

> This accomplished actor may rely upon the generosity of an American audience. The people of this community are fully aware of the hypocritical pretences of the enemies of the Drama. They will never allow our civil immunities to be invaded by a few canters who are really no more to true religion than a clown is to dramatic purity--the one always defacing and disgracing the other. We come not forward to eulogize Mr. Kean, but to vindicate the rights of our country.--With some it appears clearly that whatever England does must always be held up as the brightest example to us--we must always sail in her wake! But on this occasion the snufflers are obliged to underrate the conduct of England to bring it upon a level with their own! Kean is undoubtedly a great actor--the head of a school devised and illustrated by himself [the founder of the Romantic school of acting]. In what way then would it consist with the refinement or the honor of the city to look to follies committed in Europe, to follow the counsels of men here who rudely assail Kean, but whose real object if the destruction of the Drama? The snufflers have identified the man with the cause of the Drama. The city will support both.[99]

On 29 November 1825 Snowden's Advocate criticized Walsh, the outspoken "moral editor of the [Philadelphia National] Gazette", for his stance against Kean. The Advocate's

closing comments present yet another view about the underlying reason for the ill-natured feeling towards Kean:

> This man [Walsh] gravely asks if the occupation of a player is to be excluded from the sphere of public opinion? But what has the occupation of a player in America have to do with the conduct of Mrs. Cox or Mr. Alderman Cox, or the little Cox's in London? In a tone of concession which shows the character of his feelings upon the subject of the Drama, Mr. Walsh is desirous that actors may be more or less respectable since the theatre cannot be altogether sup- pressed!!!--here again we see the secret cause of all those passions which have been set on fire by the uproaring fanatics of the day. All the dissertations upon religion and morals have been supplied as materials necessary to keep up ill will, and to sanction an improper interference with the public and lawful entertainments of our country, for the motives of these grave counsellors can have no necessary and indeed, no possible relation either to morality or religion.

It is clear then that

> Others, both here and in Philadelphia, have waged a war upon Kean because his extraordinary powers, his matchless discriminations as an actor, threw the claims of their favorites into shade.[100]

The Columbian Centinel, a Boston publication, printed a review of Kean's Othello in its 23 November 1825 edition. After various observations about the performance, the Centinel remarked that "it is admitted on all hands, that he [Kean] has much improved his style of acting since he was last in America. Is more chaste and natural."[101] On 25 November 1825, the New England Galaxy made some additional comments about Kean's second appearance--making special mention that "there was not a lady in the house. This last is worth a whole volume of comments on the moral character of Kean." Furthermore,

the Galaxy claims to have received "several letters from New York," which seem to indicate that "the public care nothing about Kean." The article includes some additional statements about Kean coming to Boston. "Kean is coming, as he says, to Boston. We are sorry for it; but, if he comes and offers an apology for running away, let us hear it. His appeal to the people of New York, is certainly no apology for that piece of arrogance, and he probably does not expect it to be received as such."[102]

On the previous day, 24 November 1825, the Boston Courier had an article that was severely critical of Americans who too easily forgive the "past errors, or faults, or crimes" of individuals who have made confessions of reparation. The Courier wondered whether or not Kean's "appearance on the New York boards" has, indeed, reformed his character. and suggested what Kean should do in order to be accepted by the American audience. The Courier's objections and recommendations demonstrate, once again, the predilection for the "magic three:" virtue, morality, and patriotism:

> Has Mr. Kean's appearance on the New York boards been made under circumstances that promise a reformation in the man? It was humble enough, God knows, and had the usual companion of detected guilt, meaness. But still what reliance can be placed on his word? Who, that is mean enough, would not make the same confessions and the same promisses? But, after all, our confidence in them will diminish, in exact proportion to the increasing necessity that forces the culprit to make them. His veracity, then is on a par with that of any other, who confesses for the sake of the pardon; for what delinquent would not confess and promise too, to avoid the lash or the dungeon? Such confessions will never pass, because they are hollow, artful, and insincere. What then, is this poor fallen degraded

> outcast from his native land to do, ask his credulous, confiding, symphathising friends? We answer he is to return to is own country whose laws and customs he has outraged and trampled in the dust. He is to go to the people whose sense of public decency has driven him with the disgrace belonging to his transgressions, from the scenes of their chaste and public amusements. Let him go to the people whose morals he has insulted--let him make his confessions and his peace with his indignant and frowning country women--let him retrieve, if he can, his blasted reputation, where his profligacy and flagrant breaches of honour have so naturally and justly prostrated it in the dust. Let in his own sickly bombast "the waters of Lethe flow over his past life," in England! Having done this, let him, if he choose, sojourn with us, and we will be slow to remind him of faults repented of or transgressions, . . . Let him do this, and the public will pardon and give him, in his profession, a fair competition for fame and emoliement, with his peers, until he do this, shall he be received on the American boards? Shall America be content to receive without scruple, those whose bankruptcy in fortune and character has driven in disgrace from their native land? Shall America be an asylum for the profligate and the wicked, as well as for the oppressed, and to those too, who carry their true character labelled on their forehead? Is there not something humiliating in the reflection, that the crime which degrades a man in England, opposes no bar to his success in America? Are English manners and morals, then, more pure than American?

If so,

> What a commentary, this, upon our republican simplicity and virtue? Is it not equally mortifying, that he who is too infamous to appear on the English stage, can be hailed as the hero of ours? Will the fair daughters of America be instrumental in bringing this censure upon themselves and their country? Will they be less fastidious about the morals of those who contribute to their theatrical amusements, than are their sisters across the water? Or if they are, will they receive without a blush, one who was condemned as unworthy to appear at Drury Lane? We may mistake, but we believe they will not.[103]

As in Kean's first visit to the United States in 1820, reviews of his performances in 1825 dwindled both in number and matter following his first few performances.

This peculiarity, however, was strikingly more evident in 1825.[104] From Kean's second appearance as Richard III on 17 November, his third performance, fewer newspapers reviewed him.

According to available newspaper reports, the theatre was full for Kean's Richard, with no incidents of violence or any unnecessary interruptions. While remarking that the "house last evening [17 November] was crowded and perfectly tranquil," Noah's New York National Advocate, on 18 November 1825, expressed the view, as did some earlier reviews of Kean's first Richard, that Kean's acting had improved:

> Kean exerted himself to a great extent, and we think he is much improved--there is much smoothness and less periodical extravagance in his acting. The scene with Lady Ann was never played better.[105]

The New York American on 18 November 1825 stated that "Kean went through his performance . . . without any opposition. The house was, we are informed, full. Only one solitary female, however, was seen in the boxes."[106] On 19 November 1825 the New York Commercial Advertiser made only one statement about the performance: "On Thursday evening, we were informed that but one lady was present."[107] The Advertiser proceeded to upbraid the bold lady:

> And it was to have been hoped that the fact of being placed in this situation, would not only have satisfied her curiosity, but rebuked the rising curiosity of others of the sex. But we have been disappointed. Whither must have fled the keen sense of propriety and delicacy--that high sense of honor

> and virtue--which impart so many charms so much loveliness to the female character.[108]

Following the perfunctory statement on Kean's Richard, the New York American on 18 November 1825 devoted the balance of its article (concurring with the Philadelphia National Gazette's opinion) stating that too much attention had been given to Kean. However, the American disagreed with the Gazette's contention that New Yorkers "mingled with character" with Kean's during Kean's first visit to New York in 1820:

> Now, though we are little disposed to vindicate the riotous proceedings of the theatre, we cannot admit the justness of the implication, . . . that the citizens of New-York have ever by any public act mingled their character with that of Mr. Kean, or done ought respecting him that requires them to "redeem their reputation." As a player he was much frequented here formerly--by some admired--by others, among whom we were, little esteemed, but all this was in the ordinary intercourse as between an actor and his audience, in which character and reputation were, according to our apprehension in no way concerned. True, indeed, it is that some eight or ten persons, friends of Mr. Kean and of the manager, chose to invite Mr. K. to dine with them [in December 1820], of which dinner and its objects a disengenuous account was afterwards published [in the New York National Advocate], with a view to make the act of individual good will appear as the public expression of the city; but here where the trick was known, it failed of all effect, and is only now alluded to by us on the supposition that it is to this incident the National Gazette refers, when it speaks of "mingling character," and "redeeming reputation." No public dinner was ever given to Mr. Kean in this city; and any such reasoning, therefore, bottomed on the idea of such an occurence is fallacious.[109]

In Boston, some newspapers made cursory statements about Kean's performance. On 23 November 1825 the Columbian Centinel simply stated that "On Thursday night

Kean played Richard to a full and comparatively quiet house. No female attended."[110] In its 21 November 1825 edition, the Boston Courier reviewed both Othello and Richard III saying, "Kean played Othello at New York on Wednesday and Richard on Thursday evenings to full and quiet houses. The audience was composed entirely of males--not a lady venturing within the walls of the house."[111]

Following Kean's second performance of Richard III, he portrayed Shylock, on 18 November, in the Merchant of Venice. The case included Mrs. Barnes as Portia, Mr. Barnes as Launcelot, Mr. Foot as Antonio, Mr. Clarke as Bassanio, Miss Placide as Nerissa, and Mrs. De Luce as Jessica. The farce Family Jars followed this performance.[112]

Unfortunately, almost nothing was written about this performance. Noah's New York National Advocate, on 19 November 1825, tells us

> Tranquility being now restored, we perceived a number of ladies last evening at the Park Theatre to witness Kean's Shylock. While the confusion lasted, they were right in staying away. His King Lear next week will be attractive.[113]

Some scattered comments in the Columbian Centinel, provide us with some additional information regarding this performance. According to the Centinel the house was tranquil, and based on a report it received from the "last New York Courier," " . . . several very respectable ladies attended Kean's personation of Shylock."[114]

On 21 November Kean enacted Sir Giles Overreach in Massinger's A New Way to Pay Old Debts. Lord Lovel was played by Mr. Woodhull, Wellborn by Mr. Clarke, Marall by Mr. Barnes, Lady Allworth by Mrs. Battersby, and Margaret by Mrs. Hilson. The evening's entertainment concluded with the farce of Past 10 O'Clock, And a Rainy Night.[115]

Kean's Sir Giles, also received minimal coverage. From available material, we are told that the house was well filled and that "quite a number of ladies" were present.[116] This last fact greatly disturbed the New York Commercial Advertiser. "This is a melancholy fact, and will be of deep and lasting injury to the character of our country."[117] The Albion on 26 November 1825 likewise tells us that a considerable portion of the audience consisted of ladies:

> A large audience, of which the ladies made a considerable part, assembled on Monday evening, to witness Mr. Kean's Sir Giles Overreach, in Massinger's celebrated comedy of A New Way to Pay Old Debts.[118]

The Albion devotes the remainder of the review to a discussion of the performance:

> We were several times brought down from the towering sublimity of Sir Giles' passion, to the very humble level of Marall's buffoonery--and our only relief was to soar with Sir Giles till we lost sight of Marall altogether. If Massinger intended this character to be such as was given us, the performer might very easily show himself wiser than the actor.[119]

About this performance and its attendance by "Ladies of respectability," the Columbian Centinel said:

> Mr. Kean personated Sir Giles Overreach . . . to an excellent house, of which Ladies of respectability and

> moral worth, formed a considerable part, and appeared highly pleased with the performance.[120]

Although the New York Commercial Advertiser considered the increased attendance of respectable ladies at the theatre unworthy of the respectable gentry, it, nonetheless, cautioned its subscribers that

> We find that the Keanites have boasted more of the attendance of the ladies, than facts would warrant. One one evening it is said there were 100 to 150 ladies present; but with this exception, the ladies as general rule, have rendered the exalted worth of the sex still more exalted by remaining at home. The great body of the ladies of New York, will not countenance the theatre while Kean is there; and but few of the minority will venture to brave public opinion by pursuing a different course.[121]

In spite of the Commercial Advertiser's avowal, the attendance of "Ladies of respectability" in greater numbers meant that the opposition was substantially quelled.

Kean appeared as King Lear on 23 November 1825--a role considered by many American papers his most masterful portrayal. Kean's Lear was joined by Foote's Earl of Kent, Woodhull's Earl of Gloster, Clark's Edmund, Simpson's Edgar, Hilson's Cordelia, and Battersby's Regan. Lear was followed by the farce The Sprigs of Laurel with Mr. Hilson playing Nipperkin.[122]

Once again, few reviews are extant. Kean performed, as before, to a full house, according to Snowden's National Advocate:

> Mr. Kean played Lear last evening to a very crowded and fashionable house. We never saw the character of the old King so well sustained before.

> We cannot pass over in silence, the Cordelia of Mrs. Hilson; it was all that could be wished.[123]

On 26 November 1825 the Albion said that

> of all this great actor's representations, this is perhaps the most difficult, and it is generally considered his best . . . With the support Mr. K. received, it is scarcely possible to conceive a more perfect, or effective performance. The curse of Goneril is, perhaps, the most terrific exhibition of exasperated rage ever given the world.

About his acting style, the Albion remarked that Kean had

> evidently improved since he was here before. His manner is more chaste and more dignified. His hysterical laugh he seldom uses, his stage trick he has laid aside, and he now does not rant at all.[124]

Two days later, on 28 November 1825, Snowden's Advocate also wrote that Kean's acting had "considerably improved:"

> Since Mr. Kean was in this country, we think he has considerably improved. He has less stage trick--there is more calmness, moderation, and just design in his delineations. He now seems to be more guided by the spirit of the character he represents, than the ambition of a mere actor. He abandons himself to the single impulse of his feelings, without appearing to care a straw for theatrical applause. When he enters the stage, he is Lear, or Othello, or Shylock . . .--not the ambitious man who comes before an audience and seems to say "admire me, and applaud me, and then give me a public dinner to-morrow."

However,

> His misfortunes have stolen away his ambition, and his finest spirit and most congenial consolations appear to be associated with Richard, with Othello, with Shylock and with Lear.[125]

On 26 November 1825 Noah's New York National Advocate reviewed both Lear and Brutus, simply stating, "Kean's Lear and Brutus were performed to full houses, and in a manner unequalled in this or any country. Lear will bear

successful repetition."[126] Kean had played Brutus, in John Howard Payne's play Brutus, on 24 November. Brutus was accompanied by the farce My Uncle Gabriel.[127] The Albion regretted having missed Kean's Brutus. "We could not see his Brutus, which we sincerely regret. It is said to have been a performance perfectly worthy of the fame of Mr. Kean."[128] The Albion's concluding remarks were probably intended for the Commercial Advertiser:

> We regret his [Kean's] moral aberrations as much as any one, but we discriminate between the professional and private or moral character of a man.[129]

On 28 November 1825 Snowden's National Advocate published an illuminating discussion of Kean's acting style, the inadequacy of his imitators, and a brief overview of his performances:

> Since Mr. Kean made his appearance on the Park boards he has performed several of his characters in a style of excellence, to which there is no parallel in the present age of dramatic talent.--Richard the Third, Othello, Sir Giles Overreach, King Lear, and Brutus, have all been personated, and one of them even twice. His performance of Othello took place on the second night of his appearance, when the public mind had not become sufficiently calm for the actor, and his own feelings were just beginning to attain that composure which is necessary to the exhibitions of genius. It was well done, but not so spirited as he has acted on his former visit. With regard to his Richard, King Lear, and Brutus, we can speak with confidence; Sir Giles we did not see.
>
> There is something about the acting of Mr. Kean, which differs from that of all other actors that we ever saw. . . . The greater portion of actors may be called simply masters of declamation which approaches more or less to the resemblance of the original . . . The acting of Kean is essentially different. The spectator who enters justly in the illusion of the scene, never has the slightest desire to thump the benches, or clap his hands, or roar out bravo!! He forgets altogether that it is a mere imitation, and

> thinks nothing but the sufferings of Lear, the daring ambition of Richard, or the struggles of Brutus.
>
> There is no man on the English stage at the present day that is so complete a master of the pathetic as Kean, and this arises from his power to represent an original, and not a resemblance. Others are merely declamatory actors; Kean is the only natural one. . . . Other actors can produce a copy of anger, or revenge, or pride, or paternal affection, simply, and in a continuous line as it were, but how very few have that power of mental transition, whch can convey the expression of opposite feelings in one attitude, one gesture, or one look? . . . There have been imitators [Junius Brutus Booth, John Maywood and Wallack] of Kean, but without his fire, his judgment, his limbs, his voice--in short without being a Kean himself, an imitator is only an object of ridicule.[130]

On 28 November 1825 the Commercial Advertiser expressed the opinion that one can go too far in furthering a cause:

> There is undoubtedly such a thing as going too far in a controversy, and thereby injuring a good cause; and a prudent editor, without faultering in his course, or being shaken in his principles, will stop when he has had enough. Before the moral degradation of Kean, his over-acting destroyed the effect of what little talent he possessed.[131] Lest, therefore, we should commit the same fault, we must beg to be excused from publishing the mass of communications yet on hand, in regard to the Kean controversy.[132]

The Commercial Advertiser, then printed some "brief notices of their contents," such as:

> "Consistency," has been under consideration several days. It is written with much force and pungency. We had before heard the report of Kean's being an Israelite. But query: Supposing both he and the Governor and Judge [Major Noah] ever so deserving of the lash, would not our correspondent's article wound the feelings of respectable gentlemen of that persuasion, who disavow the authority of the one, and discountenance the profligacy of the other?[133]

Kean completed his first engagement at the Park Theatre performing Othello again on 28 November 1825,

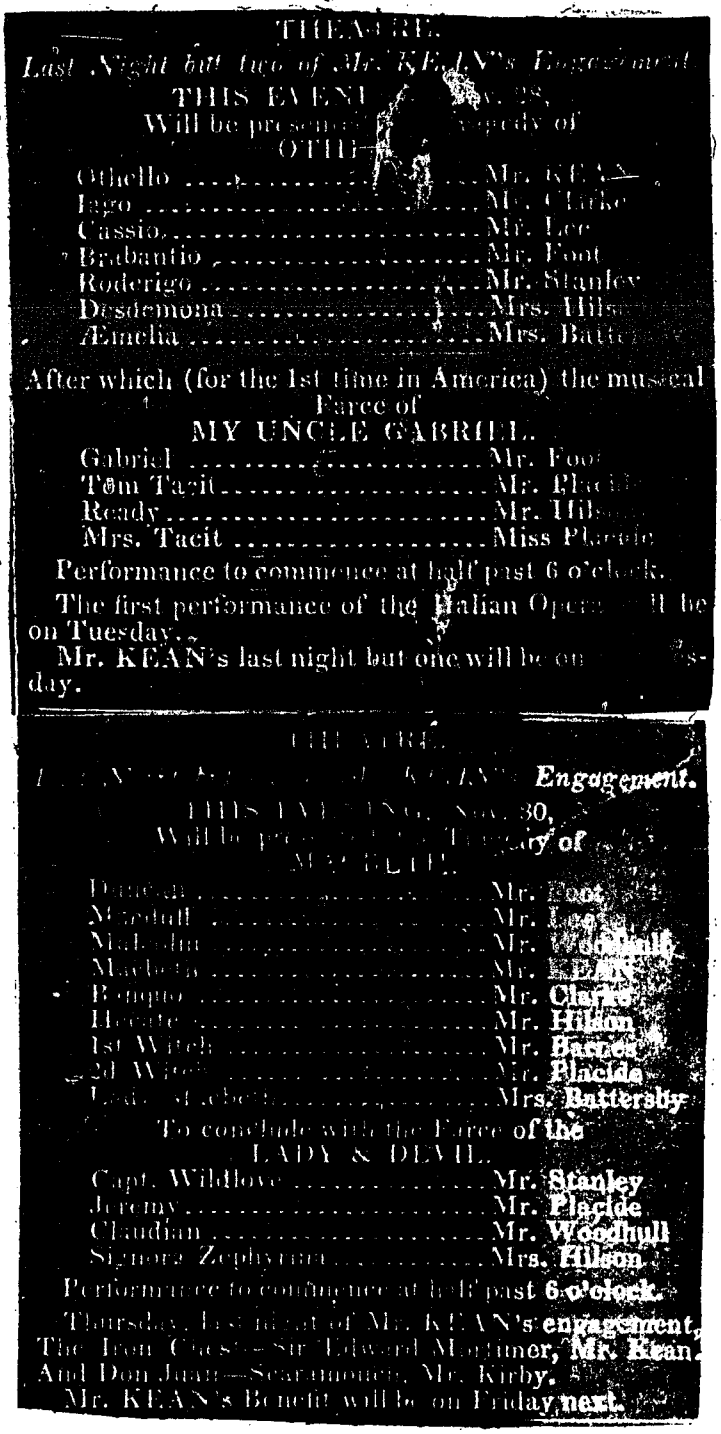
Macbeth on 30 November 1825, Sir Edward Mortimer in The Iron Chest on 1 December, and finally on 2 December 1825 his benefit performance as King Lear. Very little was written about these final performances. The Albion gave the following information:

> Mr. Kean has played during the week Othello, Macbeth, Sir Edward Mortimer in the Iron Chest, and last night [2 December] took his Benefit in King Lear. The houses have been uniformly attended, ladies comprising a large part of the audience, and last night [2 December] it was well filled to overflowing . . . indeed nothing can exceed the enthusiastic applause which he commands in every character he appears in.[134]

Although Snowden's Advocate did not publish a review of Kean's final appearance as Lear, the paper did present some observations about Kean's former appearance as Lear. The column particularly addressed those who had not previously had an "opportunity" to see Kean perform Lear:

> After having performed a number of his principal characters at the Park Theatre, Mr. Kean takes his benefit this evening in that of King Lear. . . . The style of his acting in this character is so familiar, so natural, and so full of the most pathetic touches, that a very child can enter into the illusion of the scene and weep over his misfortunes as if it were truth and reality. To give the younger members of a family, such as are approaching the state of manhood and womanhood, some notion of the depth of that affection which a fond doating father feels for them, not only will please them as a matter of taste, but is nearly allied to virtuous sensibility.--There is not another actor in the world whose tones, look and gestures are so fitted for the character of Lear as those of Mr. Kean. . . . That the house will be full to overflowing we have no doubt--the only thing we shall say is "get your seats as soon as possible."[135]

Kean's benefit performance attracted an "overflowing" audience, as reported in the 3 December 1825 issue of the New York Statesman:



THEATRE.

Last Night but two of Mr. KEAN's Engagement.

THIS EVENING, Nov. 28,
Will be presented Shakspeare's Tragedy of
OTHELLO.

Othello ..... Mr. KEAN
Iago ..... Mr. Clarke
Cassio ..... Mr. Lee
Brabantio ..... Mr. Foot
Roderigo ..... Mr. Stanley
Desdemona ..... Mrs. Hilson
Æmelia ..... Mrs. Batterby

After which (for the 1st time in America) the musical Farce of
MY UNCLE GABRIEL.

Gabriel ..... Mr. Foot
Tom Tacit ..... Mr. Placide
Ready ..... Mr. Hilson
Mrs. Tacit ..... Miss Placide

Performance to commence at half past 6 o'clock.

The first performance of the Italian Opera will be on Tuesday.

Mr. KEAN's last night but one will be on Wednesday.

THEATRE.

Last Night but two of Mr. KEAN's Engagement.

THIS EVENING, Nov. 30,
Will be presented Shakspeare's Tragedy of
MACBETH.

Duncan ..... Mr. Foot
Macduff ..... Mr. Lee
Malcolm ..... Mr. Woodhull
Macbeth ..... Mr. KEAN
Banquo ..... Mr. Clarke
Hecate ..... Mr. Hilson
1st Witch ..... Mr. Barrett
2d Witch ..... Mr. Placide
Lady Macbeth ..... Mrs. Batterby

To conclude with the Farce of the
LADY & DEVIL.

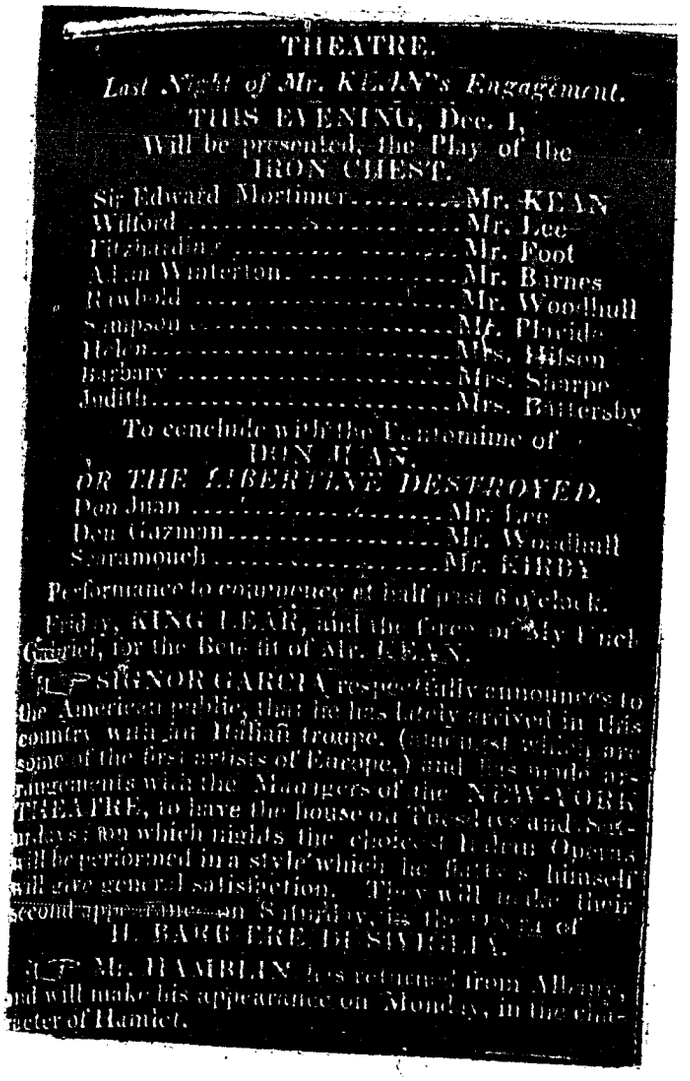
Capt. Wildlove ..... Mr. Stanley
Jeremy ..... Mr. Placide
Claudian ..... Mr. Woodhull
Signora Zephyrina ..... Mrs. Hilson

Performance to commence at half past 6 o'clock.

Thursday, last night of Mr. KEAN's engagement, The Iron Chest—Sir Edward Mortimer, Mr. Kean. And Don Juan—Scaramouch, Mr. Kirby.

Mr. KEAN's Benefit will be on Friday next.

Fig. 32. Othello and Macbeth advertisements from the New York American.



THEATRE.

Last Night of Mr. KEAN's Engagement.

THIS EVENING, Dec. 1,
Will be presented, the Play of the
IRON CHEST.

Sir Edward Mortimer.....Mr. KEAN
Wilford.....Mr. Lee
Fitzharding.....Mr. Foot
Allan Winterton.....Mr. Barnes
Rowbold.....Mr. Woodhull
Sampson.....Mr. Placide
Helen.....Mrs. Hilson
Barbary.....Mrs. Sharpe
Judith.....Mrs. Battersby

To conclude with the Pantomime of
DON JUAN,
OR THE LIBERTINE DESTROYED.

Don Juan.....Mr. Lee
Don Gazman.....Mr. Woodhull
Scaramouch.....Mr. KIRBY

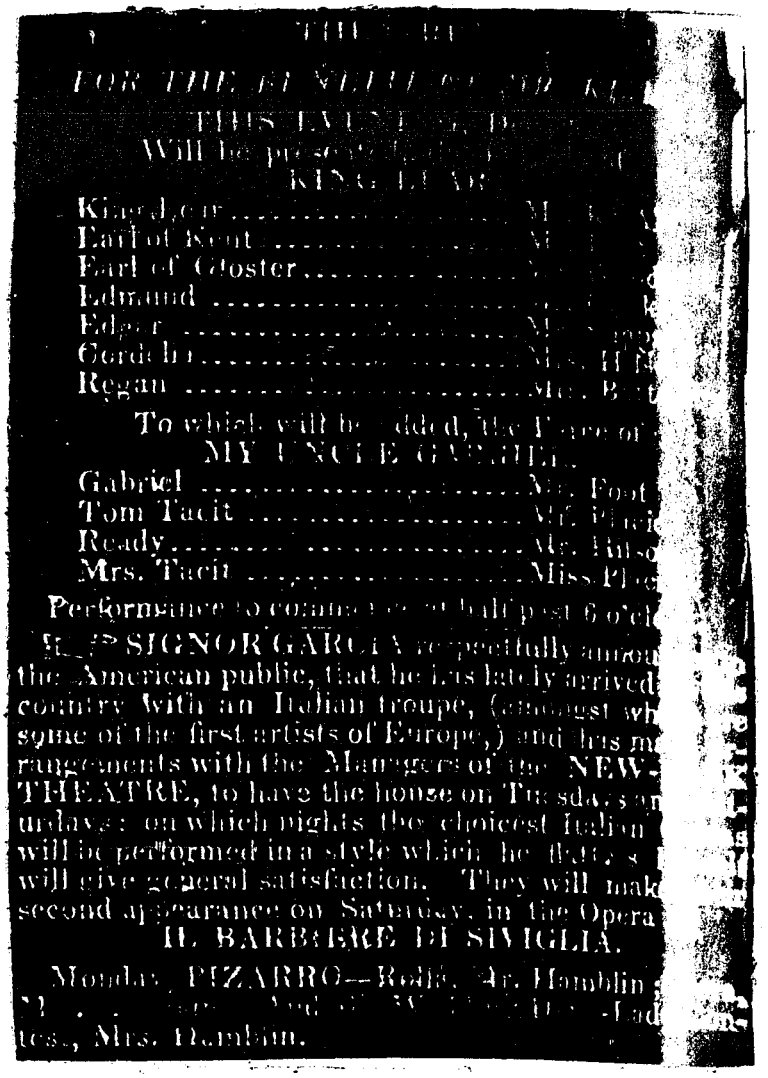
Performance to commence at half past 6 o'clock.

Friday, KING LEAR, and the Farce of My Uncle Gabriel, for the Benefit of Mr. KEAN.

☞ SIGNOR GARCIA respectfully announces to the American public, that he has lately arrived in this country with an Italian troupe, (amongst which are some of the first artists of Europe,) and has made arrangements with the Managers of the NEW-YORK THEATRE, to have the house on Tuesdays and Saturdays; on which nights the choice of Italian Operas will be performed in a style which he flatters himself will give general satisfaction. They will make their second appearance on Saturday, in the Opera of
IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA.

☞ Mr. HAMBLIN has returned from Albany, and will make his appearance on Monday, in the character of Hamlet.

Fig. 33. The Iron Chest advertisement from the New York American.



THIS EVENING
Will be presented
KING LEAR
King Lear ..... Mr. [illegible]
Earl of Kent ..... Mr. [illegible]
Earl of Gloster ..... Mr. [illegible]
Edmund ..... Mr. [illegible]
Edgar ..... Mr. [illegible]
Gordelia ..... Mrs. [illegible]
Regan ..... Mrs. [illegible]
To which will be added, the Farce of
MY UNCLE GABRIEL
Gabriel ..... Mr. Foot
Tom Tacit ..... Mr. [illegible]
Ready ..... Mr. [illegible]
Mrs. Tacit ..... Miss [illegible]
Performance to commence at half past 6 o'clock
SIGNOR GARCIA respectfully announces to the American public, that he has lately arrived in this country with an Italian troupe, (amongst which are some of the first artists of Europe,) and has made arrangements with the Managers of the NEW-YORK THEATRE, to have the house on Tuesdays and Saturdays on which nights the choicest Italian Operas will be performed in a style which he flatters himself will give general satisfaction. They will make their second appearance on Saturday, in the Opera of
IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA.
Monday, PIZARRO—Rolla, Mr. Hamblin [illegible] Cora, Mrs. Hamblin.

Fig. 34. King Lear advertisement from the New York American. Kean's farewell performance before leaving for Albany and Boston.

> Mr. Kean concluded his late engagement here by his benefit last night in King Lear, before a full and respectable house; and the performance, like the previous one in the same character, was true to the author and to nature. On the fall of the curtain, Mr. K. was called for, and after some minutes of rest from the fatigues of the evening, he appeared and made a handsome address to the audience, expressive of grateful feelings for the kindness with which he had been received.[136]

During Kean's farewell address to the New York audience, before his departure for Albany and Boston, he stressed the many kindnesses rendered him by the citizens of New York:

> LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,--In obedience to your honored commands I cheerfully present myself before you, and in pursuance of my sincere wishes I would solicit your indulgent acceptance of the humble tribute of my unfeigned gratitude and regard. There are periods, however, under peculiar circumstances, when language loses its power, and words but feebly express the emotions of the heart; I pray you will therefore bear with me on this occasion.
>
> When I landed in your hospitable city, almost a bankrupt in fortune and reputation--writhing under affliction, . . . the particulars of which might be painful, if not improper, for me here to enumerate, I was visited by mental stupor, from which I thought nothing on earth could ever arouse me--not even the clamour and opposition on the night I first had the honour to appear before you could move my faculties or subdue my fixed insensibility. Ambition seemed dead, and hope cast but a glimmering ray across the desolation of my soul, when, like my better angel, your kindness descending upon me, dispelled that lethargy, which, but a few hours before, I had devoutly prayed might attend me through all the changes of my mortal career.
>
> It is you, Ladies and Gentlemen, and your generous sympathies, that have restored me to myself and to society; and although my poor feelings may be unequal to the discharge of the enormous debt of gratitude I owe you, yet, trust me, there were dear friends and kindred spirits across the waters, who, when they shall hear of the obligation you have so tenderly imposed, will assist me in blessing you and your memories for ever. It were idle for me to assure you, that my heart is too full and too deeply sensible of

> your goodness and hospitality, to give adequate utterance to the sentiments it now entertains for you, and which, to its latest pulsation, shall be fondly cherished with the most fervent aspirations for your health and happiness.
>
> Ladies and Gentlemen, I must for a time bid you an affectionate farewell, and you will permit me to hope that, on my return from Boston, I may have the happiness and the honour of again appearing before you.[137]

The Columbian Centinel reported that "Kean's benefit in New York" amounted to $1600."[138]

From New York Kean journeyed to Albany to fulfill an engagement, before finally going on to Boston. His engagement at Albany was highly successful. An example of his enthusiastic reception is recorded in this review of his first performance on Monday, 5 December 1825:

> Long before 6 o'clock, the house was filled in every nook and corner. Loud calls were made in the pit to close the door, in consequence of the old crowd, and the call was obeyed. The second tier of boxes was so prepared that persons standing in the lobby (which was filled) could have a fair view of the stage.
>
> Previous to the raising of the curtain, the house was as still as could be expected in such an assemblage. One person (half seas over) in the pit, was very noisy, and was removed by the police officers, at the earnest call of the audience, who expressed their satisfaction at his removal by loud applause.
>
> On the ringing of the bell for the commencement of the play, the house observed profound silence, which continued until Kean's appearance, when there the [sic] most loud and deafening cheers.
>
> Throughout the play, the fine acting of this great tragedian, riveted the closest attention of the specators, and when the curtain fell, the cries of "Kean!, Kean!," resounded.[139]

At the close of the play, Kean was summoned to reappear on the stage; he then addressed the audience by saying that

> the American people had revived, resuscitated and invigorated the spirit of a poor heart broken man, and that it should be his greatest ambition to deserve and preserve their approbation; that he was then too much exhausted to speak more, but on some future occasion, he would more fully express the deep sense of gratitude he entertained towards the citizens of Albany for the very flattering manner in which they had welcomed him.[140]

On 7 December 1825 , the Commercial Advertiser published both the above statement and the following extract from the New York National Advocate's version of Kean's farewell address to the New York audience of 2 December 1825:

> What did he not owe to the New-York audience? Even that audience could not realize the extent of his obligation; for the winds of heaven would waft to congenial friends in the parent country, the consoling reception he had met with. Under the circumstances of such vital importance to him, he found it impossible to offer commensurate gratitude; and he would therefore only declare, with the deepest sincerity, that wherever destiny might direct him, or whatever might be the ultimatum of his career, the last pulsation of his heart would beat warmly for New-York.[141]

The Commercial Advertiser discredited both speeches for vacuous "pretty sayings" which will, no doubt, be "swallowed by the gulls," while Kean pockets the cash, and laughs "in his sleeve at the manner in which he bamboozles the American public."[142] According to the information submitted by an informant, the Commercial Advertiser claimed that Kean had been involved in a fracas while aboard the steamboat that sailed to Albany. Although unwilling to divulge the "two-fold" cause of the disturbance, the Advertiser nevertheless, alleged that Kean made some disparaging remarks about Americans:

> By the bye, "there was a pretty considerable sort of a row" on his [Kean's] account, on board of the steam boat on Saturday evening [3 December]; . . . had it not been for the prudence and good conduct of the captain, "the proud representative of Shakespeare's heroes," would have been tumbled from his berth, and roughly handled, if not put on shore. The captain was called to the cabin thrice to keep the peace; and he very properly declared, he cared nothing for about [sic] Kean; but, said he, he is a passenger, and no violence shall be offered him, nor shall he be taken from his berth. The cause of this disturbance, we understand to be two-fold--but delicacy forbids our stating both. It is understood, however, that forgetting his very grateful speech of the preceeding evening, and the one he was to make at Albany, he again spoke contemptuously of our country and citizens. One gentleman stated that he heard him in the course of his conversation, remark--"Well, I have apologized, it is true, but I don't care a d--n for the Yankees for all that!" Yet he will tell the gulls, with the "deepest sincerety," that "words are inadequate" to "express his gratitude," which will be felt to "the last pulsation of his heart"--and all that sort of thing. Truly he is an accomplished actor, and plays the Hypocrite better than he ever did Richard. But no matter. He finds there is no bounds to American gullibility.[143]

The two Advocates, Noah's and Snowden's, both circulated articles, disavowing the assertions made by the Commercial Advertiser on the 7.[144]

The Commercial Advertiser continued discussing this matter on 14 December 1825, because of "the indiscretions of Kean's particular friends," namely, the "two Advocates," the "Albany Daily Advertiser, and Albany Patriot," all of whom contradicted the Advertiser's allegations:

> One paper says the whole statement, "from beginning to end," was a tissue of falsehood,--Another says it was "uniquivocally false," &c. . . . after contradictions so positive, we thought it our duty to investigate the subject, with an intention, if we found ourselves in error, to make a prompt and honorable acknowledgment of it. We have done so; and the result is, that we distinctly, and unequivocally, and deliberately

> reaffirm every material fact that we stated as having occurred on board of the boat before. We shall fight no battles upon this subject; nor are we to be intimidated by anonymous letters, porter-house threats, and other means adopted to annoy us. But we challenge the friends of Kean to give us a legal opportunity to prove that the disturbance did take place on board of the boat, and that it was then and there publicly asserted, that Kean had again been insulting the American character.--A gentleman who went ashore at Newburgh, told our informant that such had been the tenor of his conversation, we believe upon deck. But it will be borne in mind that we only stated that such a story was circulated amidst the affray.--This we can prove, and thus establish every assertion that we have made. If others have done Kean injustice, we have not. We yet forbear to state the disgusting details of the transaction, and Mr. Kean will have cause to thank his friends, if we speak again about it. Surely vice stalks abroad upon stilts, while meek-eyed virtue scarce ventures to show her head.[145]

Sometime during Kean's Albany engagement, in December, he acted with the then rising American star Edwin Forrest. Although Forrest had seen Kean perform in Philadelphia in 1821, this was the very first time that both actors performed together. "Nothing could have been more fortunate for Forrest," said William Rounseville Alger, the first biographer of Forrest, "just at that time, than to watch such an actor [Kean] in his greatest parts and come into confidential contact with him. In playing Iago to his Othello, Titus to his Brutus, Richmond to his Richard, the best chance was afforded for this."[146]

On the day that Forrest was to perform Iago to Kean's Othello, he went to Kean's hotel to interview him about "any directions he might like to give for the

performance in the evening."[147] In response to his query, Kean said:

> My boy, I do not care how you come on or go off, while you are on the stage you always keep in front of me and let not your attention wander from me.[148]

According to Alger, Kean's Othello, which Alger considered his "unapproachable masterpiece," left

> its general stamp ineffaceable on the young actor who that night confronted it [Othello] with his Iago in such a manner as to win not only the vehement applause of the house but likewise the warm approval of the Othello himself.[149]

Forrest's delivery of "Look to your wife; observe well with Cassio; Wear your eye thus, not jealous,--not secure,"[150] was uttered

> in a frank and easy fashion; . . . he [Forrest] spoke the words nor secure in a husky tone, sliding down from a high pitch and ending in a whispered horror. The fearful suggestiveness of this produced from Kean a reaction so truly artistic and tremendous that the whole house was electrified.[151]

After the performance, both actors met in the dressing-room where it was reported that Kean exclaimed: "In the name of God, boy, where did you get that?"[152] Forrest replied: "It is something of my own."[153] "Well," said Kean, "everybody who speaks the part hereafter must do it just so."[154]

Forrest was so indelibly impressed with Kean's farewell address from Othello that "he did not fail to his dying day to speak of it with rapturous admiration."[155]

In a letter dated "Albany, Dec. 12," Kean wrote to his close actor friend, of the Park Theatre, John Foot,

about his anticipated four day engagement in Boston. Its contents are especially noteworthy for the candor in which Kean divulges his good intentions towards Boston--the city he sorely offended in 1821:

> Dear Foot,--I am delighted with this city [Albany], they have received me with enthusiasm; the most fashionable and moral have attended the theatre with an avidity exceeding my most sanguine expectations. I have some doubts of Boston. My friends have traced the overpowering gang, hired to assail me; but Audaces fortuna juvat, and I must redeem my pledge. I am determined to make the most submissive apology, and so much do I think it necessary to make the amende honorable to that city, that I am resolved not to benefit by them in any pecuniary way, but devote the whole profits of my engagement to the service of their charitable institutions. What news from the last packet? Does Drury conceive she can exist without talent? O Tempora! O Mores!
>
> Adieu for the present, Your sincere friend,
>
> Edmund Kean.
>
> P.S. Remember, dear Foot, do not mention to any one, my intentions towards Boston. It never must be said that Kean bought any portion of the public favour.[156]

In November, the New England Galaxy received some information from "a gentleman" who claimed that Kean "expressed a decided intention not to visit Boston." However, "if he should come," the Galaxy mockingly foretells what to expect:

> It he should come, we have never had but one opinion. Supposing him to attempt to play, we imagine he should first be greeted with hisses. A very slight . . . for running away would quiet a large portion of the disaffected. A few might continue their opposition, on account of his private character; but these would soon be overpowered and silenced. He would then proceed with his performances; he would be courted, caressed, and fondled by the same people who courted,

> caressed, and fondled him when he was here first. He would finish his engagement, and clear 800 or 1000 dollars at his benefit, and laugh, as well he might, at the guillibility of the fashionable fools--maugre all the scolding, canting, and boasting about purity of private chracter, and the immaculate moral sense of the "literary emporium!"[157]

When it was finally determined that Kean was coming to Boston, several papers tendered their opinion of Kean's anticipated apology:

> So Kean is determined to come to Boston. The eyes of our southern cities are turned hitherward with anxiety to know what will be his reception, and if a Bostonian would pass a day in New York, without being interrogated five hundred times on the subject, he must keep himself shut up in his chamber. Our belief is now, as it ever has been, that a gentlemanly apology, if such a vulgar fellow can make one,--for his running away will be sufficient to stop all riotous proceedings in our theatre, if any should be commenced. Those who like his acting would then be in quiet possession of the house, for most of those who dislike it would stay away.[158]

On 16 December 1825, the New England Galaxy said:

> We understand that Kean is expected to be in town next week. His appearance will doubtless cause some excitement, but we hope for the honour of our city that there will be no imitations of the New-York riot. Kean is probably prepared to say that he is sorry for having run away. He may perhaps, too, say that he is dejected, heartbroken, bankrupt in fame and fortune, and all that sort of thing--and that will satisfy the gulls. We hope he will make no allusion to his conduct in England, to his friends, for such things are neither here nor there. We shall be disappointed if he does not make literal professions of respect for the hospitality and kindness he has received from the Americans, and add [aside] that he wishes never to hear or think of America again. but we will not anticipate. A few days more and we expect to see his apology, and be pemitted to "examine the ingredients with philological accuracy."[159]

Kean arrived at Boston on Tuesday 20 December 1825,[160] the day before his scheduled performance as Richard III.

According to the Wednesday morning edition (21 December) of the Columbian Centinel, the "annunciation" of the appearance of Kean "in Richard" was greeted with "tokens of approbation and disapprobation" at the theatre on Monday evening (19 December),

> but in the opinion of our informants the approvers composed a decided majority of the House, particularly of the Boxes and pit. The House was one of the most crowded and fashionable of the season.--The box office was opened yesterday [20 December], and the avidity to obtain seats was similar to that of the former visits of this actor. An apology will be made; and we have entire confidence, that the deportment of our fellow citizens on this evening will be worthy of Bostonians.[161]

On the morning of the 21, Kean submitted a public apology to all the morning newspapers, including the Columbian Centinel, with the hope of placating Bostonians:

TO THE EDITOR

> Sir.--I take the liberty of informing the citizens of Boston, (through the medium of your Journal) of my arrival, in confidence that liberality and forebearance will gain the ascendancy over prejudice and cruelty: that I have erred I acknowledge:--that I have suffered for my loss of fame and fortune is too melancholy an illustration. Acting from the impulse of irritation I certainly was disrespectful to the Boston public; calm deliberation convinces me I was wrong:--the first step towards the Throne of Mercy, is confession--the hopes we are taught, forgiveness: man must not expect more than those attributes which we offer our God.[162]
>
> Edmund Kean

If Kean presumed that his conciliatory address was going to allay the indignation that some Bostonians felt towards him, he was mistaken.[163] On the evening of 21 December 1825, Kean was subjected to a most shameful riot.

"The appearance of this actor, last night, was accompanied by acts of disorder & violence hitherto unknown to our stage," said the Boston Evening Gazette on 22 December 1825 about Kean's futile attempt to appear on the Federal Theatre stage as Richard III.[164] Pandemonium prevented Kean from offering a verbal apology to the Boston audience for his unseemly conduct in 1821, and, moreover, from performing his favorite role. According to the Evening Gazette the "disorder & violence" was not only "disproportioned to the unworthy object of it," but "was produced by his [Kean's] behavior here some years ago, combined with a hostile feeling resulting from his misconduct in England since that period."[165] On the other hand, the Boston Courier believed that the riot was spurred by Kean's "insolent and blasphemous letter which was published in the morning, and of dissatisfaction with the course pursued by the managers," in permitting Kean to appear at the theatre.[166] Whatever the reason,[167] the disturbance shocked the populace of Boston and sent aftershocks to other cities contemplating Kean's appearance.

