THE DEVELOPMENT OF HENRY IRVING'S SHAKESPEAREAN
STAGING DURING HIS EARLY YEARS
AT THE LYCEUM THEATRE

DISSERTATION
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
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* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1974

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Research Topic and Purpose

The importance of Henry Irving, who for more than twenty years was one of the most prominent figures in the English theatre, is well established. He was the first of his profession to be honored with knighthood; the innovator of many creative interpretations of Shakespearean roles; the culminator of the nineteenth century trend in scenic embellishment of Shakespearean plays; and, the actor-manager who stood at the threshold of the development of the modern stage director. The achievements of Henry Irving are well known, and are fairly well recorded in the history of theatre. His work as an actor from his early days in the provinces to his farewell tours is the subject of several biographies and other works: the staging of Irving’s magnificent productions of the 1880’s and later has also received recognition. Very little, however, is known of his early years as a director of plays before he assumed the management of the Lyceum Theatre.
The purpose of this inquiry is to examine Irving's early years as a director of Shakespearean plays. Specifically, this study examines Irving's first Shakespearean production under the management of Hezekiah Bateman and concludes with his first production under his own management. The productions examined are *Hamlet* (1874), *Macbeth* (1875), *Richard III* (1877), and *Hamlet* (1878).¹ By examining these productions, this study is intended to establish an understanding of the nature of Irving's development as a director of Shakespearean plays, a hitherto unexamined subject. An appreciation of his early work, before he fully developed his style of Shakespearean production for which he is remembered, will provide a foundation for tracing Irving's later development; and, perhaps help to answer such questions as what effect the Meiningen player's performances at the Drury Lane Theatre in 1881 may have had on Irving's productions?

The rise of the actor-manager was a phenomenon of the nineteenth century theatre, and Irving's development

¹The only Shakespearean play produced during this period that is not treated in this study is the 1876 production of *Othello*. This play is omitted because of the lack of research material—specifically, no promptbooks have survived, and the press took comparatively little notice of it. In addition, the production only had a limited run.
into an actor-manager was typical. His early years were spent learning the acting profession beginning in 1856 at the New Royal Lyceum Theatre with Davis' stock company in Sunderland. After more than ten years of acting in the provinces—Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dublin, Manchester, Liverpool, Oxford, Birmingham (with two brief engagements in London in 1859 and 1860)—Irving was able to obtain adequate employment in London: he became a member of Miss Herbert's company at St. James Theatre in the autumn of 1866. After various engagements in London, Irving was eventually seen by Hezekiah L. Bateman, an American producer, who offered Irving a contract to play leading character and comic roles to support his daughter, Isabel, at the Lyceum.

At first Irving's position was that of an actor, not a stage director. The first play, Fanchette, lasted only a short while; the second production, Albery's rendition of Pickwick Papers, was hastily thrown together and did not meet with any greater success. At this opportune moment, Irving persuaded Bateman to produce The Bells and to let Irving direct the acting and technical effects. The play opened on November 25, 1871 and met with great success, it played in repertoire
to the end of the 1871–1872 season and filled the Lyceum for one hundred and fifty performances.\textsuperscript{2}

The exact responsibilities of Irving in staging the subsequent productions is not clear: apparently he assumed the duties of the director and worked with the help of Bateman. The next three major productions were rather well received. William G. Willis' \textit{Charles I} played to full houses for one hundred and eighty nights beginning in September 1872; Willis' \textit{Eugene Aram}, which opened in April 1873, was also successful. In the autumn of 1873, Irving directed Bulwer's \textit{Richelieu}, a challenge for comparison with Macready's famous portrayal of the Cardinal, which met with mixed reaction among the critics. It did run for one hundred and twenty performances.\textsuperscript{3}

Finally, after this series of fairly successful productions, Irving persuaded Bateman to produce \textit{Hamlet} in the autumn of 1874. The story of Irving's first production of \textit{Hamlet} is the beginning of this inquiry which traces Irving's development as a Shakespearean director as he staged four plays: \textit{Hamlet} (1874), \textit{Macbeth} (1875),


\textsuperscript{3}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 214-37, \textit{passim}. 
Richard III (1877), and Hamlet (1878) which is his first production under his own management and marks the beginning of Irving's final stage of development as a director.

Methodology

The procedure of inquiry for this study is to analyze the early Shakespearean productions of Irving to arrive at a description of each production; and, then to make a comparative analysis of the productions to determine Irving's process of development as a director. The description of the productions is an examination of the elements of theatrical staging in order to recreate, in as much detail as evidence permits, the productions the London audience saw and heard at the Lyceum Theatre. This description involves three steps. First, an examination of Irving's acting versions of the plays is made: a comprehensive examination would be a study in itself and this is not the intent of this inquiry. It is necessary, however, to describe the general nature of Irving's textual alterations in order to appreciate his staging of the plays, and to permit an analysis of his development as an arranger of Shakespearean scripts. The second step is to examine how Irving mounted his versions of these scripts on the Lyceum stage. In particular, what was the interpretation of the work that Irving created in his portrayal of the central figure; what effects did Irving create with his direction
of the other characters; what was the nature of his use of
the technical elements—the scenery, costumes, properties,
lighting, and special effects? The difficulty in recreating
these productions is great; however, by consolidation
of all of the extant information many aspects of the per-
formances can be determined. The final step is to compare
and contrast the various elements of these productions in
order to analyze Irving's evolutionary development as a
director of Shakespearean plays.