"On Tuesday [20 December], a non-play day, there was a great struggle for places at the Boston Office" to obtain seats for Kean's 21 December 1825 performance.[168] Presumably the avidity to secure tickets surpassed Kean's first appearance in Boston, because the Courier, on

22 December 1825, bewailed the mad rush to purchase tickets on the very morning of the performance:

> Contrary to our hopes and our expectations the Kean fever arose yesterday morning to a pretty high state of excitement. A crowd assembled round the ticket office at the theatre at an early hour, and a scene of confusion and uproar ensued that has seldom had a parallel in our sober city. Some persons literally travelled over the heads of others to approach the aperture where tickets were to be procured, and a few of them returned without the loss of coats and hats, and some we saw whose shirts indicated very unceremonius usage. Two weeks ago, we did not believe that our managers would have been guilty of so much public contempt for public opinion, and so much disregard to public decency as to permit Kean to play on their stage; but we found ourselves deceived. Four days ago, we did not believe that so worthless a fellow, such a double faced beggar for a "asylum in which to end his professional and mortal career," would have consequence enough to raise so much feeling on his account. It is gratifying to perceive that there is but one sentiment among the respectable people of the city in regard to this business; and that is, that the managers are altogether wrong in suffering Kean to attempt to appear on the stage.[169]

After "all the tickets were sold" the crowd continued to assemble "round the doors of the theatre" in anticipation of the opening of the theatre.[170] According to the Columbian Centinel:

> As soon as the doors were opened, at 5 o'clock, the House began to fill, and long before the usual time of the commencement of the play (6 o'clock) the whole audience part, from bottom to top was thronged with males, without a single exception.[171]

Shortly after the crowd had taken seats the commotion began:

> Upon the appearance of Mr. Finn, (the manager), in front of the Curtain, he was received with such uproar, chiefly from the gallery and the third row,[172] that it was impossible to hear him.--He was supposed to announce Mr. Kean's intention to make an

> apology, as he appeared immediately afterwards upon the stage dressed in his every day clothes, and in a very penitent and humble manner seemed to ask forgiveness of the publick--and to be desirous of making atonement by an apology.--But the wild commotion of the Theatrical elements, so completely astonished him that he said not a word. He was pale and dejected, but was assailed by cries of--off--off--pelted with nuts, pieces of cake, a bottle of offensive drugs and other missiles. He was encouraged also with cries of--"silence"--"hear Kean,&c. Having been fairly pelted from the stage, Mr. Kilner came forward and amidst the din was heard to say "Mr. Kean wishes to make an apology--a humble apology from his heart and soul, but he will not do it at the risk of his life." Amidst the storm of opposition, some encouragement was given by individuals that his apology might be heard; and he made his second appearance. No intermission of the uproar took place and he retired to the green room, where it was said he wept like a child--and soon after left the theatre.[173]

After Kean had left the stage, the uproar continued "for some time" with cries of "Kean or no play."[174] Kilner then braved the storm once again by coming

> forward with a large telegraphic placard, announcing on one side, Mr. Kean declines playing;--and on the other, "Shall the play go on without him? Here the noise was, if possible, increased: and amidst the shouts of "Yes," "No," "Kean or no play," "Go on," vociferated from the lungs which appeared to have acquired fresh strength from practice, the Manager retired with the belief, that the Ayes had it. While the new arrangements were making to go on with the play tranquility was apparently restored, and many persons left the house.

But,

> The raising of the curtain was the signal for the renewal of the storm, now increased with "cat calls," and the whole of the first act was exhibited in dumb show, with scarcely a sentence being audible to those nearest the stage. When Mr. Finn, as Richard, appeared, the cries of "Off," "Kean or no play," "No play." &c, were so much increased, that at the close of the first scene of the second act, the green curtain was lowered; and the play ended. Huzzas were given by one part, but loud cries of "Kean"

> continuing, Mr. Finn came forward and announced, that Mr. K. had left the theatre. Notwithstanding the uproar, there were no indications in any part of the house, to committ [sic] a riot or destroy property.[175]

That the audience was determined not to "committ a riot" was confirmed by a statement in the Boston Daily Advertiser:

> We learn from various quarters, that the audience, if it may be so denominated, that is, the persons regularly admitted, manifested no disposition either before Mr. Kean left the house, or after, to commit any act of violence to the property of the theatre.--Their purpose was to prevent Mr. Kean from playing, and of many of them, no doubt, to prevent any play from going on.[176]

Although the audience may not have been disposed to riot, a raging mob outside the theatre was. Throughout the evening the mob outside the theatre had made several unsuccessful attempts to break into the house:

> the doors of the theatre were beset by a riotous mob, who from time to time repelled with force the resistance made upon the inside to prevent their entrance, and several erruptions of ten to twenty individuals were made against all efforts to prevent them.[177]

Unfortunately, however, as soon as the curtain had dropped on Richard III, the mob, undaunted by their previous failure to enter the theatre, finally succeeded in breaking in--"most of them attracted by curiosity and many determined upon a row."[178] The Evening Gazette reported that

> the mob without had been excited to a phrenzy, and made several assaults upon the house--and the audience within began to think, not so much of Kean as of their own preservations from danger. The rabble began to assail the lamps, the windows and the entrances to the

> Boxes, Gallery and Pit. A large party succeeded in making a lodgement in the lower Box lobbies after having been repulsed. The few peace officers present, were soon overpowered, but the gentlemen of the boxes maintained their ground manfully for some time. Mr. Kean having left the house it was difficult to devine [sic] the objects of the assailants. The occupants of the pit made a retreat by the stage over the Orchestra.--The rabble without aided by friends within were finally enabled to take possession, and they had it all their own way--most of the occupants of the boxes having made their escape, by the windows, or over the stage. Windows, chandeliers--seats, box doors became the objects of wanton destruction; but several citizens who took possession of the stage protected the scenery, at the hazard of life and limb, from molestation and perhaps from fire.
>
> During the riot Mr. Justice Whitman read the riot act twice, advanced to the front of the stage, and attempted to address the rioters, but without effect, as he was unable to carry into execution the provisions of the law from the small number of civil and police officers collected. Those who were present, with the sheriff, aided by the citizens, excited themselves to prevent the rioters from entering the house, and to arrest those who were in it, but with little success; and several in the discharge of this duty were injured by the stones and other missiles hurled from the darkness, but none materially. A few citizens with a magistrate, in execution of the law, proceeded to the upper parts of the House, and immediately dispersed a gang there engaged in the destruction; which was found to consist principally of unknown strangers and mischievous boys.[179]

The confusion within the house apparently continued until near "eleven o'clock" when "the house appeared to be nearly cleared."[180] However, "after the work of mischief was over . . . the street was not tranquil til 12 or 1 o'clock."[181]

Regarding the damage to the theatre, there are varying opinions. The New England Palladium reported that the "damage done to the theatre is estimated at from 1000 to 1500 dollars;"[182] whereas, the Independent Chronicle

and Boston Patriot stated that "the amount of injury to the theatre and its appurtenances does not probably exceed five hundred dollars."[183] The Patriot's assessment of the damages concurs with reports given in other papers. The Boston Columbian Centinel claimed that "the loss of property from this disgraceful scene, has not probably been so great as reported, but will fall heavy on the lessees, of which Mrs. Powell will be the largest sufferer."[184] And the Boston Daily Advertiser likewise believed the "destruction of windows, lamps and benches, . . . will probably be repaired at an expensse of a few hundred dollars--a sum much less than the receipts of the evening."[185] The most detailed account of the destruction to the theatre was submitted to the editor of the Boston Courier by a writer called "A.B." The writer disclaims the "highly magnified" reports published in other papers:

> The statements in the papers respecting the late disturbance at the theatre, are highly magnified. They express rather the fears or apprehensions, and perhaps in some cases, the wishes of the relators, than the strict truth. The writer of this, examined the interior of the Theatre throughout, on the morning following the disturbance. The depredations are merely as follows: The doors of the lower tier of boxes, in the south side only are torn off and broken; most of the seats in the front portion of the third row are taken up, and thrown into the pit. A few of the seats in the pit are a little shattered at the edges. The stoves are overturned, and part of the funnels have fallen with them. The lamp with which the Theatre was lighted, are missing. Whether they were thoroughly destroyed, or have been since removed, I cannot say. the iron railing of the lower boxes and third row, is torn off. The lower windows on the south side are broken. This is all the perceptible

> injury done to the interior. On the outside, the box and third row of doors are broken in front, and the glass in the back window of the theatre is shattered. The doors and window shutters on the south side were, I am told taken down; but they were all up the next morning, and appeared uninjured. The whole damage, exclusive of the lamps, may be repaired at a very trifling expense. The commiseration expressed for the managers and lessees, is perhaps a little untimed; as it is well known that they were warned of the consequences, both by friendly individuals, and by the public authorities. If they were determined to persist, in defiance of public opinion most decidedly expressed, they have no right to complaint of the result.[186]

If the managers had no right "to complain of the result," they nonetheless published "A Card" on 24 December announcing their intent to prosecute the offenders. The "Card," however, begins with praise for the "gentlemen" who valiantly defended and protected the scenery on the stage during the fracas:

> The Managers of the Boston Theatre, return their sincere and thankful gratitude, to those gentlemen, who, at the personal risk of their lives, so kindly and so promptly afforded protection to their property, behind the curtain, from the violence and illegal attacks of a mob, that forcibly entered the Theatre on Wednesday evening last, and committed an unprecedented outrage, by breaking the Chandeliers, Lamp, Box doors, Windows, &c. and destroying other property to a large amount. Legal measures have been taken to bring the offenders to punishment. In the mean time every exertion will be used to repair the extensive damage, and they hope they shall be enabled to announce the re-opening of the Theatre on Christmas Monday, Dec. 26th, with the domestic tragedy of George Barnwell.[187]

As anticipated, the managers "were able to accomplish the task of re-fitting the theatre; and on Monday evening, the moral play of 'George Barnwell,' with 'Rumfustian,' and the 'Forty Thieves,' were produced to a good house."[188]

On 31 December 1825, the New York Globe and Emerald published an article which explained why Kean went to Boston (in spite of the dangers), cited the life threatening situation Kean faced during and after the riot, criticized the unwillingness of the Mayor of Boston to intercede on behalf of the managers to quell the riot, and stated that the riots both in Boston and in New York were carefully organized and constituted a plot to destroy Kean. This last statement is significant since it implicates Buckingham, the editor of the Boston Courier and the New England Galaxy, who parallels Stone, the editor of New York's Commercial Advertiser:

> It is not probably known to our readers that Mr. Kean went to Boston at the suggestion of a gentleman of that city, who possesses influence and wealth, and at the solicitation of the managers of the Boston theatre, who communicated with him immediately after the publication of his address to the citizens of New York. He hesitated, because he was well aware that the irreconcilable rancour of certain individuals, for private reasons, could operate more efficiently in Boston than in any other city of the Union; and that though the same opposition, from the same party, had been mortified and defeated here, it would succeed in the literary emporium. This he always feared, but he imagined he could overcome the ungenerous prejudice, and he did go to Boston. Immediately after his arrival, the reader is aware that he published an address to the Boston people, which, if it is not remarkable for language too submissive and complimentary, is not remarkable for anything else. Confident that this address would propitiate the goodwill, if not the affections, of his former adversaries he appeared before the audience in citizen's clothes on the evening of Wednesday last. But it was then, ferocity unparalleled in the history of civilization commenced the yell of destruction. Missiles, brass balls, potatoes, bottles containing asafoetida, apples, negro gingerbread, were thrown in showers on stage.

As noted above, after the managers had ushered Kean from the stage, following his two unsuccessful attempts to make an apology, it was decided that the play go on without him. However, after the completion of the first act, the tumult was such that the managers prudently discontinued the performance and

> Mr. Kean was hurried by his friends from his dressing room to a house contiguous to the theatre, belonging to one of the performers, whose name is Clarke.[189] The stage was invaded, and the blood-hounds cried out for him, threatening his life, and exhibiting the most determined ferocity, avowing their intentions to murder him.

It was then that the mayor was sent for, but he

> refused to attend, saying that the theatre was a place of public amusement, and as the managers made the bed, so they must lie on it. Most righteous, and moral, and benevolent magistrate! Procrustes, the tyrant of antiquity, forced his victims to conform themselves to the bed he had prepared for them--if they were too short, he stretched them; and if too long, he shortned them by the head; but it doubtless never occurred to this most worshipful magistrate that he tacitly encouraged not only the filling of the beds with active victims, but that he was making a bed of thorns for a widowed mother--we mean the lessee of the theatre, Mrs. Powell; . . . but benevolence, moral purity, and Christian charity, (much abused terms!) would not permit the chief magistrate of the Literary Emporium to interfere to prevent the commission of these trifling peccadilloes, considered as such when acted within the walls of a theatre! But let all this pass for the present. By applying ladders to the windows, and forcing other entrances, thousands by this time had succeeded in storming the house, and rushing into the interior of the theatre; they immediately commenced the work of desolation. Loud yells were now made for Kean! Kean! . . . So determined did the workers of mischief appear in their task of destruction, that the proprietor of the Exchange Coffee-house sent to Mr. Kean, begging of him to remain where he was, saying his house would be in danger, as well as Mr. Kean's life, if he returned to his lodgings. At two o'clock in the morning, however, Mr. Kean did go to the hotel from his retirement,

> which he had left but a short time, when a party of ruffians came to it demanding that Mr. Kean should be delivered to them, and on being assured that he was not there, they went to the theatre and knocked at the stage-door, when they were informed that he had left the house several hours. One of the ruffians, who appeared to be the organ of the other bloodhounds, exclaimed, on receiving this information, "Oh! by Jesus, we have missed him!" The inhuman monsters! We repeat, can the history of persecution, can Gothic annals, can African barbarity furnish an instance of such cruelty?

The following morning,

> subsequent to the riot, Mr. Kean was compelled, by severe indisposition, probably by the effects of disappointment and dispair, to confine himself to his room. At 11 o'clock, however, the proprietor of this Exchange Coffee-house waited on Mr. Kean, and informed him that the house, the property, and his own life, were in danger as long as he remained there, and entreated him to take his departure immediately. Thus was he, who was once the pride and ornament of his country, the friend and favourite of Byron, Sheridan, and Maturin, denied a shelter by his host, and driven, like a detested outcast, from the city of Boston, in the United States of America. The hunted victim, expecting the immediate ransacking of the house, and unwilling to be the cause of suffering to any man, instantly, in as private a manner as possible, ordered a hackney-coach. He entered this vehicle through a private door from the hotel, and was driven six miles out of town, where a stage had been ordered in another's name, to meet him for his exclusive accomodation, in order to convey him in safety to New York. Colonel Hamilton, of the Exchange Coffee-house, who has, throughout the entire business, acted, though perhaps too cautiously, like a humane and worthy man, struck out an unfrequented route where Mr. Kean would have a better chance of escaping the fury of his pursuers.[190] This plan was adopted, and he arrived, fatigued, nerveless, and dejected, in this city on Sunday morning [25 December] at half past 6 o'clock. When we heard of his arrival, we immediately waited on him, and we declare, on our sacred honour, that we scarcely knew the man.

Our spirited writer concluded his discourse with some information that attributes the two riots to a conspiracy:

> But death, a cruel death, was, as we have proved, the object of his sanguinary persecutors. It was not sufficient to hiss him, to revile him, to refuse to hear his apology, but they hunted for his blood. This, incredible as it may appear, was the result of an extensive and well-organized conspiracy. We are now about to mention a name which we have had reason to abhor and condemn, without exception, from the first moment we heard it mentioned to the present period. The being who bears this very queer name, is of all other men on this continent perhaps the lowest of the low, always save and excepting Stone [editor of the Commercial Advertiser] of this city. But the latter creature is too far beyond the pale even to consider him an exception. The former is now the subject of animadversion. This fellow, who is now called Buckingham [the editor of the Boston Courier and New England Galaxy], but whose real name is Tinker, was desirous of being introduced to Kean when he was last in this country. Having heard the character of the man, Kean declined an introduction to him, and this was the cause of the first night's opposition in this city [New York], where the conspiracy was first organized, and where it was, though defeated, carried the increased venom to the city of the north.[191]

Soon after Kean's arrival in New York, he performed King Lear for Mrs. Hilson's benefit on 4 January 1826. The New York Evening Post recorded the following about the performance:

> The Theatre, last night, in honour of Mrs. Hilson's benefit, and by way of showing the manner in which the New York audience would receive Mr. Kean, was crowded in every part, from the pit to the gallery; ladies occupied the usual share of both the first and second tier of boxes. He was loudly and flatteringly received by every part of the house, with cries of "Bravo Kean!" When the old and decrepit Lear uttered the exclamation "I am a man more sinned against than sinning," the whole house showed they applied the line at once, and a peal of applause burst from all parts, which was repeated a second time, and long continued. He was called for at the close, and he came forward and made an address to the audience, thanking them for the kindness they had shown him, and declaring it had made an indelible impression on his heart that no time could ever efface. But he spoke so low, that we heard him very indistinctly.[192]

Kean had earlier made arrangements to fulfill a twelve night engagement in Philadelphia, to begin on the 11 of January, under the management of William B. Wood. However, because of the proceedings in Boston, Wood wrote to Kean advising him to defer his engagement until all "threatened opposition"[193] to him had subsided in Philadelphia. Wood communicated with Kean a second time--telling him that it now appeared safe for him to fulfill his engagement:

> A gentleman who left the Theatre last evening, about 10 o'clock, has given us the following account of what took place in reference to the anticipated engagement of Mr. Kean:--The theatre, last night, was perhaps a scene of as much confusion as we ever witnessed in Philadelphia. The comedy of Charles the Second passed off without interruption, but the moment the curtain dropped the calls for "Kean, Kean," became deafening, and continued the whole interval, till the curtain rose for the Lady of the Lake: the noise was then renewed with redoubled violence, till at length Mr. Wood came forward, and amidst many interruptions stated in effect that he was quite uncertain as to the determination of Mr. Kean; and that he had written to him during the effervescence of feeling occasioned by the Boston proceedings stating that he had better delay the fulfillment of his engagement, and that he (Mr. Kean) had done so; but that since the feeling had subsided, he had written again, telling him that it would be perfectly safe that he should come hither. To this no answer had been returned. He had no power of compelling Mr. Kean to appear before them, but he wished for his appearance, and had no doubt the Philadelphia public would accept of him as a great actor, without reference to his personal failings, whatever they may have been. The piece then proceeding with occasional interruptions till the end of the second act, when the call through the house for Mr. Wood, and Mr. Mortimer, became general. After much delay, a gentleman whom we supposed to be Mr. Mortimer came forward to the front of the boxes, and made a motion to speak. He began by stating that he was forced forward very much against his inclination, but that he had determined not to speak at all until Mr. Wood was on the stage to hear him, (we forgot to

> say that the speaker had before expressed this determination, and that when he carried his intentions into effect, Mr. Wood was just below him, and appeared to listen to him without attention): he continued--It is due to those who deputed me to go to New York to see Mr. Kean, as well as to the managers, that I should state the result of my mission. Mr. Kean told me that he had received a letter from Mr. Wood (which he showed to me), in which Mr. Wood gave it as his opinion, that Mr. Kean's coming to Philadelphia to fulfill his engagement would probably endanger his personal safety or his life. Mr. Kean was not prepared to encounter a repetition of the proceedings that had disgraced another city, and after consulting with his friends, determined to relinquish his engagement altogether, which he did, "for why," said he, "shall I again encounter those who may assassinate me?" (Some dissatisfaction was here expressed.)
>
> The speaker continued--"Ladies and gentlemen, this was not the opinion which Mr. Kean had formed of you, but it is an opinion which any man would have been justified in forming, from the contents of the letter to which I allude.
>
> Mr. Kean thinks better of a Philadelphia public, and though he cannot perform his original engagement of appearing here twelve nights, yet I believe, were he assured of the kind intentions you have manifested towards him, now and on former occasions, he would yet appear before this audience for a short period. The speaker sat down amidst applause, and we hastily left the theatre, to give this imperfect and short account of the proceedings, without being able to say what followed them.[194]

Evidently convinced by Wood's second letter and comforted by the presence of the "military reserve" to provide him with "civil protection,"[195] Kean fulfilled his twelve night engagement--beginning with Richard III on 18 January 1826. Except for some minor opposition during the first performance, the balance of the engagement was highly successful and free of violence. Walsh, the editor of Philadelphia's National Gazette and an avowed opponent of Kean, was probably dismayed by Kean's resounding success, since he had predicted on 17 November 1825 that

the Philadelphia audience "would not generally attend the theatre" to see Kean.[196] About Kean's first performance on 18 January 1826, the Philadelphia Aurora said:

> At an early hour last evening the theatre was filled to overflowing, to witness the first appearance of Mr. Kean, who played the character of Richard the Third. As we anticipated, an attempt was made to interrupt the performance, but the number that assembled for this purpose was insignificant, compared with the bulk of a highly respectable audience, assembled for the purpose of enjoying the performance. When the curtain rose, the opposition commenced; and upon the entrance of Mr. Kean, the uproar increased; Mr. Kean attempted to address the audience, but the attempt was fruitless; upon which, the part of the audience that wished the play proceed, simultaneously rose, and cheered the actor, which satisfied all present, that the opposition to Mr. Kean was comparatively nothing.
>
> Mr. Kean now proceeded in the play, and opponents became less troublesome towards the conclusion of the second act. Still, however, the few who came for the purpose of evincing their disapprobation to Mr. Kean's playing, were noisy enough to destroy the pleasure for the rest of the audience; we observed, the considerable share of the noise proceeded from the gallery [as in New York and Boston]. The conduct of the audience was rigidly decorous; and the malcontents confined their disapprobation to hisses, which were few and scattered.[197]

Accounts in other Philadelphia newspapers do not materially differ from the above. As expected, Walsh's National Gazette did not write a word upon the subject--doubtless irked by Kean's unexpected success. At the conclusion of his second performance on 19 January 1826 as Macbeth, Kean, as in New York, was permitted to address the audience:

> I intended to address you last evening, but was prevailed on to proceed with my part, rather than give utterance to the feelings of gratitude, which you then created in my bosom. Friends who take an interest in my welfare assure me that the most unfounded stories

> have been circulated, with a view to prejudice you against me. For my past errors, the most implacable, I should suppose, would be satisfied that I have suffered sufficient punishment. The inhabitants of this city, I am totally unconscious of ever having offended--But if I have unconsciously done so, I most sincerely regret it. I have always borne towards this city, the kindest feelings, and the events of last night, will impress still deeper upon my heart, the respect and gratitude, which it shall be the study and pride of my life to manifest.[198]

Wood provided the following receipts for Kean's engagement:[199]

Richard	$1165
Macbeth	$650
King Lear	$751
Iron Chest	$642
Town and Country	$570
Merchant of Venice	$786
A New Way to Pay Old Debts	$720
Richard, for benefit	$1254
Othello	$941
Brutus	$636
Othello	$501
Hamlet	$574

With the absence of available figures for Kean's performances in New York, the above receipts "perhaps" provide a fair sample of what Kean may have earned in New York. After the Philadelphia engagement, Kean returned to New York for his second engagement.

CHAPTER XII

THE FINAL ENGAGEMENTS

From Philadelphia Kean returned to New York for his second engagement at the Park Theatre. He opened on 6 February 1826 with Richard III. Kean shared the stage with the universally celebrated Garcia Opera Company, alternating with the Garcias throughout the month.[1] The Garcias performed Rossini's Otello one night (February 7), with Kean performing Shakespeare's Othello the next (February 8).

For the first time since his return to America, Kean was beset with illness, which momentarily interrupted his February engagement, and would later affect others. The press occasionally remarked about Kean's health. Regrettably, Kean's ill-health depleted his extraordinary energy during some of his later performances.

As before, very few papers reviewed Kean's performances in February, with the exception of his opening performance, which received the most responses from the press. Thenceforth, little was written.

On 6 February 1826 Kean's Richard was supported by Mrs. Hilson's Lady Ann, Mr. Foot's King Henry, Mr. Woodhull's Duke Buckingham, Mr. Lee's Earl of Richmond, and Mrs. Battersby's Queen Elizabeth. Richard was followed by the farce The Sleepwalker.[2]

According to the written accounts, Kean's Richard "was received with loud applause and cheering,"[3] and attracted overflowing audiences:

> Last evening Mr. Kean appeared in the character of Richard the third to an extremely crowded audience.--There were probably over $1600 in the house. The pit and two tiers of boxes were a complete jam. He was received with much applause, and played with more than usual spirit and effect. A very considerable number of ladies appeared in the first circle, and also in the second.[4]

The "crowded" house and, especially, the attendance of ladies in great numbers shows that the opposition that Kean had aroused had about run its course. In an uncharacteristic departure from former policy,[5] the New York Evening Post published a review on 7 February 1826, penned by "Sardanapalus," apprising the public of the large number of respectable ladies now attending the theatre:

> Mr. Kean last night commenced his engagement in the character of Richard, which he played to an overflowing house. It was literally crowded from top to bottom. We were gratified to see so large a number of ladies present, many of whom were of the first respectability and fashion.[6]

The New York American's account differed with the reports of the Advocate and Post respecting the increased attendance of ladies at Kean's first performance:

> Last night the Theatre was filled to overflowing

> by the attraction of Mr. Kean in Richard III. There were but few ladies present in proportion to the number of the audience.[7]

On two consecutive nights in February, the seventh and eighth, New Yorkers were entertained with the unusual experience of having the Garcia Opera Troupe perform Otello one evening, and Kean performing Othello the following evening:

> The lover of the drama have a rare treat now offered in the successive performances of the Italian Opera Otello this evening [7 February], and the English tragedy Othello to-morrow. The principal character in each is to be presented, the former by Garcia, and the latter by Kean; thus affording an opportunity of comparing the two histrionic rivals in their favorite characters. Garcia is said to be the first operatic Otello in Europe, but the high praise does not necessarily exclude Kean from being the first tragic Othello in the world.[8]

The cast for the February 7 performance of the opera, "Rossini's Otello staged for the first time in America,"[9] included Signor Garcia as Otello, Signorina Garcia (also, known as Mme. Malibran) as Desdemona, Signorina Garcia as Emilia, Madame Barbieri as Roderigo, Signore Garcia Jr. as Iago, Agrisini as Elmiro, and Grivelli as the Doge.[10]

On 8 February 1826 the New York American gave a detailed review of the performance, which includes the mention of an historic meeting between Garcia and Kean after the second act:

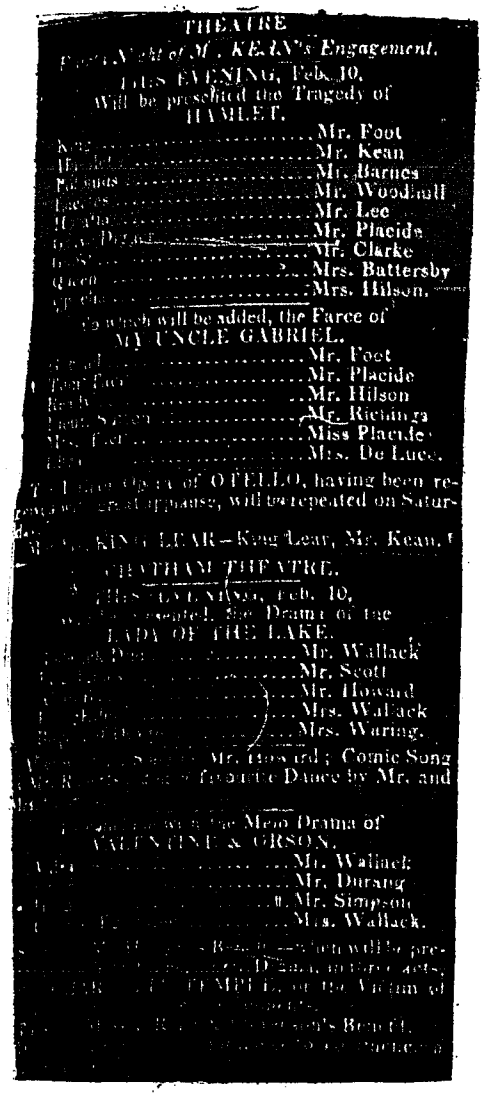
> The opera of Otello, scarcely inferior in effect to its great original, was last evening for the first time presented to the public. The house was not full; not so full as it should have been, after much allowance for the inclemency of the night. . . . The

> part of Desdemona was supported admirably well by Signorina Garcia, who evidenced as an actress powers scarcely inferior to her excellence as a singer. There was in her demeanour a combination of dignity and grace, and when proper, a pathos in her expression most happily adapted to the character, which she represented with more effect than we have ever witnessed. Garcia performed Otello in a style far exceeding our expectations, high as his reputation in the character has long been abroad; and we have no hesitation in pronouncing him, with due allowance for the medium through which he expresses the passions of the part, the best representative of the Moore that we have ever seen. . . . Angrisani fully sustained the reputation he has acquired; and Madame Barbieri supported the difficult part of Roderigo in a manner even exceeding the expectations of her warmest admirers. . . . Indeed the acting was throughout good, and the whole troupe in good voice; and what we may add to their praise, they evinced no want of spirit, or in any way indicated, . . . a sense that their talents and exertions were not repaid by the support which they richly merit.

Following complimentary remarks about the orchestra, and unflattering comments about the chorus, the reviewer closes with a passage about the historic encounter between Garcia and Kean:

> We shall close these observations with a fact which has just been communicated to us. After the 2d act, when Garcia left the stage, he was accosted by Mr. Kean, who introduced himself as he said, for the satisfaction of expressing his admiration at the excellent manner in which the part of Othello had been represented, and of complimenting the artist who had so well delineated a most difficult character. The reply was, that the approbation of so distinguished a master in his art was the most satisfactory tribute and the most pleasing recompence that could be paid.[11]

On February 8 Kean followed Garcia's Othello with his own. The lack of reviews of his performance renders comparisons impossible. It is probable that the known excellence of Kean's Othello precluded such mention. Kean



THEATRE
Night of Mr. KEAN's Engagement.
THIS EVENING, Feb. 10,
Will be presented the Tragedy of
HAMLET.
.....Mr. Foot
.....Mr. Kean
.....Mr. Barnes
.....Mr. Woodhull
.....Mr. Lee
.....Mr. Placide
.....Mr. Clarke
.....Mrs. Battersby
.....Mrs. Hilson.
To which will be added, the Farce of
MY UNCLE GABRIEL.
.....Mr. Foot
.....Mr. Placide
.....Mr. Hilson
.....Miss Placide
.....Mrs. De Luce.
...of OTELLO, having been re-
...repeated on Satur-
KING LEAR—King Lear, Mr. Kean.
CHATHAM THEATRE.
THIS EVENING, Feb. 10,
...the Drama of the
LADY OF THE LAKE.
.....Mr. Wallack
.....Mr. Scott
.....Mr. Howard
.....Mrs. Wallack
.....Mrs. Waring.
...Mr. Howard; Comic Song
...Dance by Mr. and
...the New Drama of
VALENTINE & ORSON.
.....Mr. Wallack
.....Mr. Durang
.....Mr. Simpson
.....Mrs. Wallack.
...will be pre-
...acts,
...the Victim of
...Benefit.

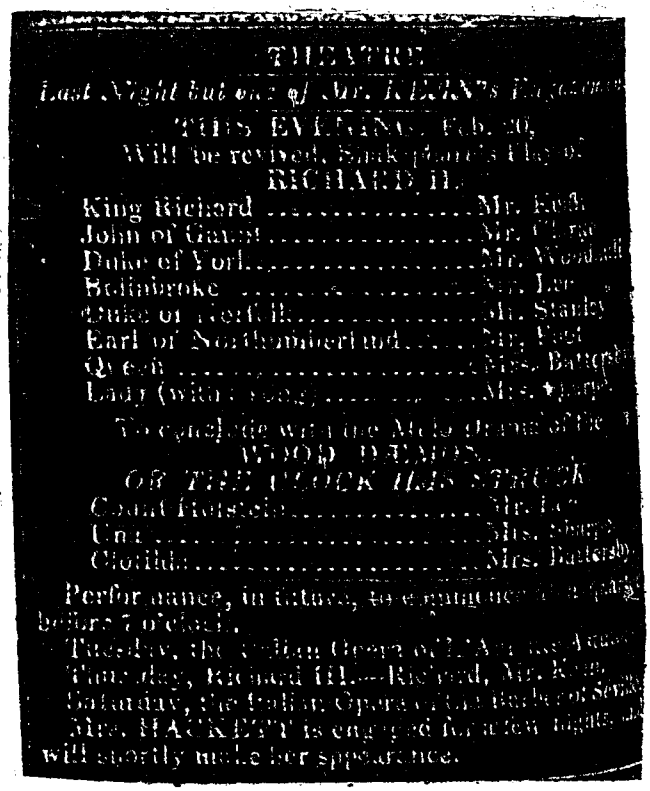
Fig. 35. Hamlet and Lady of the Lake advertisement from the New York American. Kean performed Hamlet at the Park Theatre, while Wallack performed Roderick Dhu in Lady of the Lake at the Chatham Theatre.

played the role of Sir Giles Overreach, in Massinger's A New Way to Pay Old Debts, on 9 February 1826. As with Othello, reviews are not available.

There is some material, however, about Kean's next two performances in Snowden's National Advocate. Kean played Hamlet on February 10 to the Ophelia of Mrs. Hilson. While Kean was performing at the Park Theatre, Wallack was playing at the Chatham Theatre.

The Advocate's account of Kean's Hamlet appears in its February 14 edition and concerns Kean's overall approach to the conception and performance of Hamlet:

> Of all the characters drawn by the powerful pen of Shakespeare, perhaps that of Hamlet is the most original, amiable, natural, and truly individual. . . .
>
> There is something so peculiar in Hamlet that we have often fancied we saw the individual feelings of Shakespeare himself looking through this character, in all his own melancholy, wisdom, imagination, irresolution, sarcasm and reflection. When we examine it, is it not probable that Shakespeare drew from self in his conception of Hamlet? And that he only adopted the incidents that occurred in the court of Denmark merely as a vehicle for those thoughts and those feelings that rose day by day in his own singular and unequalled mind? The slight traits of his character which biography has given us, appear to countenance such an idea. . . .
>
> It is said that Garrick gave a new character to Hamlet when he first performed it--Kean also has introduced many new beauties. Garrick's Hamlet pourtrayed filial love more than had been previously in use, and Kean has thrown more affection towards the fair Ophelia in his personation, than any other of our players do. it has often been observed of late that Kean's style has lost much of its sharpness and abrupt transitions. This change in his manner has undoubtedly improved his Hamlet, for certainly Shakespeare never intended his favorite character to be bitter and severe. His natural temper is full of affection; he is sarcastic from the impulse of circumstances only. We do not believe that there is any of Shakespeare's characters in which Kean



THEATRE.

Last Night but one of Mr. KEAN's Engagement.

THIS EVENING, Feb. 20,

Will be revived, Shakspeare's Play of

RICHARD II.

King Richard ..... Mr. Keen.
John of Gaunt ..... Mr. Clarke
Duke of York ..... Mr. Woodhull
Bolinbroke ..... Mr. Lee
Duke of Norfolk ..... Mr. Stanley
Earl of Northumberland ..... Mr. Foot
Queen ..... Mrs. Barrett
Lady (with a song) ..... Mrs. [illegible]

To conclude with the Melo-Drama of the

WOOD DEMON,

OR THE CLOCK HAS STRUCK

Count Roiseli ..... Mr. Lee
Ora ..... Mrs. Sharpe
Clotilda ..... Mrs. Butler

Performance, in future, to commence at 6 o'clock precisely, before 7 o'clock.

Tuesday, the Italian Opera of LA GAZZA LADRA.

Thursday, Richard III.—Richard, Mr. Keen.

Saturday, the Italian Opera of [illegible]

Mrs. HACKETT is engaged for a few nights, and will shortly make her appearance.

Fig. 36. Richard II advertisement from the New York American. Although above bill announces Richard III for Thursday (23 February), Kean performed Bertram in its place.

> approaches the intention of the author so nearly as in that of Hamlet. His style and manner throughout is exceedingly happy and appropriate. If it wants any improvement it is a little more amenity, and not so much asperity and high passion. . . . Garrick is said to have been very happy in his soliloquies--so is Kean. Every other actor that we ever saw has failed in giving individuality to those thinking aloud, and Kean is here . . . successful. His own feelings appear also to accord with the character.

The writer concludes his article with additional observations about Kean's enactment of Hamlet:

> But it is not enough to hear his voice when he performs this character; the spectator to enjoy it must watch the changings of his expressive countenance. There is more meaning conveyed in these changes than in all his variety of tones. In short we think that although Hamlet is a character that cannot be always understood by the multitude, it is one which shows the originality and extent of Shakespeare's genius more than any other--and that Kean is the only player we have ever seen who approaches, in any degree, near the intention of it great author. We intimated in our commencement that Shakespeare drew his Hamlet from the workings of his own mind. In this respect the player is placed in the same predicament as the poet. Kean's Hamlet is superior to others because he feels his own feelings and thinks his own thoughts.[12]

In the same issue, the Advocate made a brief statement about Kean's February 13 performance of Lear:

> King Lear was performed last evening in Kean's finest style. The house was good, and the actor excelled his former self.[13]

Kean was scheduled to follow Lear with Richard II on 15 February, but "on account of the illness of Kean,"[14] the performance was postponed. Because of Kean's continued illness, he was not able to portray Richard II until February 20. "Richard II was performed last night at the Park theatre to a very good house--the weather

considered. Kean never exerted himself to more effect," said the New York American on 21 February 1826.[15] Kean's Richard "approached towards a consummate and perfect piece of acting" and he "looked and acted like a King--woe's slave; but still," remarked the Mirror, "throughout each act, he displayed his high blood, and made us feel he was every inch a King."[16]

On 23 February 1826 Kean formally concluded his February engagement in Bertram. Kean's Bertram was joined by Mr. Woodhull's St. Aldobrand, Mr. Foot's Prior, Mrs. Hilson's Imogine, and Mrs. Sharpe's Clotilda.[17] Unfortunately, there are no reviews available for this performance.

During the months of January and February, especially January, playgoers did not attend the theatre in great numbers. The Mirror of 28 January 1826 proclaimed to "have never witnessed, night after night, a beggarly account of empty boxes."[18] Even Kean and the opera were unable to draw full houses in February. The 18 February 1826 edition of the Mirror attributed the lack of attendance to the "prevalence of the influenza, that the boxes have not been crowded."[19]

On 25 February 1826 the New York Evening Post welcomed back Crito--"an old correspondent who used, in former days [1820 and 1821], occasionally" adorn their "theatrical department."[20] Although Crito

fundamentally agrees with the Mirror's remarks about the paucity of attendance, he attempts to explain why Kean had been able to draw good to overflowing houses, and simultaneously to outdraw the trio of Conway, Cooper, and Hamblin at the Park Theatre:

> The theatre during the present winter has been very poorly attended; at least as regards the representations of the regular drama: Kean is the only actor who possesses power to draw profitable houses. During both his late engagements in this city he has uniformly had good houses, and occasionally they have been overflowing, while Cooper, and Conway, and Hamblin, played to empty benches. This is not said in disparagement of them, nor with any view of comparison or contrast, but simply to note the fact.--Now, Mr. Editor why is this? Is it because the frequenters of the theatre in this city entertain sentiments of hostility towards those performers? No, assuredly not; Mr. Cooper has shared deeply in public favor, and partaken largely of public bounty for twenty years; Conway has acquired great popularity, and Hamblin is much esteemed. Is it because Mr. Kean came here a star, and under those propitious and flattering circumstances which insensibly captivate and delude? Alas! no; Mr. Kean came here indeed a star, once of resplendent lustre, but shorn of its beams--devoid of the attraction of novelty, and under circumstances most inauspicious and forbidding. The secret of his success here may, I think, be fairly ascribed to two great and powerful causes; his transcendent merits as an actor, and that generous reaction which spontaneously arises in our minds when we think of the bad--even brutal treatment he has experienced. He comes before us an ill used and persecuted man, and our sympathies are even involuntarily enlisted in his favor.

About the scandalous behavior of the Bostonians and those few New Yorkers who had wished to drive Kean away, Crito writes:

> So far Mr. Kean is lastingly indebted to the Bostonians. They are not aware how much their outrageous conduct has dishonoured themselves and imparted . . . importance to the individual over whom they hoped to triumph.
>
> They have placed him in a position of great advantage by their vindictive and unavailing attempts to crush him, and he is justly entitled to all the

> benefit which can be educed from it. Had the attempt which was made by a few persons here, and those persons certainly by no means the most respectable, to drive Mr. Kean from the New York stage, succeeded, what would have been the consequences as now ascertained? Why, Mr. Editor, the consequences would have been that these few would have usurped the power of dictating to the many: a few unthinking and disorderly individuals, by their impertinent and audacious interference, would have prevented a large class of our most intelligent and respectable citizens from enjoying what at least to them is a most refined and interesting amusement; they would have deprived the managers of the theatre of an opportunity of profitable returns for their great expenditures, and efforts to please; and they would have robbed the individual expelled of the honest reward of the exercise of those talents with which he is so highly gifted, and which he can render effective for the support of his family in no other way.[21]

Kean's benefit performance as Selim in Barbarossa and Paul in Paul and Virginia on 24 February 1826 "attracted an immense concourse of spectators."[22] Crito's opening and closing paragraphs from his February 25 editorial apprise us of the enormous success of Kean's benefit.

Crito in the first paragraph enthusiastically expresses his satisfaction with the large and fashionable audience that attended Kean's benefit:

> Mr. Kean was last night [24 February], at his benefit honoured by the presence of the most numerous and fashionable audience which has been known since the rebuilding of the Park Theatre. The house was literally filled to overflowing, and many after purchasing tickets withdrew, having been unable to find seats. We do not remember ever to have witnessed such a display of ladies, beautiful and well dressed, even at the best of the operas.[23]

Crito's closing paragraph again lauds Kean, but disagrees with the manager's selection of Selim in Barbarossa and Paul in Paul and Virginia as judicious vehicles for displaying Kean's talents:

> One word more, Mr. Editor, as to the performances of last night: I do not think that the selection was by any means judicious, as there was no scope afforded for the display of Mr. Kean's eminent powers as a tragedian, and that in truth is his proper sphere; the characters of "Selim" and "Paul" were, however, sustained by him with great ability; several songs in the latter character were sung with much sweetness and taste, and the whole was rewarded with distinguished applause. The receipts of the house were estimated at $1800 clear, which must have been to him at once a convincing proof of the estimation in which he is held here, and a generous and substantial benefit, while it proves tht the audience of New York possess that degree of true taste and judgment which intuitively perceives and generously rewards sterling merit.[24]

In the musical piece Paul and Virginia Kean sang "the favourite songs of 'Boldly I Come,' 'Tell her I Love her,' and the duet 'See from Ocean rising,' with Mrs. Sharpe, and the trio of 'Tell Tale Echoes,' with Mrs. Sharpe and Miss Placide."[25]

When Kean finished his second successful New York engagement, he went to Charleston, South Carolina to fulfill an engagement for manager Joe Cowell. Appropriately, he sailed to Charleston aboard "the ship Othello."[26] Kean opened on 13 March 1826 at the Charleston Theatre in Richard III and closed on 24 April 1826 in Bertram for the benefit of Mr. and Mrs. Cowell. According to most accounts, Kean's Charleston engagement was extremely successful. "His share of the receipts of the house to which he played," says Molloy, "amounted to two hundred and twenty-two dollars, or upwards of fifty pounds a night."[27] The following review from the Charleston Mercury concerns his first performance:

> The expectations of the Charleston public have been more than gratified; the performance of last evening surpassed the highest anticipation. We know not how to describe the effect of the acting of Mr. Kean. The celebrity which heralded his arrival in Charleston, and his appearance on our boards . . . would seem to lessen the real impressions his presence and powers throw around him; as imagination generally outstrips reality. But it was far otherwise; the impetuosity of feeling, the vividness of conception, the strong natural flashes of reproductive genius, which marked Mr. Kean's performance, rivitted and spell bound the attention; and the spectator could no more loosen and set free his thoughts from the master-spirit which moved and spoke before him, than can the bird escape the fascination of the Syren. . . .
>
> We have never seen anything like Mr. Kean's Richard. The original of Shakespeare seemed to start into life again, in all its vast, irregular, commanding and fiery nature. The whole soul was pourtrayed in features and in gesture. If this be the school of Garrick, then is it the school of nature.
>
> It is said by certain Critics, that your true tragic hero should be at least six feet high; greatness consists in altitude. Give me, however, intellectual elevation; that soaring and daring flight which leaves the physical height pausing and wonder-struck upon the ground beneath, while it ascends, advances, and comes down upon us with the gyrations of an Eagle. . . . Unsupported by any thing but his own genius, Mr. Kean shone most happily in his soliloques. The force and character of the Monologue, were never to our mind so brilliantly pourtrayed. In this he was "himself alone." The inequalities observable in some of his dialogues, were we think, rather the effect of extrinsic causes, than that uneven flight which we have heard this great actor charged with. But the whole impression upon the mind was that of untiring and restless attention and delight.
>
> The audience were above thirteen hundred persons; many ladies of the highest rank and fashion; and a respect and silence were observed throughout only interrupted by bursts of enthusiastic applause. The curtain fell amidst thunders of approbation.[28]

On 10 April 1826 Kean repeated Richard III to the "incessant cheerings"[29] of the audience. At the end of the play, "a general call for Kean"[30] prompted him to deliver a speech from the stage. The address contains

references to his ill-health which made impossible a second engagement in Charleston:

> Ladies and Gentlemen--You must be aware of the severe labor of the character of Richard. I shall therefore endeavor to express myself as fully as my feebleness will admit. Be assured I shall bear with me a lively sense of the very flattering attention with which my efforts have been crowned. I pant for an opportunity of better expressing my obligations to a community which has equal claims upon my gratitude and admiration.
>
> I regret that I cannot gratify that portion of my patrons who wish a renewal of my engagement. My health is much impaired, and a cessation from my professional duties is absolutely necessary for its resuscitation. I beg leave again to offer my thanks, and respectfully bid you farewell.[31]

From April 10 through April 24 Kean rested at a friend's estate near Charleston trying to regain his health:

> Accordingly a friend gave him the use of a country house on Sullivan's Island--a sandbank in the centre of the harbour, uninhabited at this time of year, except by a few soldiers stationed at the fort. Here, with a couple of Newfoundland dogs, a horse, and pet deer, he remained, striving to recover from the effects of his persecution.[32]

More than likely, Kean resumed his respite at his friend's estate after the April 24 benefit for the Cowell's, because his next engagement, his third in New York, began on 12 May 1826.