A Review of Previous Research

There are a number of scholarly works on Henry Ir-
v-ing which provide many valuable pieces of information regarding these early productions, but none of the more than a
dozen and a half books deal with the topic of Irving's
early years as a director. Most of the books on Irving
are concerned with Irving the actor, and treat him in a
biographical manner. Several of the books on Irving were
written by close supporters and co-workers such as his
business manager, Bram Stoker.⁴ One of the most valuable
works is by Irving's grandson, Laurence Irving, who writes

⁴Bram Stoker, Personal Reminiscences of Henry
from his family associations and from a wealth of personal correspondence of Henry Irving. Also of great importance is the study by Gordon Craig who was an actor in Irving's company and also was the son of Ellen Terry, Irving's co-star and closest co-worker throughout his management of the Lyceum.

Turning to the field of doctoral dissertations, again there is a wealth of material, but little information exists on the early directorial efforts of Irving. The one dissertation that is devoted entirely to Henry Irving examines Irving's tours of the United States and Canada which did not begin until 1883, five years after the period this study covers. There are a number of dissertations that investigate various aspects of Irving's Shakespearean productions, usually as part of the historical development of Shakespearean

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5 Laurence Irving, Irving.


staging.

Other dissertations include a study of the Hamlet promptbooks of Garrick, Booth, and Irving; a stage history of interpretations of Hamlet; a study of Shylock as interpreted in various periods of history; a stage history of Richard III; and a general look at selected Shakespearean characters--Richard III,


Toby Lelyveld, Shylock on the Stage (Cleveland: The Press of Western Reserve University, 1960).

Macbeth, and Hamlet. An examination of these dissertations indicates that although much had been written about Irving as an actor, little has been said of Irving the director; and, moreover, the subject of Irving's early years as a director at the Lyceum has not been examined.

The books and dissertations noted above provide some insight into the subject of this study. However, the primary research documents for this inquiry are the prompt-books of the productions and the numerous articles written by theatre critics in the newspapers and periodicals of Irving's time.

The Research Documents

This inquiry rests primarily upon the extant prompt-books of Irving's productions. There are several different types of promptbooks: the most valuable one, for this study, is the book held by the prompter which contains the information necessary for the smooth running of the production. These prompter's copies sometimes contain lists of characters for entrances, properties carried by the actors, blocking notes and indications of stage business, synopses of scenery, sketches or maps for the placement of scenery,

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groove indications, perspective drawings of the scenery, lighting cues, music cues, special effects created, and other necessary information. A second type of promptbook is the actor's study script which reveals interpretations of the roles and often much of the stage business, plus the textual changes made which includes the deletion of lines, rearrangement of portions, and additions of non-Shakespearean material. A final source, though not exactly a promptbook, is the published acting editions of the plays that Irving began presenting with Richard III in 1877.

Promptbooks exist for all of the productions examined in this study, and generally provide adequate information for reconstruction of the various performances. For the first production of Hamlet (1874) there are two promptbooks in existence. The most important one is marked by J. H. Allen, Irving's prompter, and is thoroughly annotated throughout with lists of characters for entrances, lighting cues and effects produced, blocking notes, sketches of properties and scenery. The promptbook is signed by Allen, and dated March 1877; however, on the title page he indicates it is the promptbook for the two hundred night Hamlet. In the spring of 1877, Irving did a revival of his 1874 Hamlet, and perhaps preparation for this production was the occasion for Allen to make his note dating
the promptbook as 1877. The promptbook is now in the Harvard Theatre Collection, catalogue number TS 2272.75. A second promptbook for this production is Irving's studybook made from the Clark and Wright edition of the text. \[14\] It contains notes on Irving's blocking, business, and interpretation of Hamlet, as well as notes on the performances of other characters. This book is also in the Harvard Theatre Collection, catalogue number *65T-105. A third source is a copy of the Clark and Wright edition in which Irving's cuts of the text are noted. This book was a gift from Irving to Clarke Lamb Henney who apparently used it when he prepared an article for Belgravia on Irving's Hamlet. This book is held in the Folger Shakespeare Library, and a copy is also in The Ohio State University Theatre Research Institute (P-1557).

There is only one promptbook known to exist for the 1875 production of Macbeth--Irving's studybook. This promptbook is signed by Irving, and contains information on his acting and notes on the blocking of other characters; but it has only a few notes on other aspects of the production.

The text is that of Wright and Clark, published in 1874. The promptbook is now held in the Horace Howard Furness Collection, catalogue number C59.Sh1Mcl, at the University of Pennsylvania.

For the production of Richard III, there are three relevant promptbooks. Irving's studybook and production preparation copy is in the Harvard Theatre Collection (uncatalogued). It is based on the Longmans, Green and Company edition of the play, and contains notes on Irving's interpretation of Richard, plus several notes on scenery and a few maps of the positioning of actors. The Folger Shakespeare Library has a promptbook of an earlier production based apparently on the Kean version, in which Irving marked the text to eliminate the Cibber portions and entered restorations from Shakespeare. Finally, the promptbook of the Lyceum stage manager, H. J. Loveday, exists. It is constructed from the Irving 1877 edition of the play. The promptbook apparently contains several drawings and maps of the scenery, and other notes on the production. This promptbook, presently held by the London Museum, was not examined for this study because it could not be located; and, therefore, it is not available for study.

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15 Catalogued as Rich III, 8.
The 1878 production of *Hamlet* is represented by Allen's promptbook which is carefully marked with the same information noted above in his *Hamlet* promptbook of 1874. This promptbook is now in The Shakespeare Centre, Stratford-upon-Avon, catalogue number 72.907/Irving.\(^\text{16}\) Also, Ellen Terry's studybook for this production is extant, and it contains notes on her acting of Ophelia, and a few notes on the staging. This book is held in The Ellen Terry Memorial Museum, Smallhythe, England.\(^\text{17}\)

Integration of the information in the Irving promptbooks with the reviews and other published material on the productions will permit reconstruction of many aspects of Irving's staging of *Macbeth*, *Richard the Third*, and his two productions of *Hamlet*. These reconstructions will illustrate how Irving mounted his first Shakespearean productions at the Lyceum, and how he developed during his first years as a Shakespearean director.

\(^\text{16}\) A microfilm copy of this promptbook is in the John H. McDowell Film Archives, The Ohio State University Theatre Research Institute, F. 1937. Hereinafter, other microfilms held in the John H. McDowell Film Archives will be referred to as McDowell, followed by the catalogue number.

\(^\text{17}\) McDowell, p. 1935.
CHAPTER II

THE HAMLET PRODUCTION OF 1874

Introduction

His talents as an actor... have raised him in an unusually short space of time to a very high position on the stage. His fame, moreover, had been acquired in serious acting. His pictures of mental anguish had been justly admired; there were, indeed, few of the more powerful emotions of the mind which he had not shown himself capable of portraying in a way to seize on the imagination of the spectator. His performances in The Bells, and in Eugene Aram possessed certain elements akin to elements in the character of the Danish prince; and the soft melancholy and real dignity which he imparted to his portrait of King Charles were no less promising. Besides this, Mr. Irving is manifestly a man of cultivation and refinement, with which, indeed, the higher order of acting is almost unattainable; and, lastly, there is no actor more painstaking or more likely to give due thought and study to a Shakespearean character peculiarly subtle in its attributes.\(^1\)

The critic for The Graphic, in the above evaluation of Irving's early work at the Lyceum, described what must have been in the minds of many playgoers before Irving's

\(^1\)"Theatres," Graphic, X (November, 1874), 443.
London debut as Hamlet. This was Irving's first appearance in a major Shakespearean role in London.\(^2\) Irving chose the play that would excite great public interest for Hamlet was "the drama which the galleries know best, and follow with the keenest sympathy," and:

Shakespeare's Hamlet, wonderful in so many ways, is in none more wonderful than for its power of every now and then galvanising the town, awaking even our Sir Charles Coldstreams for a moment to a languid interest in the theatre and its doings, and giving drawing-rooms and dining-tables periodical fits of quite lively criticism.\(^3\)

Charles Lamb Kenney, writing in Belgravia shortly after the opening of Irving's Hamlet, spoke of the play in even more elevated terms:

Hamlet has, moreover, a hold over all educated minds in the country; it soars above all prejudices and persuasions, creeds and classes; it is a religion in itself, and one of universal acceptance. It is a monument that commemorates the unity of our common nature . . . .\(^4\)

Whether a religion or not, Hamlet had certainly proved to be a crucial role for many actors of the nineteenth century, and provocative material for the critics. It is not

\(^2\)Irving had appeared at the Princess's Theatre under the management of Augustus Harris in 1859 in the role of Osric; however, the engagement was not consequential for Irving.

\(^3\)"Punch on Hamlet," Punch, or the London Charivari, LXVII (November, 1874), 224.

\(^4\)Charles Lamb Kenney, "Mr. Irving in Hamlet," Belgravia, V, 3d Ser. (February, 1875), 183. Apparently
uncommon, when reading the reviews of Irving's *Hamlet*, to find critics who had seen most of the significant Hamlets as far back as Edmund Kean, who last performed the part on November 9, 1832. The other major Hamlets of this century included Charles Kemble, William Macready, Charles Kean, Samuel Phelps, and the startling Charles Fechter—the last significant Hamlet before Irving's (1861).