While Kean was in Charleston, several reports appeared in New York newspapers asserting that Kean was determined to remain in the United States, this in spite of the denials of some English papers.

On 4 May 1826 the New York Gazette declared that Kean planned to become a U.S. citizen despite generous

offers from England to entice his return:

> It is stated in the Charleston Mercury, that Mr. Elliston, Manager of Drury Lane Theatre, London, has offered Mr. Kean an engagement at L50 per night, for twenty-four nights, to commence on the 15th June [1827] next. And Mr. Charles Kemble, Manager of Covent Garden, is desirous of making him a permanent member of that establishment upon his own terms. At the same time a committee, in the name of the entire theatrical corps, has been formed to urge Mr. Kean to return to England.[33] All of these offers, which are more flattering than any actor of the age has received, Mr. Kean declines. He certainly will remain in this country for a twelvemonth to come, and whatever may his future views and intentions, one point he has decided upon, which is to become an American citizen, and to make this country his domicile and his home.[34]

A statement in the 12 May 1826 New York National Advocate substantiates Kean's desire to remain in the United States. "We learn," says the Advocate, "that he [Kean] has leased a house on the banks of the Hudson."[35] However, on 3 April 1826, the New York Gazette had presented this report from an English newspaper, the Sun:

> Kean is very likely . . . to resume his situation at the Drury Lane Theatre next year. By his success in America he has been enabled to repair in part, his dilapidated fortune and as emnities should not be eternal, he hopes to meet a favorable reception on his return.--After performing one more season in London, he intends to retire to his little castle in Scotland [on Bute Island], there to remain in domestic quiet for the remainder of his life.[36]

Before ending our discussion of the Charleston episode, we must note that in a curious letter, dated "April 2nd Charleston," Kean writes to Cooper about the new lease on life he has been given in the United States. The letter, which seems also to be a letter of introduction, is delivered by a Mr. Mills to Cooper:

> My dear Cooper/ The gentleman who delivers this is my particular friend, I am sure there needs no better passport to your attention. He is good enough to undertake the whole management of the boat which I shall call the United States . . . the ship, but a sincere tribute of grateful feelings to a country that has given new life to my talent. My health & fortune though Mr. Mills is a native of London, he has been so much in America that he will again call the attentions, that are due from the hospitable & generous to the strangers he will relate to you. My great success I am really not the peoples actor--but their idol.[37]

Kean returned to New York in May 1826 to begin a third engagement at the Park Theatre. He was greeted with crowded and fashionable houses and with generally rapturous applause. Opposition was now nil. In spite of this, Snowden's National Advocate said:

> We sincerely hope we shall have no scenes disgraceful to our city and to our theatre--that hypocritical, whining and canting men, will, if they cannot cease to play the hypocrite, at least cease to whine and cant, and will be satisfied with preserving the purity of their own precious morals without feeling, we would rather say evincing too nice and paternal a care for those of others.[38]

Kean again shared the Park Theatre with the Garcias, while Maywood was engaged at the Chatham Theatre, with Wallack playing lesser roles.[39] After an absence of several months, Mrs. Barnes rejoined the ranks of the Park Theatre company to perform jointly with Kean:

> Mrs. Barnes who has been likened to a little cabinet containing a precious jewel, is now performing with Mr. Kean. She is deservedly a favourite, and will always be received with warm greetings by a New York audience. The united efforts of Mrs. Barnes and Mr. Kean cannot fail of drawing good houses notwithstanding the lateness of the season.[40]

Kean's engagement, as did Maywood's, commenced on 11 May 1826. Needless to say, Kean commenced with Richard III. Few reviews were published either about this or subsequent performances.[41]

Reviews from the New York Statesman, the New York National Advocate, and Snowden's National Advocate, concur that the theatre was crowded to excess at Kean's Richard, but there are some differences of opinion about the performance. The New York National Advocate stated that Kean "looks rather thin, but played with uncommon force, ability and spirit, and made several new points."[42] However the Statesman remarks that although the performance "was highly spirited," Kean weakened "towards the end of the play, when he became somewhat hoarse, and appeared to be quite exhausted."[43] On the other hand, back to back reports from Snowden's National Advocate do not mention Kean's physical condition. On May 12 the Advocate simply relates:

> Kean commenced an engagement upon our boards in the character of Richard. The felicity with which he depicts the character of the crook-backed tyrant is too well known to need from us any commendation; indeed his merits as the great master of his art--the leviathan of the stage, are universally acknowledged where he has been most violently and bitterly persecuted.[44]

But on the 13 the Advocate gives a much more detailed analysis of Kean's performance, finding fault with Kean's presentation of the "heroic parts" of the character:

> Mr. Kean's Richard is an exquisite piece of acting. It is scarcely possible to conceive any thing

> that approaches nearer to the perfection of the art than those several passages of the play which admit the rapid transition of passion.

But,

> In the heroic parts of Richard's character the actor fails to a certain degree; but this arises not so much from a want of conception or a proper feeling as from the denial of nature in furnishing the physical materials. We cannot associate the beau-ideal of a military hero with smallness of stature, crooked legs, a hump back or a voice that breaks away with guttural sounds when it approaches an ordinary point of elevation. Garrick and Cooke have been celebrated for the manner in which they called for "a horse."--Here Mr. Kean's physical, not his intellectual powers, produce what may be termed a failure.--This however is well compensated in the brilliant execution of the other scenes. The courtship of Lady Ann, the pausing farewell, the tent scene, and above all the natural manner of reading the letter found in his camp, are given with so much truth, nature, delicacy and unrivaled individuality of feeling, that his physical defects in the heroic parts are easily forgotten. It would be vain to describe the look and gesture with which he tosses the "weak device of the enemy" from the blade of the sword. We do not know that we ever saw his Richard performed with greater spirit throughout that it was on Thursday evening last. He felt himself at home in every part, and the house accompanied the daring Richard throughout with the most intense interest.[45]

Kean played Richard to the Lady Ann of Mrs. Hilson, the King Henry of Mr. Foot, the Duke of Buckingham of Mr. Woodhull, the Earl of Richmond of Mr. Lee, and the Queen Elizabeth of Mrs. Battersby-Stickney. The play was followed by the farce of Lady, Law, and Physic. Because of the presence of the opera company, Kean was allotted specific "nights of performance" on "Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays," during the entire engagement.[46]

Kean followed Richard III with Othello on 12 May 1826. Mrs. Barnes made her first appearance since returning to the Park Theatre as Desdemona. The part of

Iago was enacted by Mr. Lee, and that of Cassio by Mr. Simpson[47] Noah's New York National Advocate of 16 May 1826 provides us with the only commentary about Kean's Othello:

> Richard is generally considered his best part, and that perhaps is the reason why the audience was so much larger on the first than on the second night. But to our judgment, Othello is the noblest of all his performances. Opinions may differ as to the exact estimate of the actor's generalement, but we can scarcely imagine any difference (amongst those who are qualified by feeling, sense and knowledge to form a judgment) as to the high excellence of his Othello. . . . the Othello of Kean is the most poetical thing on the stage. It is a complete ode of the passion itself. Whether we regard it in the calm repose, the conscious dignity and confining affection of the earlier scenes--in the pathetic outpouring of a soul appealing from its destiny--in the misgiving of doubt and despair--in the sweep and gusts of passion coming over him like a whirlwind--in the dark struggle between the sense of injury and the sense of honour--or finally, in the fruitless agony of a late remorse--in all these states, and varieties of motion, we see and feel, and know that it is an exquisitely skillful and elaborate impersonation. Through all the progress of the scene, the actor rules us with a despotism that may not be gainsaid. The carping spirit of criticism is put to shame and silence as if by a spell. Even now when the wand has been laid aside and the magician has closed his books, we feel the lingering impressions of "his so potent art." It is almost a profanation against high talents to dissect the noble shape that was before us, and to exhibit the mechanism which gave it being and power. The duties of a critic are very mischievous obstacles to everything like unqualified enjoyment. We might point out the visible defects of Kean's acting and dwell on the mannerism of his gestures--the artificial hesitations and mutterings of phrase--the rapid and forced transitions of voice--the occasional meaness of deportment--which peculiarize his style. These are faults that we now look upon as incorrigible, and they are swept away by the tide of passion which "flows on like the Propontic and knows no ebb."
>
> Shakespeare is fortunate to find, in our country, such a kindred interpreter as Mr. Kean.[48]

On the following day (May 13), Garcia played Otello. Several days later, on 17 May 1826, Snowden's National Advocate compared Kean's interpretation of Othello to that of Garcia's:

> Kean's Othello has more individuality of feeling and singleness of purpose. Garcia appears to make a constant effort to give as correct an imitation as his cooler judgment dictates. The gestures of both are very appropriate and graceful, but the first [Kean] has most simplicity, while the latter assumes much of the Italian picturesqueness. In the expression of the countenance, Kean has a manifest advantage. His fine piercing eyes give an illustration to his accents, which all the contortions of the other can never attain.[49]

Kean personated King Lear on 15 May 1826, but again there are no reviews. Kean's Lear was complimented by the Cordelia of Mrs. Barnes. The tragedy was followed by the farce Roland For An Oliver.[50] On 18 May 1826 Kean portrayed Bertram with Mrs. Barnes as Imogene. The farce entitled Mrs. Smith followed Bertram, with Mrs. Hilson as Mrs. Emily Smith.[51] The May 20 edition of Noah's New York National Advocate offers the only review of the performance. Some comments suggest that Kean had regained much of his strength:

> Mr. Kean's exertions are undiminished. He went through the laborious part of Bertram, on Thursday night, with the most surprising spirit. The play itself, is in every respect but one, excessively offensive. The subject is indelicate, and the language bombastic and declamatory; but the situations are fine, and on this single merit, the popularity of the tragedy entirely rests. Kean's Bertram has, for many years, been remarkable for its vigour and passion. Though it is too strongly tainted with his artifices to catch applause, still it is a masterly portraiture of perverted morals and overwhelming passions.

As to Mrs. Barnes, she is

> an interesting Imogene. We sympathise with her distress, though we are shocked at her frailty. In some of the scenes, the strong nature of her acting, drew tears from a great part of the audience.[52]

A New Way to Pay Old Debts succeeded Bertram on 19 May 1826 with Kean's Sir Giles Overreach supported by Woodhull's Lord Lovel, Lee's Wellborn, Mrs. Battersby-Stickney's Lady Allworth, and Mrs. Hilson's Margaret. The comedy was followed by a "new farce," which was "translated from the French," and presented in America for the first time. 'Twas I, Or, The Truth a Lie was performed by the Julienne of Miss Placide and the De Lorme of Mr. Lee.[53]

Kean's renowned portrayal of Shylock in the Merchant of Venice was staged at the Park on 22 May 1826. His Shylock was accompanied by the Portia of Mrs. Barnes. Afterwards the melo-drama called The Vision of the Sun, or, The Orphan of Peru.[54] Kean's Shylock, and some earlier characterizations, are discussed in the May 23 issue of Snowden's National Advocate:

> Park Theatre.--Mr. Kean. This great actor has been greeted with rapturous applause each successive night of his appearance. We have seen him in the different characters of Richard, Othello, Lear, &c. and know not which to call his maater piece; in all he is unrivalled;[55] and he stands confessedly the greatest Tragedian of the present day. He played last evening for the last time but one during his present engagement.
>
> Mr. Kean played Shylock and imparted the utmost interest, or rather we should say produced the utmost abhorrence for him who would glut his revenge at the expense of the life of his victim. In the Portia of Mrs. Barnes he was well supported. In short we

> recollect no time when we have been better entertained than last evening, despite of warm and oppressive weather.[56]

Kean appeared as Hamlet on 25 May 1826 completing the first part of an engagement which was to be renewed for three days beginning 29 May 1826. Mrs. Barnes, performing for the fifth time since her return to the Park Theatre, played Ophelia. Both actors were assisted by Mr. Lee as Horatio, Mr. Woodhull as Laertes, Mr. Barnes as Polonius, Mr. Clark as the Ghost, and Mrs. Battersby-Stickney as the Queen. 'Twas I, Or, The Truth a Lie was repeated as the afterpiece.[57] As with some of the other performances, reviews of this performance are unavailable.

For Kean's benefit on 26 May 1826, the management chose to showcase Kean's Cardinal Wolsey in Henry VIII. Wolsey was a premier for him in New York. The remainder of the cast included Mrs. Barnes as Kathleen, Mr. Foot as Henry VIII, Mr. Clarke as Archbishop Cranmer, Mr. Lee as the Duke of Buckingham, Mr. Simpson as Cromwell, and Mrs. Hilson as Ann Boleyn. The interlude of Sylvester Dagwood and the farce of The Sprigs of Laurel concluded the evening's entertainment.[58] In Sylvester Daggerwood, Kean gave "imitations of Messrs. Braham, Incledon, Munden, Bannister, Kemble, and other distinguished performers of the London Theatres."[59]

Although Noah's New York National Advocate did not review the actual performance, the paper did make some

observations about Kean's Wolsey on the day of the performance:

> We perceive that Mr. Kean has fixed his benefit for to-night. The play is Henry VIII.--Of his Wolsey we will say nothing critical by way of anticipation. It is a noble performance--full of interest, power and pathos. It ranks among his finest displays. If not quite equal to the Richard, the Othello and the sir Giles, it is still such an exhibition as can no where else be found, and to an American audience, it has the added charm of novelty.

The remainder of the statement raises some questions about Kean's choice of playing Sylvester Daggerwood.

> Whether it be consistent with the dignity of a tragedian actor to condescend to the farcical part of Sylvester Daggerwood, we will not pretend to inquire, but at any rate it will be a source of high amusement. For ourselves we have only to remark, that as the first part in which we ever saw Kean as Harlequin, (more Years ago than it is pleasant to remember,) so, all things permitting, we shall make it a point to see him in Daggerwood to-night.[60]

Snowden's National Advocate had a few things to say about Kean's benefit on 27 May 1826--including some comments about the effect of Kean's banishment from Boston:

> This distinguished actor concluded his present engagement last evening [26 May] with a benefit, which was well attended. He has gone through his principal characters in which he is so celebrated much to the satisfaction of the Park treasury, and equally advantageous to his own reputation. All the excitement which he had heretofore created, is now blown away at the last blow up in the Literary Emporium. The Boston treatment was a fortunate circumstance for poor Kean. It produced a complete re-action of feeling every where else. At our own theatre, of which we can speak with certainty, the nights on which he appears are equally fashionable with the opera. We have heard that he intends to visit Providence, but as yet it is but a report.[61]

The management extended Kean's engagement for another three days. Kean played Sir Edward Mortimer in

The Iron Chest on 29 May 1826. Kean's supporting cast included the Wilfred of Mr. Lee, the Fitzharding of Mr. Foot, the Sampson of Mr. Placide, the Helen of Mrs. Hilson, the Barbara of Mrs. Sharpe, and the Judith of Mrs. Battersby-Stickney.[62] the performance concluded "with the Grand Melo-Dramatic Tale, called the Vision of the Sun.[63]

Kean played in The Stranger on 1 June 1826 and closed in Richard III on 2 June 1826. With his successful and peaceful New York engagement over, Kean, with some assurance, travelled southward to fulfill additional engagements, starting with Baltimore.

Kean's contract with the manager of the Baltimore theatre William B. Wood (also the manager at Philadelphia) stipulated an eight day engagement. However, another riot precluded the completion of the engagement. On 7 June 1826 Kean opened his Baltimore engagement as Richard III. It was during this performance that Kean was confronted with another unruly audience that resulted in an abrupt cessation of the performance. Wood relates the "disgraceful scene" that accompanied Kean's appearance.

> The curtain rose, and the play proceeded quietly as usual until the appearance of Gloster, when a violent opposition from persons stationed in various parts of the house rendered all Kean's attempts to be heard hopeless. Some ill-managed efforts were made to address the audience, but he was not allowed to speak. the greatest portion of the female auditors retired in disgust from the disgraceful scene, and the play at length ended in noise and confusion. Warren conducted the ladies of the company through the crowd without molestation; Kean was conveyed through the

> adjoining house [as in Boston] to his lodgings safely, but in extreme terror, . . . The frequent calls for "another tragedian" during the tumult led to a strong and perhaps well founded suspicion that partisan feeling, and a feeling wholly unconnected with Boston, was not without its share of influence in the riot. . . . The worst result was an apprehension on the part of the female audience of future difficulties, which deterred many from ever visiting the theatre for a long time again . . . we convoked a council of friends, legal and other, . . . to deliberate on the course to be pursued. . . . Mr. William Wirt, . . . swayed his associates to a final decision in favor of closing. As soon as the bills announced this intention, we received a mass of anonymous communication, to the effect that if the house should be closed, it would prove useless ever to attempt re-opening it. The above is among the mildest shapes in which the subject was placed.
>
> For a quarter of a century, including the present disturbance, disorderly conduct was invariably confined to the boxes. In this larger and more divided space the unruly could stealthily mingle themselves with the respectable, so as to escape the detection which a more concentrated effort would have endangered. . . . Our season . . . was at once brought to a close, and the company returned to Philadelphia, which he [Kean] had so recently left.[64]

In order to make up for the lost season at the Baltimore theatre, Kean agreed "to transfer his labors to our other theatre," said Wood, "as the only remuneration of his power to offer."[65]

Kean "re-opened" his Philadelphia engagement "on the 12th of June, 1826."[66] According to Wood, Kean's "houses produced $469, $348, $255, $262, $361, $347, $245, $228, $314, $243, and $226."[67] For his benefit Kean "gave Cardinal Wolsey, in Henry VIII, and Sylvester Daggerwood. His performance on these nights "were of the most spirited and finished order."[68]

From Philadelphia, Kean apparently journeyed back to New York, where he "made a tour through the northern part of the state (Albany and Rochester)," and finally "visited Canada."[69] In Canada Kean played successive engagements at Montreal in July and August, in Quebec in September and early October and again in Montreal in October. His Canadian engagements attracted packed houses and vigorous applause.

It was in the beginning of October in Quebec, a day or two before visiting Montreal a second time, that Kean was admitted into the Huron tribe as an honorary member. He treasured the honor, and he occasionally greeted friends and the public in full Indian regalia, under the name Alanienouidet, which had been given to him by the Huron tribe. Shortly before Kean left the United States in December, he summoned Dr. Francis, an old and loyal friend, to his hotel in New York under his Indian name, Alanienouidet. Not knowing who or what to expect, Francis arrived at the hotel to meet the mysterious stranger:

> I entered, aided by the feeble light of the room; but at the remote end I soon perceived something like a forest of evergreens, lighted up by many rays from floor lamps, and surrounding a stage or throne; and seated in great state was the chief. I advanced, and a more terrific warrier I never purveyed. Red jacket or Black hawk was an unadorned simple personage in comparison. Full dressed, with skins tagged loosely about his person, a broad collar of bear-skin over his shoulders, his leggings with many stripes, garnished with porcupine quills; his quills; his moccasons decorated with beads; his head decked with war-eagle's plumes, behind which flowed massive black locks of dishevelled horse-hair; golden-colored rings pendant from his nose and ears; streaks of yellow paint over

> his face massive red daubings about the eyes, with various hues in streaks across the forehead, not very artistically drawn. A broad belt surrounded his waist, with tomahawk; his arms, with shining bracelets, stretched out with bow and arrow, as if ready for a mark. He descended his throne and rapidly approached me. His eye was meteoric and fearful, like the furnace of a cyclops. He vociferously exclaimed, Alantenaida! the vowels strong enough. I was relieved; he betrayed something of his raucous voice in imprecation. It was Kean . . . The Hurons had honored him by admission into their tribe, . . . and declared that even Old Drury had never conferred so proud a distinction on him as he had received from the Hurons.

Finally,

> he was prevailed upon to change his dress and retire to rest! A day or two later, he sailed for Europe, with his Indian paraphernalia.[70]

T. C. Grattan also recalls meeting Kean adorned in his Indian costume this time at the Hummums Hotel, Covent-Garden:

> When I first called on him at the Hummums, one day early in 1827, he was sitting up in his bed, a buffalo-skin wrapped round him, a huge hairy cap, decked with many coloured-feathers, on his head, a scalping-knife in his belt, and a tomahawk in his hand. He was making up his face for a very savage look. A tumbler glass of white-wine negus stood at the bed-side; two shabby-looking heroes were close by, with similar potations in their reach; and a portrait painter was placed before an easel at the window, taking the likeness of the renowned Alanienonideh, the name in which the chieftan (most sincerely) rejoiced.[71]

And on still another occasion, Kean addressed a Dublin audience "in the character and costume of an Indian chief."[72]

In November, Kean entered upon his fourth and final engagement in New York. Notwithstanding his plans to make America his domicile, extenuating circumstances compelled

him to leave the United States. First, since Kean's last engagement in New York in May 1826, Stephen Price, the impresario of the Park Theatre, had been offered the lesseeship of the Drury Lane Theatre (because of the continued indebtedness of Robert William Elliston) and he had accepted. The

> new lessee of Drury-lane Theatre, arrived at Liverpool on Tuesday [14 November] evening, in the Manchester, from New-York, . . . It is stated that he has brought a number of recruits for his already extensive theatrical regiment.[73]

With Price at Drury, Kean perhaps thought about returning to his homeland.

Next, although the Garcia opera troupe had performed for the last time in September--depriving "lovers of music . . . of their refined and beloved amusement,"[74] Kean now had to contend with the arrival of William Macready in the United States. "The arrival of this tragedian [Macready] in our country," said the New York Gazette, "will prove a great acquisition to our boards."[75] Macready, an arch rival of Kean from Covent Garden, performed to overflowing audiences in New York in October, and in November intoxicated Boston audiences, as Kean had once done in 1821. Kean was now seriously challenged by a "truly famous star." To further complicate matters, Kean's preeminent status was challenged by yet another ascending star appearing for the first time in New York. This time it was an American actor, the star of the Albany theatre, the young Edwin

Forrest. Forrest, who had performed with Kean in Albany and was frequently compared with him, was booked at the Bowery theatre in November. Later in November, Mrs. Knight, an English opera star and actress, was performing at the Park Theatre, following Mrs. Hamblin earlier in November.[76]

The presence of these star performers, especially Macready, doubtless prompted Kean to carefully reconsider his future in America. In addition, his health was failing. Reviews during his last engagement consistently refer to his feeble condition. The flashes of lightning were dimming. Perhaps a change of venue would restore his strength and add to his fortune, as it had in America. Perhaps an absence from some vindictive members of the American press would sooth his anguished soul and revive his self-confidence. And perhaps his countrymen could now forgive and forget.

If it had not been for Kean, Macready would have been the leading tragedian of the day. At best, Macready was heir apparent to the throne. By the way Macready delighted New York audiences during his first engagement in October, however, one might assume that Macready had effectively usurped the crown. More than a month before Kean commenced his final run on 13 November 1826, Macready had appeared at the Park Theatre for the first time on 2 October 1826, in the tragedy of Virginius. Effusive comments appeared in the New York Gazette after the performance:

> This distinguished Tragedian made his first appearance [October 2] before an American audience last evening-- . . . The Park Theatre was filled to overflowing, and we never beheld one whose feelings were so strongly enchained. On his entrance he was greeted a round of the loudest applause, . . . He was evidently embarassed, but it did not prevent a display of his tragic powers, which, in our opinion are equal, if not superior to any we have ever witnessed. . . . His performance fully realised the great expectations that had been formed of his abilities.[77]

On 6 October 1826, Macready appeared in Damon and Pythias with Mrs. Hilson:

> The Damon of Mr. Macready last evening [October 6] was a chaste and classical piece of acting. Nature to this gentleman has been very bountiful, having furnished him with every requisite to enable him to secure to himself eminence--an enviable eminence--in his profession.[78]

After Macready had captivated New York audiences, he went on to bewitch Boston audiences in November, as no one had since Kean. Boxes were once again auctioned, as during Kean's visit:

> Macready seems absolutely to have maddened our Boston friends with delight. As in the case of Kean's first visit, before they had found him out, such has been the scramble for places during Macready's engagement, that the seats have again been sold at auction. Our correspondent, under the date of the 15 instant, states, that the tickets for the first and second row of boxes, for that evening were at an advance of $392.50, and gives us a list of the purchases. But the sum total will answer our purpose. The fact is, the Bostonians are no half-way sort of people. Whatever they undertake they do with all their might; and whether they resolve to applaud and reward a meritorious actor, or to empty the vials of their wrath upon a scurvy delinquent [Kean?], they go for the whole. They are hospitable and generous, and delight to render homage to talent and worth. But none are more ready to tear the mask from imposture, or punish ingratitude [as they did to Kean].[79]

Earlier in November, the Boston Statesman presented what seems to be a sensible appraisal of Macready's overall merits as an actor, not quite equating him with the genius of Kean:

> Mr. Macready's Virginius attracted a crowded house on Monday evening, and elicited great applause. . . . In the familiar colloquial dialogue with Virginia, Mr. Macready excelled, and his enunciation was then, very beautiful.--But he has not the fire of Kean--nor the finely regulated and princely passion of Cooper--nor the finished reading of Conway. . . . In fine, we consider Mr. Macready a capital display of what may be accomplished by unwearied and persevering study, without the concomitant of extraordinary genius.[80]

With Macready in Boston, Forrest began his engagement at the Bowery Theatre. Although his performances at the Bowery were well-received, there were some reservations concerning the "exuberance" of his acting, and his resemblance to Kean:

> Mr. Forrest made his appearance last night at the New-York [Bowery] Theatre in Othello, before a numerous and respectable audience. . . . Mr. Forrest's figure is advantageous, and his manner may be justly pronounced original, though he frequently resembled Kean, particularly in the more impassioned scenes. His approximation to Kean's style, however, partook of none of the servility of imitation and was no nearer than a faithful and spirited effort is likely to induce. . . . Mr. Forrest's faults are precisely those which are inseparable from his early age and limited practice, viz. much exuberance of display, and a want of that fine finish so essential in the business of the stage, and which, next to his admirable development of human feelings, is the attractive charm of Mr. Kean's performances.[81]

While Forrest was at the Bowery and Macready in Boston, Kean commenced his final engagement at the Park Theatre on 13 November 1826 as Richard III. Few reviews were written about these final performances. We do know

that Kean's first performance lured "one of the most crowded audiences" that was ever seen at the Park Theatre,[82] and that throughout his engagement he was "drawing full houses."[83] When Mrs. Hamblin had played earlier at the Park theatre in November, Snowden's Advocate had complained about the empty boxes and pit (unlike when Kean appeared), regretting that Mrs. Hamblin was not drawing fuller houses, as Kean and her husband were doing.[84]

Kean's Richard "was greeted . . . by enthusiastic and long continued plaudits," in spite of his evidently weakened constitution. "When he [Kean] commenced his engagement," declared the New York Gazette, "he was seriously indisposed, and too weak and debilitated to perform with the marked energy that always characterises his histrionic effort."[85] This seeming debility lasted throughout his engagement. His "Richard on Monday," and his "Othello on Wednesday were comparatively feeble performances," said the Gazette.[86]

Kean's Othello on November 15 was joined by the Desdemona of Mrs. Barnes, and the Iago of Mr. Clarke. "The house was respectable, though not crowded,"[87] reported the Statesman on 16 November 1826. Kean's usually masterful performance of Othello was seriously undermined by his enervated condition. The American found fault with his earlier scenes:

> The latter part of Kean's Othello on Wednesday evening was masterly. Some of the earlier scenes were given with an unusual lack of effect. We notice particularly the scene in which he rushes in to quell the night-brawl of Cassio and his companions, which was comparatively very tame. The last scene of the play produced a strong sensation, and completely retrieved the character of Mr. K's performance.[88]

The Statesman, on the other hand, felt that

> the performance was in Mr. Kean's characteristic style of personating the Moore, exquisite in many parts, but not, as a whole, equal to the other characters in which he is accustomed to appear.[89]

Kean next performed Shylock on 17 November 1826 to the Portia of Mrs. Barnes, the Launcelot of Mr. Barnes, the Nerissa of Mrs. Sharpe, and the Gratiano of Mr. Simpson, after which "the Burletta of Tom Thumb" was staged.[90] For this performance, Kean surprisingly regained most of his lost vigor. "On Friday . . . he [Kean] appeared in Shylock with health surprisingly improved; and he represented 'the Jew, that Shakespeare drew,' in his very best and most impressive manner," exclaimed the Gazette on 20 November 1826.[91] And on 18 November 1826 the New York American said:

> Kean's Shylock was performed throughout in his best and most spirited manner, and was received with great approbation. Mrs. Barnes was an interesting Portia: Mrs. Sharpe a pretty Nerissa, and Barnes a most humerous Launcelot Gobbo.[92]

On 20 November 1826 Kean personated Lear with the Kent of Mr. Foot, the Edgar of Mr. Simpson, the Edmund of Mr. Clarke, the Cordelia of Mrs. Barnes, and the Regan of Mrs. Battersby-Stickney. Afterwards the farce of 'Twas I,

or The Truth A Lie was performed.[93] Unhappily we have no reviews for this performance.

Due to the recurrence of illness, Kean did not perform again until 27 November 1826 as Richard III. Mrs. Barnes' Queen Elizabeth, Mrs. Hilson's Lady Ann, Mr. Lee's Richmond, Mr. Woodhull's Buckingham completed the cast. Richard III was followed by the "Ballet of Myrtil and Myrtilla."[94] Though Kean's second performance as Richard was considerably more spirited than the first, he was still not himself:

> Last evening Mr. Kean played Richard III the second time since his present engagement. He acquitted himself much better than before;--was in better voice, better spirits and greater personal vigor, but did not quite come up to his former happiest attempts.[95]

The American concurred:

> Kean, in his performance of Richard at the Park Theatre, last evening, made great exertions, but exhibited great dibility. His voice, especially, was far less powerful than previous to his illness.[96]

Hamlet followed Richard on 29 November 1826. Mrs. Barnes played Ophelia, and Mr. Barnes Polonius. The "Farce of Love, Law, and Physic"[97] concluded the evening's fare. Reviews for this performance are not extant.

A few days before Kean's performance of Bertram, Mrs. Knight made her debut at the Park Theatre on 30 November 1826 "in the part of Floretta in the Cabinet.[98] On December 1 Kean "played Bertram . . . to a fashionable house. He was uncommonly happy through the whole. Mrs.

Barnes' Imogene was spirited and correct, and in the fourth act received repeated bursts of applause."[99]

For his benefit performance on 4 December 1826, Kean played De Montfort in "the Tragedy of De Montfort," which concluded with Kean singing some songs in the "farce of The Waterman."[100] Reviews are unavailable for this occasion.

The following day, December 5, Kean played Richard III for the last time before a New York audience, which role--as it had been his first in America,--so was his last:

> On Tuesday evening this eminent actor made his last appearance to a New-York audience before his departure for England. After the ballet [a Spanish ballet] which succeeded the play, he came out and made a sort of speech to the American nation. There were a few passages in it very happily expressed.[101]

The address delivered by Kean after his final performance contained "flattering sentiments" respecting his stay in America.[102] It also contained some not so flattering sentiments about the American press. According to Delta, a correspondent writing for the Evening Post, the "effect produced by its delivery was electric."[103] While Kean was addressing the audience, he was "interrupted by enthusiastic bursts of applause, and when retiring from the stage, was greeted by three cheers and long and deafening applause."[104] The Evening Post's report about Kean's address laments the unavailability "of

a copy of the address," but happily recalls "the leading outlines" of the recitation:

> Mr. Kean began by stating that in some cases silence was more eloquent than words; that he felt himself in that situation, but that he could not take leave of the American public without expressing his gratitude. He had intended to make America his residence, but owing to a shattered constitution he was compelled by the advice of eminent American physicians, to visit his native country. He regretted it, but had no alternative considering his health. He had been doomed to suffer obloquy, which had constantly pursued him both at home and abroad. He hoped, and indeed he felt that the American public were not to be led by the goose quills [the Press] of a few. He knew there were reptiles [Stone in New York, and Buckingham in Boston] here, and likened the American nation to a beautiful temple on which worms would crawl, indigenous to the soil but disfiguring to the temple. He then alluded in severe but well merited terms of disgust to those who endeavored to drive him from America, and in a most touching tone observed, "I can only add, that the American public have been the means of restoring a suffering individual to fortune, fame, and home." The beautiful and pathetic manner in which this last observation was made, drew forth loud and long continued applause. He added that if two years more rolled over his head he would return to America as his home,[105] that then he would introduce a virtuous and honorable boy [his son Charles], who bore his name, to this country, that he might become a citizen of the United States. For the present he most respectfully bade them farewell.[106]

Even though Snowden's National Advocate had defended Kean throughout his engagements, it considered his severe criticism of "those who endeavored to drive him from America" entirely "uncalled for."[107] We have always been friendly to Kean and think he would have done well, to let Buckingham, Stone, and the Bostonians alone."[108] And, furthermore,

> we cannot approve of the manner in which he spoke and alluded to respectable persons in this community. However, much we like to crack a joke upon Colonel

> Stone, still Colonel Stone is a useful and respectable member of an intelligent community, and we cannot perceive why any actor should be permitted (and particularly Mr. Kean) to travel out the record," and insinuate attacks upon persons of respectability.[109]

Although Kean "came here under circumstances extremely unpropitious," said Delta, "he endeared himself to the American public, as well as by his transcendant genius in public, as by his respectful conduct in private." For these reasons, the public have restored "him in his own beautiful language 'to fortune, fame and home.'" Moreover, Kean was able to overcome the "squeamish advocates [the Stones and the Buckinghams] of morality and national insult," because he was able to excite public sympathy. In the end, however, it was "the victory of genius" that enabled Kean to triumph over his persecutors:[110]

> His standing in his profession has been yielded to him not without labor and exertion of the most discouraging character, and in the midst of opposition, which nothing but genius would attempt to brave.[111]

Although Kean had already "taken his passage on board the ship Silas Richards"[112] and sailed for England on 8 December 1826, an editorial appeared in the New York Commercial Advertiser on December 9, frankly admitting that the paper "may be charged with 'shooting at a dead duck'" now that Kean had already left the United States, but nevertheless was determined to "spill its guts" about Kean's supposedly contemptible and salacious character:

This very virtuous, and in his own opinion, hardly-used individual, is on the point, we understand, of quitting the United States to return to his native land. . . . Where a person of high talents and elevated character comes amongst us, to delight us by his own genius, and to instruct us by his example, we hail his arrival with eager enthusiasm, and witness his departure with sincere regret. But Mr. Kean is no such person. Whatever his talents may be, and no doubt they are great, we have yet to hear of his moral character. It has not been our good fortune to meet with any eulogy of his chastity, honor, sobriety, decorum, & any other moral virtue. On the contrary, we have heard much, and often, of his constant intoxications, of his personal quarrels, his vulgar debaucheries, the indecency of his conversation and general licentiousness of his habits. His conduct in the United states has been of a piece with that which distinguished him in England. . . . Mr. Kean the other night took farewell of the New-York audience in a speech remarkable for its effrontery. Not content with reproving some one in the third tier for requesting him to "speak louder," he took upon him to lecture the public Press of this country. This impudent vagabond had the audacity to mention one editor [probably Stone of the Commercial Advertiser] by name, and to allude to another [probably Buckingham of Boston] so clearly, that no one could mistake his intention. How any audience should tolerate such an exampled abuse of the privileges condescendingly awarded to actors, is beyond our power to explain. It was a direct insult to every respectable person in the Theatre. Why, it is but twelve months since that "vagabond by act of parliament," stood upon that same stage, the scoff and scorn of the public--a mendicant outcast--flying from the contempt of his own country, to beg a refuge and a grave in ours! And yet within a little year he marches forward "with face unmoved and forehead unabashed," to tell the same audience and through them the country, that the Editors of the United States, or some of them, are "wretches," "reptiles," "a disgrace to the American people," with other coarse and ribald observations? It is not to be supposed that we feel much terror at his abuse . . . He that defends the cause of morality earns the malevolence of the vicious, and he that advocates the purity of public amusements is sure to be assailed by the venom and spite of the dissolute, the licentious, and the low. Such has been our labor, and we have not missed its reward.-- . . . We have done with this man forever. He came an unwilling exile, without character and without friends. He has lived here a

> debaucher and a drunkard. He quits us with a constitution diseased and impaired.[113]

On December 13 Delta penned an article which condemned a press that wished only to gratify its "private pique, malignity, or revenge." Delta scrupulously reminds the press of the "noble object for which it was designed," namely, to further the advancement and refinement of civilization. But when it deviates from its course and "violates the sanctity of retirement, and drags forth the privacy of the closet to public scorn, it becomes a curse." Delta's article was especially meant for the Commercial Advertiser, "among the earliest opponents of Mr. Kean," and its pernicious article of "the 9 inst:"

> And what is it after all? The most finished specimen of downright Billingsgate that perhaps was ever penned, abounding in such terms as "impudent vagabond," "worthless villain," "scoundrel," and other epithets, which might defy the whole vocabulary of abuse. As such, it deserves public reprehension. The press is the standard of public taste, and no community can consider itself wronged in being considered destitute of taste where such articles are endured. The public which received Kean, and, overlooking his transgressions, admired and applauded his genius, are insulted. Have they been fondling a "worthless villain, an impudent vagabond?" Have they not rather given shelter to a persecuted individual? Have they not rekindled the flame of genius, which was almost extinguished to by envenomed shafts of moral malignity?[114]

And what is the antidote to the "mawkish pretentions to piety," of the Commercial Advertiser, which daily "corrupts the taste of its readers," Delta asks on December 28?:

> A press in the hands of a man, who, regardless of public good, prostitutes it to the gratification of vindictive feelings, is a public nuisance. An editor [Stone] maliciously disposed, can never be without pretexts which may impose upon the credulous, who may be induced to look up without alarm, while one individual after another is devoted and immolated. To point the public attention to a press thus conducted, and chastise those who usurp its columns to purposes so flagrantly unjust, is a duty which every citizen is bound to render to the majesty of the laws . . . I care not for Kean. I am not his advocate but as a persecuted man of genius. His character may be as vile as this misguided and unfeeling editor would have it. But I insist that be the character of any man what it may, the laws of a well regulated community will never permit a press to arrogate the right of punishing by libelling individual transgression.[115]

If we peruse the text (outlined in the Evening Post) of Kean's farewell address, we can say that the obvious reason for his departure was his ill-health. However, there may be other and not so obvious reasons.

While it is true that Kean was beset with ill-health throughout his final engagements, especially in New York, I am not certain that this alone would have been sufficient to induce Kean to leave the United States, despite the advice given by his American physicians, unless, perhaps, he felt that superior medical care could be obtained solely in England.

As for another reason--the persecution of the press (censoring Kean's moral behavior), especially that of the New York Commercial Advertiser and the Boston Courier,--it might be said that this could have prompted Kean to seek refuge in his homeland. However, in spite of the institution of an English committee to lure Kean back to

England, and the lucrative offers tendered by William Elliston at Drury Lane, and Charles Kemble at Covent Garden, it is not likely that Kean would once again have been confronted with hostile criticism from an English press, a press which previously had precipitated his flight to America for a second time?

There must be other underlying motives for Kean's leaving America. First, there was the engagement of other star performers at the Park Theatre and elsewhere. Kean was no longer the Lion of the hour. During his first engagements in the United States he was not faced with the quality of competition that occurred during his second tour of the United States. In 1820 and 1821, Kean's chief adversaries were Cooper, Wallack and Maywood, and except for Cooper, not much of a challenge. In 1825 and 1826, however, the picture dramatically changed. The Garcias were in New York, along with Cooper, Conway, Maywood, and Wallack. The rising English star William Macready arrived in October of 1826, and the rising American star, Edwin Forrest, in November 1826. Possibly the arrival of the last two made Kean seek "greener pastures" in Great Britain. He had to have realized that he might no longer be the major attraction that he once was. Moreover, he must have realized that other stars would soon appear.

Finally, a surprising reason for Kean's abrupt departure from the United States, is related by Kean's old

acquaintance, T. C. Grattan, who called on Kean one day "early in 1827" at the Hummums Hotel:

> He [Kean] explained the hoax under which he had been led to leave America so abruptly, and showed me the letter on which he had acted. This purported to be from Mr. Price the manager of Drury-lane, and proposed to Kean to return forthwith, to take possession of the management of the theatre, which was only held by him (Price) in trust for "its true inheritor"--Kean.
>
> This preposterous humbug was greedily swallowed by Kean, who arrived in London in the full belief that he was about to enter on the functions and the fancied profits of manager. The mortification of finding himself duped would have been dreadful, had it not been an engagement for twelve nights at 100 guineas each, followed up by a reception from the public which amply atoned for former suffering and present disappointment.[116]

How true the above is cannot be authenticated since the letter referred to by Grattan is currently unavailable. What we have then are several possibilities that may have coaxed Kean to return to England. Convinced that the letter (supposedly sent by Stephen Price, the new lessee of Drury Lane)[117] was genuine, Kean returned to England fully confident tht he was about to inherit the lesseeship of Drury Lane from Price.

Back at Drury Lane in January, Kean apparently reverted to his old ways as James Winston (retained by Price as one of his officers) notes in his diary for 5 January 1827 that "Kean came to the theatre very drunk (two men with him) about four in the afternoon."[118] Kean was then informed by Price that he (Price) never intended to relinquish his position as manager. "Someone wrote a letter to Kean in Price's name," said Winston in

an entry for 4 February 1827, "saying he [Price] had taken the theatre for Kean."[119] Although Kean accepted Price's offer of "an engagement for twelve nights at 100 guineas each,"[120] he felt that he was tricked, and, accordingly, angrily told Price (records Winston on 6 February 1827) "in his reply to Price's supposed letter to him," that "he wished to build a hut for himself in America, drink rum, and die forgotten."[121]

Kean began his twelve-night engagement on 7 January 1827 as Shylock,[122] the very role he selected to launch his career at Drury Lane in January 1814. Kean chose Shylock because it was less exhausting than some of his familiar parts (Richard III, Othello, or Sir Giles Overreach). Kean's feeble health,[123] from this time on, often affected both the quality and frequency of his appearances. Although Kean was greatly received and acted remarkably well, much like he had ten years earlier, he was noticeably weakened after the performance. After repeated calls for his reappearance, Kean finally appeared, but, "merely bowed again and again, and quietly made his exit."[124]

Following Shylock, Kean performed some of his other favorite roles, including Othello and Richard III. It was as Richard where it became more and more evident that Kean "was physically a wreck of his former self."[125] On 26 February 1827, Winston reports that Kean was ill during a performance of Richard III, performing the part "not with

that force and energy he was accustomed to; and, when dead, instead of remaining till the curtain dropped, he was carried off the stage. It seems he was not only ill in body but in mind."[126] Kean completed his twelve-night engagement on 27 February 1827.[127] In consequence of playing to enthusiastic audiences, Kean "regained his place," said Grattan, "at the head of the acted drama."[128] From Drury Lane, he went on a two-month tour of the provinces, which began with an engagement in Dublin near the beginning of March.[129]

In May 1827 Kean was back at Drury Lane performing some of his stock characters. On May 10 he reappeared at Drury Lane in Othello.[130] On 9 May 1827 Winston tells us that Kean "meant after the present season [at Drury Lane] to build a schooner and go to sea, having six men to work the vessel, which would cost £15,000, etc. etc., go to America, the West Indies, Botany Bay, etc."[131]

Sometime in May preparations were made and rehearsals scheduled for performances of Colley T. Grattan's never before performed tragedy, Ben Nazir, the Saracen at Drury Lane. After his return to England, Kean met with his old friend Grattan and agreed to play Ben Nazir. Both Grattan and Kean were extremely enthused about the upcoming staging of the tragedy, which was planned for a first performance on May 16. However, according to a selection from Winston's diary, dated 16 May 1827, "the play was postponed because Kean not being

perfect."[132] The play was then rescheduled for May 21. Even though Kean refused to attend the final rehearsals--"saying it would not only confuse and annoy him, but perhaps destroy the effect he wished to reserve for the public,"[133] the play went on. Before Ben Nazir began, James Wallack went to Kean's dressing-room, after he had sent three summonses to fetch Kean from his dressing-room, and "found him weeping, and in total despair."[134] What followed, on the evening of 21 May 1827, astonished all who saw it, including Winston and the author himself, Grattan. In an entry for May 21, Winston says:

> The tragedy waited beginning for him till after quarter past seven. He cut the play to atoms. In one scene [in] which the play was to be developed, he cut out five and a half pages at once. . . . Kean was repeatedly hissed during the play.[135]

Grattan was appalled at what he saw:

> What was my astonishment to see him, as the scene opened, standing in the centre of the stage, his arms crossed, and his whole attitude of thoughtful solemnity! His dress was splendid; and thunders of applause greeted him from all parts of the house. To display the one and give time for the other were the objects for which he stood fixed for several minutes, sacrificed the sense of the situation. He spoke; but what a speech! The one I wrote consisted of eight or nine lines; his was of two or three sentences, but not six consecutive words of the text. His look, his manner, his tone were to me quite appalling; to any other observer they must have been incomprehensible.[136]

Although Kean was later, with great difficulty, able to add Henry V (one performance) and Virginius (three performances,) from Sheridan Knowles's play of the same

name, to his list of roles, it became increasingly apparent that he no longer could easily memorise lines in plays he had not previously acted in. This greatly disturbed him, especially with the ascendance of Macready. He felt that he needed to learn new parts in order to remain England's leading tragedian. After miserably failing in Henry V, Kean wrote to his friend W.H. Halpin:

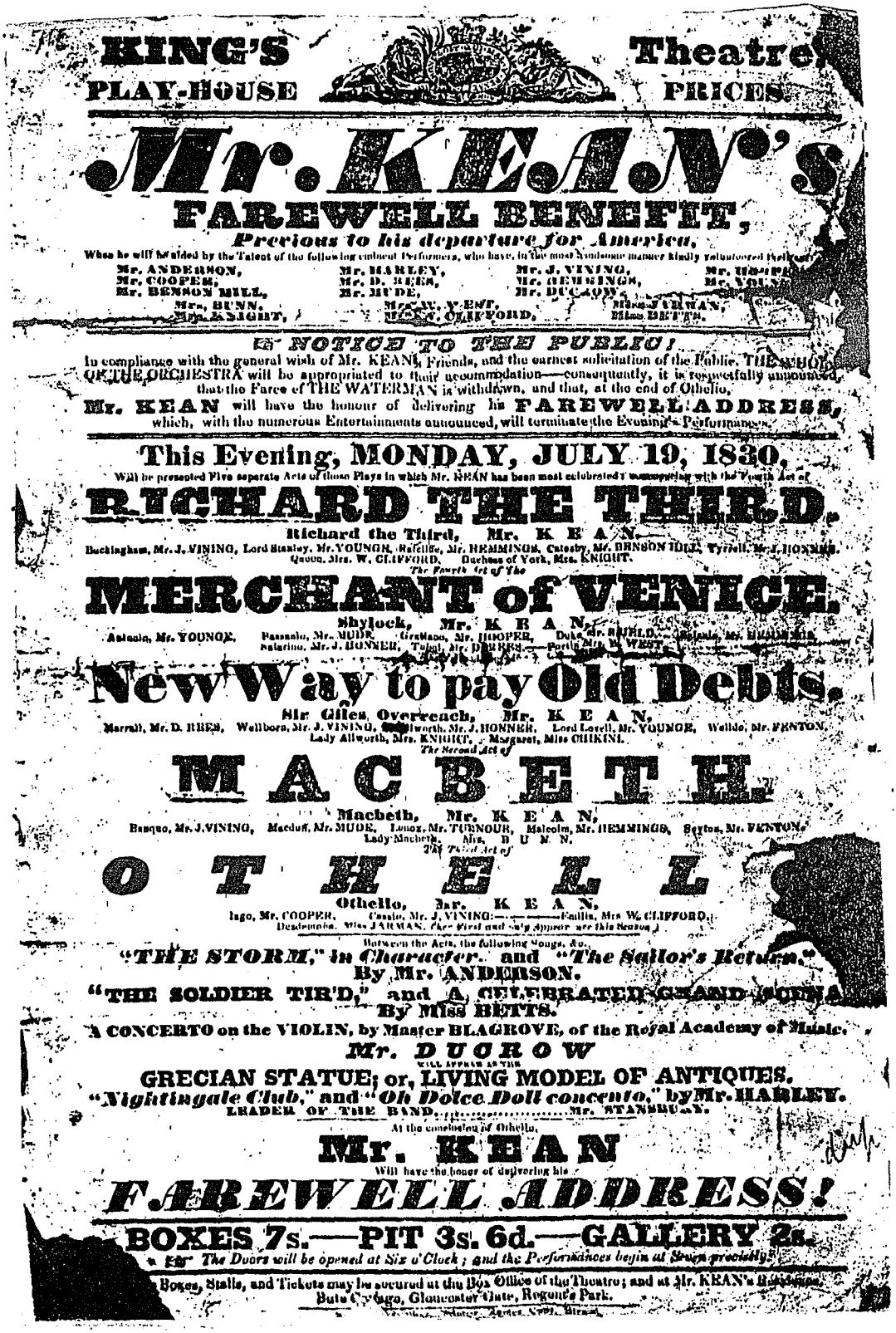
> Fight for me. I have no resources in myself; mind is gone, and body is hopeless. God knows my heart. I would do, but cannot. Memory, the first of goddesses, has forsaken me, and I am left without a hope but from those old resources that the public and myself are tired of. Damn, God damn ambition. The soul leaps, the body fails.[137]

At the end of June 1827, Kean went on another provincial tour, returning to London during the fall. Since Stephen Price, the manager of Drury Lane, had engaged his son Charles "for three years, at a salary of 10£, a week for the first, to be increased to 11£. and 12£. in case of success,"[138] Kean left Drury Lane for Covent Garden, which was under the management of Charles Kemble. Charles Kean opened at Drury Lane on 1 October 1827, as Young Norval in Home's Douglas.[139] The critics, for the most part, were not kind. Some said he lacked maturity. Others said that although he bore the name of a genius, he himself was not. Edmund, meanwhile, debuted at Covent Garden on 15 October 1827, as Shylock.[140] Other performances followed. On 21 December 1827, Kean played Othello to the Iago of Charles Mayne Young and the

Cassio of Charles Kemble.[141] Throughout the Winter season Kean was frequently ill, causing him to cancel some performances.

After retiring to his home in Bute in January 1828, Kean returned to Covent Garden for the Spring, 1828 season. In May 1828 Kean was performing his Richard III for a Parisian audience.[142] This was the first time that Kean had performed in Paris. Unfortunately, however, his impassioned style, with the Parisians accustomed to a more formal style, disappointed them. He was cooly received. After several performances, Kean left Paris. From Paris Kean returned to his island home in Bute and stayed there throughout the summer. On 1 October 1828 both he and his son Charles for the first time appeared together in Payne's Fall of Tarquin in Glasgow.[143] Kean played Brutus to Charles's Titus. On 13 October 1828 Kean commenced his second season at Covent Garden--performing many of his well-known roles and a new one (Virginius). On 15 December 1828, in the first of three performances, Kean personated Virginius in Sheridan Knowles's play Virginius.[144]

Kean's second season at Covent Garden was interrupted by illness early in 1829. After sufficiently recovering from his illness, he proceeded to tour the provinces with Charles. He performed at Belfast, Dublin, and Cork. At Dublin and Cork he played "Othello, Sir Giles, Macbeth, Virginius, Shylock, and Brutus . . . to



KING'S Theatre,
PLAY-HOUSE PRICES.

Mr. KEAN'S
FAREWELL BENEFIT,
Previous to his departure for America,

When he will be aided by the Talent of the following eminent Performers, who have, in the most handsome manner kindly volunteered their aid:—

Mr. ANDERSON, Mr. HARLEY, Mr. J. VINING, Mr. HAMMOND,
Mr. COOPER, Mr. D. REES, Mr. HEMMINGS, Mr. YOUNGE,
Mr. BENSON HILL, Mr. MUDE, Mr. DUCROW,
Mrs. BUNN, Mrs. AY. ENT, Miss JARMAN,
Mrs. KNIGHT, Mrs. W. CLIFFORD, Miss BETTS.

☞ NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC!

In compliance with the general wish of Mr. KEAN's Friends, and the earnest solicitation of the Public, THE BOXES OF THE ORCHESTRA will be appropriated to their accommodation—consequently, it is respectfully announced, that the Farce of THE WATERMAN is withdrawn, and that, at the end of Othello,

Mr. KEAN will have the honour of delivering his FAREWELL ADDRESS, which, with the numerous Entertainments announced, will terminate the Evening's Performances.

This Evening, MONDAY, JULY 19, 1830,

Will be presented Five separate Acts of those Plays in which Mr. KEAN has been most celebrated; commencing with the Fourth Act of

RICHARD THE THIRD.

Richard the Third, Mr. KEAN.

Buckingham, Mr. J. VINING, Lord Stanley, Mr. YOUNGE, Ratcliffe, Mr. HEMMINGS, Catesby, Mr. BENSON HILL, Tyrrell, Mr. J. HONNER.
Queen, Mrs. W. CLIFFORD. Duchess of York, Mrs. KNIGHT.

The Fourth Act of The

MERCHANT of VENICE.

Shylock, Mr. KEAN,

Antonio, Mr. YOUNGE. Bassanio, Mr. MUDE. Gratiano, Mr. HOOPER. Duke, Mr. BAILD. Salarino, Mr. J. HONNER. Tubal, Mr. REES. Portia, Mrs. W. WEST.

New Way to pay Old Debts.

Sir Giles Overreach, Mr. KEAN,

Marrall, Mr. D. REES. Wellborn, Mr. J. VINING. Allworth, Mr. J. HONNER. Lord Lovell, Mr. YOUNGE. Wellde, Mr. FENTON.
Lady Allworth, Mrs. KNIGHT. Margaret, Miss CHIKINI.

The Second Act of

MACBETH.

Macbeth, Mr. KEAN,

Banquo, Mr. J. VINING. Macduff, Mr. MUDE. Lenox, Mr. TURNOUR. Malcolm, Mr. HEMMINGS. Seyton, Mr. FENTON.
Lady Macbeth, Mrs. D U M N.

The Third Act of

O T H E L L O

Othello, Mr. KEAN,

Iago, Mr. COOPER. Cassio, Mr. J. VINING. Emilia, Mrs W. CLIFFORD.
Desdemona, Miss JARMAN. (Her First and only Appearance this Season.)

Between the Acts, the following Songs, &c.

"THE STORM," in Character, and "The Sailor's Return,"
By Mr. ANDERSON.

"THE SOLDIER TIR'D," and A CELEBRATED GRAND ARIA,
By Miss BETTS.

A CONCERTO on the VIOLIN, by Master BLAGROVE, of the Royal Academy of Music.

Mr. DUCROW
WILL APPEAR AS THE
GRECIAN STATUE; or, LIVING MODEL OF ANTIQUES.

"Nightingale Club," and "Oh Dolce Doll concerto," by Mr. HARLEY.

LEADER OF THE BAND, Mr. STANSBURY.

At the conclusion of Othello,

Mr. KEAN
Will have the honor of delivering his

FAREWELL ADDRESS!

BOXES 7s.—PIT 3s. 6d.—GALLERY 2s.

☞ The Doors will be opened at Six o'Clock; and the Performances begin at Seven precisely.

Boxes, Stalls, and Tickets may be secured at the Box Office of the Theatre; and at Mr. KEAN's Residence,
Bute Cottage, Gloucester Gate, Regent's Park.

Fig. 37. Playbill indicating that Kean intended to visit America for a third time in 1830.

the Iago, Wellborn, Macduff, Julius, Bassanio, and Titus of his son Charles."[145] Near the end of 1829, Kean severed his ties with Covent Garden because of a disagreement with Charles Kemble.[146]

Kean was back at Drury Lane on 2 December 1829, which "opened his twelfth Drury-lane season as Richard III."[147] On 8 March 1830, after cancellation of a performance in February, Kean finally impersonated Shakespeare's Henry V for the first time. However, as with the debacle of Grattan's Ben Nazir, Kean mutilated the text, transposing, cutting and altering lines throughout the evening. This was the last time that Kean ever attempted a new role.[148]

From March through May, Kean intermittently performed at Drury Lane. Primarily because of his enfeebled condition and a desperate need for money (Kean managed to squander most of the nearly £200,000 he had made during his career), Kean decided to retire to America after making farewell appearances in June and July, 1830 at the Haymarket Theatre. He played "Richard III, Shylock, Sir Giles Overreach, and King Lear at the Haymarket."[149] On 19 July 1830 Kean was advertised at the King's Theatre for his farewell benefit. According to the Times of 20 July 1830, Kean's appearance "drew together the largest concourse of people we ever saw assembled on any similar occasion."[150] He played five of his greatest parts, which consisted of the fourth acts of Richard III and the

Merchant of Venice, the fourth act of A New Way to Pay Old Debts, the second act of Macbeth and the third act of Othello. Afterwards he made the following address, which was meant to be his last speech ever before an English audience previous to his departure for America:

> Ladies and Gentlemen, I hope that none of you can understand the pain and agitation which fills my heart at this climax of my career, or the acute suffering I endure now that I am about to quit the country that has given me birth, and the people whom I have adored, to visit a land [America] where perhaps nothing but ill-health and sorrow await me. I feel it quite impossible to express my gratitude for the constant ebullitions of your approbation which you have this night and always bestowed upon me. For the favour and popularity I have always enjoyed, the fact of performing in one night all my favourite characters was the best, the only return my gratitude could make you. I will not particularly allude to past or future events, but now that I am about to leave you for ever, most earnestly from my heart I entreat that you will suffer no empirics to usurp the dramatic throne, to the ruin and disgrace of the drama. I must and will venture to assert, that the well-being of the stage is of the utmost consequence to a nation's morality. Ladies and gentlemen, the time has now arrived for me to return you all most fervent thanks, and to bid you a long, a last farewell.[151]

Following this address, the audience enthusiastically applauded Kean. The audience left the theatre believing they had seen him for the last time.

Approximately a week after his farewell benefit, Kean travelled to Bute "to make preparations for his departure."[152] It was there that he became seriously ill, which necessarily prompted him to abandon for good his third trip to the United States. Kean had hoped that his third visit to America would once more reap lavish rewards, permitting him to retire in comfort. Despite his

debility, Kean was compelled, because of his dire financial situation, to continue performing.

Although Kean was denied his wish to visit America once again, his son Charles was not. Now that Stephen Price, who had resigned his post at Drury Lane because of insurmountable debts, was back at New York's Park Theatre, Charles was engaged to appear at the Park Theatre in September 1830. He made his debut, like his father, as Richard III on 1 September 1830. The first impressions of his Richard, as with some of his other characters, disappointed American critics. His acting was generally considered weak and ineffectual when contrasted to that of the elder Kean. Philip Hone, the early nineteenth-century New York diarist, saw Charles Kean's first performance and was not impressed. In an entry for 1 September 1830 he says:

> I went to the Park Theatre to witness the first appearance in America of Charles Kean, the son of the celebrated tragedian . . . making every allowance for the disadvantages of a first appearance, I cannot perceive that he inherits any great proportion of his father's genius, and is, in my opinion, quite deficient in the requisite physical qualities of voice, figure, and deportment. Booth is playing tragedy at the Bowery Theatre, and I have no doubt will be greatly preferred by theatrical amateurs.[153]

Of Sir Giles Overreach (one of Edmund's most outstanding parts) of 5 September 1830, the New York American on 6 September 1830 noted the striking similarity to the "acting . . . of his father," although the similarity approached "mimicry" and "caricature." In spite of this,

said the American, Edmund Kean "is constantly brought to mind . . . the husky yet varied intonations of the voice are similar; they possess the same command over the features and the frame; and have in common the most expressive eye that ever pourtrayed the workings of the mind upon the stage."[154] Charles remained in America for two and a half years, returning to England in February 1833.[155]

After spending some restful and restorative months at Bute, Kean was performing again at Drury Lane in January 1831. With Price's resignation, Kean had hoped that he would be named the new lessee; but, instead, Alexander Lee was chosen. In the Spring of 1831 Kean finally leased a theatre, the King's Theatre at Richmond. He formed his own entourage of performers, with himself as the leading tragedian.[156] He also, from this time on, "fixed his residence at the cottage adjoining the little theatre at Richmond."[157] Moreover, from this time on, Kean alternately performed at Richmond, London and the provinces. In spite of recurring sickness, Kean was able to perform from "August to October 1831," at Richmond and twice a week at the Haymarket.[158]

From November 1831 through May 1832 Kean was performing in the provinces. In May 1832 he alternately acted at the Haymarket and Drury lane. His performances, however, more and more displayed a man who was extremely worn down. Dr. John Doran, who saw several of Kean's

performances of Richard III at the Haymarket in 1832, recalls one performance of Kean's Richard:

> The sight was pitiable. Genius was not traceable in that bloated face; intellect was all but quenched in these once matchless eyes; and the power seemed gone, despite the will that would recall it. I noted in a diary, that night, the above facts, and, in addition, that by bursts he was as grand as he had ever been,--that though he looked well as long as he was still, he moved only with difficulty using his sword as a stick.[159]

Charles Mayne Young, the tragedian who was nearly wrecked by Kean in 1821, retired from the stage in 1832. On 30 May 1832 Young gave his farewell performance at Covent Garden to an extremely packed house.[160] With Young's retirement, Kean and Macready were the remaining leading tragedians.

While Kean was residing and resting at his cottage home at Richmond, being cared for by both his Aunt Tidswell and his mother Nance Carey,[161] Charles and Fanny Kemble journeyed to the United States. Chiefly because of serious financial difficulties, Charles Kemble chose to visit America, as Kean had done in 1825. Philip Hone, who had also seen Charles Kean's first performance at the Park Theatre, was present at Charles Kemble's premier performance at the Park Theatre on 17 September 1832. He was not impressed with Kemble's Hamlet, for he records in his diary of September 17 that

> his pauses are too long and too frequent, so much so as to make the representation fatiguing; and for myself, I confess that although my judgment is perfectly satisfied, his Hamlet falls far short of the power to interest me and give me pleasure of Kean's

> [Edmund?] or even Wallack's, but, on the whole, a fine actor, a good study for the younger men, and his visit to this country ought to improve the American stage.[162]

However, the New York American of 18 September 1832 considered Kemble's Hamlet the "finest Hamlet we have ever had in this country. For our own parts we may say, that he is the only actor who, on our stage, realized our conception of the noble and philisophic Dane."[163]

Of Fanny Kemble's debut on the following night (18 September), Hone records in his diary of 18 September 1832 that

> Miss Fanny Kemble made her first appearance this evening in the character of Bianca, in Milman's tragedy of "Fazio." . . . She has some faults: her low tones are sepulchral and indistinct, . . . and she is at times somewhat monotonous, particularly in unimpassioned passages . . . It was the fault of John Kemble and of Mrs. Siddons, and is that of her father . . . But on the whole I am quite satisfied that we have never seen her equal on the American stage, and England has witnessed none since Miss O'Neil.[164]

Kean began his final season at Drury Lane on 5 November 1832. In November he was obliged to act with Macready at Drury Lane. On 26 November 1832 Kean played Othello to the Iago of Macready. Of this historic meeting, George Henry Lewes fondly remembers:

> I remember, the last time I saw him [Kean] play Othello, how puny he appeared beside Macready [Iago], until in the third act, when roused by Iago's taunts and insinuations, he moved towards him with a gouty hobble, seized him by the throat, and, in a well-known explosion, "Villian! be sure you prove," etc., seemed to swell into a stature which made Macready appear small. On that very evening, when gout made it difficult for him to display his accustomed grace, when a drunken hoarseness had ruined the once,

> matchless voice, such was the irrestible pathos--manly, not tearful--which vibrated in his tones and expressed itself in look and gestures, that old men leaned their heads upon their arms and fairly sobbed.[165]

On 12 March 1833 Kean played Richard III for the very last time at Drury Lane. Because of a misunderstanding with Captain Polhill, the new lessee of Drury Lane, Kean broke his ties with Drury Lane for good. On 25 March 1833 Kean made not only his last appearance at Covent Garden, but it was to be his final appearance on <u>any</u> stage. On this momentous evening both Kean and his son Charles performed for the first time together on a London stage. It was during this performance that Edmund nearly died in the arms of his son Charles. Dr. Doran saw this performance:

> Edmund Kean was so shattered in frame, that he had scarcely strength to pass over him the dress of the Moor; so shattered in nerve, that he dreaded some disaster. Brandy gave some little heart to the greatly fallen actor, but he anxiously enjoined his son to be ever near him, in case some mischance, and he went through the part, dying as he went, till after giving the sweet utterance, as of old, to the celebrated "Farewell," ending with "Othello's occupation's gone!" he attempted to utter the next speech, and in the attempt fell on his son's shoulder, with a whispered moan, "I am dying,--speak to them for me!" The curtain descended on him for ever.[166]

After the performance he was taken to the nearby Wrekin Tavern, in Broad Court, where attempts were made to revive him. Afterwards he was removed to his home at Richmond.

Kean spent his final weeks at his home at Richmond, where he was constantly attended by Dr. Douchez (his physician), John Lee (his secretary,) his son Charles and

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

The Public is respectfully informed, that

Mr. KEAN

was last Thursday received in the character of **SHYLOCK** with acclamations;—and in order to meet the generally expressed desire that he should appear with his Son,

The Tragedy of OTHELLO

will be acted this evening,
when they will perform together, for the first time.

This present MONDAY, March 25, 1833, Shakspeare's Tragedy of

OTHELLO.

The Duke of Venice, Mr. RANSFORD,
Brabantio, Mr. DIDDEAR, Gratiano, Mr. TURNOUR,
Lodovico, Mr. PAYNE, Montano, Mr. HAINES,
Othello by Mr. KEAN,
Cassio, Mr. ABBOTT,
Iago, *(first time)* Mr. CHARLES KEAN,
Roderigo, Mr. FORESTER, Antonio, Mr. IRWIN, Julio, Mr. T. Matthews
Giovanni, Mr. J. COOPER, Luca, Mr. BRADY, Lorenzo Mr. Bender
Messenger Mr MEARS, Marco Mr Collet, Cosmo Mr Heath, Paolo Mr Stanley
Desdemona, *(first time)* Miss E. TREE,
Emilia, Mrs. LOVELL.

After which, (3d time) A NEW FARCE, in Two Acts, called

A Nabob for an Hour

Mr. Frampton, Mr. ABBOTT, Sam Hobbs, Mr. BARTLEY,
Dick Dumpy, Mr. KEELEY,
Emma Leslie, Miss SYDNEY, Nanny Scraggs, Mrs. KEELEY.

To conclude with the **Grand Ballet of**

MASANIELLO.

Masaniello, *(Fisherman of Portici)* Mons. COULON,
Alphonso, *(Viceroy of Naples)* Mons. THEODORE GUERINOT,
Pietro, Mr. PAYNE, Borella, Mr. GOURIET, Morino, Mr. MICHAU, Lusurini, Mr. T. MATTHEWS
Francisco, Mr. CHICKINI, Lazzaroni, Mr. ELLER, Lorenzo, Mr. IRWIN, Selva, Mr. BERTRAM
Fenella, *(Sister of Masaniello)* Madame PROCHE GIUBILEI.
Elvire, *(Wife of Alphonse)* Mlle. ADELE, Dame of Honour, Miss THORPE,

On this occasion, the Vocal Parts will be sustained by

Mess. WILSON, I. BENNETT, DURUSET, HENRY, MORLEY, G. PENSON, RANSFORD, STANSBURY
Mesdames H. CAWSE DALY, HORTON, INVERARITY, KEELEY, LEE, E. ROMER, SHIRREFF.

In Act I. **A PAS DEUX** by Mons. **THEODORE GUERINOT** and Mlle. **ADELE.**
In act II. **A BOLERO** by **MONS. COULON & MADAME PROCHE GIUBILEI.**
A TARENTELLE by **Mr. MICHAU** and **Mrs. VEDY.**

PLACES for the BOXES to be had of Mr. NOTTER, at the Box-Office, Hart-Street, from Ten till Four.

Auber's new Opera of

THE COINERS,

Or, The SOLDIER's OATH,

having been honoured with the most COMPLEME SUCCESS, and announced for repetition amidst general and enthusiastic applause, will be performed To-morrow & Saturday next, And Three Times a Week after Easter.

A NABOB FOR AN HOUR

having again been received with roars of laughter and applause, will be repeated

Every Evening until further notice.

Tomorrow, (2d time) AUBER's New Opera of **The COINERS, or the Seldier's Oath**
With (4th time) **A Nabob for an Hour.**
To conclude with (38th time) the new Drama of **NELL GWYNNE.**
On Wednesday, (**Last Night but One**) the highly popular New Dramatic Oratorio, called
The Israelites in Egypt; or, the **Passage of the Red Sea.**
On Easter-Monday will be produced, a New **SERIO-COMIC LEGENDARY FAIRY TALE.** (which has been long in preparation,) to be called

The ELFIN SPRITE,

AND

The Grim Grey Woman.

Fig. 38. Playbill of Kean's last performance, 25 March 1833. This performance marks the first time Kean and his son Charles performed together in London. Courtesy of the Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ n.c. 804.

Miss Tidswell. In an attempt to reconcile himself with his wife, Mary, Kean sent her a letter, asking her to "come home; forget and forgive."[167] She did. Shortly afterwards, after a temporary respite, Kean died on 15 May 1833 at Richmond. Of Kean's death, the Bell's Weekly Messenger said:

> This melancholy event took place on Wednesday morning, at twenty minutes past nine o'clock, at his house, at Richmond, in the presence of Mr. Douchez, his principal medical attendant, and Mr. Lee, his constant and faithful secretary. Mr. Douchez postponed several consultations in town, on Tuesday, for the purpose of attending the last moments of his friend, and at twelve o'clock proceeded to Richmond. On his arrival, he found his patient in a very lethargic state, unconscious of anything passing around him, and towards evening a large accumulation of mucus took place in the bronchiae (air passages of the lungs,) vulgarly known by the term "rattles," giving evident signs of his speedy dissolution. He continued in this state during nearly the whole of the night, occasionally muttering religious interjections.
>
> At five o'clock in the morning he appeared to recognize Mr. Douchez and Mr. Lee, and grasped the former by the hand, throwing, at the same, a look of beneficent kindness upon them, which can be better imagined than described. As the morning approached, an attempt was made to pass something through his lips, but it was in vain. The poor sufferer afterwards made several ineffectual attempts to speak, and at the hour before mentioned, still grasping the hand of Mr. Douchez, he fixed his eyes steadily upon him and Mr. Lee for a minute, heaved one sign, and expired; and thus departed the brightest luminary upon the British stage.[168]

Edmund Kean was only forty-six years old at the time of his death. Not only does his memory live on as one of England's greatest tragedians, but also as one of the greatest English actors to have appeared on the American stage.

CHAPTER XIII

CONCLUSION

As documented in this study, Kean's appearances in the United States constitute one of the most exciting and thrilling periods in nineteenth-century American theatre history. His appearances in 1820/21 and 1825/26 significantly influenced the history of nineteenth-century American theatre.

His visits to America demonstrate how this electrifying actor, one of the greatest ever to have performed on an American stage, captivated the hearts and minds of countless playgoers and critics. His visits reveal how a budding America, formerly a colony of England, was beginning to assert its own artistic, moral, and nationalistic values--charting its own course towards cultural independence. This striving towards "independence" had a great impact on the reaction to Kean during both engagements. In their zealousness to exert their own standards of artistic excellence newspapers like the New York American criticized Kean "as a proof of the independence and superiority of American taste." This independence also extended to American moral and nationalistic standards.

Finally, it is unlikely that any actor before or since Kean has received the singular public and critical attention that he did. In 1820, Kean the actor was carefully scrutinized; whereas, in 1825, Kean the man was carefully scrutinized. The extensive discussions and debates about his merits as an actor and his "private worth" seem unique.

Kean came to the United States for a variety of reasons. In 1820, he visited America to gain fame, fortune, and perhaps to explore further the trail already pioneered by his idol George Frederick Cooke, who appeared in the United States from 1810 to 1812. Kean's dislike for Robert William Elliston, the manager of Drury Lane Theatre, must certainly have played a role in his decision to tour the United States. Finally, his popularity in England was on the decline, primarily because of his bickerings with management, actors, actresses, and playwrights; a tour of the United States might restore some of the esteem lost in England.

The American press and its readers were aware of Kean years before he came to the United States. His innovative style, which typified the romantic school of acting, was often a topic of discussion in American journals. Americans knew that Kean was the acknowledged successor to the great David Garrick. Americans knew that Kean was declared a genius by numerous English critics. Americans knew that romantic writers, like Keats, Hazlitt,

and Byron, considered Kean's impassioned, energetic, and forceful acting the embodiment of their romantic ideals--regarding him as the savior of the English stage. At long last, Shakespeare could be appreciated fully on the stage. At long last, Shakespeare was no longer solely the prerogative of the printed page. Kean's fiery, bustling acting, which was often uneven,[1] radically differed from the rhetorical, cold declaiming of Kemble and his disciples. Americans knew that Cooper, the darling of their stage, was one such disciple. This circumstance provided the press with an opportunity to debate the merits of both actors before and after Kean's arrival. Americans also knew that Kean was arrogant. Before Kean's arrival, some Americans were prejudiced against him--suspecting both his acting style, which potentially threatened favorites like Cooper, and his character.

In 1819, approximately a year before Kean appeared in the United States, the New York National Advocate and the New York American offered reasons for Cooper's waning popularity. Both newspapers ascribed it to a preoccupation and fascination with the new school of acting introduced by the "disciples of modern nature." Although Kean initiated the romantic school of acting, both James W. Wallack and John Maywood introduced the so-called modern "school of nature" to American audiences in 1818--two years before Kean's 29 November 1820 debut in

New York.[2] The American was especially annoyed with the "modern improvement in transatlantic acting"--considering it an "eccentric innovation." The "love of novelty," said the American, is to blame for Cooper's loss in favor.

Shortly before Kean's first performance, the American and the New York Evening Post engaged in an intense debate about Cooper's merits as an actor. "Crito," writing for the Post, severely criticized Cooper's Virginius. He believed that Cooper's acting lacked the necessary feeling to convincingly portray Virginius. The American, on the other hand, denounced "Crito's" argument, surmising that excessive criticism of Cooper had been instigated to prepare the way for Kean--at the expense of Cooper. The American argued that "Crito's" hard criticism of Cooper was employed merely in order to exploit the imminent appearance of Kean. If Kean was truly great, said the American, he need not be bolstered by inflated criticism.[3]

Comparisons between Kean and Cooper continued throughout Kean's engagements.[4] During Kean's engagements extensive articles were devoted entirely to discussions of the merits of both performers. It is both extraordinary and surprising to see actors receive so much attention.[5] The importance of an actor in nineteenth-century America was indeed unusual and remarkable, especially with other pressing matters at hand.[6]

In spite of some misgivings about Kean's "novel" style, both before and after his arrival, critics and audiences generally regarded him as a most extraordinary actor. Coleman, the editor of the New York Evening Post, admitted that Kean came to the United States with untold "prepossessions in his favor" and "prejudices to encounter." Coleman and other writers, in cities like Boston and Philadelphia, were acquainted with Kean's alleged stage tricks and physical liabilities: "sudden starts," "frequent and unexpected pauses," rapid transitions, sudden changes in pitch, his whirlwinds of passion, his middling stature and his hoarseness of voice.[7] In spite of this, however, they truly did not know what to expect. Although they had seen Wallack and Maywood, both imitators of Kean, they were merely copies of the original. Not until Coleman saw Kean for the first time, in Richard III, did he acknowledge Kean the "most complete actor . . . that ever appeared" on an American stage.

Other cities, such as Philadelphia and Boston, soon followed in their praise of Kean. Theatres were usually filled with rapturous playgoers. In Boston, for the first time ever, box seats were sold at auction to accommodate the needs of spectators.[8] "No actor before his first appearance, ever so excited the curiosity and engrossed the attention of the people of Boston," said Mossop in the New-England Galaxy. Audiences filled the Federal Street

Theatre as never before. As in New York, Bostonians declared Kean the greatest actor they had ever seen. Kean's "wild and original conceptions," "grandness and boldness of exhibitions," "strong and accurate mind," "simple, sheer passion," "genius," and ceaseless "intensity," delighted audiences play after play.

Notwithstanding this enthusiasm, however, there were some who questioned Kean's preeminence. Kean encountered the "prejudices" that Coleman spoke of. The New-England Galaxy freely admitted that it doubted "the omnipotence of" Kean's "genius," even though they had not yet seen him perform. Some newspapers, like the New York American and the New England Palladium, clearly disliked Kean.[9] The American, for instance, complained about Kean's use of "long pauses," "quick transitions," and "exuberance of manner." Others criticized his "mannerisms," "hurried flows," "bursting impetuosities," "fiery activity," "rancorous snarlings," "sarcastic murmurings," and "inflections of voice." In general, Kean's critics claimed that his acting abounded in the use of "stage tricks." In general, Kean's advocates believed that his intense acting was inspired by nature and genius. If Kean did not completely satisfy his critics, he was nevertheless triumphant.

Kean's second visit to Boston, in May 1821, once more generated excitement, but this time it was of a different kind. Kean's arrogance was well known to many

Americans before he came to the United States; however, not until Kean's second engagement in Boston was there evidence of it.[10] Because of a poorly filled house, Kean hastily decided to not only break his engagement, but also leave the theatre without performing Richard III. This did not sit well with many Americans. Newspapers in Boston and New York were infuriated with Kean's action--considering it both presumptuous and contemptible. They felt that Americans were at long last seeing the "real" Kean. No longer was Kean the actor only suspect, but now also Kean the man. Shortly after Kean left Boston, he returned to New York. From New York he left for England in June 1821.

Kean's return to England was chiefly caused by the furor that followed his ill-advised decision to hastily terminate the May 1821 Boston engagement. The newspapers that condemned Kean's conduct were especially irritated by his rationale for leaving Boston, namely, that Bostonians (indirectly indicting all Americans) did not appreciate Shakespeare in the warmer months.

Kean's first American engagements exerted a profound influence on the interpretation of many Shakespearian and non-Shakespearian roles. It was generally acknowledged that Kean's impersonation of Richard III, Othello, King Lear, Shylock, Brutus and Sir Giles Overreach surpassed his predecessors and contemporaries on the American stage. Most American critics were overwhelmed by the

power of his performances. Thomas Snowden said in 1825 that Kean's personations were performed "in a style of excellence, to which there is no parallel in the present age of dramatic talent."[11] Although Kean's Othello was regarded as his crowning achievement in England, his Richard a close second, in America most writers considered his King Lear his most "masterful portrayal." And if it was his most "masterful portrayal," it then was the most "masterful portrayal" on the American stage. The power of Kean's Lear, the bustle of his Richard, the poetic beauty of his Othello, the solemnity of his Brutus, the fury of his Sir Giles, and the uniqueness of his Shylock left lasting impressions on an American audience who had never seen his like before.

By 1825 Kean's reasons for visiting the United States were somewhat different from those of 1820. Although he had to replenish his diminished fortune, he was compelled to leave England principally because of his infamous affair with Alderman Cox's wife, which had produced considerable moral indignation in the English press. Newspapers, such as the Times, were especially mortified both by Kean's effrontery and his sudden return to the stage on 24 January 1825 at Drury Lane Theatre, only seven days after the public trial at which Alderman Cox was awarded 200 pounds for damages. The riots that followed his return to the stage reportedly surpassed the notorious O.P. riots, which occurred during John Philip

Kemble's management at Covent Garden in 1812. The press regarded Kean's conduct with disdain--considering his behavior inconsistent with its supposedly high standard of morals, which were largely based in puritanical tradition.

Another factor in his return to America was his hope to resuscitate his declining health. The ordeal of the trial, which estranged him from his wife and son, and the humiliation and disclosure of the liasion--including the publication of eighty letters sent by Kean to Charlotte Cox, worsened his already failing health. Finally, Kean entertained the possibility of making the United States his permanent residence--away from the scandal and troubles that beset him in his homeland.

The disgrace of the trial and the ensuing riots were widely publicised in the United States before Kean's reappearance in New York on 14 November 1825. Before and immediately after Kean came back to the United States, fervent debates circulated in the newspapers in New York and Boston about the propriety of permitting Kean to perform. The apprehension that glutted the newspapers was essentially based on moral and patriotic grounds.

The negative publicity engendered by the trial, especially with its moral implications,[12] made Kean unfit, in the eyes of some Americans,[13] to act on an American stage. Kean's misconduct in England and his rash breaking of his May 1821 Boston engagement raised serious objections to his reappearance in America. According to

Colonel William L. Stone, the editor of the New York Commercial Advertiser, and Buckingham, the editor of the Boston Courier and New England Palladium, the leading opponents of Kean in 1825/26,[14] Kean's shameful behavior in England and his contemptible behavior in Boston made him ill-suited to perform at the Park Theatre, the Federal Street Theatre, or for that matter, at any American theatre.

Once again Kean was placed on public trial, this time, however, in the New York and Boston press. Newspapers expressed their own tastes, which were meant to differ from those of the British. If Kean was rejected, spurned, and scorned by his countrymen, then, they asked, should Americans be any less scrupulous than Englishmen by allowing him to perform on their stages? If English women were not encouraged to attend the theatre to see Kean, why should American women attend his theatre? Are American women less chaste than their British cousins? Should our daughters countenance such a man, inquiring fathers asked? But, more importantly, should Americans countenance a man, an actor, who previously insulted not only Bostonians, but all Americans, by unceremoniously and impudently breaking his engagement in Boston? If Kean made a suitable apology to Bostonians, would it sufficiently efface his past error and present disgrace? Should this "vagabond," "this lump of moral pollution," an outcast from his own country, be allowed to perform on

their stage? To these questions they answered "no." Kean the man--Kean the adulterer--Kean the Englishman was tried and found guilty.

Some sensible voices in the press, however, spoke out in his defense. They argued for fairness, justice, and generosity. They argued for the actor, the genius who had no equal on either an English or American stage--the acknowledged successor to David Garrick. Shall we deprive a man of his "subsistence" merely because of moral indiscretions, some asked? Major Noah, the editor of the New York National Advocate and the main supporter of Kean during his reengagements, urged Americans to separate the man from his profession. Kean has not come to teach Americans about morals, said Noah, he has come simply to do what he does best--act. If we do not enquire into the morals of our associates, why should we enquire into the morals of Mr. Kean? It is preposterous. Noah believed that those who opposed Kean were in reality the "enemies of the theatre"--the self-professed guardians of the drama.[15] If Kean were an "angel," the pretenders of morality would still shun him; after all, he is an actor.[16]

Although Thomas Snowden, the editor of the other National Advocate, agreed with Noah's assertion that Kean's enemies were truly the "enemies of the drama," the "snufflers" who have "identified the man with the cause of the Drama,"[17] he also felt that Kean's severest critics

"have waged a war" upon him "because his extraordinary powers, his matchless discrimination as an actor, through [sic] the claims of their favorites into shade." While it is possible that the basis for condemning Kean was motivated by his profligate conduct in England, it is very likely, however, that some Americans still resented Kean's lofty position as the world's greatest English-speaking actor--displacing their own favorites such as Cooper. The New York Commercial Advertiser, like many Boston publications, not only reproached Kean's "moral degradation," but, also, "his over-acting," which they insisted "destroyed the effect of what little talent he possessed."

If Stone, Noah, Snowden, Buckingham and others considered it necessary to debate the suitability of allowing Kean to act on the American stage, Walsh in Philadelphia did not. Robert Walsh, the editor of the Philadelphia National Gazette , thought that Kean's appearance in the United States had been given too much attention in the press,[18] especially since he was "disgraced" in England.

On 14 November 1825 Kean made his first appearance of this second tour at the Park Theatre in New York.[19] This event resulted in the first riot at a public theatre in an American city. Kean attempted to perform Richard III. The reception was bedlam from beginning to end, with friends of Kean vying with his opponents to outdo each

other.[20] The performance, witnessed by the largest audience ever assembled at the Park Theatre, was interrupted by incessant applause and hissing that prevented the actors from being heard. Throughout the evening various objects were hurled at Kean interrupting the performance. It was indeed an evening of "riot and confusion," with "not one word of the play" heard by "an mortal in the house."[21]

This unprecedented incident sparked a heated debate between New York and Boston. Noah believed, as did Snowden, that "an organized opposition" from Boston was responsible for the commotion. Throughout the performance, claimed Noah and Snowden, the rioters "constantly vociferated Boston--send him to Boston." Kean's supporters, on the other hand, frequently exclaimed "away with the noisy Bostonians"--"away with Buckingham--" "off with his head." Although Noah blamed Bostonians for the excitement, which was adamantly denied by the Boston Courier and other newspapers, it was most probably a concerted effort by both Bostonians and New Yorkers.[22]

On 16 November 1825 many New York newspapers published an apology written by Kean. In it, he expressed thanks for the kindness given him by "the inhabitants of New York," he acknowledged committing an "error," and wished to return to Boston "to apologise for" his "indiscretions." He, also, expressed a desire to end his career in the United States,[23] especially since he was

no longer the "proud representative of Shakespeare's heroes," with "the spark of ambition" now "extinct."[24] Several New York newspapers, and most Boston newspapers, responded negatively to his apology. Although most papers considered his moral indiscretions the foremost charge against him, they, nevertheless, were disturbed by his inability to specifically articulate and acknowledge his offense in Boston. This they believed was another instance of his "arrogance and vanity."

After the first performance, the rest of Kean's engagement was peaceful and tranquil. By the fourth performance, Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice, women were once more attending the theatre.[25]

From New York, Kean went to Albany--performing there for a few nights in early December. During his highly successful engagement, Kean, for the first time, met the rising American star Edwin Forrest. This was an especially important meeting, since both actors, one on the rise (Forrest) and the other on the decline (Kean), performed in Othello, Richard III and Brutus. Kean played Othello to Forrest's Iago, Richard to his Richmond, and Brutus to his Titus. This encounter apparently exerted a profound influence on Forrest's career. Later, in 1826, while they were performing at the Bowery Theatre in New York, critics noted the similarity between the fiery acting of Forrest and that of Kean.

After leaving Albany, Kean went to Boston. There he planned to fulfill an engagement and make restitution for his slight to Boston in 1821.

Just before Kean's arrival in Boston, newspapers continued to debate the propriety of allowing him to perform at the Federal Street Theatre. Newspapers asked the same questions that were raised before and soon after Kean arrived in the United States. As before, his "private worth," which may more accurately be called his "moral worth," was censured. Although Kean submitted a public apology to the newspapers, published in the 21 December 1825 morning editions, it was largely rejected by the press for its seeming lack of humility. This "card," they argued, clearly revealed Kean's "arrogance and vanity." On the eve of the December 21 performance, enormous crowds gathered to purchase tickets for the incredible purpose of simply booing him!

As in New York, another riot ensued. This time, however, Kean was not able to perform. The riot resulted in the destruction of a considerable portion of the theatre--necessitating the closing of the theatre for repairs. This was the first time that such a disturbance had taken place in a Boston theatre. Even though threats were made on Kean's life, he was able to secretly leave Boston in safety. Following the Boston debacle, Kean completed two successful engagements in Philadelphia,[26] one in New Orleans, several in Canada, and three more in

New York[27] before finally leaving the United States, from New York, in December 1826.

In 1826, Kean left the United States for the following reaasons. His health was failing.[28] He was no longer the main attraction as he had been in 1821[29]--performers such as William Conway, the Hamblins, the Garcias, William Charles Macready and the rising American star Edwin Forrest were competing. Finally, the likelihood of other English stars coming to America and an offer to assume the lesseeship of Drury Lane Theatre,[30] must also have influenced his decision to return home.

Kean's eminently successful engagements in the United States inspired other notable performers to come to America. In 1821, shortly after Kean left the United States, Junius Brutus Booth, who was considered a disciple of Kean, came to America. He successfully performed in New York, Boston and other cities from 1821 through 1825--leaving just before Kean returned to New York to begin his second series of engagements. Shortly after Kean returned to England in December 1826, Junius Brutus Booth came back to the United States. From then on, Booth remained in the United States,--which established the renowned first family of American actors, the Booths.

Aside from Junius Brutus Booth and the visits of William Conway and the Hamblins, perhaps the most esteemed of the group arrived in October 1826, William Charles Macready. Macready stayed in the United States from 1826

through 1827--performing at various theatres including the Park Theatre and Federal Street Theatre. His return visit in 1846 ignited the infamous Astor Place riot.

Kean's "novel" acting style served as a model not only for Junius Brutus Booth and Edwin Forrest, but, also, for James W. Wallack who, after arriving in the United States in 1818, went on to manage several theatres in New York before his death in 1864. It is reasonable to assume that Kean's "unique" acting style greatly influenced generations of American actors who followed the Booths, Forrests and Wallacks.

In all, what can be said about the American reaction to Kean? What did we learn from the American writers' criticisms of Kean? It is evident that the "prejudices" that preceded Kean's arrival, both in 1820 and 1825, greatly influenced his reception in the United States. These "prejudices" were formulated from suspicions about his "new" acting style and his decadent behavior.

In 1820, Kean's advocates and adversaries concentrated principally on his "novel" acting style. Kean's advocates were intoxicated with the intensity, buoyancy, and naturalness of his acting. The stories they had read and heard about his "genius," from the reports of the romantic writers and other English critics, was confirmed both by the brilliance and uniqueness of his interpretations. Even though they recognized some "flaws" in his acting style, as did some of the romantics and

other English writers, his spirited acting was a decided relief from the stale formalism of the "Kemblelite" school of acting as personified in the likes of Cooper. For them, Kean was indeed the "genius" they expected--the likes of which they had never seen before. Whatever "prejudices" they maintained about his acting before his arrival were eradicated by his genius.

Kean's adversaries, on the other hand, were not fully convinced as were his admirers that he was truly a genius. They faulted his use of so-called "stage tricks." They complained about his "over-acting." Although Kean may have been guilty of tearing "a passion to tatters," it is conceivable that Kean's critics mistook his impassioned acting for "over-acting," as they were accustomed to the more stately acting of their favorites like Cooper.[31] Perhaps in their earnestness to establish tastes independent from the British--exemplifying the "superiority of American taste," Kean's critics were unduly severe in their criticism. In spite of the probing and often illuminating criticism about Kean's acting, which frequently agreed in substance with some English reviews, we must read that criticism with some caution because of the limitation of the essentially amateurish caliber of some of the American critics. Moreover, Kean's foes held negative views about him even before his arrival.

In 1825, Kean's critics were no longer concerned about his acting style. His "private worth" became the central issue. This circumstance may be attributed mainly to the following reasons. The "newness" of his acting style had worn off. And his "moral indiscretions" superseded detailed discussions about his acting. Moreover, Kean's opponents seized upon the opportunity to further advance their "independence of taste" as a proof of the superiority of American ideals. Unfortunately, this was accomplished at the expense of Kean the actor. Since Kean's reengagement was devoted almost entirely to discussions about his "private worth," we learn virtually nothing "new" about his acting this second time around.

Much of the information that I have provided, may lead to possible fruitful future research on such matters as the attendance of women in the American theatre in the 1820s, the differences between British and American theatrical criticism, attitudes toward moral issues, especially as related to performers, and how performers, especially "stars," were contracted and paid in early nineteenth-century America.[32] The study also provides many original source materials on such matters as early nineteenth-century theatre criticism and history, the evolution of the curtain call, the composition and attitudes of the American audience and acting styles of the day. In fact, it reveals how theatre may help to reflect the cultural and social history of the period.