Despite the history of successful Hamlet productions in the nineteenth century, Bateman was extremely reluctant to produce it at the Lyceum. It was during the provincial tour of *Richelieu* in the summer of 1874 that Irving was able to persuade the producer H. L. Bateman to let him stage *Hamlet*. Laurence Irving indicates Bateman allotted only 100 pounds for production costs. Henry Irving, speaking on the twentieth anniversary of the opening of *Hamlet*, recalled the limited nature of the preparations:

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Kenney wrote this long and detailed description with the aid of a promptcopy of Irving's text before him. A copy of Irving's cutting of the Clark & Wright edition held at the Folger Shakespeare Library bears the inscription: "Given to Charles Lamb Kenney by Henry Irving with marks, as performed by him at the Lyceum."


It is evidence of the abiding strength of this play in the hearts of the people that though . . . it was hurriedly put on the stage, with very little expense—some of the scenery having been used in other plays—and with only such care as can be used within a very short period, it achieved a longer run than was ever thought possible. My excellent manager at that time did not much believe in it, and at most expected a run of a few weeks; but it ran for 200 nights.  

The 1874 season opened at the Lyceum on September 28th with *The Bells*. During the afternoons, Irving rehearsed *Hamlet* until its opening on October 31st—a four week rehearsal period.  

All doubt concerning the production's potential for a successful run must have vanished when Bateman opened the Lyceum doors on the evening of the thirty-first. Irving's reputation as an actor and the popularity of *Hamlet* combined to create a great demand for tickets. The stalls had been sold out for days; around three o'clock that afternoon a queue began to form at the gallery and pit entrances. Not all could be accommodated,

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7 Henry Irving, *Theatre*, XXIII (December, 1894), 33.


9 "Theatres," *Graphic*, X (November, 1874), 443.
the numbers who . . . were turned back when they showed themselves in Wellington-street and could not produce a ticket . . . showed that the London public had been stimulated to a degree to which it would be difficult to find a precedent.\textsuperscript{10}

Before we examine what the members of the audience witnessed that night, it is helpful to describe the general approach which Irving took in his interpretation of Hamlet. This is a difficult task, and one that cannot be accomplished thoroughly. Irving himself did not set down his thoughts on this matter. The promptbooks are of some value but perhaps the best available record of the general conception of Irving's Hamlet is found in the impressions related by the reviewers and critics of the London newspapers and periodicals.

In his approach to the character, one point seems to be clear: Irving's interpretation was new. The critic for The Times stated:

Mr. Irving's Hamlet is original throughout. It is more than probable that he has never seen any predecessor of extraordinary eminence enact the part. At all events, it is certain that the Hamlet in the playbook has been realized by Mr. Irving upon the stage without passing through any medium but that of his own thoughts.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{10}"Lyceum Theatre," The Times (London), November 2, 1874, p. 8.

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid.
In *The Graphic* the same conclusion was reached about the originality of Irving's Hamlet. Irving was complimented for

his perfect good faith in 'dealing justly' with us, not attempting to insnare our admiration and cheat us of our enthusiasm by hollow devices of little or no warrant from the text . . . .

These "hollow devices" refer to the traditional "points" that had accumulated through the years of Hamlet interpretations. The points were known to the audience, and the actor was judged by how he handled them in the play. "The learned will turn over their books," *The Times* stated:

> to discover what was done by Betterton, what by Kemble, what by Charles Young; but their studies will avail them nothing towards an estimate of Mr. Irving, who stands aloof from the pedigree beginning with Betterton and ending with Charles Kean.13

While Irving's Hamlet may not have been like any previous, it was not because Irving was unaware of the play's tradition. During Irving's apprentice years, he studied the techniques of his art by observation and by conversation with actors such as Chippendale—whom he engaged to play Polonius at the Lyceum—who had described

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12 Kenney, "Mr. Irving in *Hamlet,*" p. 185.

the Hamlet of Edmund Kean for Irving. Irving had himself seen Phelps' Hamlet at Sadler's Wells--Irving was twelve years of age at the time. There is one actor in particular, however, who definitely had an influence upon Irving's Hamlet--Edwin Booth. While working in Manchester in 1861 Irving played with Edwin Booth for a period of several weeks. Laurence Irving evaluated the general effect Booth had on Irving:

... for the first time [he] saw the actor of his dreams--or at least a facet of that majestic creature of his imagination. Hitherto nearly all the actors with whom he had worked had got their results by animal, rather than by spiritual, forcefulness. Booth's romantic soul and philosophic mind were reflected in his finely chiselled features and his grave yet graceful bearing. His approach to his art particularly to his study of Hamlet, was intellectual. Rejecting all the meretricious tricks which were still affected by his contemporaries, he harnessed his fine voice, his flexible techniques, and his poetic imagination to a natural interpretation of Shakespeare's characters which he recreated with almost magical sincerity.

In discussing Irving's Hamlet of 1874, Laurence Irving stressed that Irving's interpretation was heavily influenced by Booth.

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16 *Ibid.*, p. 242. It is interesting that Edwin Booth's Hamlet set a record of one hundred consecutive performances at his theatre in New York in 1864-65, and a decade later Henry Irving was to double that record at the
Having dispensed with the traditional points, what were the general qualities that characterized Irving's Hamlet? *Punch* indicated that Irving emphasized "the pathetic and more gentle side of the Prince . . ." 17 *The Times* agreed that Irving's Hamlet was essentially tender, loving, and merciful. He is not a weak man called upon to do something beyond his powers, but he is a kindly man urged to do a deed, which . . . may be righteous, but which is yet cruel. 18

*The Times* concluded that "according to Mr. Irving . . . it is to the utter lack of cruelty in his nature that Hamlet's shortcomings are to be attributed." 19

One traditionally revered quality which Irving's portrayal did not emphasize was dignity, according to *The Times* critic, and his Hamlet had "an undercurrent of tearfulness . . . through all his discourse." 20 This "tender" and "loving" character, who was not overly conscious of his royalty, seemed to have actively exhibited his reactions to his crises, for this critic of *The Times* noted that:

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... his sensitive nature subjects him to the highest degree of nervous excitement. This could not be more clearly expressed by Mr. Irving. His frequent changes from sitting to standing, his fitful walks up and down the stage, the frequent visit of his hand to his forehead, represent to perfection the action of what in common parlance is called 'figet.' Most powerfully is the nervous condition exhibited in the scene with Ophelia. The pretended madness, the unquenchable love, and the desire to utter stern truths seemed to hustle against each other. The words seemed to be flung about at random, and the facial movements corresponded to the recklessness of the words. The storm of applause which followed this display of genius denoted not only admiration, but wonder.  

"The words flung about at random" was perhaps the method of delivery which The Illustrated London News referred to as "an easy, familiar tone, which at once reduces blank verse to the level of ordinary prose." The delivery was that of "a gentleman and scholar thinking aloud, and not acting either the speeches or the situation." Kenney, too, called Irving's delivery "direct and natural." Irving's break with the traditional delivery was further supported by the critic writing under the name of "A Templar" for MacMillan's Magazine, who indicated that Irving's delivery, "his tones and cadences," were like

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21 Ibid.


23 Ibid.

24 Kenney, "Mr. Irving in Hamlet," p. 185.
Charles Fechter's. Fechter, who startled the London audiences with his Hamlet in 1861, was unaware of the traditional Hamlet which had formed in the minds of the English audience because he was trained in the French theatre.

Perhaps there were similarities between Fechter's delivery and that of Irving; certainly there was one similarity in that, according to the critics, Irving had discarded the traditional points of the role, just as Fechter had omitted them (although Fechter probably did so out of ignorance). Irving's choice to dismiss the points was the result of much study, deliberation and careful preparation. And, as a result of his study, Irving's interpretation of Hamlet forced Punch into an unusual critical position:

So intelligent indeed, is Mr. Irving's performance, that Mr. Punch feels it his duty to lay aside the condescending and omniscient tone appropriate to criticism, and to admit that Mr. Irving has earned the right to an opinion of his own; so that where he differs from Mr. Punch, in his view of how a scene should be presented or played, it is possible that Mr. Irving may be right, and Mr. Punch wrong.

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26 Ibid., p. 237.

An Analysis of the Directorial Aspects of the Production

The opening scene is reconstructed in detail in order that an examination of some of the directorial practices of Irving can be made. However, the first matter to consider before analyzing the staging of this scene is Irving's textual alterations of the W. G. Clark and W. A. Wright edition of the play published by the Clarendon Press in 1873—the Cambridge edition.

The beginning of the scene is kept intact by Irving up to the first exit of the Ghost, with the exception of cutting two lines: one line belongs to Bernardo, "Sit down awhile;" and, the other to Horatio, "Well, sit we down." The lines occur just prior to the first entrance of the Ghost. Elimination of these lines is probably necessary to accommodate Irving's blocking which apparently did not require the three to sit. However, these are not all the lines which Irving cut. Out of the original 175 lines in the scene, he cuts eighty-two. The majority of these lines expunged from the text involve Horatio's discussion of the history of war between Norway and Denmark, and the ensuing preparations for an attack by young Fortinbras to regain some of the territory Norway lost in an earlier conflict. Also, some lines that further the credibility of the supernatural as a force
in the affairs of man are eliminated. Horatio's speech about unnatural occurrences is an example of this type of deletion:

In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets.

Thus, the textual changes made by Irving eliminated all references to the subplot of Fortinbras and the military-political problems of Denmark. Irving also chose to eliminate some of the supernatural coloring from this scene. As a result, Irving focuses attention on the Ghost, and the suspense created by its appearance.