APPENDIX A

DRAFT OF KEAN'S DRURY LANE CONTRACT: 1814

In figures 39 and 40 may be seen what appears to be the original draft of a contract drawn up between the proprietors (Whitebread and Arnold) of Drury Lane theatre and Edmund Kean. Unfortunately the date of the contract is not legible. However, since Kean made his debut at Drury Lane on 27 January 1814, it is very likely that the contract was drafted during December of 1813, or at the very latest, at the beginning of January. From what is discernible of the hand-written material, it seems that Kean negotiated a three year agreement at an escalating salary of eight pounds for the first full year, nine pounds for the second season, and for the final season or seasons, ten pounds. However, the Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres claims that Kean's original contract called "for three seasons, at eight guineas for the first season, ten the second, and twelve the third." After Kean's first performance at Drury, the committee evidently realized the treasure they had found, and astutely renegotiated Kean's contract for five years "at a

salary for the first year of sixteen pounds, per week, to be increased for the second to eighteen pounds, and for the three last years to twenty pounds per week, with a benefit each season."[2]

Articles of Agreement indented made and entered into this [illegible] day of [illegible] one thousand eight hundred and [illegible] Between THE THEATRE ROYAL DRURY LANE COMPANY OF PROPRIETORS of the one part, and Edmund Kean [illegible]

of the other part (that is to say)

The said Company of Proprietors, do hereby agree to engage and employ, and by these presents do engage and employ the said Edmund Kean [illegible] as a Performer at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, in the County of Middlesex, or at such other Theatre as the said Company of Proprietors, their Successors, Lessees, or Assigns, shall use or employ within the City and Liberties of Westminster for the time being, for the Term of present Season of Performances to commence from the 7th day of December instant at the rate of the Weekly Salary, and according to the usual Playhouse payment of [illegible] for every Six Nights of Theatrical Performances at the said Theatre Royal Drury Lane, or at such other Theatre as aforesaid, And so in proportion for any less number of Nights of Theatrical Performances in the week, so long as the said Edmund Kean [illegible] shall and do well and duly perform, and fulfil the Engagements and Agreements hereinafter contained, on [illegible] part, such Weekly Salary or payment to be made, if demanded, on the last day of every Week of Performance, at the Treasury or Pay Office of the said Theatre Royal Drury Lane, or of such other Theatre as aforesaid, during the usual Office hours, the Stoppages as herein mentioned, if any shall be incurred, being first made thereout. AND the said Company of Proprietors, do hereby Covenant and Agree to and with the said Edmund Kean [illegible] Executors, and Administrators, that the said Edmund Kean having duly performed [illegible] Agreements and Engagements in the manner hereinafter mentioned, but not otherwise, shall be allowed the use of the said Theatre, or such other Theatre as aforesaid, for one Benefit Night in every Season during the said Term, to perform there such one Play, or Opera, and one Burletta, or Ballet, or Farce, or Musical Afterpiece, to be chosen out of the Common Stock List of acting Plays, as [illegible] shall fix upon, such Night, as to the priority and order thereof to be named and assigned by the Manager for the time being of such Theatre, according to the Rank and amount of Salary of the said Edmund Kean and according to the usage observed in the London Theatres; the said Edmund Kean first paying unto the Treasurer for the time being of such Theatre the Sum of Two Hundred Guineas for such use of the said Theatre, exclusively of extra Charges for New Dresses, Copying, Printing, Advertising, and Supernumeraries, and other incidental Charges, if any there be. Provided always in case the said sum of Two Hundred Guineas and the amount of such extra Charges shall not be paid previously to such Benefit Night, Then it is hereby agreed by and between the said Parties hereto, that it shall and may be lawful to and for the Sub-Committee of management of the said Company of Proprietors, and their Successors, Lessees, or Assigns, or the Treasurer for the time being, to stop and retain the said sum of Two Hundred Guineas, together with the amount of such extra Charges out of the Monies to be received on such Benefit Night at the Doors of the said Theatre: And in case the amount of the Monies so to be received shall not be sufficient to pay and defray the same, then that the deficiency shall be retained and made good by and out of the Weekly Salary due or to become due to the said Edmund Kean and in case the amount of the said Salary shall not be sufficient, then the said Edmund Kean shall and will be answerable for and pay the deficiency on demand, to the said Company of Proprietors, their Successors, Lessees, or Assigns, or if the said Company of Proprietors, their Successors, Lessees, or Assigns, shall think fit, give such reasonable Security as may be demanded for the payment of deficiencies that may be due on account of the said Charges: PROVIDED ALWAYS AND it is hereby further declared and agreed, by and between the said Parties, that in case the said Edmund Kean [illegible] shall at any time during the said Term of [illegible] by Sickness, Indisposition, Infirmity, or by any other restraint, accident, reason, or cause whatsoever, be absent from the Rehearsal or Performance, at the time or times [illegible] shall or may be in the usual manner of the London Theatres required to attend, then and in every such case, and as often as it shall so happen, the Salary or a proportion thereof, according to the time or duration of such absence, shall and may at the discretion of the Sub-Committee of Management of the said Company of Proprietors, their Successors, Lessees, or Assigns, or of their Manager for the time being, be suspended and not paid, but the same be thereupon retained.

Fig. 39. The above "Articles of Agreement" appears to be the first draft of Kean's contract with Drury Lane in 1814. Courtesy of the Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 804.

AND the said Edmund Kean doth hereby Covenant and Agree with the said Company of Proprietors, their Successors, Lessees, and Assigns, for the time being, that he the said Edmund Kean shall and will at all times during the said Term of three seasons or Years, attend Rehearsals, and perform such Characters or Parts in any Plays, Operas, Afterpieces, Burlettas, Choruses, Masks, Ballets, Preludes, Interludes, Pantomimes, Dances, Processions and other Pieces or Entertainments to be performed or exhibited at the said Theatre, or at or in any other Place or Theatre as aforesaid, and recite such Prologues and Epilogues there as the Sub-Committee of Management of the said Company of Proprietors, their Successors, Lessees or Assigns, or their Manager, or their Prompter, or other Agent, for the time being, shall in the usual manner require the said Edmund Kean to do, and as shall or may be within his Power or Capability. And further that he the said Edmund Kean shall not, and will not, during the said Term of three seasons perform, or Assist, at any other Theatre, or Place of Public Amusement, be the same in Play, Opera, Farce, Burletta, Oratorio, Dance, Concert, or otherwise, without the previous Consent thereto, in Writing, of the Sub-Committee of Management of the said Company of Proprietors, their Successors, Lessees, or Assigns, or of their Manager, for the time being. AND further that he the said Edmund Kean shall and will, during the said Term of said Engagement conform to the Table of Regulations for the maintenance of good Order and Punctuality by the Performers of the said Theatre, or such other Theatre to be used by them as aforesaid, which shall, at the time, be fixed up and exhibited in some conspicuous part of the Treasury belonging to the said Theatre. AND further that it shall and may be lawful for the Sub-Committee of Management of the said Company of Proprietors, their Successors, Lessees, or Assigns, or their Manager, to direct the Treasurer of such Theatre for the time being, who shall, thereupon, by and out of the Current Salary of the said Edmund Kean or out of the Receipt of his Benefit to stop and retain the full amount of such Sums as according to the said Table of Regulations shall become forfeited, and payable by the said Edmund Kean AND further that in case the said Edmund Kean shall refuse to accept and perform any part or Character, which shall be cast or allotted to him by the Sub-Committee of Management of the said Company of Proprietors, their Successors, Lessees, or Assigns, or their Manager, for the time being; then, and in that case he the said Edmund Kean shall and will forfeit and pay unto the said Company of Proprietors, their Successors, Lessees, or Assigns, the Sum of Thirty pounds Sterling for such refusal; it being understood that the said Sum of Thirty pounds so to be forfeited, shall be deemed to be separate and distinct from the Penalties and Damages contained and expressed in the Table of Regulations, and in this Agreement. Provided always and these Presents are upon this express Condition that if the said Edmund Kean shall at all times during the said Term of three seasons perform his Engagement by, in the Character the said Edmund Kean shall be cast or allotted to perform, and shall duly observe and perform all and every the Articles and Conditions in the Table of Regulations aforesaid, which now are or hereafter shall be made by the said Sub-Committee of Management of the said Company of Proprietors, their Successors, Lessees, or Assigns, or their Manager, for the time being, and shall in all respects conform to the directions of the said Sub-Committee of Management, or their Manager, for the time being, according to the true intent and meaning of these Presents, then the Obligation aforesaid shall be void and of none effect, or else shall remain in full force and virtue.

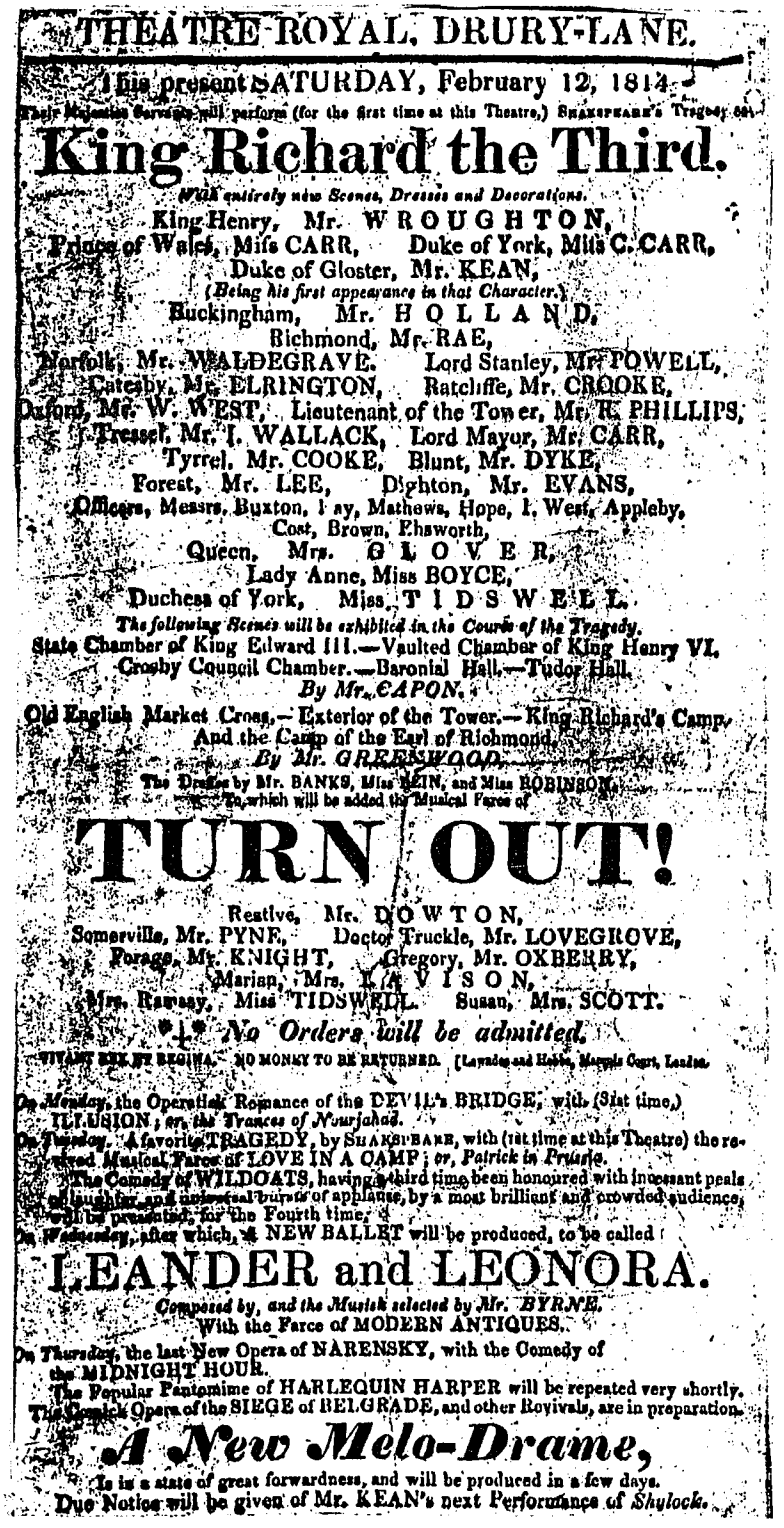
AND LASTLY, for the true performance of the several Clauses and Agreements hereinbefore mentioned and contained, the said Parties do hereby bind themselves and himself, respectively each unto the other, in the Penal Sum of One Thousand Pounds of lawful Money of Great Britain, firmly by these Presents.

IN WITNESS whereof the said Company of Proprietors have hereunto affixed the Seal now used by them as their Common Seal. And the said Edmund Kean hath hereunto subscribed and set his hand and Seal the day and year first above written.

STEAD COLLECTION

J. M'Creery, Printer,
Black-Horse-Court, Fleet-Street, London.

Fig. 40. Second page of Drury Lane contract.



THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.

This present SATURDAY, February 12, 1814,

Their Majesties Servants will perform (for the first time at this Theatre,) SHAKESPEARE'S Tragedy of

King Richard the Third.

With entirely new Scenes, Dresses and Decorations.

King Henry, Mr. WROUGHTON,
Prince of Wales, Miss CARR, Duke of York, Miss C. CARR,
Duke of Gloster, Mr. KEAN,
(Being his first appearance in that Character.)
Buckingham, Mr. HOLLAND,
Richmond, Mr. RAE,
Norfolk, Mr. WALDEGRAVE. Lord Stanley, Mr. POWELL,
Catesby, Mr. ELRINGTON, Ratcliffe, Mr. CROOKE,
Oxford, Mr. W. WEST, Lieutenant of the Tower, Mr. R. PHILLIPS,
Tressel, Mr. I. WALLACK, Lord Mayor, Mr. CARR,
Tyrrel, Mr. COOKE, Blunt, Mr. DYKE,
Forest, Mr. LEE, Dighton, Mr. EVANS,
Officers, Messrs. Buxton, Fay, Mathews, Hope, I. West, Appleby,
Cost, Brown, Ebsworth,
Queen, Mrs. GLOVER,
Lady Anne, Miss BOYCE,
Duchess of York, Miss TIDSWELL.

The following Scenes will be exhibited in the Course of the Tragedy.

State Chamber of King Edward III.—Vaulted Chamber of King Henry VI.
Crosby Council Chamber.—Baronial Hall.—Tudor Hall.
By Mr. CAPON.

Old English Market Cross.—Exterior of the Tower.—King Richard's Camp,
And the Camp of the Earl of Richmond.
By Mr. GREENWOOD.

The Dresses by Mr. BANKS, Miss BEIN, and Miss ROBINSON.

To which will be added the Musical Farce of

TURN OUT!

Restive, Mr. DOWTON,
Somerville, Mr. PYNE, Doctor Truckle, Mr. LOVEGROVE,
Forage, Mr. KNIGHT, Gregory, Mr. OXBERRY,
Marian, Mrs. LAVISON,
Mrs. Ramsay, Miss TIDSWELL. Susan, Mrs. SCOTT.

*** *No Orders will be admitted.*

VIVANT REX ET REGINA. NO MONEY TO BE RETURNED. [Lavender and Hobbs, Marquis Court, Leadn.

On *Monday*, the Operatick Romance of the DEVIL's BRIDGE, with (31st time,)
ILLUSION; *or, the Trances of Nourjahad.*
On *Tuesday*, A favorite TRAGEDY, by SHAKESPEARE, with (1st time at this Theatre) the re-
vived Musical Farce of LOVE IN A CAMP; *or, Patrick in Prussia.*
The Comedy of WILDOATS, having a third time been honoured with incessant peals
of laughter, and universal bursts of applause, by a most brilliant and crowded audience,
will be presented, for the Fourth time,
On *Wednesday*, after which, a NEW BALLET will be produced, to be called

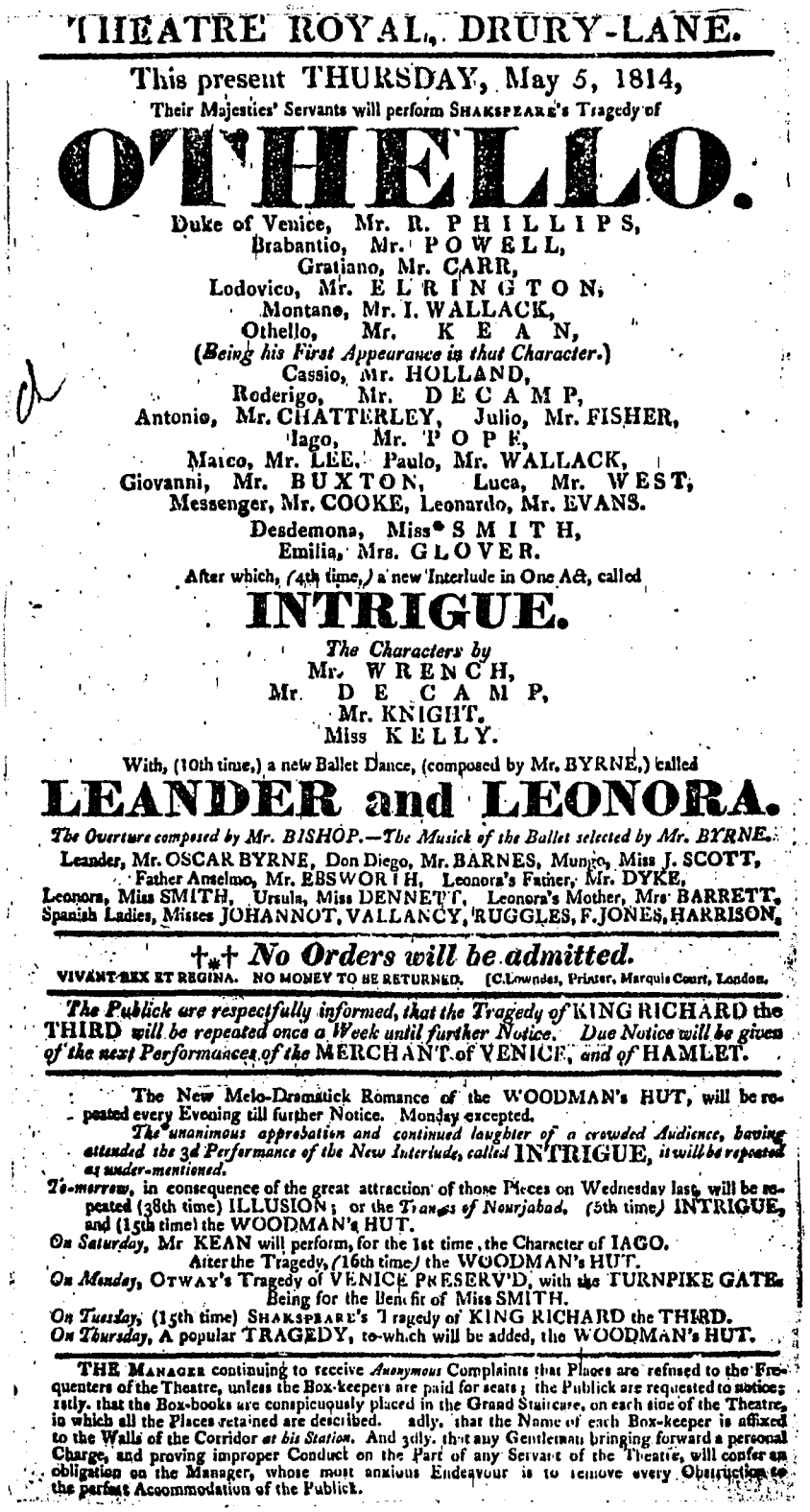
LEANDER and LEONORA.

Composed by, and the Musick selected by Mr. BYRNE.
With the Farce of MODERN ANTIQUES.
On *Thursday*, the last New Opera of NARENSKY, with the Comedy of
the MIDNIGHT HOUR.
The Popular Pantomime of HARLEQUIN HARPER will be repeated very shortly.
The Comick Opera of the SIEGE of BELGRADE, and other Revivals, are in preparation.

A New Melo-Drame,

Is in a state of great forwardness, and will be produced in a few days.
Due Notice will be given of Mr. KEAN's next Performance of *Shylock.*

Fig. 41. Drury Lane Playbill indicating Kean's first appearance as the Duke of Gloster. Courtesy of the Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 804.



THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.

This present THURSDAY, May 5, 1814,

Their Majesties' Servants will perform SHAKSPEARE's Tragedy of

OTHELLO.

Duke of Venice, Mr. R. PHILLIPS,
Brabantio, Mr. POWELL,
Gratiano, Mr. CARR,
Lodovico, Mr. ELRINGTON,
Montano, Mr. I. WALLACK,
Othello, Mr. KEAN,
(Being his First Appearance in that Character.)
Cassio, Mr. HOLLAND,
Roderigo, Mr. DECAMP,
Antonio, Mr. CHATTERLEY, Julio, Mr. FISHER,
Iago, Mr. POPE,
Maico, Mr. LEE. Paulo, Mr. WALLACK,
Giovanni, Mr. BUXTON, Luca, Mr. WEST,
Messenger, Mr. COOKE, Leonardo, Mr. EVANS.
Desdemona, Miss SMITH,
Emilia, Mrs. GLOVER.

After which, *(4th time,)* a new Interlude in One Act, called

INTRIGUE.

The Characters by
Mr. WRENCH,
Mr. DE CAMP,
Mr. KNIGHT.
Miss KELLY.

With, (10th time,) a new Ballet Dance, (composed by Mr. BYRNE,) called

LEANDER and LEONORA.

The Overture composed by Mr. BISHOP.—The Musick of the Ballet selected by Mr. BYRNE.

Leander, Mr. OSCAR BYRNE, Don Diego, Mr. BARNES, Mungo, Miss J. SCOTT,
Father Anselmo, Mr. EBSWORTH, Leonora's Father, Mr. DYKE,
Leonora, Miss SMITH, Ursula, Miss DENNETT, Leonora's Mother, Mrs BARRETT,
Spanish Ladies, Misses JOHANNOT, VALLANCY, RUGGLES, F. JONES, HARRISON,

†⁂† *No Orders will be admitted.*

VIVANT REX ET REGINA. NO MONEY TO BE RETURNED. [C. Lowndes, Printer, Marquis Court, London.

The Publick are respectfully informed, that the Tragedy of KING RICHARD the THIRD *will be repeated once a Week until further Notice. Due Notice will be given of the next Performances of the* MERCHANT of VENICE, *and of* HAMLET.

The New Melo-Dramatick Romance of the WOODMAN's HUT, will be repeated every Evening till further Notice. Monday excepted.

The unanimous approbation and continued laughter of a crowded Audience, having attended the 3d Performance of the New Interlude, called INTRIGUE, *it will be repeated as under-mentioned.*

To-morrow, in consequence of the great attraction of those Pieces on Wednesday last, will be repeated (38th time) ILLUSION; or the *Tyrants of Nourjahad.* (5th time) INTRIGUE, and (15th time) the WOODMAN's HUT.

On Saturday, Mr KEAN will perform, for the 1st time, the Character of IAGO.
After the Tragedy, (16th time) the WOODMAN's HUT.

On Monday, OTWAY's Tragedy of VENICE PRESERV'D, with the TURNPIKE GATE.
Being for the Benefit of Miss SMITH.

On Tuesday, (15th time) SHAKSPEARE's Tragedy of KING RICHARD the THIRD.

On Thursday, A popular TRAGEDY, to which will be added, the WOODMAN's HUT.

THE MANAGER continuing to receive *Anonymous* Complaints that Places are refused to the Frequenters of the Theatre, unless the Box-keepers are paid for seats; the Publick are requested to notice; 1stly. that the Box-books are conspicuously placed in the Grand Staircase, on each side of the Theatre, in which all the Places retained are described. 2dly. that the Name of each Box-keeper is affixed to the Walls of the Corridor *at his Station.* And 3dly. that any Gentleman bringing forward a personal Charge, and proving improper Conduct on the Part of any Servant of the Theatre, will confer an obligation on the Manager, whose most anxious Endeavour is to remove every Obstruction to the perfect Accommodation of the Publick.

Fig. 42. Drury Lane Playbill indicating Kean's first appearance as Othello. Courtesy of the Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 804.

APPENDIX B

THE PARK THEATRE CONTROVERSY

The first Park Theatre was destroyed by fire on 25 May 1820.[1] The New York American claimed that the loss incurred by the managers amounted to "upwards of $30,000," and that "no lives were lost, and only one person injured."[2] This event generated various responses about the propriety of building another theatre: many of the responses disapproved the construction of a second Park Theatre. In fact, positive statements supporting the reconstruction were rare in the New York newspapers. There were 1,737 petitions signed by various citizens protesting the rebuilding of the theatre.[3]

People who believed that the theatre should not be rebuilt, based their objections and apprehensions on the following tenets: theatres are immoral breeding grounds of "vice and profligacy," and, moreover, public grounds should be used for worthy enterprises, such as "courts and municipal offices."[4]

Several newspapers engaged in serious debate about the moral integrity of leasing a lot for the construction of another theatre. Colonel William L. Stone, the editor

of the New York Commercial Advertiser, was indifferent about the reconstruction--feeling that theatres are acceptable only "when proper pieces are selected, and a theatre otherwise judiciously managed,"[5] while others, like Major Noah, the editor of the New York National Advocate, wanted to see it rebuilt. Noah was positive about the rebuilding of the Park Theatre, and also became the chief supporter of Kean during his two sojourns in New York. An editorial in the 30 August 1820 National Advocate, clearly established Noah's rationale:

> The metropolis of the United States, and the resort of strangers from all parts, must have a theatre. Mr. Kean, together with other distinguished performers, are daily expected, and there is no Theatre to receive them. The public spirit which has always distinguished our citizens, and the ample means at our disposal, will not permit the city to be without a Theatre any longer. We presume, that if it is commenced immediately, that it will be completed in the spring.[6]

Noah was not alone in his quest to have the Park Theatre rebuilt. One adherent addressed a communication to the editor (Noah) of the National Advocate about the "inconsistent wise acres" who exclaim "against the immorality of the stage." The writer signed the bottom of the letter with an anonymous H:

> How is it, Mr. Editor, that these inconsistent wise acres, in the midst of all their exclamations against the immorality of the stage, should shut their eyes against the notorious fact, that there are no less than thirteen Theatres in London, capable of containing nearly 30,000 spectators, all of which are well frequented; and yet we do not discover, by the English newspapers, or other periodical publications, that any apprehension is entertained on this account, for "pure and undefiled religion." . . .

> Great Britain . . . not only tolerates, but encourages the drama; because, although there may be some difference of opinion there as to whether theatres improve the morality of a nation, there are few who say that they deprave it. All agree, that good plays are calculated to improve the public taste. Among such then, as profess to be friendly to the cultivation of good breeding, let us, in future, find only those who, if they think they cannot, with a good conscience, give the drama their open support, will not do any thing, either publicly or in a covert manner, to injure it. (signed) H.[7]

Unfortunately, because of constant bickering betwixt the committee of the City Corporation and the proprietors (Astor and Beekman) and the management (Price and Simpson) of the Park Theatre, the undertaking did not begin for many months (not until January 1821).[8] In the meantime, "Kean, . . . with other distinguished performers" performed at the "Theatre in Anthony-Street."[9] The Park Theatre company played at this theatre from 29 May 1820[10] until the opening of the second Park Theatre on 1 September 1821.[11] Whatever was left of the scenery and properties from the conflagration, was used by Price and Simpson at the Anthony-Street Theatre. The New York Gazette said that "Price and Simpson . . . fitted it up handsomely," and the theatre "is rendered cool, safe, and pleasant."[12] This was where Kean performed during his 1820 and 1821 engagements in New York.

In spite of persistent objections to the rebuilding, which Noah attributed to the "spirit of bigotry and fanataciśm,"[13] the Park Theatre was rebuilt on property that was purchased, and not leased, from the City

Corporation, and therefore there was little or nothing that the Corporation could do to prevent the rebuilding. The newly constructed theatre was built on the old site. With the reopening of the Park Theatre, it was once more a vital part of the cultural life of New York City.

The evidenced inimical feeling towards the theatre which tried to prevent the rebuilding of the Park Theatre emerged once again during Kean's visit to the United States in 1825.[14] William L. Stone, the leading opponent to the reconstruction of the Park Theatre, led a relentless campaign in 1825 aimed at stopping Kean from performing in New York and elsewhere.[15] Stone's denunciation of Kean was principally impelled by Kean's adulterous liaison with the English Alderman Cox's wife. The William L. Stones of the world, who opposed reconstruction of the Park Theatre, also disliked Kean. It seems that Kean was considered by many to be an immoral representative of the immoral theatre. Snowden's New York National Advocate, as did Noah's Advocate, denounced this attitude:

> Kean is undoubtedly a great actor--the head of a school devised and illustrated by himself. In what way then would it consist with the refinement or the honour of the city to look to follies committed in Europe, to follow the counsels of men here who rudely assail Kean, but whose real object is the destruction of the Drama? The snufflers have identified the man with the cause of the Drama. The city will support both.[16]

Major Noah, who championed the cause of the theatre and exhorted for the rebuilding of the Park Theatre,[17]

strove to present criticism of Kean in an objective manner. He preferred to view Kean as an actor--a genius--and to ignore his private life. When Kean was mercilessly set upon by the New York and Boston press in 1825, Noah came to his defense.

> The bitterness and malevolence with which Mr. Kean has been attacked in some of our journals, both before and since his arrival compel us, whatever have been our resolution, to make common cause with that gentleman against his enemies, . . . We cannot see him, hunted round the world, driven from country to country by his ferocious persecutors. . . .
>
> And who are they who have, on this side of the Atlantic, re-commenced this war of extermination against an individual. Have they been the friends and patrons, who now set themselves up as the sovereigns of the drama? Have they not uniformly denounced the theatre as the broad road of vice, ranking it with stews and infamy, who now, for a base and diabolical purpose, claim it as a school for morality? We now offer themselves as guardians of its purity, and tremble for its profanation as if it were a church? Away with these hypocritical pharisees. Let honest men, and men of sense, and men of the world, have some little hand at least in the management of their own affairs. Mr. Kean has not come here to learn us morals; he comes with no such pretensions; he is not to officiate at a church, nor in the lecture room, but at the theatre. . . . We beseech you gentlemen, let us have Mr. Kean, such as he is. The Theatre does not please you, so long as he is an actor. We like Mr. Kean! Leave us to our raptures; we will not interfere with yours.[18]

One may ask, then, what precipitated such negative notions about the theatre and its representatives. Many newspapers based their publications on moral and religious grounds. The New York American (founded in 1819) believed that "liberty is not worth possessing unless associated with sound morals, true piety, and with the improvement of our mental powers. . . . free of all control but that of

religion and morality."[19] Kean, as a wayward son of the theatre, was not thought to be "associated with sound morals" and "true piety." Hence when we study the many and various reviews and articles about Kean, we must recall the Park Theatre controversy. The New York Gazette of 22 December 1815, contains the following statement about "the American stage:"

> In no country, and no age, has a more correct taste, for scenic exhibitions, pervaded the minds of a people, than that which at present distinguishes our own nation, and helps to contribute some feeble beams to the declining sun of literature. It is that taste which still keeps the glowing remains of departed genius in agitation; and which although it only produces a galaxy of sparks, is yet sufficient to impart warmth to the fancy, vigor to the mind, and feeling to the heart.[20]

APPENDIX C

OTHELLO REVIEW: THE NEW YORK AMERICAN, 4 December 1820

On 4 December 1820, the New York American published the following review of Othello, written by the Critic in the Pit:

> One of the peculiar traits in Mr. Kean's acting is seizing on the imagination by frequent, sudden, and striking changes; as from the highest key to which his voice is elevated when in an ebullition of passion, down in a moment to either a soft or familiar according as Mr. Kean conceives the particular passage requires. This 'tis true, is very often applicable and comfortable to the true spirit of the author, but that it is proper to make those "pointed transitions" on all the particular places Mr. Kean has thought right to imply them, can scarcely be allowed when we once come to consider the propriety or correctness of it. Two instances of misapplication in this respect we observed in Mr. Kean's performance of Othello. The first, when Othello is before the senate, on the charge of Brabantio that his daughter had been stolen, and "corrupted by spells and medicines bought of Montebanks:" Othello requests the Duke to send for Desdemona, and the Duke gives orders to that effect; immediately after, indeed the words "fetch Desdemona hither," had scarcely escaped the Duke's lips, before Mr. Kean (as Othello) says to Iago, in a hurried, quick, and unnatural tone and manner, "Ancient, conduct them; you best know the way." Othello, without doubt, was desirous of the immediate attendance of his wife, to clear him from the charge of Brabantio: but the tone he had employed before his judges in a preceeding speech being so dissimilar, could not at all reconcile us to the unsuitable effect the manner exercise in delivering the above words produced. This quick transition may force an applause

from the sudden way in which they were spoken, and the tone and manner above mentioned, but never can be quoted as a specimen of fine acting. The instance occured in the same scene, after the conclusion of the defence before the senate, he observes,

"Here comes the lady, let her witness it."

The tone here used was nearly similar to that before mentioned, and appeared to strike us more as if it were delivered tauntingly, or so spoken from malicious delight of Brabantio's certain defeat and his own sure acquittal, than the observation of the dignified Othello, who, though sure of success from Desdemona's presence, yet does not manifest any eager anticipation, which would leave an influence that if the decision of the senate were in his favour, he would evince more malicious pleasure at it than proud satisfaction. From not only the different passions that take possession of the Moor, but from their constant collision, the character of Othello becomes one where in the powers of an actor can have full display. In the onset we find him all fondness for the beauteous Desdemona: then the seeds of mistrust are sewn by the villain Iago: Iago's continual feeding of the fire he had kindled follows next: his surmise concerning Cassio, his infernal scheme with the handkerchief, and the warring conflicts between doating fondness and supposed dishonour are inimitably deliniated. Although the character of Othello possesses these great advantages for the display of the talents and genius of an actor, yet none can claim a perfect infallibility in an accurate conception of it: and that Mr. Kean does not enjoy this infallibility, and that he is by no means exempt from error, and those not unimportant or accidental, has appeared to us on a critical investigation of his merits and faults, and that too without any nice accumen or determination to pick our every little mistake or inaccurary that may have been casually committed.

In the third scene of act third, Othello and Iago enter immediately after Cassio had been importuning Desdemona to procure of the Moor the restitution of his liutenancy. Desdemona begs of her husband to call back Cassio, and says,

"Shall't be to-night at supper?
Oth. No not to-night
Des. To-morrow dinner then?
Oth. I shall not dine at home:
I meet the captains at the citadel."

The tone in which these answers were given would lead to the belief that the previous exclamation of Iago on seeing Cassio in entering the room, "Ha! I like not that," had already instilled into the mind of

the Moor a distrustful feeling towards his wife. Any thing conducive to such belief, or that would in the least leave any suspicion of the sort, should be particularly avoided; for it is not until Desdemona has left the room in this same scene, when the Moor and Iago are left alone, that the former first receives an intimation of any thing to rouse his jealousy. But when Othello discovers the meaning of the ambiguous sentences of Iago, Mr. Kean gave an effect both striking and impressive: his looks, his action, and the wild stare of his countenance, were a splendid picture of the effects of jealousy on the heart of a Moor. The shock was electric, and Mr. Kean gave full force. Indeed, the whole scene with Iago was ably executed, although we should not be displeased to see omitted those specimens of "pantomimical evolutions," performed not only in that scene, but frequently in other parts of the play, as we conceive that the effects from the supposed faithless conduct of a beautiful wife on a loving husband can well be shown without them. When Iago observes to him that she deceived her father marrying him, the reply,

"And so she did,"

was uttered in a tone that evinced the anguish of his heart, and was feelingly and appropriately delivered. We felt a sympathetic thrill for his own unhappy situation. In the chamber scene we were much disappointed; it was a lame performance, and though here and there we would witness specimens of fine acting, we decidedly think we have seen that part of Othello at least as ably, if not better, executed. We would say something of Mr. Maywood's Iago; some parts of it did him credit, and others again were extremely flat.

APPENDIX D

PHILADELPHIA CRITICISM:

January 1821

Once again, we can refer to Kean's "Diary" for financial data, this relating to his Philadelphia engagement. Kean made arrangements with William B. Wood, the manager of the Walnut Street Theatre--arrangements which proved to be more profitable than those for New York. The "Terms of engagement for Philadelphia" reads as follows:

> To perform 16 nights commencing 8 Jan^{y} four nights in each week divide first 6 [with the managers]--after charges [half of the gross receipts] next 6 after charges. & the 7th without charge . . . the charges amount to 66 £. per night. Theatre holds 250.[1]

According to Kean's diary, he "arrived in Philadelphia on Friday the 5^{t}h of Jan^{y}."[2] Kean chose Richard III, as in New York, to open his engagement. On 8 January 1821, Kean made his debut at the Walnut Street theatre where he did not completely satisfy all his auditors. Some newspapers felt that Cooke was the better actor. The Aurora and General Advertiser believed that "Cooke was the greater actor as well as in part the

model of Kean."[3] As was customary in the nineteenth-century American theatre, if danger was imminent, women were advised not to attend the theatre. Few women attended the theatre for Kean's first performance. By the end of Kean's second performance, as Othello, the Aurora had allied itself to Kean's camp. On January 15 the Aurora printed effusive plaudits--saying "all that has been said of Mr. Kean, in anticipation, was in his performance of Othello realized--we may safely say exceeded."[4]

In Personal Recollections of the Stage, William B. Wood recalled the peculiar circumstances concerning Kean's first performances:

> This eminent actor appeared as Richard on the 8 of January, 1821, and at once satisfied the audience that his vast fame had been fairly acquired. The verdict however was not unanimous: some determined critics, who had persuaded themselves that Cooke's loss was never to be supplied, were on the first night loud in condemnation of the new actor, whom they honored with the flattering names of Quack, Mountebank, and Vulgar impostor. Strangely enough his second appearance at once converted these judges into his most enthusiastic admirers. Othello now brought over to the Kean faith the most obstinate partizans of Fennell. The little hero acted Richard with marvellous spirit, although upon his first entrance his agitation was so strong as to be visible to those near the stage.[5]

For the sixteen nights, Kean amassed the following receipts:[6]

Richard [January 8]	$1,178.00
Othello [January 10]	$ 837.00
Merchant of Venice [January 12]	$1,260.00
Hamlet [January 13]	$ 718.00
Richard [January 15]	$ 883.00
Brutus [January 17]	$ 897.00
First benefit,	

A New Way to Pay Old Debts [January 19] . . .	$1,397.00
Macbeth [January 20].	$ 615.00
King Lear [January 22].	$1,351.00
Rule a Wife [January 24].	$ 699.50
Bertram [January 26].	$ 650.00
Town and Country [January 27]	$ 675.00
King Lear [January 29].	$ 889.00
Second benefit, Othello [January 31].	$1,199.00
Merchant of Venice [February 2]	$ 400.50
Iron Chest [February 3]	$ 727.00

Of all the newspapers reporting about Kean, the Democratic Press was the loudest devotee. Their reviews were the most gushing and frequent. The following criticism, which was reported in the Democratic Press on 11 January 1821, is a vivid testimony of the public's approval of Kean:

> He was cordially greeted, we should rather say he was loudly cheered by the whole audience on his entrance. The house was very full, and never did an audience await a performer with more anxious curiosity, or appear more favorably disposed than that of last evening. Mr. Kean was most judiciously made up for the character. He looked it so admirably, that all our prepossessions were at once for ripening into loud and oft-repeated applause. Those dispositions were counteracted by an ardent desire to see every movement of every muscle and to hear every sound which he uttered. This desire brought forth in under tones hush, hush: and an occasional cry of order, order; and thus was much feeling repressed. At various times, indeed the greater part of the time while Kean was on the stage, the most profound and flattering silence prevailed. The organ of hearing was left in full possession of all its faculties, and every eye was greedily devouring every expression of feeling, every movement of passion.
>
> Thus much for the audience: we now approach the actor. We approach him with extreme diffidence: distrusting even our own senses when they are at variance with the reports and opinions of some of the ablest and most impassioned critics; who have ever touched the subject of theatrical performers. For ourselves we will not dare to pass upon Mr. Kean, nor will we venture a remark, other than those which arose in our minds as to the particular character in which

he appeared before us.

We have before said, that Mr. Kean looked the Richard of Shakespeare admirably. No love of person, no desire to be considered well formed, restrained him when dressing for the character. He was sufficiently deformed and misshapen. The whole style of his acting was so very novel, that we find it impossible to reduce our impressions to order, or to embody an opinion upon the general merits of the representation. All the soliloquies were delivered in a manner and with action altogether peculiar; we are not prepared to say that they were not the very best we have ever seen; but they were so very unexpected and extraordinary, that we have not yet got over our surprise.--His quick and hurried walk, sudden unlooked for and remarkable intonations of voice; long pauses between words immediately connected; bursts of passion, whirlwinds of rage; abrupt stops and rapid actions; all succeeded each other with such rapidity, that unaccustomed eyes and ears could scarcely keep pace, and judgment was left far behind. But there were passages which no eye that saw, nor ear that heard will ever forget; no lapse of time can ever rase from memory the deep impression they have made. His rush from the Tent, under the agonies of an actively repproaching conscience, was horrible, sung on one knee, with his hands on each other, and his head, not on his hands, but grasped in them with such an agonizing grasp, as seemed to wish to bury it forever from every human eye. It was terrific; and when he dared to lift his head so as again to meet the light of heaven, his pale, his woe worn face had assumed altogether another expression; fear and horror were in every line, and again he buried it convulsively in his hands. No pen, no memory, no eloquence can portray this scene. The cold and clammy sweat of death, seemed to stand upon his forehead, and he was about to expire under the dreadful death-dealing blows of an awakened and horror-struck conscience. The subsequent exaggerations of his crimes, were truly and terrifically tragic.

It was some relief to the feelings of the audience, when Catesby entering somewhat abrutply, Richard in a terrified tone of alarm, exclaimed "Who's there?" I utterly despair of having given any adequate idea of this wonderful piece of acting. When I see it, as I now do, vivid as I did last night, I am surprised at the prosing dullness with which I have sketched it. It must be seen to be felt and esteemed.

The peculiarities of Mr. Kean's voice are as great as the uses he makes of it are various. Its whispers are not always distinct, and when pitched to its highest tone, it is apt to crack. In some stages of

passion and utterance of words, there were sounds which did not properly belong to the words, some of which may be regarded as provincialism. In the scene with Lady Ann we twice heard the letter a precede the word "hate" so as to make it sound ahate. The words which begin with th when pronounced the-rong and the-ret-en. These deviations in such an actor will be tolerated or overlooked, but such an actor ought not to ask such toleration. He who has accomplished so much, he who has triumphed over so many difficulties, ought to take the trouble to avoid any thing which appertains to a mispronunciation. The example is pernicious. We offer these remarks with great respect for the talents and histrionic powers of Mr. Kean.

So much had been said of the dying scenes of Mr. Kean that curiosity was at its topmost round when the fight began which was to issue in his death. All that we had heard, must necessarily fall infinitely short of the extraordinary powers displayed by Mr. Kean in the last scene. He writhed with bodily pain; he agonized under the terrors of conscience; he gasped for breath, his every motion evinced distress and approaching death and every succeeding word bespoke its nearer approach; his sufferings were so painful to the beholder, that he felt relieved when nature was exhausted and Richard had expired.[7]

The Union's review, published on 12 January 1821, is in concordance with the Democratic Press's impression. Kean is the most unique actor they had ever seen:

The visit of the late George Frederick Cooke was generally considered as a promising omen to the American stage: and the fact has been exemplified in the emigration of some of the most distinguished performers of the London boards, since the exit of this great character, to

"That undiscovered country, from whose bourne
"no traveller returns--"

And it may be recollected that Kemble was on the eve of embarking when the late war broke out.

The Philadelphia audience were gratified, for the first time, with a view of the celebrated Mr. Kean on last Monday evening (January 8). The doors of the theatre, at an early hour, were crowded to excess: and our distinguished visitor was received by an overflowing audience, with the most unbounded applause.

On his appearance, we were forcibly struck with the similitude between his acting and Mr. I. Wallack's, which circumstance appears very natural when we recollect that they frequently performed

together at Drury Lane, and Wallack was generally known to have imitated him in his performances.

The only defect we observed in Mr. Kean's Richard, was, the thickness and inaudibility of his voice in those passages which the Poet intended should be most sonorous. This, is, however a venial defect.

With respect to originality of conception--to the composing and discomposing and gravity of his muscles--and to his surprising the auditors with these vivid ejaculations, those sudden starts, and judicious pauses, which so plentifully abound with him;--we give our unqualified opinion that there never was a performer that graced the American stage with more success.

We shall cite a few instances of his admirable conception of the dissembling "crooked-backed" Richard. In his first address, while "descanting in his own deformity," he exclaims in a tone of bitter sarcasm:---

"Then since this earth affords no joy to me,
"But to command, to check and o'erbear, such
"As are of happier person than myself,"
"Why, then, to me, this restless world is hell."

Here, pausing for a minute, and suddenly anticipating the ripening of the "golden fruit" for which he so ardently glowed, with a smiling complacency, he thus resumes:--

"Till the mishapen-trunk's assuring head,
"Be circled in a glorious diadem."--

The sensation was admirable!

It was impossible to witness the courtship of Lady Anne, without evincing sympathy for the woman's frailty, and applause for the artful dissimulation with which Kean personified Gloster. The success of this scene depends entirely upon the skill of the performer, to render it either natural or reasonable. And we must acknowledge that we never yet saw the part sustained with such precision, and such artful, hypocritical manoeveures, as we witnessed that evening.

The last speech in Act II, was a happy one for Kean. This is the part in which Cooke is represented in the painting of Mr. Sully--the words--

"Hold ye--where shall he keep his court? the tower?
"Aye--the tower,"

Were delivered in a peculiarly striking manner.