The play opens with the curtain slowly rising to 'ghost music,' the green float lights are half on revealing the battlements of Elsinore in the dim light of approaching dawn. The scene is set rather shallow, in the second grooves (Plate I). Francisco is discovered alone right of center armed with a halberd. Bernardo calls from off stage left, "Who's there?" Francisco answers:

Nay, answer me:
Stand, and unfold yourself.

Bernardo enters from the Left 2nd Entrance (L.2.E.) with what is perhaps the password for the night, "Long live the
PLATE 1

FLOORPLAN OF ENTRANCE AND GROOVE LOCATIONS
OF THE LXCEUM THEATRE STAGE
Backings

Fourth Groove  ———  Fourth Groove

Third Groove  ———  Third Groove
 R.3.E.     L.3.E.

Second Groove  ———  Second Groove
 R.2.E.     L.2.E.

First Groove  ———  First Groove
 R.1.E.     L.1.E.

PROSCENIUM WING  ———  PROSCENIUM WING

Proscenium width 38' 6"
King?" In the dark Francisco is not sure who it is, "Bernardo?" Bernardo answers, "He." Francisco sighs and moves to him. Bernardo takes the weapon from Francisco and crosses right, "'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco." Francisco moves left (balancing the right cross made by Bernardo) as he comments on the "bitter cold." Bernardo holds out his hand which Francisco takes, then he exits right into R.2.E. with his line:

Well, good night.
If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

Francisco is alone again and looking off left, "I think I hear them.--Stand, ho! Who's There?" From off left Horatio answers, "Friends to this ground." Marcellus answers, as he enters from L.2.E., "And liegemen to the Dane." (Horatio is still off stage.) Francisco then takes his leave exiting R.1.E. Marcellus calls for Bernardo, who returns from R.2.E. and crosses to center as he says, "Say, what, is Horatio there?" Horatio enters with his line, "A piece of him," from L.2.E. Thus,

28See Plate I for entrance locations. Hereinafter the abbreviated form noted in Plate I will be used, e.g., Left Second Entrance is L.2.E. The areas noted as Right and Left Fourth Entrances are often referred to as Right and Left Upper Entrances.
Bernardo is center, Marcellus is right of him, and Horatio is left center, as they greet each other with a handshake. Marcellus explains that he has brought the skeptical Horatio to witness the apparition. Bernardo and Marcellus move from stage center to up right as Bernardo says:

And let us once again assail your ears,  
That are so fortified against our story,  
What we two nights have seen.

Horatio joins them up stage, "Well, And let us hear Bernardo speak of this." Bernardo responds:

Last night of all,  
When yond same star, that's westward from the pole  
Had made his course to illume that part of heaven  
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,  
The bell then beating one.--

At the appropriate place in this speech "a star twinkles in its rightful place."\textsuperscript{30} And a large bell tolls one. The Ghost music is heard, and out of a mist the Ghost appears slightly down stage (L.1.E.) of the trio up right.\textsuperscript{31} The green floats are lowered and the limelight is turned on and illuminates the Ghost. The trio speaks in whispers to one another. Horatio, who has moved center,

\textsuperscript{30}\textit{Laurence Irving, Irving}, p. 243.

\textsuperscript{31}\textit{Ibid.}
challenges the Ghost to speak as the Ghost crosses right and off stage at R.1.E. The limelight vanishes, and the green floats are brought up a little. Horatio, who is struck by the vision, crosses right toward the exit path of the Ghost; stopping left center he comments on the armor worn by the Ghost. Marcellus comes up to Horatio. The lights again dim and the limelight comes up as the Ghost enters from R.2.E. Horatio:

But, soft! behold! lo, where it comes again! I'll cross it, though it blast me.

The Ghost crosses left towards Horatio and stops as Horatio moves towards him with "Stay illusion!" and then implores the Ghost to speak. The Ghost raises his truncheon, which, since it is made of glass, scatters and reflects the limelight in an eerie manner across the stage. He starts to speak, but, suddenly he exits L.2.E. The limelight is turned off; the normal stage lighting is brought up. There is no cue for the cock to crow, although the line is left in:

Bernardo: It was about to speak when the cock crew.

Horatio: And then it started like a guilty thing Upon a fearful summons. I have heard, The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn, Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat Awake the god of day; and, at his warning, Whether in sea or fire, in earth or, air, The extravagant and erring spirit hies To his confine. [Horatio moves right] But look [looking of right], the morn in russet mantle clad Walks o'er the dew of yon nigh eastward hill. Break we our watch up, and by my advice
Let us impart what we have seen tonight
Unto young Hamlet, for upon my life
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.

Horatio exits R.2.E. Marcellus and Bernardo follow him and when they are almost off stage, they turn and look toward stage left where the Ghost has exited. They they exit R.2.E.

The setting for the scene represents nothing out of the ordinary for the period. The set is shallow in order that the setting for the second scene can be in place for a quick and smooth transition between the first and second scenes. The setting in Plate II illustrates the end of scene iv, just as the Ghost leads Hamlet away from the battlements; this setting is the same as the opening scene. The painting of the castle in the distance is typical of the period, painted probably on a "cloth" dropped from the flies.32 The rocks seen in the picture are probably those of the artist's imagination, for no reference to three dimensional set pieces is made in the promptbooks or reviews, or perhaps they were painted on the backing piece.

PLATE II

SETTING FOR HAMLET (1874), ACT I, SCENE ii
It is in Irving's use of lighting that the eerie mood of the scene is principally established. The curtain opens on a dimly lit set, bathed only in a soft green gas light. The appearance of the Ghost is always illuminated by a green limelight, which is the dominant lighting when the Ghost is on stage. When the Ghost leaves the stage the floats are brought up a little. This procedure is used consistently throughout the scene. The lighting fulfills its primary function of enabling the audience to see the actors and scenery. Also, it indicates the time of action as being night. And, it helps to establish the supernatural atmosphere necessary for acceptance of the Ghost as a credible force in the play.

The properties are not numerous, but those used are effective. The use of a clear glass truncheon by the Ghost adds to the unnatural quality to the play because of its transparency which reflects the diffused green limelight on the stage. The only other property is the halbard, which allows for some business between two actors, and provides some variety in the visual image of the actors.

One special effect in this scene is the appearance of the Ghost out of a mist, which enhances the unearthly atmosphere of the scene. Also, the use of a light for a twinkling star is an interesting effect, and illustrates
the literal nature that occasionally guides Irving's matching of textual matters with the technical elements of production.

The visual aspects, while not elaborate, aid significantly in the creation of the proper atmosphere for the opening of the play. This is not to say, however, that there were no negative criticisms of the staging of the opening scene. Punch, who generally reacted favorably to the production, had this to say:

I say nothing of the utter sacrifice of the opening scene of the play. That is inevitable so long as the scene is played close on the footlights. In the Crystal Palace representation [the Tom Taylor production of 1873] the whole stage was opened for it, at the cost of a brief closing of tableau-curtains, before the Great Hall was discovered. Only in this way can the effect be imparted to that wonderful opening which it deserves and requires, to give it its due importance in the action. But the scene being in the hands of 'utility' people, what manager is likely to put himself out of the way for Francisco and Bernardo, and Marcellus, or even Horatio?33

The blocking and stage business of the opening scene was as carefully planned as were the technical aspects. The entrances and exits were all assiduously mapped out to agree with the lines of the play, Bernardo's exit after he relieves Francisco is an example. Another example is Horatio's first line "Friends to this ground,"

which is given off stage; his entrance postponed until immediately after Bernardo's line, "Say, what, is Horatio there?" This is done to make Bernardo's line seem more natural since he actually could not see Horatio. The business of shaking hands at Francisco's departure and the greeting of Horatio is carefully planned. The effect of all this is to fit the movement and business of the actors to the dialogue of the play; and in this Irving seems to have been successful and true to the text. (However, Irving did eliminate two lines from the text to accommodate his blocking, which did not include seating of Horatio, Bernardo, and Marcellus.)

Upon examining the blocking closer, it is apparent that Irving had a good sense of the actors' movement. Irving's use of slight moves to enforce or point up lines and to balance the movements of other actors were the result of a keen artistic sense. Within the limits imposed by the stage, Irving moved his actors in coordination with the dialogue of the play in an aesthetically pleasing manner that gave the appearance of natural movement, and not of artificiality.

At the end of the first scene, the setting is changed when all the actors are "clear." There is no note for a change in the lighting during the scene change, so probably the dim green lighting remains. As the change
is made, march music is played on a harp; and afterwards
the lights come up full, revealing the large room of
state. Plate III is a sketch of the floorplan for the
opening of scene ii.\textsuperscript{34} Six guards dressed in chain mail
are discovered at the back of the stage. The royal pro-
cession enters from R.U.E. to the sound of the march music
that continues until all are on stage. The procession is
led by Laertes and five courtiers who enter and cross
down to R.1.E. as they bow to the King who is still off
stage. Four pages enter backwards as they bow and move
to behind the chairs stage left. The King and Queen
enter and cross to their chairs. Behind them is Hamlet
who slowly moves to up left of the chairs. Five ladies
then fill up the R.U.E., and some courtiers filter through
them and move down to R.2. and 3.E. The march music
softly dies away as the King begins his lines from his
throne.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{34}Permission from the Harvard Theatre Collection
to photograph the drawings in the 1874 Hamlet promptbook
(TS 2272.75) could not be obtained for this study. An-
other researcher has been working with this promptbook,
and plans to use it in a publication. Therefore, I have
rendered sketches to illustrate my discussion.