The effect produced in Act 3d, Scene 2d, was truly astonishing, where Buckingham demands the fulfillment of his late promises. After many equivocations to the requests of Buckingham, he exclaims in the vehemence of rage "Thou troublest me"--then, turning from him and in a kind of an ironical manner, he adds--"I'm not in the vein,"--Mr. Cooper delivers this passage with

> increasing rage, giving the word "vein" the strongest emphasis:-- Wallack and Kean in the manner above described: the effect of which is undoubtedly greater. There should be a gentle cadence toward the end of the line to give it its due force.
>
> Towards the conclusion of the tragedy his voice failed him considerably. The best part of Kean's whole performance was the representation of the tent scene, Act 5, Scent 5--never was the effects of a guilty conscience shown more natural: every individual appeared to feel what he saw, and not a whisper pervaded the house at the time.
>
> To trace this extraordinary performer through all his beauties, would be to point out every particular in the tragedy. The feeble efforts of my pen cannot do that justice which the exemplary talents of Mr. Kean demands. It is to be regretted that nature which has been so propitious to him had not extended her liberality and given him a voice that would better correspond with the versatility of his powers.[8]

Throughout Kean's Philadelphia engagement, the National Gazette, led by its editor Robert Walsh, waged an industrious campaign to defame Kean's professional talents. Ironically, for whatever reason, the Gazette had abstained from submitting any criticism until the 24 of January, a fact testified to by a writer named "Cibber" in the 20 January 1821 edition of the Gazette:

> I am not surprised that you betray some backwardness as to the expression of your opinion upon the merits of the celebrated actor who is now treading our boards. You do not, I shrewdly suspect, like to incur the risk of competition with those of your brethren who have at once, with so much intrepidity and terseness and subtlety of remark, spoken for themselves and the public on this momentous subject.[9]

On 24 January 1821 the National Gazette published its first review of Kean. This review of Kean's Sir Giles Overreach is representative of later reviews and articles inserted in the Gazette. The National Gazette reviews

were unusually well written and literary--giving the Democratic Press and other journals formidable competition:

> Mr. Kean's Sir Giles Overreach in Massinger's comedy of "A New Way to Pay Old Debts" drew a considerable auditory on Friday evening, comprizing, I think, as large a proportion of cultivated and acute understandings, as would be found in any casual assemblage of like number in any other of our cities. The choice of the character for his benefit (like New York,) and the reputation which he has known to have acquired by it in England, heightened the public curiosity and expectation, in an unusual degree. Hazlitt had proclaimed it to be "one of his very best parts," and even said in a strain becoming one of our own theatrical oracles,--"We cannot conceive of any one's doing Mr. Kean's part of Sir Giles Overreach so well as himself."
>
> The gross exaggerations which have been hazarded respecting the impression made upon the Philadelphia public by Mr. Kean's antecedent exhibitions, will no doubt be repeated in this instance, and we shall hear of incessant thunders of applause, which have about as much reality as the discharges of artillery heard in certain diseased ears.
>
> The truth is, that during the four first acts of the piece, no indications of strong emotion were given by the audience--an uncommon apathy appeared to reign, considering the ordinary proneness to clapping and the kindly mood, which prevail wherever an actor of much celebrity is treading the boards. On former occasions, although Mr. Kean's style of acting is such as mechanically stimulates to frequent acclamation, I have observed no more, than was indulged during the performance of Mrs. Bartley, Mr. Cooper, or indeed than always attends our domestic favourites either in tragedy or comedy.
>
> The members of the audience of last evening with whom I conversed,--and they were of that class upon whose impartiality and judgment most reliance could be placed,--experienced, together, as I believe, with the majority of the whole, much disappointment during the four first acts. No strong sensation was produced in their minds, the absence of Cooke in the character of Overreach was almost unremittingly felt. The powers of Mr. Kean were displayed in the fifth act, to greater advantage and with much more obvious effect, it was impossible not to see and feel that he possessed a strong genius for his art, and had passed through a long and laborious discipline; but at the same time the insufficiency and harshness of his voice, his excessive efforts, amounting to the wildest

rant, the inordinate vivacity and irregularity of his gesticulation, destructive of all dignity and grace, gave absolute pain, and contributed to mar the efficacy of those sallies of genius and occasional excellencies of declamation, those magical evolutions of face and that deep sensibility, which all of us are willing to acknowledge and extol.

He did not read or recite Massinger well, in general . . . His fine versification disappeared in the mouth of Mr. Kean; it may be understood by this gentleman, but his peculiar system of emphasis, pause and elision, essentially wrong in my humble opinion, and the hoarseness of his utterance, destroyed all perception of it in the bearer, as they must do indeed, in regard to the rhythm of all our dramatic poets in their impassioned scenes. I have been a diligent reader, and am a great admirer of Massinger, and leaned forward with especial interest when Mr. Kean came to the exquisite passage of the 4th act

"Yes, as rocks are,
When foamy billows split themselves against
Their flinty ribs," &c.

I need not say, for those to whom the passage was known, that justice was not done to it; and I must express my surprise that the following criticism of one of the faults in its enunciation, made by Hazlitt four years ago, did not strike Mr. Kean as worthy by the orphan's tears, the widow's curse? He answers--"Yes--as rocks by waves, to the moon by howling wolves." Mr. Kean, in speaking the latter sentence, dashes his voice about with the greatest violence, but from inflexible resistance to it,--not motion, but rest. The very pause after the word yes, points out the cool deliberate way in which it should be spoken.

My purpose is merely to give you a loose report of yesterday's representation; not to scrutinize either the merits or demerits of Mr. Kean; or to interfere in any manner with the observations, general and particular, which you or your correspondents may be disposed to offer in the subject.[10]

Near the conclusion of his Philadelphia engagement, Kean "Received [on] Jan^{y} 26th Thursday--from Mr. Warren a Draft for 2981. dollars for 7 nights performances. 673£ exchanged for Mr. Price's draft in Franklin Bank in New York."[11] At the end of his engagement, Kean wrote in his diary:

> FebY 1820-paid in the Reroy. [sic] & Bayards hands - the produce of my Philadelphia engagement. 4444 £-44S--making one Thousand pounds Sterling-for immediate remittance to Coutts & Co. London.[12]

The following article from the Franklin Gazette best typifies the high esteem Philadelphia critics and playgoers had for Kean:

> Since the recent appearance of this gentleman upon our boards, the curiosity of the dramatic public has been excited: the admiration of the audiences who have witnessed him has been elicited, and the ingenuity of the whole tribe of critics has been tasked by the slendour of his genius, and the electric effect of his acting. The poets of the day are resolved not to withold their homage from this extraordinary man, not to be behind hand with the critics. A Bard of acknowledged taste has produced the following impromptu; and as the Garrick Tavern, opposite the Theatre, has become the resort of the professors of the fine arts, and the depository of the late numerous criticisms and theatrical reviews, it has been placed under a beautiful portrait of Mr. Kean, in that house, whence it is extracted.
>
> "Richard's himself again" did Shakespeare say,
> By whom we know not, in the poet's day;
> But this we know, this our eyes have seen,
> "Richard's himself again" this day in Kean.
>
> Another.
> To Mr. Kean.
>
> The Bard of Avon ev'ry voice proclaims.
> The first of Comic, first of Tragic names:
> Love, hate and joy, and Nature's wildest rage,
> Glow in his words and burn along his page:
> The faithful mirror of his matchless mind,
> Reflects the characters of all mankind:
> From the godlike Julius, master of the world,
> To empty Bufo thro' a ball-room whirl's:
> But half his beauties were unseen, unknown,
> Till you appeared and made them all our own.[13]

Like Edmund Simpson, William B. Wood, the manager of the Walnut Street Theatre, was fully surprised to find that Kean's "private worth" was entirely different from the image drawn in England:

> Kean, . . . created no less a surprise in the greenroom than when before the audience. All had read or heard of his wild and irregular habits, his association with the "Wolf Club," and other persons, most likely to render his manner coarse and offensive. He appeared among us instead a mild, unassuming and cheerful man, wholly free from every affectation of superiority or dictation. His suggestions as to business on the stage, were always given with a gentleness of manner which secured their immediate adoption. The deficiencies of humbler performers were treated with indulgence, and created even in the most careless of them a desire to excell. His presence in the green-room was always a source of enjoyment. I speak of his deportment throughout a long series of performances. In private society, particularly in the company of ladies, he was distinguished for his modest and unassuming manner as well as conversation.[14]

Wood, however, did admit to one frivolous aspect of Kean's person:

> Unlike Cooke, who could bear two or three bottles of port wine, Kean would be overset by as many glasses. He was aware of his folly in submitting to these midnight wastes of time and health, but wanted firmness to result them. I frequently remained with him in his dressing-room after performance for several hours, in order to tire out these persevering tempters, who would remain in their carriages at the stage-door with the most indelicate pertinacity.[15]

After the completion of his first season in Philadelphia, Kean went to Boston. From Boston, Kean went to New York for a second engagement, and then, returned to Philadelphia for a second engagement. The receipts for the second Philadelphia engagement are:[16]

Richard [April 9]	$ 613.00
Othello [April 11].	$ 528.00
Riches [April 13]	$ 523.00
King Lear [April 14].	$ 412.50
Iron Chest [April 16]	$ 537.00
Benefit, "Venice Preserved" [April 18].	$10,005.00

Kean's profits for both Philadelphia engagements were "$7,197.00."[17]

APPENDIX E

MOSSOP'S CRITIQUE OF KEAN (23 MARCH 1821) AND THE COLUMBIAN CENTINEL'S LIST OF BOX SEATS, BIDDEN DURING KEAN'S FIRST BOSTON ENGAGEMENT

The following long article was printed in the 23 March 1821 edition of the New-England Galaxy.[1] Mossop, as in his first essay published on February 13, again assails Kean's merits as an actor. Although Mossop's condemnation of Kean is probably excessive and dubious, it nonetheless gives us one of the finest critiques of Kean's acting penned in the United States:

> The calm, which has happily succeeded to the late theatrical tornado, raised by the witchery of Kean, affords a favorable opportunity for the temperate discussion of his merits as an actor. Attempts have already been made to account for his success in this town, on principles favourable to his judgment and talents. May it not be explained on other principles, more probable, though less propitious to Mr. Kean's reputation?
>
> De gustibus non est disputandum. There is no disputing about tastes. Influenced by prejudice, by education, by habit, by temperament,--we differ in our judgments and feelings. That which pleases one individual, or one class of individuals, displeases another individual, or another portion of the community. . . .
>
> The purpose of these remarks is to show, that the admiration which Mr. Kean has recently excited here, is not a certain index of permanent fame, or of real

merit. That Mr. Kean possesses some talents of a superior order as a tragedian, no candid, unprejudiced person can, in my opinion, deny. That these talents have been overrated, by the great body of his numerous admirers is, I think, equally indisputable. His physical are vastly inferior to his mental powers. His conception is bold and vigorous; his ability to embody it defective and inadequate. His voice is incapable of carrying the climax of a passion to the height in which it is conceived. He is obliged to make up the deficiency by violent inarticulate sound, and excess of action. With an excellent eye, and a face which may be called good--though the features are not remarkably distinct--or the lines of passion strongly marked,--his figure wants height, erectness and dignity. His manner is coarse, and his representation of high rank vulgar. The purity of his taste, is not equal to the vigour of his conception. He goes beyond nature. His taste seems to have been formed upon that of the million: It is deficient in chasteness, severity, critical conformity to truth. His aim appears to be, to obtain the greatest possible quantity of applause, indifferent as to the quality, or the source whence it proceeds. He has been applauded here, in my judgment without discrimination, and in cases which do no credit to the taste of a Boston audience. He has been rewarded with loudest shouts, when he most outraged nature; when he out-heroded Herod; when his ravings, and contradictions and distortions, and stridings, and strident attitudes, and his barkings, snarlings, and guttural throttlings, were anything but a correct and consistent delineation of appropriate passion. His happiest efforts, his most finished passages, have passed without reward, because they were less striking and obtrusive.

With respect to the acting of Mr. Kean, it may be characterized in one word, as <u>outre</u>. Its peculiarity is redundancy, excess, sometimes even to caricature. It is replete with sudden, unexpected transitions and affected attitudes;--which last, however striking and picturesque in themselves, are frequently inappropriate and unnatural, and are often prolonged to a most unwarrantable extent. With respect to his person, it is deficient in dignity, and his manner lacks majesty and grace. His voice is remarkably wanting in strength and compass. When carried much beyond its natural height, it breaks into inarticulate raving, and hoarse, unintelligible noise.

Were Mr. Kean a young actor, his present <u>redundancy</u> might be denominated richness. Time and experience, it might be hoped, would mature a more pure and correct taste,--less obnoxious to the censure

of a severe criticism. But the taste, the manner, the opinions of Mr. K. are probably formed not to be altered;--and the flattering applause with which he has been recently greeted, will, no doubt, have the effect to conform them, or to push him still further into the extreme which now characterizes him.

Mr. Kean has a perfect knowledge of all the arts used on the stage for exciting applause. He practices them with success, and is not sparing in their use. Those of most frequent recurrence are studied attitudes--affected pauses,--sudden transitions of passion,--abrupt depressions of voice, from its highest strength and pitch, to a familiar, colloquial tone, or almost to a whisper. But the actor is visible in all. He has not the art to conceal art;--or he does not aim to do it. A complete knowledge of stage effect may justly be considered a merit in a performer;--though the constant recourse which Mr. K. has to its aid, must be viewed as one of those most prominent faults.

The action of Mr. Kean is remarkable for effort, bustle, and violence of action. He tries to give effect to every sentence,--to almost every word of the author. No expression escapes the attention of the audience, through the tameness of the actor. His love of action is so immoderate, and he is so addicted to constant use of it, that much of it is necessarily without meaning. Of this kind are his frequent stridings from one stage box to the other, the patting of his forehead, the external fingering of his sword belt and adjusting of his sword, the unmeaning thrusting of his handkerchief into his bosom and pulling it out again, and the everlasting fumbling with his hands at his throat, and collar without object or design. These tricks are repeated to satiety. Indeed, he appears not to know what to do with his hands, when they are not employed in some violent motion.

With all these drawbacks on his merits, Mr. Kean awakens attention, and produces effect. Whether this is wholly to be ascribed to novelty, to fashion, to popular caprice, or to superior talent and perfection in his art, time will soon determine. To that arbiter we must leave it. It may however be said, with the present appearance of truth, that Mr. Kean possesses many prominent excellencies as an actor, but that they are accompanied with great faults and great defects. It is much to be doubted, whether his second visit to this town will be attended with circumstances so flattering to his fame, as those which he lately experienced.

The Columbian Centinel, on 24 February 1821, provided the following breakdown of the proceeds bidden, choice of boxes, boxes chosen and seats for the first tier of boxes sold at auction for Kean's performance in A New Way to Pay Old Debts. The sum came to $292.50. The amount paid for the second tier of boxes, not reflected in the ensuing table, totalled $102.00--giving us an aggregate of $400.50 for the entire sale of box seats, which was donated to the Massachusetts General Hospital. The premiums for the second tier of boxes averaged between "6 to 8 dollars 50 cents each."[2]

Choice.	Price	Boxes chosen.	Seats
1st--	$14--	No. 1	8
2d	14	2	9
3d	16	3	9
4th	15	17	9
5th	15.50	19	8
6th	17.50	18	9
7th	15.50	16	9
8th	16.50	4	9
9th	15	8	20
10th	15	5	13
11th	16	9	20
12th	15	15	12
13th	15.50	14	14
14th	15	13	17
15th	15	6	14
16th	16	7	17
17th	15	12	20
18th	15	10	19
19th	16	11	20

APPENDIX F

NEW-ENGLAND GALAXY'S ARTICLE (1 June 1821) ABOUT KEAN'S REFUSAL TO ACT IN RICHARD III in May 1821

The following article, from the New-England Galaxy of 1 June 1821, is atypical of the criticism that was printed in many of the Boston newspapers after Kean's refusal to perform Richard III--a complete turn around from the previous glowing reviews of the first engagement:

> The name of this person has been so often of late introduced into our columns, and remarks on his performances and his pretensions to the fame of a great actor have occupied so large a space in our paper, that we fear our readers will begin to feel something of the loathing which has affected us at every late repitition of his name--a sensation not much unlike that which is produced on the stomachs of our south-end neighbors by a west wind freighted with the fragrant, aromatic exhalations from the dry pond between Boston and Brookline. We should, however, be inexpressibly mortified, if we supposed that any reader could attribute our frequent recurrence to this subject to any importance that we have attached to his pretensions as an actor or his character as a man. There are other considerations which have induced us, and still seem to call upon us, as directors of one of the public presses of the town, to devote so much of our time and paper to a subject comparatively trivial and insignificant: one of which is the fact that a few of our "travalled fools," exotic dandies and indigenous fops, have undertaken to give a tone to the public taste.--to arbitrate in matters of criticism,--to direct in all the concerns of fashion and ceremony--and to impose on the world a ridiculous

notion that the public of Boston have held Kean in high estimation as an actor of superior genius and unrivalled accomplishments. The truth is, that the public.--the "real public"-- (an expression which we continue to use with great deference acknowledged to be the lawful property of another) have never thought so highly of Kean, since they first saw him as when they estimated his worth from common fame. For six months previous to his arrival the public mind was excited by inflated eulogiums on his performances, and by heralds who were hired to trumpet--his fame across the Atlantic. It is not surprising that Bostonians should desire to see and to judge for themselves. they did <u>see</u> and they <u>did</u> judge, and their judgment was decidedly against the man who came with such extravagant claims upon their approbation, they saw and they were convinced that though in some little things he aimed to surprise, yet whenever the poet had intended the actor to be great and overwhelming, the actor was insignificantly little and forever disappointed all reasonable anticipation. They were satisfied, that, though Kean could sometimes strike as with electricity, yet, that in the aggregate, he was not worthy to be named with Cooke, Cooper, Fenell, or Wallack; that in person and manners he was inferior to Duff, that in reading he could not stand on a parallel with Brown, though it could not be denied (strange and incredible as it may seem,) that he exceeded the last mentioned gentleman in vanity, and self-conceit.

The contemptible farce which was played the last night of Kean's engagement in March, ought not to be mentioned a a reproach to the public of Boston. It was a thing with which the public had nothing to do, nor ought to suffer the slightest particle of the obloquy which its authors merit. It was got up entirely by Mr. K. and his intimate friends--they had pledged themselves to call him out, and he had prepared, with infinite labour, the speech which he was to make, and which he did make, on the occasion. If the public of Boston could have been till then deluded by the extraordinary means that were used, into a belief that Kean was anything like what he pretended to be, that moment would have undeceived them. That moment when, casting off the borrowed trappings of royalty and mimic majesty, he appeared before them as plain and simple Mr. Kean, they perceived that he wanted mind and manners--two qualities generally supposed by Bostonians to be essential in the composition of an actor and a gentleman. Had he possessed a tolerable share of respect for the audience, he would not have insulted them with his pitiful compliment about the "literary emporium of the new world" nor cajoled them with his

"double relish of their approbation," and its "ingredients examined with philological precision." The whole performance proved that he was a man of neither letters nor manners, that he had no respect for the good sense of the public, and that those who contrived the plot of the farce had not sense enough to respect themselves.

With the departure of Kean, the excitement so very naturally produced at first, though artificially and laborously protracted, began to subside. It was foreseen that his promised return could not gratify his inordinate appetite for popular applause, and it was found that a second engagement would prove a losing game to the managers. These predictions and anticipations are not realities. He returned--played Lear to an audience that in ordinary times would have been called numerous and respectable.--and Jaffier to about half the number of spectators of the preceding evening. He was announced to play Richard on Friday evening last. An audience respectable in character and number had assembled. After a delay, much beyond the usual time for the performance to commence, Mr. Duff came forward and gave notice that Mr. Kean positively refused to play. The audience having expressed a desire that the performances should go on Mr. Brown was substituted for Kean, and the play proceeded accordingly.

We have taken some pains to ascertain to what passed behind the curtain on this occasion, and the following may be relied on as fact. Mr. Kean went to the theatre at the usual time, and, instead of preparing to perform his duty, he informed the managers that he should play no more, and should immediately prepare to leave the town. All the remonstrances, arguments and entreaties of the managers were unavailing. He left the theatre, returning to his lodgings, and gave immediate directions to his servants to pack up his baggage for New-York. No other reason was assigned by Mr. Kean for this strange, and unprincipled conduct--we have heard as other reason offered by his friends--than that he should not, and ought not to, play to bare walls. However mortifying it might be to his vanity to find that his attraction was so sensibly diminished, it will be difficult, we imagine, to justify such an outrage on propriety--such a breach of legal and moral obligation. Had there been but ten persons in the house--had five of these ten been boot-blacks and the other five scavengers, Kean was as much bound to play, and to play to the best of his ability, as if there had been ten thousand, and among them the king and nobility of England.

No blame has been attached--none could attach--to the managers in this business. They fulfilled, as far as lay in their power, their engagements to the public. We have heard them censured for nothing but too much forbearance--they ought to have taken this insolent pretender this inflated, self-conceited, unprincipled vagabond by the nose, and dragged him before the curtain to make his excuses for his conduct himself. And was he grateful to them for this forbearance? No--he repaid their civility with supercilious indifference, and added insult to injury. While the managers in this distress were exerting themselves to pacify a disappointed audience, this far-famed scholar and gentleman, this "super-human genius" invited them to go to a tavern and take a parting glass! Can the annals of impudence, of vulgarism, and of villany furnish a parallel to conduct like this? Every man of sense, of morality, of honor, of decency, answers, No. Every Bostonian, every American will answer No. And yet, it is said, there are not wanting persons who shamelessly pretend to justify it--nay, even to applaud it. Some of them, the very nabobs of the town, we understand, called at his lodgings, commenced him for the spirit he had shown, and escorted him to supper. His conduct has also been highly approved by another, who, we suspect, had not the honour of a personal acquaintance, he being only a genteel hair-cutter from London, yet in point of intellectual accomplishments, a suitable co-mate and fellow to the rest. The narrative part of this article may be concluded by stating that Mr. Kean,--probably fearing that the same mob which assembled to shout their halulujahs when he left town on his first visit, might reassemble and salute him with acclamations of a different character,--and did not dare to wait for the stage coach to carry him off, but sneaked away in a private carriage, to an adjoining town, where he waited the arrival of the stage.

This subject furnishes a number of reflections, which may be of service to some of our good townsmen, and might even have a wholesome influence on Kean himself, should they be so fortunate as to reach the "eager and scrutinizing searches of his eye." We have reason to believe that his real character is now pretty fairly unfolded. His second visit was not wanted to show what were his talents as an actor. We respect, that the public, after having given him a fair trial, decided, that, in the very narrow range of characters which he assumed, he was not superior to others whose dramatic walks were much less circumscribed. In all the crowded audiences that have seen his performances there are not fifty individuals

who will pretend to say that he equalled their expectations, or justified the inflated and bombastic criticisms which preceded his appearance. But his second visit has satisfied all, if any doubted that he is destitute of the most important and amiable qualities that give weight and dignity and worth to the human character, and which entitle a man to the regard of love of his fellow-man. He has no sense of moral obligation; his will is the law which governs his conduct, and his passions are his only monitors. He has no sense of gratitude; he considers public patronage as a tax which he has a right to demand and which the public are bound to pay. He has little or no regard for politeness and the common courtesies of society; he retaliated proffered civilities with neglect and ill-breeding and prefers the indulgence of low and degrading propensities to the refined gratifications of intellect. He has no mind; he lives only by exhaling the vapoury and offensive atmosphere of a house crowded with flatterers and fools; and how despicably mean must that man be who cannot pursue his adopted profession--the ordinary business by which he gets his bread--without the perpetual stimulus of popular and boisterous applause!

Mr. Kean's professed admirers and most intimate friends in Boston, may thank themselves for the chagrin and mortification which now elongate their visages to a frightful and melancholy length. These friends and supporters of his are found chiefly among a certain class, which has never been celebrated for high or uncommon acquirements in literature or science. Money most of them have it is true; money left by their fathers, which enabled them to voyage across the Atlantic, to learn foreign follies, without improving their intellectual faculties,--which enables them to live in splendour superior to the great majority of their neighbours, but which never has imparted superior brilliancy to their intellectual powers. Money gives to its owners a world of advantages, but who ever heard that it converted a fool into a scholar or an ass into a philosopher? Mammon and Apollo have always been at variance, and their favours are seldom bestowed on the same individual. In painting or in drama,--arts which profess to be imitations or representations of nature,--wood-sawers and lumpers are as well and often better qualified to act as critics and connosseirs [sic] than their lordly employers. Mr. Kean's friends have been blamed by some and laughed at by others. At our hands they shall receive neither vengeance nor ridicule. We have too much magnanimity to waste our indignation or lavish our merriment on beings which have such boundless claims to compassion--claims that

could hardly be satisfied were our pity as inexhaustable as ocean, as illimitable as space.

"Weep with Them That Weep"

In compliance with this direction of an apostle, we feel it to be our duty to condole with the friends of Mr. Kean, on the affecting dispensation of fortune which has bereaved them of their idol. We could offer them volumes of consolation,, would time and space permit, and point out to them a variety of sources from which comfort might be drawn. History and experience and poetry will furnish them abundantly with parallel cases of affliction and bereavement, from all of which they may derive something to alleviate the anguish of broken hearts and to blunt the sting of disappointment. We pity you, friends--in faith we pity you from the inmost recesses of the soul. But sorrow now, dear friends, as those who have no hope.

Priam from fortune's lofty summit fell;
Great Alexander, midst his conquests mourn'd;
Heroes and demi-gods have known their sorrows;
Caesars have wept, and Kean has run away.

But time and patience will bring relief. Fortune will shortly raise up some othe favourite, equally distinguished for genius, for learning, and for honour, and equally worthy of your affectionate regards.

To persevere
In obstinate condelement, is a course
Of impious stubborness; 'tis unmanly grief;
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven;
A heart unfortified, or mind impatient;
An understanding simple and unschool'd.

Therefore let your griefs be banished with the fugitive and let the world take notice that men so highly gifted with intellect,--taste,--genius,--learning, as yourselves, can despise the persecuting sneers of the vulgar souls, and triumph over the casualties of fortune and the malice of even fate itself.

THE TWO MURDERS

When Cain, the first foul murderer, as we're told,
His righteous brother slew, in days of old,
God drove him forth, and damned him with a stain,
That all might know the guilty wretch again.
But modern Kean, that vagrant, cockney wight,
Who murders sense and nature every night
Forestalls his doom, runs off, crack pated elf,
Proves fool, as well as knave, and damns himself.

APPENDIX G

ARTICLES ABOUT RIOT AT PARK THEATRE AND MAJOR NOAH'S SPEECH ABOUT REESTABLISHMENT OF "HEBREW GOVERNMENT" IN NEW YORK

The ensuing account of Kean's performance of Richard III on 14 November 1825 was published by the New York Commercial Advertiser on 15 November 1825. However, consistent with its expressed policy, the Advertiser published its review from information furnished by correspondents other than their own, this instance from the New York Gazette. According to William L. Stone, the editor of the newspaper, sending their own correspondents to the threatre might indicate a show of support for Kean and, at the same time, taint their personage:

> The reception of Kean was quite different from what we had supposed it would have been.
>
> From the comparative silence of those who could not but oppose him, and from the great pains that had been taken for weeks to pack the house, so as to assure him a favourable reception, and also from the liberal distribution of money which, it is whispered, had been made at groceries, to hire persons to go and applaud, [sugggests a claque] we had supposed that no opposition of any consequence would have been shown, and that he and his friends--and the Faux's and Fearon's who came here to pick up materials to defame the American character when they get home--would have been triumphant. But far otherwise was the case. The house was crammed from the pit to the topmost

gallery--but we are proud to say, there were but two females in the first, and two in the second tier of boxes; and these were soon compelled to beat a precipitate retreat. The curtain rose and two of the minor characters of the Play appeared and commenced reciting their parts; but the confusion was too great to allow them to be heard,--Kean was loudly called for, who speedily appeared, bowed, and prepared to address the audience. But the moment he appeared, he was assailed by such a powerful and unexpected burst of catcalls, and shower of hisses, that he was for the moment quailed. He walked forward and attempted to obtain a hearing; but in vain. The hisses and shouts, however, intermingled with cries of "Bravo, Kean," "Go on, go on," "No, no," "Off, off," drowned every thing else. The noise did not abate, and after standing upon the stage for fully a quarter of an hour, finding that the audience were unwilling to listen to him, he was finally compelled to retire. He soon, however, made a second attempt, and was driven indignantly off. An orange struck him on the hand, and fell upon the stage. He picked it up, and again came forward, holding it in his hand, and again attempted to obtain a hearing. But it was again in vain; and with one of those gutteral hectic laughs which are familiar to him, he tossed it across the stage, and retired. A gentleman (one of his friends) then rose, and endeavoured to speak a word for him; but nothing could be heard but "Hear him," "Kean for ever," "Down, down," "To Bridewell with him," "No Little Breeches here," &c.

At length the manager came forward; but although a favourite [sic] with the audience, even he could not be heard. A gentleman who sat in the stagebox informs us that, from the few words he could hear, he thought Mr. Simpson attempted to say, that a man--a stranger--should not be condemned unheard, and that Mr. Kean was desirous of making an apology. Thus all would not do. But, notwithstanding the uproar, it was decreed in the greenroom, that the play should go on. And on it went--Richard the Third in pantomime. It is said, that foreigners and all, three out of four were the friends of Kean.--But the opposition was too much for their cheers. Not a sound from the stage could be heard, and "ever and anon each dreary pause between," a not very gentle salutation of an orange or a rotten apple greeted some part of his body. Every time he made his appearance, the cries were redoubled; and "Alderman Cox," "Little Breeches," "Boston," "Literary Emporium," "Kean," "Bravo, Kean," "Turn the geese out," "Down," "Out with him," "watch," &c. mingled with all sorts of exclamations: "I dost care for Cox's wife," says one, "but he has insulted our

country;" "Bravo, that he has," cried another. "Down with the Keanites," "There's Bostonians" "Out with the d--d rascals." "That's magnanimous--most magnanimous audience!" "Send the Bostonians home!" "Huzza, there's New York hospitality for You!" At this moment a noise from without attracted their attention. An immense assemblage of the populace were at the doors, and threatened to take the theatre by storm. The indications of a rush were so strong, that a worthy assistant Alderman went out to attempt to pacify them. He obtained a partial hearing, and begged them to desist. "Gentlemen," said he, "we have noise and disturbance enough within doors, don't pray make so much disturbance in the street." But he was speedily silenced by hisses and cries of "bah!" and "little breeches!" The dumb play proceeded in the mean time within, but not quietly. Several of the hissers were taken out. But this viet armis business was soon checked by one resolute gentleman, who made fight. He was assailed by a dozen at once; but he laid about them with so much resolution and science that he beat them off, after drawing the claret of one, queering the peeper of another, knocking the ivory of another, and making a disagreeable lunge in the bread-basket of another.

A bevy of watchmen were sent for without, and some twenty or thirty having crept through the crowd, suddenly appeared on the steps of the theatre with their staves, and prevented any assault upon the doors. The noises, however, continued without and within. When in the wooing scene with Lady Ann, a nameless missile was thrown upon the stage, with a label of "Mrs. Cox." Mr. Hilson here rushed upon the stage, and carried Mrs. Hilson (who was attempting to play Lady Ann) behind the scenes. Mr. Simpson then appeared, and with an expression of countenance indicative of sorrow and indignation, seemed to implore the audience to act with more decorum, and display a little more respect for themselves. After a short interval, however, during which the noises of all descriptions were kept up, Mrs. Hilson was again led forward, and the pantomime went on. Kean became more agitated and angry. A bag of sand, with a label, struck his shoulder. His eyes flashed fire, and he trembled with rage. But amidst cried, and hisses, and exclamations, and catcalls, the play was proceeded with. At last, (in the dying scene) Richard was saluted with a shower of rotten apples. He took up one, and, although dying, looked at it for a moment--"grinned a ghastly smile," and the curtain fell amidst such an uproar as was never witnessed before on this side the Atlantic. Finally, one of the company came forward, and as it was said (for no one

could hear a word), announced Kean in Othello, for Wednesday evening. The hisses and shouts were as loud as before. But the show being now over, the audience adjourned.--"Come, Joe," said one of the steps, "let's go home." "I would, if I could," said Joe, "but the watch won't let me."

Thus ended Kean's first appearance. A bold experiment was hazarded--to insure success the house was packed--but all would not do. It was a continued scene of riot and confusion, and not one word of the play was heard by any mortal in the house.

But the most ludicrous part of the affair, was the interest manifested for Kean by the blacks in the upper tier. They relished the sentiment of the play so highly, that they could not contain themselves, and their applause was obstreperous. One of them appeared as a kind of leader. He thrust himself forward with a flag, and gave signals when his company was to cheer, and cry bravo Kean, "Oh Messa Kean go on!" "He debbleish sight better play deu Hulet"--"Turn out de brack rascal." "Cuffee looked dare, how he rolls his eyes like two eggs in a soap dish."--Hold tongue Toney, how like mad dog he foam at de mouth," "Take off hat and let Missa Dinah see!" "Debbie take Missa Dinah, I want to hear him stamp his foot!"

On the conclusion of the afterpiece, (we are told by the Gazette,) Kean was loudly called for, when Mr. Simpson appeared and stated that he had left the house, and that it was not known where he was to be found. On the receipt of this information, a part of the audience displayed a disposition to commit violence, and, we understand, some damage was done to the benches, fixtures, &c. Indeed on clearing off the stage, the subordinate hands of the theatre found it completely strewn with missiles of all descriptions, fragments of furniture, &c.

A morning paper suggests that there should be a large body of the Police at the theatre on Wednesday evening. Indeed?

Good.--Kean is announced for to-morrow evening in Othello--with the afterpiece of Fish out of Water. He is indeed like a fish out of water.

The following article was sent to Major Noah's New York National Advocate, and included in the 16 November 1825 issue. It is addressed to Noah and signed "A Native of Boston:"

At the Theatre on Monday, I was exceedingly scandalized to hear the name of my own native Boston

so unceremoniously hurled at Mr. Kean. I looked about with surprize, to make sure whether I was in the Boston Theatre or not, but soon realized where I was, and the character of the clamour. I had taken a seat below, but owing to the press, was compelled to accept a place in the third tier. Just below me, I heard a constant vociferous cry of "Boston, Boston--send Kean to Boston," &c. All this from the same person, and that a stranger!

Now, sir, as a native of Boston, my feelings were not a little outraged by this vulgar and contradictory clamour, this unwarrantable abuse of an enlightned city. I speak advisedly, sir, and know it to be no representation of the well-informed of that city. In the same slip there were some other young men, apparently of the party of the above stentor; they were satisfied, however, with the hissing, with reasoning on morality, and ever and anon suspending their moral discourse in a more amiable digression, by a show of gallantry and devotion to one or two of the very few ladies that appeared in the house. I do not say that these young men were from Boston; I hope they were not; but this was the character of the opposition and disturbance in the section of the house where I happened to be, and it seemed to be the same elsewhere.

Now, sir, I for one, protest against all extrinsic aid in manifesting the sense of a New York audience. The question is, not how Boston, Philadelphia or London have, or will receive Mr. Kean, but how New York does; and although our neighbours might, with less glaring impropriety, on ordinary occasions, approve or not approve of the mode of acting, yet when it is notoriously a question to be decided by New Yorkers, whether they will hear Kean in New York or not, all opposition by strangers is highly unbecoming; clamorous opposition is indecent and intolerable and, moreover, unlawful. It has become no longer a question of good acting, but whether our own citizens, on their own ground, shall hear Kean at all; and this right is contested mainly by strangers and the very question of it attempted to be drowned in vociferation. Mr. Kean was not allowed to be heard, even in apology!

Now, sir, let our own audience decide for itself--let not its competency be brow beaten: let every energy be applied to restore order; let fewer tickets be sold, and more peace officers be distributed about the house; let them in the outset, remove all who bring whistles or other instruments of clamour; let them next take in hand those who manifest a determination to prevent others hearing. It is implied that people go to hear the play; they pay their money, and have a right to hear, and to prevent

> it, is a flagrant breach of right, and of law, and every one is justified in putting down those who attempt to stop their ears; and whether they attempt it by willful clamour or force, the right of self defense is the same.
>
> Let these simple principles be understood, and let all disturbers be warned beforehand to stay away if they do not want to hear; that they purchase tickets on the implied condition that they act decently, and, be assured, sir, nine-tenths of the audience will back the officers, and tranquility be restored. I say nothing of Mr. Kean, as an actor; I only object on principal, and in general terms, to a very few restless spirits, usurping the rights of a New York audience. I would not compel any one to hear--nor would I submit to distation from others.
>
> A NATIVE OF BOSTON

The following material contains extracts from a long speech made by Major Noah to reestablish the "Hebrew government" in New York State. It is not only historically significant, but, at the same time, elucidates the general character of Major Noah who firmly supported Kean; whereas the Courier, and other like journals, opposed Kean--providing their own pretensions of morality.[1] The speech was printed in the Boston Courier of 27 November 1825:

> The oldest of nations, powerful in numbers and great in resources, remains isolated, without a home, a country, or a government.
>
> Having made known by proclamation the re-establishment of the Hebrew government, having laid the foundation of a city of refuge, an asylum for the oppressed in this free and happy republic, I avail myself of that portion of my beloved brethren here assembled, together with this concourse of my fellow citizens, to unfold the principles, explain the views, and detail the objects contemplated in the great work of regeneration and independence to which it has pleased the Almighty to direct my attention. . . .
>
> Two thousand years have nearly elapsed since the dissolution of the Jewish government, and no period had presented itself more auspiciously than the present for its reorganization. . . .

> A few millions of dollars judiciously invested and thrown into the Western district of this State, would realize a reasonable profit, and be of immense benefit to this thriving and populous section of our country. . . .
>
> I recommend the establishment of emigration societies throughout Europe, in order that proper aid may be afforded to those who may be disposed to visit this country, and also to ascertain the character and occupation of each emigrant, and supply them with passports and information. Passage in all cases should be taken for New York . . .--We shall not be prepared to receive emigrants on Grand Island, until the ensuing summer; and this notice is given many good objects. . . . Thus commences, auspiciously, I hope, the attempt to revive the Government of the oldest of nations, and lead them, if not to the promised, still to happy land.
>
> The effort may be successful or injurious. It directs public attention to the claims of an oppressed people--it will admonish Sovereigns to be just and generous to them--it may produce a better state of toleration and religious feeling--it may place our people in the road to honor and fame--it opens to them the avenues of industry and competence; in short, it makes men and citizens of them, gives them a name, a rank, and interest and a voice among the nations of the earth. . . .
>
> To him who shelters and protects the whole family of mankind, the great omnipotent and omnipresent God, do I commit the destinies of Israel, and pray that he may have you all in his safe and holy keeping.

The following letter was published in the New York National Advocate on 21 November 1825. It contains information about an impending riot at the Park Theatre. At the bottom of the letter the name "Caius" is penned, and the date "Nov. 14" is written:

> So many communications have been written to editors of newspapers concerning Mr. Kean, that I should think they were by this time heartily sick of them, and would cast any paper aside relating to him. Nothing but a knowledge of an act about to be perpetrated tonight, which deeply concerns not only the peace of our city, but the honour of New-York induces a hope that this paper will not be treated with indifference.

So far as regards Mr. Kean's conduct in London, which is venial compared with that of Miss Foote, the avowed mistress of Beckley, and the catch-penny for Mr. Haine, who was stupidly and inconsistently rewarded for her adroitness by a London audience with $850, while Kean, who was cajoled by the notorious Mrs. Cox, was refused his bread. I shall not dilate upon at present. My business as a New-Yorker and a peaceable citizen abstracted in feeling for the moment from Kean or any other actor, is with New-York and Boston.

Many persons thought that the idea of an opposition coming from Boston was chimerical. I give the managers, I give the police, I give the constables, I give Mr. Kean, I give the New-York patrons of the drama, I give the city, for its honor, all fair warning, that not only does such a thing exist, but that such an organization of it exist; that danger impends, not only over the character and spirit of our citizens, but over their limbs and lives. Unless powerful, indefatigable, and ingenious methods are adopted, a scene will be presented to-night, that will make the ears of all parties tingle, I speak advisedly, and for the public good.

Let us look at the matter briefly. Mr. Kean, in his beautiful appeal to-day, expresses his intention to go to Boston and apologise for his indiscretions--With what face, then, do Mr. T, Mr. B. and Mr. P. organize a vindictive corps of opposition here, relying on their pugilistic strength and skill, to bear down the will of a New-York audience, and usurping its province, attempt to dictate to us taste and propriety? And that too, when Kean will give them an opportunity of forgiving or of persecuting him on their own ground, and when it endangers the peace and safety of our citizens? Do these gentlemen really imagine, that our young men have no spirit, our police no vigor, our managers no independence? Do they really think, that when a New-York audience of 2,000 people are assembled, that 100 Bostonians, armed with cat-calls, missiles, clubs, loaded whips and canes, small torpedoes, oranges, apples, dirks, and small swords, can force their opinion, viet armis, down the throats of the while 2,000? Let the gentlemen beware, or to-night they may find themselves awfully in error, to their own grief or that of this city and of Boston, for that city never would countenance such a transaction.

Mr. Kean exclusive of all his other losses, was lately defrauded of £4500, and has come here humble, penitent, prostrate and poor. None of his supporters pretend that he has done right! he does not pretend it himself, but says he is guilty, and asks our

> forgiveness. What man, what Christian, will not pardon a penitent? Mercy "blesseth him who gives and him who takes," and the only question is, whether we shall forgive, like enlightened men, or, Zanga-like, thrust genius and penitence out upon a thankless world, "to scorn and beggary." I ask the protection of my native city against Boston, from the police, from the managers, and from my fellow citizens.--Nov. 14.
>
> Caius

The following address, which was delivered by Kean at the conclusion of his benefit performance on 2 December 1825, is taken from the New York National Advocate. It differs slightly in content from the text presented in another newspaper:

> Mr. Kean stated, that in doing himself the honour of appearing before the audience, he might observe that it would be an insult to their understanding to suppose that words could be a return for the unbounded favours he had received. He had left England, after the most virulent and unrelenting persecution that any man had ever suffered; and, added to this, he had experienced domestic calamities which it would not be here proper to explain. The dreadful agony of his feelings had nearly overcome him; he was in the lowest state of dejection, and feared even his intellectual faculties would have abandoned him. In this horible condition--injured in reputation, and bankrupt in fortune, he landed on our hospitable shores--and his only hope was, that the same providence that had blasted his expectations, might also prostrate his mortal frame in the dust. He was alike insensible to censure or applause; nor was it the clamour [sic] and disturbance that attended his appearance on the first night, that in the least aroused him from the stupor. He might truly say that he was wrecked, senseless, on our coast, and by generous treatment had been restored to life! What, therefore, did he not owe to the New York audience? Even that audience could not realize the extent of his obligation; for the winds of heaven would waft to congenial friends in the parent country, the consoling reception he had met with. Under circumstances of such vital importance to him, he found it impossible to offer commensurate gratitude; and he would, therefore, only declare, with the deepest sincerity, that wherever destiny might direct him, or whatever might be the ultimatum of his career,

the last pulsation of his heart would beat warmly for New York.

Mr. Kean concluded (amidst the loudest applause), with informing the audience that he should now proceed to Boston, and on his return, he anticipated the honour of again appearing before them.

APPENDIX H

RIOT AT THE FEDERAL STREET THEATRE

The following article provides us with a detailed glimpse of the proceedings which took place during the riot at the Boston Federal Street Theatre on the evening of 21 December 1825. The information was gratuitously furnished by "an obliging friend" of the editors of the Boston Daily Advertiser. It is especially interesting for its candor and detailed analysis "of the proceedings" which took place "at the Theatre on Wednesday evening." The letter was published in the 23 December 1825 issue of the Boston Daily Advertiser:

> At half past five, the house was completely filled in every part with men. There was not a single female present. There did not appear to be any extraordinary excitement, and it was generally thought that after a little tumult at his first appearance, Kean would be permitted to go through his four nights. At six, the time for raising the curtain, Mr. Finn came forward, and was received with so much uproar, that it was impossible, even in a box very nigh the stage, to hear a syllable he said. We presume, however, it was to announce Mr. Kean's wish to apologize, for immediately after, that gentleman appeared in ordinary clothes, not dressed for his part, and with an air of profound humility and depreciation, seemed to solicit to be heard. He was pale and apparently in very ill health. He was greeted with a shower of the usual missiles, and an additional species of annoyance in little brass balls of about the size of a musket bullet, some of which struck him. Water was also

thrown on the stage. He appeared sorrowful and alarmed, and retired. Great tumult then ensued, which terminated in a call for "the Manager," it seeming to be the wish of the audience to have some in visu, to insult, though they had the firm intention of hearing no one but themselves.--In obedience to this requisition, Mr. Kilner appeared, and by great caution managed to be heard in a box next but one to the stage, to say, that "Mr. Kean wished to make an apology from his heart and soul," which proffer being responded to by the charitable cry of "D--n his soul," Mr. Kean appeared a second time, and was a second time forced to retire. Some attempts were now made by gentlemen in different parts of the house, to address the pit, and obtain a hearing of "Kean's apology," which was at intervals clamorously called for. These all failed, and the uproar was so great, that one of our leading fellow-citizens could not be heard for a sentence, and retired.--Mr. Kilner now made his second communication to the pacific audience, and adopted the expedient of telegraphing it, in the way in which ships at sea, who cannot speak each others, chalk out their reckoning on the quarter, for mutual information. He displayed a large placard, with the inscription, "Mr. Kean declines playing!" but while the natural and dignified mirth of the pit and gallery was exhaling itself at this, they were called again to their deliberations, by the startling query, which the reversed side of the placard contained, which he now displayed--"Shall the play go on without him?" This inquiry, however innocent it seems, will at once appear to the reflecting mind to throw the whole grave matter again in medias, and accordingly "loud as the wolves" again became the pit, whereupon the curtain drew up, and that interesting personage, "the Lieutenant of the Tower," who had better been the helper of Newgate, displayed his person, and we presume, repeated his part. Mr. Kilner also stated, that "the noise and bustle of this life were weary to him," in all probability, but we could not catch even this apposite remark of King Henry. When Mr. Finn appeared dressed for Richard, the tumult again became overpowering, and after a scene or two, the play was stopped and Mr. Finn came forward in reply to the calls for Mr. Kean, and stated he had left the house. It is understood also since, that he immediately left town. Thus ended the acting part of this splendid transaction.

Long before this, however, the populace outside had manifested a desire to enter, in a very expressive manner, and were uniformly met with a practical appeal to the principle "tis better thee without and us within." Before the acting stopped, after a pretty

sharp skirmish between the gentlemen of the boxes (the peace officers having been put hors du combat, at once) and the gentlemen of the piazza, the former were driven in, and the latter came in to occupy the lines they had forced. These were in number about 200. By a masterly manoevre, however, they were taken in rear, and the doors again closed, the rioters being retained, though hardly on the footing of prisoners. The audience went on with its concert of harmony about a half an hour longer when the alarming information was communicated, that the people were forcing the house at all points. The gentlemen in the boxes now began to show their prudence. After having performed miracles of valor, and effected a perfectly scientific retreat to the stage and the pit. This measure was real generalship, for the rioters had a surprising advantage in the quantity and kind of their ammunition, as they were well supplied with pebbles and brickbrats [sic],and availed themselves of the benches, as very effectual means of annoyance. They commenced an attack immediately on the lustres, and individuals who from this strong exposure to a brilliant light may, it is hoped, be identified, wrenched out the branches, which suspend the chandeliers, or coolly struck them to pieces with clubs. By this time the boxes were deserted by their defenders, except a few of the vanguard, and the stage covered. The windows were now opened to the street; and many who thought their cause desperate, retired through them. They were frequently met by the gentlemen without in the act of availing themselves at the same time, of this method of entering. These intruders, uniformly, we understand, covered their burglarious entry with a sly, though untimely inquiry as to the price of checks; it being obvious, that where 2000 people are pouring into the theatre from all passages, the price of that article must be merely nominal. The lights were soon extinguished, the benches torn up, the window frames, and all, thrown into the street.--What damage was done to the property behind, we do not learn, but it must have been considerable. We observed many of those who had got possession of the stage, to display those tin-headed pikes which uniformly serve as the arms of the body-guard of all tyrants, &c. with an apparent disposition to appropriate them to their own use. It is said his honour the mayor was at length, after several messages, prevailed on to appear. This we did not see, but have no doubt that any apparent delay in that very active officer's conduct was the result either of accident or principle.--The riot Act was attempted to be read, but the lights were extinguished as often as produced for that purpose. All after this

was a scene of confusion which could not be painted for the simple reason that it could not be seen. At about 11, we heard some one in the front door of the Theatre, after it had been defended for a long time proclaiming permission "to all to come in." After this full capitulation, we retire.--It is said stones were thrown at the windows opposite the front of the Theatre. Many persons were injured, but we heard of no lives lost. We hardly know where to bestow the palm of distinction; on the Peace Officers who signalised themselves by a mixture of discretion and valour or the gentlemen of the boxes who performed feats of chivalry worthy of Richard of Aire, one having to our knowledge knocked down six men, before he himself was prostrated, and finally the rioters, who at last remained undisputed masters of the field, partly gained however like Mexico by their formidable artillery.

ENDNOTES

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

[1]Before the advent of Kean, John Philip Kemble was the prototype for English tragedians, as was Quin before Garrick emerged on the scene in the eighteenth-century. According to Henry T. Tuckerman:

> "The taste in England had been formed by Kemble and his school; dignity, correctness, grave emphasis, and highly-finished elocution, had become the standard characteristics. Kean was a bold innovator upon this system; he trusted to nature more than to art, or rather endeavored to fuse the two . . . He seemed possessed with the character he represented; and, throwing mere technical rules to the winds, identified himself through passionate sympathy, regulated by studious contemplation, with the idiosyncrasies of those whose very natures and being he aspired to embody and develop" (Henry T. Tuckerman, Essays, Biographical and Critical; or studies of Character [Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1857], p. 96).

[2]H. Buxton Forman, ed., Maurice Buxton Forman, rev. ed., The Poetical Works and other writings of John Keats, 8 vols. (Charles Scribners & Sons, 1939; reprint ed., New York: Phaeton Press, 1970), V: 232.

[3]See Apendix A for what appears to be a draft of Kean's first Drury Lane contract. Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 804.

[4]Morning Chronicle (London), 27 January 1814.

[5]Ibid.

[6]George Frederick Cooke visited the United States in 1810--performing there from 1810 to 1812. He was a highly regarded tragedian who may have had some influence on Kean's formative years as an actor: Kean saw Cooke perform in the provinces before Cooke left for the United

States. See chapter Some British Shakespeareans who preceded Kean on the American Stage for some information about his appearance in the United States. The following quote from James Boaden's Memoirs of J.P. Kemble, perhaps provides us with the possibility that Kean did emulate Cooke:

> "That though I think his [Kean's] taste very frequently vicious and his judgment often imperfect;--though he had almost countless vulgarisms in his pronounciation, and a trick, like Cooke, of speaking with different voices, and uttering the most discordant tones;--yet his energy is so unfailing, as to bear down criticism itself in his rage; and even in the gentler scenes of sorrow, occasional touches of infinite grace and beauty proceed from his imagination" (James Boaden, Memoirs of The Life of J.P. Kemble, Esq. Including A History of the Stage, From the Time of Garrick To The Present Period, 2 vols. [Philadelphia: Robert H. Small, 1825,] 1: 569).

[7]Morning Chronicle (London), 15 February 1814.

[8]Although the romantics stepped onto Kean's bandwagon, except for Shelley who disliked Kean, they nonetheless were able to find a crack in Kean's armor. Other writers, besides the romantics, also faulted some aspects of Kean's acting.

[9]Coventry Patmore, ed., The Table Talk and Omniana of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (London: Oxford University Press, 1917), p. 44.

[10]William Archer and Robert W. Lowe, eds. Dramatic Essays of Leigh Hunt (London: Walter Scott, 1891,) p. 199.

[11]Laurence Huston Houtchens and Carolyn Washburn Houtchens, eds. Leigh Hunt's Dramatic Criticism 1808-1831 (London: Oxford University Press, 1950,) p. 113.

[12]Ibid., p. 114.

[13]William Hazlitt, "The Drama," London Magazine, (January 1820): 68.

[14]Morning Chronicle (London,) 2 February 1814.

[15]William Archer and Robert W. Lowe, eds., Hazlitt on Theatre (London: 1895; reprint ed., New York: Hill and Wang, 1957), p. 31.

[16]Selection from Crabb Robinson's diary, Eluned Brown, "A Note on Henry Crabb Robinson's Reactions to J.P.

Kemble and Edmund Kean," Theatre Notebook 13, No. 1 (Autumn, 1958): 16.

[17]Bell's Weekly Messenger (London), 1815, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 5218.

[18]London Museum or Record of Literature, Fine Arts, Science, Antiquities, The Drama, &c., 7 (8 June 1822): 109. Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 5218.

[19]Morning Chronicle (London), 9 May 1814.

[20]Frances Ann Kemble, Records of a Girlhood (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1884), p. 429.

[21]Ibid. p. 430.

[22]Thomas Colley Grattan, Beaten Paths And Those Who Trod Them, 2 vols. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1862), 2: 175.

[23]George Vandenhoff, Leaves from an Actor's Notebook (New York: Appleton, 1860), p. 21.

[24]George Henry Lewes, On Acting and the Art of Acting (Smith, Elder & Co., 1875), p. 17.

[25]Sarah Kemble Siddons is generally considered the greatest English-speaking actress of the nineteenth-century. Her acting style is said to have been impassioned and highly energetic.

[26]London Magazine, (January 1820): 68-69.

[27]Thomas Moore, ed. The Life, Letters and Journals of Lord Byron (London: 1820; reprint ed., Scholarly Press, Inc. 1972), p. 228.

[28]Thomas Dibdin, The Reminiscences of Thomas Dibdin, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1834), 2: 31-32.

[29]The writer preferred Garrick and Henderson to Kean in Hamlet. Hamlet was not regarded as one of Kean's great roles.

[30]"Drury-Lane--Hamlet," [Unidentified newspaper clipping,] 1814, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 803.

[31]William B. Wood, Personal Recollections of the Stage (Philadelphia: Henry Carey Baird, 1855), pp. 264-65.

[32]See Appendix A for Drury-Lane playbills of Kean's first appearances as Richard III and Othello. Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 804.

[33]Leigh Hunt's Dramatic Criticism 1808-1831, p. 202.

[34]Examiner (London), 7 January 1816.

[35]London Museum or Record of Literature, Fine Arts, Science, Antiquities, The Drama, &c., (December 1822): 525. Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 5218.

[36]Monthly Magazine (London), quoted in the New York Evening Post, 6 September 1817. This review clearly shows that the American newspapers were attentively watching Kean.

[37]Eluned Brown, "A Note on Henry Crabb Robinson's Reactions to J.P. Kemble and Edmund Kean," Theatre Notebook 13, No. 1 (Autumn, 1958): 17.

[38]William Cotton, Story of the Drama in Exeter, During the Best Period, 1787 to 1823 with Reminiscenses of Edmund Kean (London: Hamilton Adams & Co., 1887), p. 39.

[39]London Magazine, (January 1820): 69.

[40]Early nineteenth-century American playgoers and critics were accustomed to the formalism of the likes of Cooper, Fennell, and Hodgkinson.

[41]It is a limitation to have to depend so much on them.

Chapter 2. KEAN DECIDES TO COME TO AMERICA

[1]George C. D. Odell, Annals of the New York Stage, 15 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1927), 2: 581.

[2]Harold Newcomb Hillebrand, Edmund Kean (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933), p. 200.

[3]New York Evening Post, 25 July 1818.

[4]Raymund Fitzsimons, Edmund Kean: Fire From Heaven (New York: The Dial Press, 1976), p. 119.

[5]A. E. Snodgrass, "The Storm and Stress of Edmund Kean," Cornhill Magazine (May 1933): 513.

[6]New York Evening Post, 17 July 1817.

[7]J. Fitzgerald Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean, Tragedian 1787-1833 (London: Downey & Co. Limited, 1897), p. 97.

[8]Ibid. p. 195.

[9]Fitzsimons, Edmund Kean, p. 120.

[10]Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean, p. 260.

[11]Ibid., pp. 257-58.

[12]Ibid., p. 260.

[13] Ibid.

[14]A "first draft" of Edmund Kean's initial contract (1814) between the proprietors of Drury Lane is contained in Appendix A. Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 804.

[15]George Raymond, Memoirs of Robert William Elliston, 2 vols. 2nd ed. (London: John Ollivier, 1846; reprint ed., New York: Benjamin Blom, 1969), 2: pp. 98-99.

[16]Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean, p. 260.

[17]Ibid., pp. 260-61.

[18]Times (London), 4 October 1819.

[19]New York Evening Post, quoted in the New York National Advocate, 19 October 1819.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean, p. 270.

[22]Times (London), 9 November 1819.

[23]Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean, 271.

[24]Morning Post (London), 18 September 1820, quoted in the New York Evening Post, 17 January 1821.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Hillebrand, Edmund Kean, p. 196.

[27]New York Evening Post, 25 July 1817.

[28]Edmund Kean to Charlotte Cox under "assumed" name Mrs. Allen, 5 April 1821. Sent from America to England, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center.

[29]"Kean's MS Diary of his visit to America," 22 pages, inserted in Vol. 8 of F. W. Hawkins, The Life of Edmund Kean: Illustrated 14 vols. (London, 1869). This specially illustrated edition is located in the special reading room at the Widener Library at Harvard University. Additional information from this manuscript is contained in following chapters.

[30]When we discuss Kean's Boston engagements, information will be provided from "Kean's MS Diary" and from various Boston newspapers.

[31]William W. Clapp, A Record of the Boston Stage (Boston: James Monroe, 1853, reprint ed., New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968), p. 181.

[32]Ibid.

[33]New York National Advocate, 15 September 1820.

[34]Thomas Colley Grattan, "My Acquaintance with the late Edmund Kean," New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal 39, Part the Third (1833): 15.

[35]Baltimore Morning Chronicle, quoted in the New York Evening Post, 19 May 1821.

[36]Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean, p. 223.

[37]Raymond, Memoirs of Elliston, 2: 326.

[38]Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean, p. 226.

[39]Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean, pp. 226-27.

[40]Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean, pp. 229-30.

[41]New England Palladium (Boston), 2 March 1821.

[42]Fitzsimons, Edmund Kean, p. 124.

[43]Harold Newcomb Hillebrand, Edmund Kean (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933), p. 181.

[44]Champion (London,) quoted in Charles Bucke, Preface to The Italians or The Fatal Accusation, 4 ed., (London: G. and W. B. Whittaker, 1819), xx-xxi.

[45]Hillebrand, Edmund Kean, p. 182.

[46]Fitzsimons, Edmund Kean, p. 126.

[47]Bucke, Preface, ix-x.

[48]Ibid.

[49]Ibid., xii.

[50]Fitzsimons, Edmund Kean, p. 127.

[51]Ibid.

[52]Bucke, Preface, xxii.

[53][Unidentified Newspaper clipping], 15 March 1819, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 803.

[54]Courier (London), 18 March 1819, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 803.

[55]Courier (London), 22 March 1819, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 803.

[56]Fitzsimons, Edmund Kean, p. 128.

[57]Morning Herald (London), quoted in Bucke, Preface, xxxiii-xxxiv.

[58]Fitzsimons, Edmund Kean, p. 128.

[59]Times (London), 16 August 1820.

[60]Ibid.

[61]"The Drury Lane Theatre," New Monthly Magazine (London), (September 1820), quoted in the New York Evening Post, 1 December 1820.

Chapter 3.SOME BRITISH SHAKESPEAREANS WHO PRECEDED KEAN ON THE AMERICAN STAGE

[1]There were other prominent British Shakespeareans, such as John Hodgkinson (1792), James Fennel (1793), Charlotte Melmoth (1793), and Ann Brunton Merry (1796), who appeared in the United States before 1818, however a discussion of their initial appearances is not germane to the needs of this chapter. The others discussed have a direct connection to Kean.

[2]Very likely, if Kemble had appeared on the American stage, he would have been the recipient of the kind of adulation given Cooper, who was the favourite of the American audience. Cooper, like Kemble, popularized the old school, declamatory, sing-song style of acting, which was very popular during the first quarter of nineteenth-century America.

[3]Philadelphia Union, 12 January 1821.

[4]New York National Advocate, 30 November 1817.

[5]A distinction must be made between performers who were drafted, as in 1818, by American managers like Cooper and Price, and those performers who came to the United States on their own initiative. Actors like Cooper and Kean came to the United States on their own initiative, whereas Wallack and Maywood were recruited.

[6]New York National Advocate, 20 August 1818.

[7]Ibid.

[8]New York National Advocate, 9 September 1818.

[9]New York Evening Post, 8 September 1818.

[10]New York Herald, 16 November 1810.

[11]Thomas Abthorpe Cooper shared the management of the Park Theatre in New York City with Stephen Price in

1810. When Kean arrived in 1820, Edmund Simpson shared the management with Stephen Price.

[12]New York Herald, 16 November 1810.

[13]According to the New York Journal of 23 November 1810:

> "Cooke, Kemble, and Holman are the three great European tragic actors of the present day. Cooke is more indebted to nature than either of the other two. Kemble and Holman are labored, finished actors, whose every gesture, every attitude has been studied before the looking glass. . . . Cooke has the advantage of Kemble and Holman in one great thing, that is in the countenance; in fact the expression in Cooke's countenance is so great, that his thoughts can nearly be told before he opens his mouth."

[14]New York Herald, 19 November 1810.

[15]William W. Clapp, A Record of the Boston Stage Boston: James Monroe, 1853, reprint ed., New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968), p. 123.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid. Clapp's reference to Cooke disappointing the public in "his usual way," refers to Cooke's habit of frequently absenting himself from performances because of heavy drinking. Because of his immense success, Cooke's New York engagement was extended an additional seven nights.

[18]New York Journal, 23 November 1810.

[19]New York Journal, 5 December 1810.

[20]Ibid.

[21]New York Herald, 28 November 1810.

[22]Clapp, A Record of the Boston Stage, p. 123.

[23]Ibid., p. 124.

[24]Ibid., pp. 123-24.

[25]"Superstar," in this instance, refers to Kean's unique status as the first genius to perform on the American stage.

[26]The American press published notices of Kean in various newspapers and periodicals before his first

appearance in the United States. Periodicals, like the Boston Athenium, quoted in the New York Evening Post, of 17 July 1817, contained "judicious selections from various English periodical works' about Kean's career. Newspapers, like the New York Evening Post of 6 September 1817, which contained a (London) Monthly Magazine review of Kean's Othello, occasionally printed reviews of Kean's performances. Some newspapers, like the New York National Advocate, made comments about Kean's position as an actor. The Advocate, on 19 December 1817, said that Kean "approximates most near" to David Garrick.

[27]New York Evening Post, 8 September 1818.

[28]Ibid.

[29]New York National Advocate, 9 September 1818.

[30]Nineteenth-century critics considered it essential that an actor maintain acceptable social behavior in private affairs. As it happened with Kean, any deviation from the accepted standard would necessitate public censure.

[31]New York National Advocate, 20 September 1818.

[32]New York Evening Post, 25 September 1818.

[33]James E. Murdoch, The Stage or Recollections of Actors and Acting From an Experience of Fifty Years (New York: 1880; reprint ed., New York: Benjamin Blom, 1969), pp. 220-21.

[34]New York Gazette, 13 January 1819.

[35]Ibid.

[36]New York Commercial Advertiser, 18 January 1819.

[37]Clapp, A Record of the Boston Stage, p. 62.

[38]When we read about Kean's first performances in New York, we find Cooper's name frequently mentioned. Sometimes articles are entirely devoted to discussions of the relative merits of both actors.

[39]New-England Galaxy (Boston), 6 October 1820.

[40]New York National Advocate, 25 October 1819. It is ironic that the Advocate chose to support Cooper and not the new school of actors, since the paper subsequently defended Kean during his engagements.

[41]Junius Brutus Booth, who had not yet appeared in the United States, was also considered an imitator of Kean.

[42]New York American, 27 October 1819.

[43]New York Evening Post, 18 November 1820.

[44]New York American, 20 November 1820.

[45]New York Evening Post, 18 November 1820.

[46]New York Evening Post, 28 November 1820.

[47]New York American, 29 November 1820.

[48]John W. Francis, Old New York or, Reminiscences of the Past Sixty Years (New York: Charles Roe, 1858), p. 205.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Extensive research in early nineteenth-century American newspapers and journals reveals that many writers went far overboard, writing either overly favorable or extremely negative comments about performers. Thus each succeeding performer became greater than his predecessor. So it went with Cooper, with Cooke, with Wallack, with Maywood, and later with Kean.

[51]Philadelphia Union, 12 January 1821.

Chapter 4. KEAN'S AMERICAN DEBUT: NEW YORK 1820

[1]New-England Palladium (Boston), 28 November 1820.

[2]New York Evening Post, 30 November 1820.

[3]Joseph N. Ireland, Records of the New York Stage: From 1750 to 1860, 2 vols. (New York: T.H. Morrell, 1866), 1: 300.

[4]See Appendix B for brief discussion of so-called "Park Theatre controversy."

[5]New York National Advocate, 4 September 1820.

[6]John Howison, Esq. Sketches of Upper Canada: Domestic, Local, and Characteristic: To which are added, Practical Details For the information of Emigrants of Every Class: And some recollections of The United States of America (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1821), p. 321.

[7]New York National Advocate, 23 September 1818.

[8]George C. D. Odell, Annals of the New York Stage, 15 vols. (New York: Columbian University Press, 1927), 2: 581.

[9]Ibid.

[10]New York American, 29 November 1820.

[11]The performance of an afterpiece at the end of the first play was common practice during this period, both in America and England; and was usually a one-act play, sometimes two. The fare alternated between farce and musical.

[12]"Kean's MS Diary of his visit to America," 22 pages, inserted in vol. 8 of F. W. Hawkins, The Life of Edmund Kean: Illustrated 14 vols. (London: 1869). This specially illustrated edition is located in the special reading room at the Widener Library at Harvard University.

[13]Other information from this manuscript includes statements about amount of money "paid Captain Sketchly," the "Steward," "sailors," "Cook," upon Kean's arrival in New York on "Friday the 24 of November." Additional information incudes the "35 dollars" that Kean paid for his room in New York.

[14]"Kean's MS diary of his visit to America."

[15]New York Evening Post, 30 November 1820.

[16]Frank Luther Mott, American Journalism: A History of Newspapers in the United States Through 260 years: 1690 to 1950 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), p. 188.

[17]Philadelphia National Gazette, 4 November 1820.

[18]New York American, 3 March 1819.

[19]Mott, American Journalism, p. 181.

[20]New York American, 30 November 1820.

[21]New York American, 1 December 1820.

[22]William Hazlitt and Robert Lowe eds., Hazlitt on Theatre (London: 1895; reprint ed., New York: Hill and Wang, 1957), p. 4.

[23]New York National Advocate, 30 November 1820.

[24]Philadelphia Union, 12 January 1821.

[25]The Times (London) (16 August 1820) had confidently stated that "a difference of taste clearly exists" between American and English audiences, the latter being superior. Both the American and the National Advocate praised the impartiality, freedom and superior taste of the American audience.

[26]New York National Advocate, 1 December 1820.

[27]New York Daily Advertiser, 30 November 1820.

[28]New York Commercial Advertiser, 30 November 1820.

[29]New York Gazette, 5 December 1820.

[30]New York Evening Post, 4 December 1820.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Archer and Lowe, Hazlitt on Theatre, p. 69.

[33]Monthly Magazine (London), quoted in the New York Evening Post, 6 September 1817.

[34]New York National Advocate, 4 December 1820.

[35]William Hazlitt, Theatrical Examiner (February 1816), no. 226, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 802.

[36]John Adolphus, Memoirs of John Bannister, 2 vols. (London: 1838), 1: 256-58.

[37]The complete review of Othello is contained in Appendix c. New York American, 4 December 1820.

[38]New York American, 4 December 1820.

[39]New York Gazette, 5 December 1820.

[40]Odell, Annals of the New York Stage, 2: 586.

[41]New York Evening Post, 2 December 1820.

[42]Odell, Annals of the New York Stage, 2: 588.

[43]New York National Advocate, 4 December 1820.

[44]John W. Francis, Old New York, or, Reminiscences

of the Past Sixty Years (New York: Charles Roe, 1858), p. 227.

[45]New York American, 8 December 1820.

[46]Odell, Annals of the New York Stage, 2: 586.

[47]New York Evening Post, 4 December 1820.

[48]New York National Advocate, 6 December 1820.

[49]New York Evening Post, 5 December 1820.

[50]New York National Advocate, 8 December 1820.

[51]New York Evening Post, 7 December 1820.

[52]New York Evening Post, 6 December 1820.

[53]New York Evening Post, 8 December 1820.

[54]Thomas Moore, ed., The Life, Letters, and Journal of Lord Byron (London: 1820, reprint ed., London: Scholarly Press Inc., 1972), p. 252.

[55]New York Evening Post, 11 December 1820.

[56]New York National Advocate, 11 December 1820.

[57]New York Evening Post, 11 December 1820.

[58]"Kean's MS Diary of his visit to America."

[59]Nahum Tate's dramatization of Shakespeare's King Lear, called King Lear and his 3 daughters, had dominated the English stage since the Restoration period. Many of Shakespeare's tragedies were altered, i.e., Romeo and Juliet was given a happy ending. In 1824, Kean restored the unhappy conclusion in King Lear, however, he retained some of Tate's changes: the fool was still omitted, and Edgar and Cordelia remained lovers.

[60]New York National Advocate, 14 December 1820.

[61]New York National Advocate, 16 December 1820.

[62]Francis, Old New York, p. 230.

[63]New York Evening Post, 15 December 1820.

[64]New York Evening Post, 16 December 1820.

[65]New York National Advocate, 18 December 1820.

[66]New York Evening Post, 16 December 1820.

[67]New York National Advocate, 18 December 1820.

[68]New York Evening Post, 22 December 1820.

[69]New York National Advocate, 23 December 1820.

[70]New York National Advocate, 25 December 1820.

[71]New York Evening Post, 28 December 1820.

[72]Ibid.

[73]New York Evening Post, 29 December 1820.

Chapter 5. AFTERMATH OF KEAN'S FIRST ENGAGEMENT IN NEW YORK

[1]See Appendix D for some comments about Kean's engagement in Philadelphia.

[2]New York American, 4 January 1821.

[3]William B. Wood, Personal Recollections of the Stage (Philadelphia: Henry Carey Baird, 1855), p. 260.

[4]Ibid., p. 261.

[5]New York Evening Post, 8 January 1821.

[6]New York American, 9 January 1821.

[7]New York Evening Post, 11 January 1821.

[8]Ibid.

[9]New York American, 11 January 1821.

[10]New York American, 11 January 1821.

[11]New York Evening Post, 12 January 1821.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid.

[14]New York American, 12 January 1821.

Chapter 6. KEAN'S FIRST ENGAGEMENT IN BOSTON

[1]Refer to Appendix D for success of Kean's Philadelphia engagement.

[2]"Kean's MS Diary of his visit to America," 22 pages, inserted in Vol. 8 of F. W. Hawkins, The Life of Edmund Kean: Illustrated, 14 vols. (London: 1869).

[3]Jenny Lind appeared in the United States in 1849.

[4]William W. Clapp, A Record of the Boston Stage (Boston: James Monroe, 1853, reprint ed., New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968), p. 180.

[5]New-England Galaxy (Boston), 19 January 1821. In 1825, during Kean's second tour of the United States, Buckingham's Boston Courier maintained similar sentiments.

[6]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 10 February 1821.

[7]Clapp, A Record of the Boston Stage, p. 181.

[8]Ibid.

[9]This instance may be the first time that full scale scalping of tickets took place.

[10]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 10 February 1821.

[11]New-England Palladium (Boston), 23 February 1821.

[12]Boston Patriot, 23 February 1821.

[13]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 14 February 1821.

[14]Boston Patriot, 14 February 1821.

[15]Ibid.

[16]New-England Palladium and Commercial Advertiser, (Boston), 15 February 1821.

[17]Boston Daily Advertiser, 17 February 1821.

[18]Boston Daily Advertiser, 16 February 1821.

[19]Boston Patriot, 14 February 1821.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 14 February 1821.

[22]Boston Daily Advertiser, 16 February 1821.

[23]Boston Patriot, 15 February 1821.

[24]Boston Daily Advertiser, 17 February 1821.

[25]New-England Palladium and Commercial Advertiser (Boston), 15 February 1821.

[26]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 14 February 1821.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 17 February 1821.

[29]Boston Patriot, 20 February 1821.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Boston Daily Advertiser, 20 February 1821.

[32]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 17 February 1821.

[33]Boston Daily Advertiser, 21 February 1821.

[35]Boston Daily Advertiser, 21 February 1821.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Boston Daily Advertiser, 23 February 1821.

[38]New-England Palladium (Boston), 23 February 1821.

[39]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 24 February 1821.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Ibid. See table in Appendix E for breakdown of sums paid for box seats bidden on 23 February 1821.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Ibid.

[47]Boston Daily Advertiser, 26 February 1821. For this performance, said the Boston Columbian Centinel on

24 February 1821, "the whole of the Lower Boxes and seventeen Boxes in the Second Row," were sold at auction.

[48]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 28 February 1821.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Ibid. According to the Boston Patriot of 27 February 1821, "One of the reasons we casually heard assigned for the demand of tickets being more limited," for this performance, "was a diversion of the fashionable by a splendid ball given last evening."

[51]Ibid.

[52]Boston Patriot, 1 March 1821.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Ibid.

[55]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 28 February 1821.

[56]Boston Daily Advertiser, 2 March 1821. If this is the same writer who extolled Kean's first performance as Othello, I am surprised that he did not notice the blackened visage at the first performance.

[57]Boston Patriot, 5 March 1821.

[58]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 28 February 1821.

[59]New-England Galaxy (Boston), 2 March 1821.

[60]New-England Galaxy (Boston), 23 February 1821.

[61]Ibid.

[62]Ibid.

[63]Ibid.

[64]See Appendix E for complete article.

[65]New-England Galaxy (Boston), 23 March 1821.

[66]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 3 March 1821.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Ibid.

[69]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 7 March 1821.

[70]Ibid.

[71]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 10 March 1821.

[72]Ibid.

[73]The Palladium's remark about the "vile slanders" of the above British publications is well founded. It was not unusual for Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, and other like publications, to degrade American writers, customs, etc. The following quote from the 12 April 1820 New York Commercial Advertiser supports the Palladium's assertion:

> "The illiberality with which British critics have almost uniformly treated the productions of American genius is proverbial. Whenever they take occasion to speak of our country, its manners, customs, institutions, or literature, they have invariably selected our fault's in each particular; and upon these they dwell with much apparent pleasure and satisfaction."

[74]New-England Palladium (Boston), quoted in the New-York American, 12 March 1821.

[75]Boston Daily Advertiser, 8 March 1821.

[76]Ibid.

[77]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 10 March 1821.

[78]New-England Palladium (Boston), 9 March 1821.

[79]Boston Patriot, 8 March 1821.

[80]Boston Evening Gazette, quoted in the New York National Advocate, 15 March 1821.

[81]"Kean's MS Diary of his visit to America," 22 pages, inserted in vol. 8 of F. W. Hawkins, The Life of Edmund Kean: Illustrated, 14 vols. (London: 1869).

[82]Ibid.

[83]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 10 March 1821.

[84]Ibid.

[85]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 31 March 1821.

[86]Ibid.

[87]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 10 March 1821.

[88]New-England Palladium (Boston), 20 March 1821.

[89]Boston Patriot, quoted in the New York Evening Post, 22 March 1821.

Chapter 7. KEAN'S SECOND NEW YORK ENGAGEMENT

[1]"Kean's MS Diary of his visit to America," 22 pages, inserted in vol. 8 of F. W. Hawkins, The Life of Edmund Kean: Illustrated, 14 vols. (London: 1869).

[2]John Fairburn, Fairburn's Edition of the Trial Between Robert Albion Cox, Esq. Plaintiff, and Edmund Kean, Defendant, For Criminal Conversation With the Plaintiff's Wife, And all the Curious Love Letters, &c. &c. Tried in the Court of King's Bench, Guildhall, January the 17th, 1825, before the Lord Chief Justice Abbott, and a Special Jury (London: John Fairburn, 1825), p. 8.

[3]Original copy of letter from Edmund Kean to "Mrs. Allen [the assumed name of Mrs. Cox] to the care of Mrs. Price, Marlett-court, Bow-Street, London, 5 April 1821, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center. In a copy of the letter quoted in Fairburn's edition, some of the contents differs from the "original:"

> "How shall I thank my darling little girl for all her solicitude and affection, and how shall I tell her how much I love her, and how great my desire to have her once more in my arms? . . . Indeed, love, I sincerely repent of my folly in restraining you from your wishes; there is not a night or day passes but some pleasing remembrance makes me say "if she were but here!" . . . your charming letters are a great source of delight and instruction to me, as of course my feelings are deeply interested in the success of Drury-lane, and I receive all the events with double satisfaction when they come from you, as I am well assured you inquire into them only for my gratification. It will be some time before I shall thank my little darling in person. I stay another year in America, and the only way we have to reconcile it is, that it is to my interest. I shall sail from New York to Liverpool on the 16th of next April, anno 1822. Oh! what joy I shall then feel in clasping my dear, dear Charlotte to my heart. You ask me what money I am making? My love, it is almost incredible. I am living in the best style, traveling magnificently, and transmitting to England L1000 each month. It gives me great pleasure to find Elliston is doing so well; from his great kindness and indulgence to me, he is entitled to my best wishes; it is

likewise doubly fortunate for me, as he cannot have any scruples in granting me an extension of absence" (John Fairburn, Fairburn's Edition of the Trial Between Robert Albion Cox, Esq. Plaintiff, And Edmund Kean, Defendant, pp. 8-9).

[4]Harold Newcomb Hillebrand, Edmund Kean (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933), p. 214.

[5]Ibid.

[6]In England Kean rarely earned fifty pounds per performance, as he did in the United States. He occasionally received fifty pounds for performances at some provincial theatres, such as the theatre in Dublin. He sometimes was payed fifty pounds for "special" engagements at Drury Lane: in 1824 and 1825 Kean was paid fifty pounds per performance for a "run" of performances at Drury Lane.

[7]New York Evening Post, 12 January 1821.

[8]New York National Advocate, 13 March 1821.

[9]New York National Advocate, 3 April 1821.

[10]New York Evening Post, 13 March 1821.

[11]New York National Advocate, 16 March 1821.

[12]New York Evening Post, 17 March 1821.

[13]New York National Advocate, 19 March 1821.

[14]New York National Advocate, 22 March 1821.

[15]New York National Advocate, 19 March 1821.

[16]New York National Advocate, 26 March 1821.

[17]Ibid.

[18]New York Evening Post, 24 March 1821.

[19]Ibid.

[20]New York Evening Post, 27 March 1821.

[21]New York National Advocate, 29 March 1821.

[22]Ibid.

[23]"Kean's MS Diary of his visit to America."

[24]New York Evening Post, 7 April 1821.

[25]Ibid.

[26]New York Evening Post, 10 April 1821.

[27]New York Evening Post, 19 May 1821.

[28]F. W. Hawkins, Life of Edmund Kean, 2 vols. (London: 1869; reprint ed., New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1969), 2: 154-156.

Chapter 8. KEAN'S SECOND BOSTON ENGAGEMENT

[1]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 16 May 1821.

[2]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 19 May 1821.

[3]William W. Clapp, A Record of the Boston Stage (Boston: James Monroe, 1853; reprint ed., New York, Benjamin Blom, 1968), p. 185.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 23 May 1821. Kean was scheduled to commence his second Boston engagement on 21 May 1821, but because of illness, the engagement was postponed to 23 May.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Clapp, A Record of the Boston Stage, p. 185.

[8]Boston Patriot, 24 May 1821.

[9]Clapp, A Record of the Boston Stage, p. 185.

[10]Ibid., pp. 185-187.

[11]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 26 May 1821. Following the announcement that Kean would not appear, some members of the audience requested the appearance of Henry Kemble to replace Kean. Kemble, an itinerant performer, was noted for his impersonations of Kean.

[12]Boston Patriot, 26 May 1821.

[13]Boston Daily Advertiser, 28 May 1821.

[14]New York Commercial Advertiser, 28 May 1821.

[15]New York American, 29 May 1821.

[16]Boston Gazette, 28 May 1821.

[17]New York Commercial Advertiser, 30 May 1821.

[18]Ibid.

[19]New York National Advocate, 4 June 1821.

[20]New York Gazette, 29 May 1821.

[21]New York American, 31 May 1821.

[22]New-England Galaxy (Boston), 1 June 1821. See Appendix F for complete article.

[23]Ibid.

[24]New York National Advocate, 31 May 1821.

[25]New York National Advocate, 30 May 1821.

[26]Columbian Centinel (Boston), quoted in the New York Daily Advertiser, 5 June 1821.

[27]New York Evening Post, 30 May 1821.

[28]New York National Advocate, 1 June 1821.

[29]New York Commercial Advertiser, 1 June 1821.

[30]New York Evening Post, 1 June 1821.

[31]New York National Advocate, 2 June 1821.

[32]Boston Patriot, 5 June 1821.

[33]Boston Patriot, 4 June 1821.

[34]New-England Palladium (Boston), 5 June 1821.

[35]Clapp, A Record of the Boston Stage, pp. 190-91. Kean's contractual arrangements for the second Boston engagement was not based on a fixed sum, but, instead, he received a share of the profits.

[36]Clapp, A Record of the Boston Stage, p. 191.

[37]Boston Gazette, 4 June 1821, quoted in the New York Commercial Advertiser, 6 June 1821.

[38]Boston Patriot, 7 June 1821.

[39]Philadelphia National Gazette, 6 June 1821, quoted in Harold Newcomb Hillebrand, Edmund Kean (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933), p. 219.

[40]New York Evening Post, 7 June 1821.

[41]New York Evening Post, 6 June 1821.

[42]Providence Journal, quoted in New York National Advocate, 7 June 1821.

[43]New York National Advocate, 8 June 1821.

[44]New York National Advocate, 8 June 1821.

[45]New York Evening Post, 8 June 1821.

[46]New York American, 8 June 1821.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Ibid.

[49]Ibid.

[50]New York National Advocate, 9 June 1821.

[51]Philadelphia National Gazette, quoted in the New York National Advocate, 11 June 1821.

[52]New York National Advocate, 11 June 1821.

[53]New York Evening Post, 12 June 1821.

[54]New York National Advocate, 13 June 1821.

[55]New-England Galaxy (Boston), 15 June 1821.

[56]Providence Journal, quoted in the New York National Advocate, 14 June 1821.

[57]Boston Palladium (probably, the New-England Palladium,) quoted in the New York National Advocate, 21 June 1821. According to the Palladium, Kean "devoted a hundred guineas for the erection" of the monument.

[58]New-York Daily Advertiser, 6 June 1821.

[59]Ibid.

[60]John W. Francis, Old New York or, Reminiscences of the Past Sixty Years (New York: Charles Roe, 1858), p. 233.

[61]Ibid., p. 234.

[62]Ibid.

[63]Boston Palladium, quoted in the New York National Advocate, 21 June 1821.

Chapter 9. KEAN PREPARED FOR ANOTHER VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES

[1]George Raymond, Memoirs of William Elliston, 2 vols. 2nd ed. (London: John Ollivier, 1846; reprint ed., New York: Benjamin Blom, 1969), 2: 291.

[2]Ibid., 2: 291-92.

[3]Kean's affair with Robert Albion Cox's wife created a sensation in many English newspapers. Its outcome greatly affected Kean's career in England. Moreover, its impact was felt in America.

[4]The major theatres (Covent Garden and Drury Lane) were the only theatres licensed by the crown to present Shakespeare's plays. In order to circumvent this privilege, the minor theatres (generally referred to as provincial theatres) resorted to the presentation of spectacular, most often ostentatious, productions of melodramas, extravaganzas and Shakespeare punctuated and bastardized with musical fare.

[5]Charles Mayne Young shared the tragic mantle with William Macready at Covent Garden. Like Young, Macready later joined the ranks of Drury Lane.

[6]William Hazlitt, "Drury Lane and Covent Garden," London Magazine 6 (November 1822): 471.

[7]Elliston's disregard for the private agreement made between the two major theatres, established a precarious precedent for years to come. From then on, both theatres vied for the services of each other's performers. More importantly, however, Elliston's enormous salaries promulgated a wage war between the theatres.

[8]Raymund Fitzsimons, Edmund Kean: Fire From Heaven (New York: The Dial Press, 1976), p. 163.

[9]Kean's present contract stipulated a two year engagement with Elliston.

[10]Raymond, Memoirs of William Elliston, 2: 326.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Fitzsimons, Edmund Kean, p. 165.

[13]Young's acting style was imitative of Kemble's. Unlike Kean's acting style, which was impassioned and highly energetic, Young's acting style was icy and highly mannered. According to the London Magazine:

> "the difference between Mr. Kean's genius and Mr. Young's talent is, . . . enormous. That of the one [Kean] is all fire--while that of the other [Young] is coldness itself" (London Magazine 6 [December 1822]: 571).

[14]Harold Newcomb Hillebrand, Edmund Kean (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933), p. 230.

[15]Hillebrand, Edmund Kean, p. 231.

[16]Fitzsimons, Edmund Kean, p. 167.

[17]George Raymond, Life and Enterprises of R. W. Elliston, Comedian (London: G. Routledge & Co., 1857), p. 320.

[18]London Magazine 6 (November 1822): 472.

[19]F. W. Hawkins, The Life of Edmund Kean 2 vols. (London: 1869, reprint ed., New York: Benjamin Blom, 1969), pp. 205-06.

[20]William Hazlitt, "Mr. Kean and Mr. Young," London Magazine 7 (January 1823): 100.

[21]Alfred L. Nelson, and Gilbert B. Cross eds., Drury Lane Journal: Selections from James Winston's Diaries 1819-1827 (Society for Theatre Research, 1974), p. 68.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid., p. 70.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Ibid., pp. 70-71.

[30]J. F. Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean (London: Downey & Co., 1897), p. 296.

[31]Sir Edward Pollock, ed., Macready's Reminiscences and Selections From His Diaries and Letters, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan & Co., 1875), 1: 281.

[32]Ibid., 1: 294.

[33]Hillebrand, Edmund Kean, p. 234.

[34]Fitzsimons, Edmund Kean, p. 174.

[35]Though the letter is incompletely dated, it can be reliably ascribed to 1823. Hillebrand, Edmund Kean, pp. 237-38.

[36]Hillebrand, Edmund Kean, p. 234.

[37]Pollock, Macready's Reminiscences, 1: 286.

[38]Ibid., 1: 287.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Hillebrand, Edmund Kean, p. 234.

[41]Fitzsimons, Edmund Kean, p. 175.

[42]Bryan Waller Procter, The Life of Edmund Kean, 2 vols. (London: Edward Moxon, 1835), 2: 208-09.

[43]Ibid., 2: 209-10.

[44]Hillebrand, Edmund Kean, p. 234.

[45]Fitzsimons, Edmund Kean, p. 176.

[46]Nelson, and Cross eds., Selections from James Winston's Diaries, p. 78.

[47]Fitzsimons, Edmund Kean, p. 178.

[48]Hillebrand, Edmund Kean, p. 236.

[49]Fitzsimons, Edmund Kean, p. 178.

[50]Nelson, and Cross eds., Selections from James Winston's Diaries, p. 81.

[51]Raymond, Memoirs of William Elliston, 2: 356.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Hillebrand, Edmund Kean, p. 236.

[54]Nelson, and Cross eds., Selections from James Winston's Diaries, p. 86.

[55]Ibid.

[56]Ibid., p. 87.

[57]Raymond, Memoirs of William Elliston, 2: 358.

[58]Ibid., 2: 359. No date is given for this letter, but from sequence of events was probably written sometime in May 1824.

[59]Although this letter is incompletely dated, we can safely ascribe it to May 1824. Harvard Theatre Collection, Cambridge, Ma.

[60]There is some speculation that Cox knew about the affair before his alleged discovery of the letters in March 1824.

[61]"COURT OF KING'S BENCH, Monday. CRIM. CON.--COX v. KEAN," Examiner (London), [January] 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 804.

[62]"COX v. KEAN. COURT OF KING'S BENCH," Bell's Weekly Messenger (London), 23 January 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ., n.c. 5218.

[63]Ibid.

[64]Thomas Colley Grattan, "My Acquaintance with the Late Edmund Kean," New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal 39, Part the third (1833): 143.

[65]Ibid. p. 144.

[66]Hillebrand, Edmund Kean, p. 236.

[67]Nelson, and Cross eds., Selections from James Winston's Diaries, p. 93.

[68]Fitzsimons, Edmund Kean, p. 184.

[69]As with his first American tour, Kean received fifty pounds per performance for his second tour in 1825.

[70]Fitzsimons, Edmund Kean, p. 183.

[71][William] Oxberry, "Memoir of Edmund Kean," Dramatic Biography 1 (January 1825): 10.

[72]Hillebrand, Edmund Kean, p. 236.

[73]Fitzsimons, Edmund Kean, p. 184.

[74]"COURT OF KING'S BENCH, Monday. CRIM. CON.--COX v. KEAN.," Examiner (London), [January] 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ., n.c. 804.

[75]Ibid.

[76]"COURT OF KING'S BENCH. ACTION FOR CRIM. CON.," John Bull (London), 26 January 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ., n.c. 804.

[77]Ibid.

[78]Ibid.

[79]COX v. KEAN, COURT OF KING'S BENCH," Bell's Weekly Messenger (London), 23 January 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ., n.c. 5218.

[80]"COURT OF KING'S BENCH, Monday. CRIM. CON.--COX. v. KEAN.," Examiner (London), [January] 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ., n.c. 804.

[81]Hillebrand, Edmund Kean, p. 241.

[82]"COURT OF KING'S BENCH, Monday, CRIM. CON.--COX v. KEAN.," Examiner (London), [January] 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ., n.c. 804.

[83]Ibid.

[84]Edmund Kean to Mrs. Cox, 6 January 1823, quoted in Hillebrand, Edmund Kean, p. 248.

[85]"COURT OF KING'S BENCH. ACTION FOR CRIM. CON.," Joun Bull (London), 26 January 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ., n.c. 804.

[86]"COURT OF KING'S BENCH, Monday. CRIM. CON.--COX v. KEAN.," Examiner (London), [January] 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ., n.c. 804.

[87]Ibid.

[88]Ibid.

[89]"REFLECTIONS ON THE CASE OF COX v. KEAN.," [Unidentified newspaper clipping], [January] 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ., n.c. 5218.

[90]"L.B." is as reference to "Little Breeches."

[91]Times (London), 18 January 1825.

[92]"COX v. KEAN, COURT OF KING'S BENCH.," Bell's Weekly Messenger, (London) 23 January 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ., n.c. 5218.

[93]"COURT OF KING'S BENCH. ACTION FOR CRIM. CON.," John Bull (London) 26 January 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ., n.c. 804.

[94]"COURT OF KING'S BENCH, Monday. CRIM. CON.--COX v. KEAN.," Examiner, (London) [January] 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead collection, MWEZ., n.c. 804.

[95]Ibid.

[96]Ibid.

[97]"COURT OF KING'S BENCH. ACTION FOR CRIM. CON.," John Bull (London), 26 January 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ., n.c. 804.

[98]Ibid.

[99]Ibid.

[100]Ibid.

[101]Ibid.

[102]Ibid.

[103]Ibid.

[104]Ibid.

[105]Ibid.

[106]Ibid.

[107]Raymond, Memoirs of Robert William Elliston, 2: 392.

[108]Ibid., 2: 393.

[109]Hillebrand, Edmund Kean, p. 248.

[110]Bell's Weekly Messenger (London), 23 January 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ., n.c. 5218.

[111]"REFLECTIONS ON THE CASE OF COX v. KEAN.," [Unidentified newspaper clipping], [January] 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ., n.c. 5218.

[112]Ibid.

[113]Times (London), 18 January 1825.

[114]Times (London), 21 January 1825.

[115]Hillebrand, Edmund Kean, p. 248.

[116]Morning Chronicle (London), 19 January 1825.

[117]Morning Chronicle (London), 21 January 1825.

[118]Ibid.

[119]Examiner (London), [21] January 1825, quoted in Hillebrand, Edmund Kean p. 250.

[120]Kean's first appearance in New York on 14 November 1825 resulted in a near riot at the Park Theatre. The riot was apparently instigated by Bostonians eager to show their displeasure at Kean's desertion in May 1821.

[121]News (London), 30 January 1825.

[122]Ibid.

[123]Times (London), 25 January 1825.

[124]News (London), 30 January 1825. This circumstance is similar to the one that later occurs on November 1825 at New York's Park Theatre to initiate Kean's first performance on his return to America. It is believed that several claques were set up throughout the house to support or oppose Kean. As in England, some of the opposition disliked Kean's prurient conduct. Others, to be discussed in an ensuing chapter, opposed Kean because of his ill treatment of a Bostonian audience in 1821.

[125]Ibid.

[126]Times (London), 25 January 1825.

[127]Times (London), 1825, quoted in the Boston Courier 11 March 1825.

[128]News (London), 30 January 1825.

[129]Ibid.

[130]Times (London), 25 January 1825.

[131]News (London), 30 January 1825.

[132]Ibid.

[133]Boston Courier, 11 March 1825.

[134]Times (London), 25 January 1825.

[135]News (London), 30 January 1825. At Kean's first performance in New York in November 1825, not many females were present to witness his performance of Richard III.

[136]Times (London), 25 January 1825.

[137]Ibid.

[138]Morning Chronicle (London), 25 January 1825.

[139]News (London), 30 January 1825.

[140]Times (London), 28 January 1825.

[141]Hillebrand, Edmund Kean, p. 253.

[142]Times (London), 29 January 1825.

[143]Ibid.

[144]Ibid.

[145]Ibid.

[146]Ibid.

[147]Ibid.

[148]Ibid.

[149]News (London), 30 January 1825.

[150]Times (London), 29 January 1825.

[151]Ibid.

[152]News (London), 30 January 1825.

[153]"Mr. Kean.," [Unidentified newspaper clipping], 5 February 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ., n.c. 804.

[154]Ibid.

[155]Times (London), 5 February 1825.

[156]Ibid.

[157]Hillebrand, Edmund Kean, p. 254.

[158]Times (London), 18 February 1825.

[159][Courier] (Manchester), 2 April 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ., n.c. 803.

[160]Ibid.

[161]Morning Chronicle (London), 28 March 1825, quoted in [Courier] (Manchester) 2 April 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ., n.c. 803.

[162][Courier] (Manchester), 2 April 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ., n.c. 803.

[163]Hillebrand, Edmund Kean, p. 255.

[164]"THE THEATRE," Courier (Manchester), 23 April 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ., n.c. 803.

[165]Ibid.

[166]Ibid.

[167]Ibid.

[168]Boston Courier, 23 April 1825.

[169]"KEAN AT GLASGOW," Free Press (Glasgow), [May] 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ., n.c. 803.

[170]Lehman Rede, "Recollections of Kean," New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal, Part the Second, (18340: 60.

[171]"THE THEATRE," Courier (Manchester), 23 April 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ., n.c. 803.

[172]Rede, "Recollections of Kean,": 60.

[173]Ibid.

[174]Hillebrand, Edmund Kean. p. 256.

[175]"KEAN AT MANCHESTER," [Unidentified Provincial Journal], [August] 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ., n.c. 803.

[176]New York Evening Post, 13 October 1825.

[177]Ibid.

[178]Ibid.

[179]John Bull (London), 10 September 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 804.

[180]Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean, p. 319.

[181]Molloy, Life of Edmund Kean, p. 319.

[182]Grattan, "My acquaintance with the Late Edmund Kean," New Monthly Magazine 39, Part the third (1833): 144-45. Kean left from Liverpool sometime late in September.

[183]Following the "Cox v. Kean" trial, both Mary Kean (Kean's wife) and Charles Kean (Kean's son) deserted Kean. Although Kean was separated from his wife, he furnished her with money on a monthly basis.

[184]Poem, "Addressed to Edmund Kean, Esq.," on his departure from America., [September] 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 802.

Chapter 10. AMERICAN PRESS REACTION TO KEAN'S IMPENDING VISIT

[1]Some newspapers were still indignant because of Kean's imperious treatment of a Boston audience in May of 1821. The American press was not willing to concede that American standards of morality were less scrupulous than British ones. Some newspapers, however, did question the rigidity and vindictiveness of others towards Kean.

[2]Boston Evening Gazette, 20 August 1825.

[3]Independent Chronicle and Boston Patriot, 5 March 1825.

[4]New York Evening Post, 3 March 1825.

[5]New York Evening Post, 5 March 1825.

[6]New York Gazette, 7 March 1825.

[7]New York Evening Post, 7 March 1825.

[8]Boston Daily Advertiser, 10 March 1825.

[9]New York Evening Post, 8 March 1825.

[10]New York Gazette, 17 May 1825.

[11]New York Gazette, 20 May 1825.

[12]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), 16 February 1825. The Boston Courier, on 12 November 1825, announced that "Booth had been engaged to fill the place of Kean at Drury Lane."

[13]New York Gazette, 30 September 1825.

[14]Independent Chronicle and Boston Patriot, 1 October 1825.

[15]New York Gazette, 30 September 1825.

[16]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), quoted in the New-England Galaxy, (Boston) 2 September 1825.

[17]New York Commercial Advertiser, quoted in Independent Chronicle and Boston Patriot, 2 November 1825.

[18]New York Commercial Advertiser, 29 September 1825.

[19]New York Evening Post, 1 November 1825.

[20]New York Daily Advertiser, 10 November 1825.

[21]New York Commercial Advertiser, 15 October 1825.

[22]Independent Chronicle and Boston Patriot, quoted in Boston Courier, 20 October 1825.

[23]Boston Courier, 3 October 1825.

[24]Boston Courier, 5 October 1825.

[25]Ibid.

[26]New-England Galaxy (Boston), 28 October 1825.

[27]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 23 November 1825.

[28]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), 10 November 1825.

[29]New York Commercial Advertiser, 29 October 1825.

[30]Ibid.

[31]New York National Advocate, (Major Noah's) 29 October 1825.

[32]New York Commercial Advertiser, 31 October 1825.

[33]New-England Palladium, (Boston) 14 October 1825.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Boston Evening Gazette, 15 October 1825.

[36]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), 3 November 1825.

[37]New-England Galaxy (Boston), 26 August 1825.

[38]Boston Daily Advertiser, 2 November 1825.

[39]New-England Galaxy (Boston), 4 November 1825.

[40]Ibid.

[41]His previous engagement, although under Park management, was at the Anthony Street Theatre, because the Park Theatre building had burned.

Chapter 11. KEAN RETURNS TO THE UNITED STATES IN NEW YORK CITY, ALBANY, BOSTON AND PHILADELPHIA

[1]Philadelphia National Gazette, 28 October 1825. Kean made his first appearance at the Park Theatre on 14 November 1825.

[2]The Garcia Opera Company was a distinguished Spanish opera company which was the most highly respected and regarded opera company in Europe.

[3]Kean crossed swords with the Gardias on two occasions. Both alternated performances at the Park Theatre in February and May 1826. Kean would perform one night, the Garcias the other.

[4]With William Macready's arrival in New York in October 1826, Kean's eminence was perhaps once again challenged. In 1820 and 1821 Kean did not share the spotlight at the Anthony Street Theatre with any major foreign star or company.

[5]In 1821, some critics were simply suspicious of Kean's "novel" acting style--being accustomed to the more formal, rhetorical style of Cooper and the like. Moreover, the press was aware of Kean's shenanigans with English management, actors and actresses.

[6]In 1820 Kean's private life or "private worth" was not made an issue, but in 1825 it was.

[7]Although the Evening Post (1 November 1825), like the American and some others, preferred to remain silent about the propriety of allowing Kean to reappear on the American stage, and "admit nothing to be published . . . relating to" Kean, nonetheless advised its subscribers to simply not attend the theatre in order to express their dissatisfaction. The Commerial Acvertiser, on the other hand, published countless articles protesting Kean's reappearance, but, like the Post, published reviews (indeed very few of them for that matter) of Kean's performances with information chiefly furnished from other sources.

[8]When Kean first appeared in New York there was only one edition of the New York National Advocate (edited by Major Noah). In 1826, as stated in the text, there were two New York National Advocates, one edited by Major Noah, the other by Thomas Snowden.

[9]J. Fitzgerald Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean (London: Downey & Co., 1897), p. 319.

[10]New York National Advocate, 21 July 1821.

[11]New York National Advocate, 21 July 1821.

[12]Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean, p. 326. Booth also performed in such cities as New Orleans, Petersburg and Boston.

[13]Although Cooper was teamed with Conway, he was not a new face to an American audience. He first came to the United States from England in 1810. His great popularity, especially in New York, initiated a debate in 1820 among several New York newspapers about the differences between his and Kean's acting styles: Kean's fiery, impassioned acting versus Cooper's more stately, stoical delivery.

[14]New York American, 29 October 1825.

[15]Boston Courier, 12 November 1825.

[16]Boston Evening Gazette, 24 September 1825.

[17]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), 2 November 1825. In 1825 there were two editions of the National Advocate. The one just cited was edited by Major Noah, a staunch advocate of Kean, and simply called the New York National Advocate to distinguish it from the other edition, edited by Snowden, which was called Snowden's National Advocate.

[18]New York American, 7 September 1825.

[19]Albion (New York), 3 December 1825.

[20]Kean's appearance at the Park Theatre initiated his second tour of the major American cities: New York, Boston, Albany, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New Orleans. Moreover, this was Kean's first appearance at the Park Theatre which had been destroyed by a fire in 1820. It reopened in 1821--months after Kean left the United States after concluding a successful first tour. The riot at the Park Theatre preceded the Astor Place riot of 1846--usually named as the first riot at a public theatre in the United States.

[21]New York Evening Post, 15 November 1825.

[22]The Commercial Advertiser throughout Kean's engagements printed accounts from other sources, including numerous letters sent to them by subscribers. The letters chosen for publication were always in opposition to Kean.

[23]As with Kean's engagements in 1825 and 1826, William L. Stone, the outspoken editor of the Commercial Advertiser, previously led the opposition to the rebuilding of the Park Theatre in 1821. The grounds for such opposition, as with Kean, were solely based on moral criteria.

[24]New York Commercial Advertiser, 15 November 1825.

[25]Because of the Commercial Advertiser's negative attitude towards Kean, we must regard his assertion with a grain of salt.

[26]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden), quoted in New York Evening Post, 15 November 1825.

[27]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), 15 November 1825.

[28]New York Daily Advertiser, 16 November 1825.

[29]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), quoted in New York Evening Post, 15 November 1825.

[30]New York Commercial Advertiser, 15 November 1825. See Appendix G for complete, lengthy review of the performance. The Commercial Advertiser's elaborate review is punctuated with several observations not mentioned in other reviews.

[31]The "ringing of the bell" customarily signified the commencement of a play during this period of American theatre history.

[32]The New York Gazette, in the following report, gives a far more comprehensive assessment of the incident with Mrs. Hilson:

> "During the wooing scene, in the second act, one of the many missiles that were thrown upon the stage passed directly over the heads of Mrs. Hilson (who represented Lady Ann) and Mr. Kean, nearly striking the latter. Mr. Hilson, who was in one of the boxes in front of the pit, being alarmed for the safety of his wife, immediately jumped upon the stage, and conducted her off. Mr. Simpson then appeared, and, with an expression of countenance indicative of sorrow and indignation, seemed to implore that the audience would act with more decorum, and display a little more respect for themselves. After some delay, Mrs. Hilson again appeared, and the piece proceeded; but, as before, the din of mingled applause and hisses rendered the dialogue inaudible" (New York Gazette, 15 November 1825).

[33]New York American, 15 November 1825.

[34]New York Statesman, 16 November 1825. Following this review, the Statesman periodically reviewed Kean's performances. However, it maintained its position of neutrality by making no judgments about the propriety of allowing Kean to perform.

[35]Most of the newspapers failed to provide substantial information about the occurrences which took place after the play, and, moreover, papers such as Snowden's National Advocate, inadvertently or erroneously stated that no other serious disturbances occurred after the third act.

[36]New York Statesman, 16 November 1825.

[37]Ibid.

[38]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), 15 November 1825.

[39]Both William L. Stone, the editor of the New York Commercial Advertiser, and Buckingham were the most outspoken critics of Kean during his second visit to the United States.

[40]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), quoted in the New York Evening Post, 15 December 1825.

[41]Ibid.

[42]New York American, 15 December 1825. Perhaps Kean's so-called "improved" acting style was not by design, but rather the result of depleted energy caused by the inexorable castigation of the English press following the infamous Cox scandal.

[43]Albion (New York), 3 December 1825.

[44]New York Evening Post, 16 November 1825.

[45]New York Daily Advertiser, 16 November 1825.

[46]The primary opposition to Kean was engendered by the press. Throughout Kean's engagements the theatre was crammed with spectators. The audience appreciated great acting--separating his "private worth" from his professional talents.

[47]New York Daily Advertiser, 16 November 1825.

[48]Boston Daily Advertiser, 19 November 1825. Kean's "present embarrassment" refers to his moral indiscretions in Europe.

[49]Boston Courier, 19 November 1825.

[50]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), 16 November 1825.

[51]Ibid.

[52]Ibid. See Appendix G for entire article. It is a good example of one of many communications that were submitted to the newspapers. However, with the exception of Noah's New York National Advocate and the New York Commercial Advertiser, most journals refrained from printing these communications. Regarding this situation, the Evening Post said:

> "Respecting this actor our table is literally covered with communications, both for and against him; but it best consists with our declared neutrality to persist, for the present, in maintaining an unbroken silence,

and in publishing nothing that may indicate a leaning either way" (New York Evening Post, 16 November 1825).

[53]Ibid. The Evening Post dismissed the "assertions" made by Noah and other correspondents:

"Assertions are strenuously made by more than one correspondent, that his most violent opponents belong to a neighboring city [Boston], and that certain people, even naming some of them, are here in person with that intention; but which we are little loth [sic.] to believe . . ." (New York Evening Post, 16 November 1825).

[54]New York Commercial Advertiser, 18 November 1825.

[55]Although the Courier does not specifically mention Noah by name, this reference clearly establishes Noah as the butt of the Courier's attack. Noah in a speech recorded in the Courier, advocates a plan to reestablish the "Jewish government" in New York State, with the emigration of Jews from Europe. See Appendix G for extracts of this speech.

[56]Boston Courier, 18 November 1825.

[57]Boston Courier, 19 November 1825.

[58]Ibid.

[59]Ibid.

[60]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), 22 November 1825.

[61]Refers to Snowden's National Advocate. Although Snowden's Advocate, like the New York National Advocate, censured the Bostonians, it may be that the Daily Advertiser was actually impugning Noah's Advocate.

[62]Boston Daily Advertiser, 18 November 1825.

[63]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), 21 November 1825.

[64]Ibid.

[65]Ibid. See Appendix G for complete letter.

[66]Ibid.

[67]New York Commercial Advertiser, 21 November 1825.

[68]The Philadelphia National Gazette's reference to Kean's "disgrace" in England evidently shows that the Gazette, the Boston Courier, the New York Commercial Advertiser, and other like newspapers, were overwhelmingly disturbed by Kean's immoral and unseemly conduct in England. The newspapers, both in New York and Boston, frequently mentioned Kean's affront to the 1821 Boston audience, but in reality it was his unethical behavior and haughty posture that the press disliked the most.

[69]Philadelphia National Gazette, 16 November 1825.

[70]Philadelphia National Gazette, 17 November 1825.

[71]New York Commercial Advertiser, 18 November 1825.

[72]Ibid.

[73][Unidentified newspaper clipping], Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 802.

[74]New York Statesman, 17 November 1825.

[75]New York American, 16 November 1825.

[76]New York Globe and Emerald, 19 November 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 803.

[77]New York Commercial Advertiser, 17 November 1825.

[78]New York Commercial Advetiser, 17 November 1825. The lack of attendance by females may have been associated with the moral disposition of the "genteel" sex towards Kean. Following Kean's first performance, the Evening Post said:

> "There were no ladies present; some few having left the house at the commencement of the disturbance" (New York Evening Post, 15 November 1825).

[79]New York Statesman, 17 November 1825.

[80]New York Globe and Emerald, 19 November 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 803.

[81]New York Statesman, 17 November 1825.

[82]New York Evening Post, 17 November 1825. "Thespis" also stated that the experiment to close the "fourth tier of boxes, the gallery and slips," and place handbills about the theatre was thought of for the first performance:

> "Both these measures suggested themselves to the minds of many the first evening, when it was believed that Mr. Kean's friends did him as much harm by their applause of clamers [sic] as his enemies by their hisses and catcalls, and that all the noise and uproar had taken refuge in the fourth tier. The experiment this evening proved that they were not mistaken."

[83]New York National Advocate, 17 November 1825.

[84]New York Gazette, 17 November 1825.

[85]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 17 Novembr 1825.

[86]New York Evening Post, 17 November 1825.

[87]New York Commercial Advertiser, 17 November 1825.

[88]New York Gazette, 17 November 1825.

[89]New York Daily Advertiser, 17 November 1825.

[90]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), 17 November 1825.

[91]A later special address to Boston evinces a similar response.

[92]New York Commercial Advertiser, 17 November 1825.

[93]Ibid.

[94]Ibid.

[95]New York Commercial Advertiser, 18 November 1825.

[96]Ibid.

[97]Ibid.

[98]New York Commercial Advertiser, 21 November 1821.

[99]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 19 November 1825. The rationale to prevent the rebuilding of the Park Theatre, in 1821, was based on similar ideas. Stone, the editor of the Commercial Advertiser, was Kean's

harshest critic in 1825; he, likewise, was one of the primary opponents to re-building the Park Theatre.

[100]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 29 November 1825.

[101]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 23 November 1825.

[102]New-England Galaxy (Boston), 25 November 1825.

[103]Boston Courier, 24 November 1825.

[104]This situation, in 1825, was probably largely due to Kean's moral indiscretions; however, the American fascination for the likes of Cooper, and a fond memory of Cooke, did not help matters.

[105]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), 18 November 1825. As stated earlier, the likelihood of Kean purposely "smoothing" his acting style is improbable. He was more than likely simply worn out from the ordeals in England, as implied in his November 16 address submitted to the New York press. Kean's acting style was especially noted for its "flashes of lightning" which interwove moments of brilliance (working towards the points in the play) with moments of slovenly acting. I suspect that the Advocate's belief that his acting acquired greater smoothness meant that his acting was more consistently even.

[106]New York American, 18 November 1825.

[107]Commercial Advertiser, 19 November 1825. Like the above American review, the Advertiser continued to cover Kean's performances from information received from other correspondents.

[108]Ibid.

[109]New York American, 18 November 1825.

[110]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 23 November 1825.

[111]Boston Courier, 21 November 1825. Both the Centinel and the Courier erroneously state that no females attended Richard III, when in fact one did according to the New York American on 18 November 1825.

[112]New York American, 18 November 1825.

[113]New York National Advocate, 19 November 1825.

[114]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 23 November 1825.

[115]New York American, 21 November 1825.

[116]New York Commercial Advertiser, 22 November 1825.

[117]Ibid.

[118]Albion (New York), 26 November 1825.

[119]Ibid.

[120]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 26 November 1825.

[121]New York Commercial Advertiser, 28 November 1825.

[122]New York American, 23 November 1825.

[123]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 24 November 1825.

[124]Albion (New York), 26 November 1825.

[125]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 28 November 1825.

[126]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), 26 November 1825.

[127]New York American, 24 November 1825.

[128]Albion (New York), 26 November 1825.

[129]Ibid.

[130]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 28 November 1825.

[131]This admission undoubtedly shows that the main objections to Kean's return to America were based both on moral and professional criteria: his moral indiscretions, and his unique acting style were incongruous with the standards established by Cooper and Cooke, and others.

[132]New York Commercial Advertiser, 28 November 1825.

[133]Ibid.

[134]Albion (New York), 3 December 1825.

[135]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 2 December 1825.

[136]The New York Statesman, 3 December 1825.

[137][Unidentified Newspaper clipping], Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 802.

[138]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 10 December 1825.

[139]New York Daily Advertiser, quoted in the New York Statesman, 7 December 1825.

[140]New York Commercial Advertiser, 7 December 1825.

[141]Ibid. See Appendix G for entire address from Noah's Advocate. The New York National Advocate [December] 1825, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 803.

[142]New York Commercial Advertiser, 7 December 1825.

[143]Ibid.

[144]The New York Commercial Advertiser, 14 December 1825.

[145]Ibid.

[146]William Rounseville Alger, Life of Edwin Forrest, The American Tragedian, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: 1877; reprint ed., New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1972), p. 143.

[147]Ibid. pp. 143-44.

[148]Ibid.

[149]Ibid. p. 144.

[150]Ibid. p. 145.

[151]Ibid.

[152]Ibid.

[153]Ibid.

[154]Ibid.

[155]Ibid. p. 146.

[156]New York Globe and Emerald, 31 December 1825.

[157]New England Galaxy (Boston), 18 November 1825.

[158]The Boston Courier, (December 1825), Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 803.

[159]New England Galaxy (Boston), 16 December 1825.

[160]William W. Clapp, Jr., A Record of the Boston Stage (Boston, 1853; reprint ed., New York/London: Banjamin Blom, 1968), p. 230.

[161]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 21 December 1825.

[162]Ibid. Kean's message was sent from his lodging at the Exchange Coffee House.

[163]Kean's letter was regarded by some as a pretentious, canting attempt to atone for his past conduct.

[164]Boston Evening Gazette, 22 December 1825.

[165]Boston Evening Gazette, 24 December 1825.

[166]Boston Courier, 22 December 1825.

[167]More than likely, the riot was caused by a combination of the factors just stated. However, it is conceivable that the tenor of Kean's public apology did "excite rather than allay the temper of the public," as suggested by the New York American on 22 December. The Courier explicitly expressed its dissatisfaction with Kean's apology on 22 December:

> "Kean's Apology, which appeared in the papers yesterday, if apology it can be called, partakes largely of the peculiar and distinguishing attributes of it's author's mind--puppyism and hypocrisy. So far from being an apology, it is an additional insult. What right has he to talk of "prejudice and cruelty" in an appear to the public of Boston? Had they ever treated him with cruelty, or give him any indications of unfavourable prejudice!" Acting from the impulse of irritation," he says, he "certainly was disrespectful to the Boston public." Disrespectful indeed. Does he acknowlege so much? Was he not insolent, impertinent, arrogant, ungrateful? And why does he now acknowledge this? "Calm deliberation convinces him he was wrong!" When did he deliberate thus calmly, and come to this conclusion? Not till he was assailed by the unequivocal expressions of public indignation in New York. . . . Why then does he not confess,--not simply that he was disrespectful to the

public of Boston, but that he was ungrateful and insolent to the whole nation. . . . he falls to confession like a culprit who turns state's evidence to extricate his neck from the halter."

[168]Boston Evening Gazette, 24 December 1825.

[169]Boston Courier, 22 December 1825.

[170]Boston Evening Gazette, 24 December 1825.

[171]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 24 December 1825.

[172]Other newspapers, such as the Columbian Centinel, also remarked that the principal opposition to Kean came from the gallery and the third row. In New York the chief opposition billowed from the fourth tier and slips.

[173]Boston Evening Gazette, 24 December 1825. According to William Clapp, the editor of the Gazette:

> "Mr. Kean escaped from the theatre before the riot reached its height, by passing through Mrs. Powell's house, in Theatre Alley, which, adjoining the theatre, had a door to communicate with it. We have heard that Kean slept that night at the "Lamb Tavern," and left the next day; but we believe the most authentic account is that we have received from "Tim Divol," who for years drove a hack for Niles, . . . He drove Kean and Kilner to Brighton, where the former took the stage for Boston to Worcester" (William Clapp, A Record of the Boston Stage [Boston: James Monroe, 1853, reprint ed., New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968], p. 237).

[174]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 24 December 1825.

[175]Ibid.

[176]Boston Daily Advertiser, 23 December 1825. See Appendix H for complete coverage of the evening's events. On 27 December the Boston Daily Advertiser claimed that neither of the managers "had the least intimation of anything like serious or organized opposition being in contemplation, until past 4 o'clock in the afternoon of Wednesday [21 December], after every ticket had been sold, and arrangements made for the evening."

[177]Independent Chronicle and Boston Patriot, 23 December 1825.

[178]Boston Evening Gazette, 24 December 1825. The Gazette also claimed that

"during the late tumult at the Theatre those of the audience who were in the second tier of Boxes found themselves in a most trying situation. The fierce conflict with brick-bats, clubs, &c. at the stairs and doors, effectually shut out their means of retreat, and they were compelled to await in anxiety, and witness the increasing outrages, and approach of the immense mob without, expecting every instant when the internal resistance would cloven [sic.] down, and the thronging rabble precipitate them into the Pit, or maim them with deadly missiles, or crush them to death in the lobbies. The sense of confinement, joined to the apprehension of fire, &c. rendered their sensations painful beyond description.
In this fearful juncture, the formidable height of the windows did not prevent them from being used as a mode of escape. The writer of this, was the first who serving himself out of a window, about twenty-five feet from the ground, and upon a thin, narrow board, made his descent about twelve feet on to the frail roof of a small tenement. He was afterwards followed by hundreds."

[179]Ibid.

[180]Boston Daily Advertiser, 22 December 1825.

[181]New England Palladium (Boston), 23 December 1825.

[182]Ibid.

[183]Independent Chronicle and Boston Patriot, 23 December 1825.

[184]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 24 December 1825.

[185]Boston Daily Advertiser, 23 December 1825.

[186]Boston Courier, 26 December 1825.

[187]Columbian Centinel (Boston), 24 December 1825.

[188]Clapp, A Record of the Boston Stage, p. 236.

[189]The Globe and Emerald's account about whose house Kean passed through upon leaving the theatre differs from Clapp's statement discussed in an earlier footnote.

[190]This information likewise differs from Clapp's account about Kean's departure from Boston.

[191]New York Globe and Emerald, 31 December 1825.

[192]New York Evening Post, 5 January 1826.

[193]William B. Wood, Personal Recollections of the Stage (Philadelphia: Henry Carey Baird, 1855), p. 309.

[194]U.S. Gazette (Philadelphia), 12 January 1826.

[195]Wood, Personal Recollections , p. 309.

[196]Philadelphia National Gazette, 17 November 1825.

[197]Aurora (Philadelphia), quoted in the New York Statesman, 20 January 1826.

[198]Democratic Press (Philadelphia), quoted in the New York Statesman, 20 January 1826.

[199]Wood, Personal Recollections, p. 310.

Chapter 12.THE FINAL ENGAGEMENTS

[1]This happy occurrence was repeated in May.

[2]New York American, 6 February 1826.

[3]New York Gazette, 7 February 1825.

[4]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 7 February 1826.

[5]During Kean's first New York engagement, the Post had vowed to remain silent--refusing to personally cover Kean's performances or say anything about permitting Kean to perform.

[6]New York Evening Post, 7 February 1826.

[7]New York American, 7 February 1826.

[8]New York Evening Post, 7 February 1826. The Garcia troupe performed two nights per week at the Park Theatre during their engagements.

[9]New York Daily Advertiser, 11 February 1826.

[10]New York American, 8 February 1826.

[11]Ibid.

[12]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 14 February 1826.

[13]Ibid.

[14]New York American, 16 February 1826. From this time on, Kean was occasionally subject to recurring illness.

[15]New York American, 21 February 1826.

[16]New York Mirror, 25 February 1826, quoted in George C. Odell, Annals of the New York Stage, 15 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1927-49), 3:191.

[17]New York American, 23 February 1826.

[18]New York Mirror, 28 January 1826, quoted in George C. Odell, Annals of the New York Stage, 15 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1927-1949), 3:189.

[19]New York Mirror, 18 February 1826, quoted in Odell, Annals of the New York Stage, 3:191.

[20]New York Evening Post, 25 February 1826.

[21]Ibid.

[22]New York Gazette, 27 February 1826.

[23]New York Evening Post, 25 February 1826.

[24]Ibid.

[25]New York Gazette, 27 February 1826. This is the first time that Kean appeared in an afterpiece in the United States.

[26]J. Fitzgerald Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean (London: Downey & Co. Limited, 1897), p. 345.

[27]Ibid., p. 347.

[28]Charleston Mercury, 14 March 1826, quoted in the New York Evening Post, 24 March 1826.

[29]New York Gazette, 21 April 1826.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Molloy, Life of Edmund Kean, p. 347.

[33]A statement in the New York Gazette of 3 April 1826 tells why Kean was being recalled by the English committee:

> "Another paper states that a committee was forming to recall him to the British stage in consequence of the illiberal treatment he had met with in some parts of the United States."

[34]New York Gazette, 4 May 1826.

[35]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), 12 May 1826.

[36]New York Gazette, 3 April 1826.

[37]Edmund Kean to Thomas Abthorpe Cooper, 2 April [1826], Charleston, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center.

[38]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 12 May 1826.

[39]It is ironic that Maywood's engagement should coincide with Kean's, since Maywood had been frequently referred to as an imitator of Kean.

[40]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 23 May 1826.

[41]Hillebrand, in his biography about Kean, claimed that no reviews could be found for May 1826.

[42]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 12 May 1826.

[43]New York Statesman, 12 May 1826.

[44]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 12 May 1826.

[45]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 13 May 1826.

[46]New York American, 11 May 1826. During his February engagement, Kean was likewise allocated Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for his performances. The other days were filled in by the Garcias.

[47]New York American, 12 May 1826.

[48]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), 16 May 1826.

[49]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 17 May 1826.

[50]New York American, 15 May 1826.

[51]New York American, 18 May 1826.

[52]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), 20 May 1826.

[53]New York American, 19 May 1826.

[54]New York American, 22 May 1826.

[55]Back on 24 March 1826 "Crito," in the New York Evening Post expressed a similar feeling:

> "To talk of instituting a comparison between Kean and any other actor that ever trod the American boards, bespeaks a defect in taste and judgment of which we have no conception."

[56]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 23 May 1826.

[57]New York American, 25 May 1826.

[58]New York Daily Advertiser, 26 May 1826.

[59]Ibid.

[60]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), 26 May 1826.

[61]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 27 May 1826. If Kean visited Providence, there is no record of it.

[62]New York Daily Advertiser, 29 May 1826.

[63]Ibid.

[64]William B. Wood, Personal Recollections of the Stage (Philadelphia: Henry Carey Baird, 1855), pp. 321-22.

[65]Ibid., p. 323.

[66]Ibid., p. 324.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Ibid.

[69]John W. Francis, Old York York, or, Reminiscences of the Past Sixty Years (New York: Charles Roe, 1858), p. 234.

[70]Ibid., p. 235-36.

[71]Thomas Colley Grattan, "My Acquaintance with the Late Edmund Kean," New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal 39, Part the third (1833): 146.

[72]Ibid., p. 147.

[73]New York American, 15 November 1826.

[74]New York Gazette, 30 September 1826.

[75]Ibid.

[76]Ibid.

[77]New York Gazette, 3 October 1826.

[78]New York Gazette, 7 October 1826.

[79]New York Commercial Advertiser, 17 November 1826.

[80]Boston Statesman, quoted in the New York Gazette 4 Noveber 1826.

[81]New York Statesman, 3 November 1826. On 22 November 1826, Snowden's New York National Advocate remarked that Forrest's acting style "approaches in a slight degree to Kean's passion and earnestness."

[82]New York Statesman, 14 November 1826.

[83]New York National Advocate, (Thomas Snowden's) 18 November 1826.

[84]Ibid. Mrs. Hamblin's husband (Mr. Hamblin) was performing at the Chatham theatre.

[85]New York Gazette, 20 November 1826.

[86]Ibid.

[87]New York Statesman, 16 November 1826.

[88]New York American, 17 November 1826.

[89]New York Statesman, 16 November 1826.

[90]New York American, 17 November 1826.

[91]New York Gazette, 20 November 1826.

[92]New York American, 18 November 1826.

[93]New York American, 20 November 1826.

[94]New York American, 27 November 1826.

[95]New York Evening Post, 28 November 1826.

[96]New York American, 28 November 1826.

[97]New York American, 29 November 1826.

[98]New York Evening Post, 28 November 1826.

[99]New York American, 2 December 1826.

[100]New York American, 4 December 1826.

[101]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 7 December 1826.

[102]New York Evening Post, 8 December 1826.

[103]Ibid.

[104]Ibid.

[105]Kean's plan to bring his son Charles to the United States in 1828 did not take place. It is conceivable that Kean's wife Mary interfered. Moreover, it is likewise possible that Kean's poor health, as in 1830, also interfered.

[106]New York Evening Post, 8 December 1826.

[107]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 9 December 1826.

[108]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 7 December 1826.

[109]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 9 December 1826.

[110]New York Evening Post, 8 December 1826.

[111]Ibid.

[112]New York Gazette, 30 November 1826.

[113]New York Commercial Advertiser, 9 December 1826.

[114]New York Evening Post, 13 December 1826.

[115]New York Evening Post, 28 December 1826. According to my research, this is the "last" mention of Kean in the U.S. press.

[116]Thomas Colley Grattan, "My Acquaintance with the Late Edmund Kean," New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal 39, Part the Third (1833): 146.

[117]Because of ill health and financial problems, Stephen Price, formerly the manager of the Park Theatre, succeeded William Elliston as lessee of Drury Lane. Elliston went on to lease the Surrey Theatre.

[118]Alfred L. Nelson, and Gilbert B. Cross eds., Drury Lane Journal: Selections from James Winston's Diaries 1819-1827 (Society for Theatre Research, 1974), p. 138. In an entry for 9 January 1827, Winston says that "Price went to Kean at the Hummums [Hotel, Covent Garden]," where Kean had been living, and "found him at breakfast on a la mode beef and brandy and water" (Ibid., p. 139).

[119]Nelson, and Cross eds., Selections from James Winston's Diaries, p. 141. In another entry for 4 February 1827, Price told Winston that "Kean sent home [England] L4,300 from America" (Ibid).

[120]Thomas Colley Grattan, "My Acquaintance with the Late Edmund Kean," New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal 39, Part the Third (1833): 146.

[121]Nelson, and Cross eds., Selections from James Winston's Diaries, p. 142. Also for 6 February 1827, Winston states that Kean came to his room, in the evening, drunk and with a female that Kean said "had come all the way from America to act and he wished her to play Amanthis [in Archibald's Child of Nature]" (Ibid., p. 142).

[122]F. W. Hawkins, The Life of Edmund Kean, 2 vols. (London: 1869; reprint ed., New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1969), 2: 269.

[123]Two entries from Winston's diary vividly shows that Kean was suffering from serious health problems. On 17 January 1827, Kean's personal physician, Dr. Carpue, told Winston that Kean "was in a bad way, his leg [was] ulcerated" (Nelson, and Cross eds., Selections from James Winston's Diaries, p. 139). In an entry for 12 February 1827, Dr. Carpue told Kean that "he must prepare, if he continued his course of life, to have his leg taken off as a means of saving his life" (Ibid., p. 142).

[124]J. F. Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean (London: Downey & Co., 1897), p. 354.

[125]Ibid.

[126]Nelson, and Cross eds., Selections from James Winston's Diaries, p. 143. Kean was especially troubled by recurring bouts of gout.

[127]Hawkins, The Life of Edmund Kean, 2: 285.

[128]Grattan, "My Acquaintance with the Late Edmund Kean," New Monthly Magazine 39, Part the Third (1833): 147.

[129]Hawkins, The Life of Edmund Kean, 2: 286.

[130]Ibid.

[131]Nelson, and Cross eds., Selections from James Winston's Diaries, p. 146.

[132]Ibid., p. 147.

[133]Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean, p. 357.

[134]Grattan, "My acquaintance with the Late Edmund Kean," New Monthly Magazine 39, Part the Third (1833): 150.

[135]Nelson, and Cross eds., Selections from James Winston's Diaries, p. 148.

[136]Grattan, "My Acquaintance with the Late Edmund Kean," New Monthly Magazine 39, Part the Third (1833): 149.

[137]Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean, p. 390.

[138]Hawkins, The Life of Edmund Kean, 2: 297.

[139]Ibid., 2: 296.

[140]Ibid., 2: 315.

[141]Ibid., 2: 316.

[142]Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean, p. 367.

[143]Hawkins, The Life of Edmund Kean, 2: 329.

[144]Hawkins, The Life of Edmund Kean, 2: 330.

[145]Ibid., 2: 333.

[146]Raymund Fitzsimons, Edmund Kean: Fire From Heaven. (New York: The Dial Press, 1976), p. 230.

[147]Hawkins, The Life of Edmund Kean, 2: 338.

[148]Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean, pp. 386-87.

[149]Ibid., p. 393.

[150]Times (London), 20 July 1820.

[151]Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean, p. 396.

[152]Hawkins, The Life of Edmund Kean, 2: 353.

[153]Philip Hone, The Diaries of Philip Hone, 1828-1851, ed., Bayard Tuckerman, 2 vols. (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1889), 1: 20.

[154]New York American, 6 September 1830.

[155]Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean, p. 412.

[156]Fitzsimons, Edmund Kean, p. 233.

[157]Hawkins, The Life of Edmund Kean, 2: 355.

[158]Fitzsimons, Edmund Kean, p. 234.

[159]John Doran, Their Majesties' Servants: Annals of the English Stage from Thomas Betterton to Edmund Kean, ed., Robert W. Loewe, 3 vols. (London: John C. Nimmo, 1888), 3: 412.

[160]Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean, p. 403.

[161]Kean was abandoned by his mother, Nance Carey, during his early childhood. Miss Tidswell, an actress whom Kean regarded as his natural aunt, cared for Kean after his mother left him.

[162]Hone, The Diaries of Philip Hone, 1: 62.

[163]New York American, 18 September 1832.

[164]Hone, The Diaries of Philip Hone, 1: 63.

[165]George Henry Lewes, On Actors and the Art of Acting, (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1875), pp. 15-16.

[166]Doran, Their Majesties' Servants, 3: 416.

[167]Molloy, The Life and Adventures of Edmund Kean, p. 426.

[168]"Death of Edmund Kean, the Tragedian," Bell's Weekly Messenger, (London) 20 May 1833, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 804.

Chapter 13. CONCLUSION

[1]The "peaks and valleys" in Kean's performances prompted Coleridge's now famous statement, "To see him act is like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning." Although the romantics acknowledged this flaw in his acting, they, nonetheless, felt that his uniqueness prevailed. Americans were familiar with this criticism.

[2]It was Kean, however, who had been the model for both Wallack and Maywood. Various articles in American newspapers clearly state that Wallack and Maywood were imitators of Kean.

[3]The American suspected that "Crito's" criticism was intended to "puff" Kean. The practice of "puffing," the criticism of one actor in order to raise another, was apparently not common in America because both the American and the New York Evening Post claimed that it was solely employed in Liverpool and London.

[4]Throughout Kean's engagements, particularly in Boston, comparisons were also frequently made between Kean and Cooke.

[5]At the end of Kean's first New York engagement, he was honored with a dinner given by citizens, under the auspices of Major Noah of the New York National Advocate. No actor had ever been so honored in New York. This is an extraordinary instance of attention given to an actor.

[6]It is surprising to see so much space devoted to articles about actors, especially, since most newspapers were only four to six pages long. Most of the important news occupied only two pages with the remaining pages allocated to assorted advertisements.

[7]Americans became familiar with Kean's "novel" acting style through what they read, heard and saw. Some American writers, apparently, had seen Kean at Drury Lane.

[8]By this action, the management hoped to prevent riotous proceedings, at the box office and, also, to discourage "scalping" of tickets. This may be the first time that full scale scalping of tickets took place.

[9]Other newspapers like the New York Gazette (5 December 1820) were ambivalent in their reaction to Kean. "It is quite evident that Mr. Kean is a man of genius, and well skilled in his profession, but he frequently obscures the effect of his genius, by stooping to tricks in order to catch applause.

[10]Although William B. Wood had expected the "haughty" Kean, he was favorably impressed with Kean's unassuming demeanor back stage during his Philadelphia and Baltimore engagements.

[11]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 28 November 1825.

[12]Since both New York and Boston, especially Boston with its puritanical tradition, were extremely sensitive to moral impropriety, in life and on the stage, it is not surprising that some Americans condemned Kean's reappearance. Kean represented, for some, all that was wrong with the theatre--an immoral lifestyle and an identification with the drama, which some considered vulgar.

[13]Besides commentary by the press, some custodians of morality submitted letters to the New York Commercial Advertiser, the Boston Courier and other Boston publications protesting Kean's appearance.

[14]Many New York newspapers refrained from making any statements questioning the propriety of permitting Kean to perform. Coleman's New York Evening Post, for instance, announced its intention to withhold any comments on the issue. Aside from the New York Commercial Advertiser, the New York Daily Advertiser was the most outspoken critic of Kean. In Boston, unlike New York, most of the newspapers questioned Kean's visit to the United States. The New England Galaxy, the Boston Daily Advertiser, the Columbian Centinel and other publications voiced their displeasure.

[15]Noah's "enemies of the theatre," who opposed Kean, were more than likely those who protested the rebuilding of the Park Theatre in 1821.

[16]It is highly probable that his resentment towards Kean was exacerbated by the fact that he was English. If he were a native genius, things might have been different. Animosity between both countries still existed at this time, after all, it was only fifteen years since the War of 1812. Ill feeling towards American writers may be seen in such English periodicals as Blackwood's Magazine. Some English writers considered Americans merely imitators, and bad ones at that, of Europeans. Many Americans resented this condescending attitude.

[17]Kean's critics were unable to separate his "private worth," which was severely damaged by his immoral behavior in England, from his profession. This preoccupation with Kean's private life clouded their perceptions of Kean the actor. They were unwilling to suspend, for a few hours in the theatre, their dissatisfaction with Kean's private life.

[18]As in 1820 and 1821, when newspapers engaged in an intense debate about the merits of Kean and Cooper and Kean's refusal to fulfill his Boston engagement, the press in 1825 magnified the importance of an actor, even though this actor was Kean.

[19]The Park Theatre, which was destroyed by a fire in May, 1820, reopened on 1 September 1821--three months after Kean returned to England. It is remarkable how quickly the theatre was rebuilt.

[20]New York Commercial Advertiser claimed that people were hired to applaud Kean. If this is so, it marks the introduction of the "claque" in the American theatre.

[21]In spite of the clamor, both Noah and Snowden felt that Kean's reception was a success. Both editors claimed that only a handfull of spectators, mostly in the slips and third tier, were opposed to Kean.

[22]Even though the riot was very likely instigated by Bostonians for the affront committed in Boston in 1821, numerous communications published in New York and Boston reiterated, over and over, that they were principally appalled by Kean's "vices and crimes committed in Europe." The insult against Boston, therefore, seems to occupy a lesser priority. Notwithstanding the riot, however, it is important to realize that the press, not the public, was obsessed with Kean's moral indiscretions. The success of later performances attested to this.

[23]Kean's wish to settle in America may have appeared condescending to some Americans, since he, an Englishman, who previously insulted all Americans, now wanted to live in a country that was ironically a former colony of England.

[24]Snowden's Advocate and other newspapers claimed that Kean's acting had improved since his last visit--claiming that his acting appeared more "chaste" than before. If this is so, we may attribute it both to Kean's misfortunes and his declining ambition.

[25]This clearly indicated that all opposition to Kean was over.

[26]After Kean terminated the first Philadelphia engagement, in January 1826, he went to Baltimore. In Baltimore, however, another fracas interfered with his performance of Richard III. From there, he went back to Philadelphia to satisfy William B. Wood, the manager of the Baltimore and Philadelphia theatres.

[27]Since the Garcia Opera Company, the first ever to perform in the United States, was performing at the Park Theatre in February and May, Kean was obliged to share the theatre with them. On alternate nights, the audience was treated to the performance of Kean's Othello (Shakespeare's) to that of Garcia's Otello (Rossini). This was truly an extraordinary moment in American theatre history!

[28]Intermittently Kean's performances were interrupted by poor health during his 1826 engagements.

[29]Before Kean came back to the United States, William Conway, who came to America in 1823, had been successfully acting in Boston and New York. Aside from Conway, the Hamblins also competed with Kean during his engagements. In October, 1826 William Charles Macready, the great Covent Garden actor whom Kean disliked and feared, was triumphantly engaged at the Park Theatre. Also, while Kean was engaged in the United States, Forrest was performing at the Bowery theatre.

[30]This offer was evidently tendered by Stephen Price, formerly the manager of New York's Park Theatre.

[31]It is also likely that Kean's expressive delivery and facial expressions were more suited for the much larger Drury Lane Theatre. William Hazlitt periodically commented that Kean's wonderful facial expressions were often lost in the cavernous confines of Drury Lane, unless one was sitting near the stage. If

this is so, the smaller American theatres may have contributed to the impression that Kean was "over-acting."

[32]Although Kean's "American Diary" provided us with ivaluable information about how a "star" was paid at this time, approximately L50 per performance, additional research is needed to enhance our knowledge of early nineteenth-century American theatrical contractual arrangements.

Appendix A

[1]Literary Gazette, And Journal of Belles Lettres, (June 1833), Theatre Collection, New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, Stead Collection, MWEZ, n.c. 804.

[2]New York Evening Post, 17 July 1817.

Appendix B

[1]New York Gazette, 26 May 1820.

[2]New York American, 25 May 1820.

[3]New York Commercial Advertiser, 11 July 1820.

[4]New York Commercial Advertiser, 30 June 1820.

[5]New York Commercial Advertiser, 18 July 1820.

[6]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), 30 August 1820.

[7]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), 25 July 1820.

[8]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), 1 September 1821.

[9]New York Gazette, 29 May 1820.

[10]Ibid.

[11]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), 1 September 1821.

[12]New York Gazette, 29 May 1820.

[13]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), 18 July 1820. Stone, in the 18 July 1820 edition of the New York

Commercial Advertiser, disagreed with Noah's assertion that "all who opposed" the theatre "are actuated by a 'spirit of bigotry and fanatacism.'" "Is it not fact," said Stone, "that a vast majority of the professing Christians of this country, of the various denominations collectively, are decidedly and conscientiously opposed to theatrical representations?"

[14]These same forces also emerged after Kean had unexpectedly terminated his May 1821 Boston engagement.

[15]Stone's opposition to the rebuilding of the Park Theatre was not as clear-cut as his campaign against Kean.

[16]New York National Advocate (Thomas Snowden's), 19 November 1825.

[17]Noah and Stone were at opposite ends during both the Park Theatre controversy and Kean's 1825 engagements.

[18]New York National Advocate (Major Noah's), 3 November 1825.

[19]New York American, 3 March 1819.

[20]New York Gazette, 22 December 1815.

Appendix D

[1]Kean's MS Diary of his visit to America," 22 pages, inserted in vol. 8 of F. W. Hawkins, The Life of Edmund Kean: Illustrated, 14 vols. (London: 1869).

[2]Ibid.

[3]Aurora and General Advertiser (Philadelphia), quoted in Harold Newcomb Hillebrand, Edmund Kean (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933), p. 208.

[4]Aurora and General Advertiser (Philadelphia), 15 January 1821, quoted in Harold Newcomb Hillebrand, Edmund Kean (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933), p. 209.

[5]William B. Wood, Personal Recollections of the Stage (Philadelphia: Henry Carey Baird, 1855), p. 255.

[6]Ibid., p. 256.

[7]Democratic Press (Philadelphia), 11 January 1821.

[8]Philadelphia Union, 12 January 1821.

[9]Philadelphia National Gazette, 20 January 1821.

[10]Philadelphia National Gazette, 24 January 1821.

[11]"Kean's MS Diary."

[12]Ibid.

[13]Franklin Gazette (Philadelphia), quoted in the New York Evening Post, 17 January 1821.

[14]Wood, Personal Recollections of the Stage, p. 262.

[15]Ibid., p. 263.

[16]Ibid., p. 259.

[17]Ibid., p. 267.

Appendix E

[1]Before Kean's appearance in Boston, the Galaxy had already made up its mind that Kean's reputation was undeserved and a sham. Buckingham, also known as Tinker, the editor of the New-England Galaxy was the most outspoken critic of Kean during this engagement. Later in 1825, his Boston Courier led the charge against Kean's reappearance in Boston.

[2]The Columbian Centinel (Boston), 24 February 1821.

Appendix G

[1]The Courier, on 18 November 1825, impugned Noah's accusation that Bostonians instigated the riot at the Park Theatre by referring to Noah as the pretentious "governor and judge of Israel." This conviction possibly establishes a connection between the enemies of Noah and Kean.

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