\textsuperscript{35}Laurence Irving, Irving, p. 243.
PLATE III

SKETCH OF FLOORPLAN FOR *HAMLET* (1874),

*ACT I, SCENE ii*
Before the scene is examined further, a look at the textual changes is required for an accurate reconstruction of the scene. Of the 258 lines in the scene, Irving eliminates fifty-three. The cuttings all occur before Hamlet's soliloquy; thereafter the scene is played without alteration. All of the lines cut, except one, are from the speeches of the King. In particular, Irving continues his cutting of references to Fortinbras, and his attempt to regain territory lost to Denmark—this deletion accounts for half of the changes. As a result, the characters of Cornelius and Voltemand, messengers to Norway, are eliminated. The other lines of the King that are cut are those which amplify his plea for Hamlet to throw off his mourning for his father:

A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
An understanding simple and unschooled.
For what we know must be and is as common
An any the most vulgar thing to sense,
Why should we in our peevish opposition
Take it to heart? Fie, 'tis a fault to heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd, whose common theme
Is death of fathers... .

and his plea to Hamlet to remain in Denmark because he loves him:

And with no less nobility of love
Than that which dearest father bears his son
Do I impart toward you.
The deletion of the lines regarding Fortinbras is consistent with Irving's decision to eliminate that aspect of the play. The other deleted lines of the King are cut probably to shorten the play.

The first half of the scene, then, is significantly shortened. The King, seated on his throne, speaks of the sorrow felt for his brother's death, and of his recent marriage to Gertrude. Laertes then presents his suit, kneeling down stage right, and asks permission to return to France. The King grants his request:

Take thy fair hour, Laertes. Time be thine,
And thy best graces spend it at thy will. [Laertes rises and bows.]
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son--

Hamlet, who has been seated down left beside the King and Queen (see Plate III),36 speaks his first line, an aside: "A little more than kin, and less than kind." Kenney, writing in Belgravia, described Irving in this opening scene:

36 Laurence Irving indicates Irving upon his entrance "drew to one side and sat remote from the royal presence." However, the placement of Hamlet in the floorplan in Plate III indicates this is not so. Irving, p. 243.
There was something in the plain unaffected simplicity of the actor's dress and bearing; in the absorbed gravity of the face without any ecstatic upturning of the eye; in the weary dejection of the attitude as he reclines rather than sits in his chair; and in the curious attentive watching and listening, as if with a desire to penetrate something, he knew not what—that at once informed the observer here was an actor thoroughly imbued with the spirit and purport of his part, and moreover thoroughly sincere and honest in his intentions.  

Hamlet's brief exchange with the King and Queen is spoken seated. Even Hamlet's reaction to his mother's plea for him to end his mourning is given seated, "Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not seems [etc]." This part of the scene ends with Hamlet agreeing to remain in Denmark.

The King answers:

Why, 'tis a loving and a fiar reply;
Be as ourself in Denmark.—Madam, come.

The King rises and leads the Queen down center—the pages follow. As the King finishes his speech at stage center, he turns and with the Queen moves toward R.U.E. As they proceed up stage right, the ladies make way for them. The pages precede the King and Queen moving backwards as they bow; Polonius preceded the King and Queen as they exit. The five ladies follow with Laertes. All, except Hamlet, follow the procession, including the six guards.

Hamlet's soliloquy, "O that this too too sullied flesh would melt," begins with Hamlet still seated, as Kenney describes, because being seated was:

more indicative of lassitude and meditation; and not till the stream of his thoughts flows more actively in picturing past events does he rise and advance towards the audience, but still without an indication of any other presence than his own, as he fitfully paces here and there, driven as it were like a leaf on the eddying breath of his impassioned cogitations. 38

As the soliloquy ends Hamlet sits in the chair up right with:

It is not, nor it cannot come to good; But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue!

Horatio, Bernardo, and Marcellus enter from L.2.E. as Horatio greets Hamlet, "Hail to your lordship!" Hamlet rises and comes forward and returns the greeting and takes Horatio's hand. Hamlet addresses Marcellus. Horatio moves behind Hamlet and to his right, as Marcellus kneels to Hamlet. The conversation proceeds to their reason for leaving Wittenberg and coming to Denmark. At Hamlet's line, "My father,—methinks, I see my father," Horatio, Marcellus and Bernardo all exchange looks. Finally, Horatio tells Hamlet of the apparition on the battlements.

38 Ibid., p. 186.
Marcellus and Bernardo move in a little, while Horatio, who is right, with Hamlet center, and Marcellus and Bernardo to Hamlet's left, tells of the Ghost. When Horatio is finished, Hamlet crosses left center slowly with "Indeed, indeed, sirs but this troubles me--Hold you the watch to-night?" During this line, Marcellus and Bernardo balance Hamlet's move by crossing over to the right side of the stage to Horatio, as Hamlet from stage left questions them about the nature of the ghost. Upon deciding to meet that night for the watch, Hamlet moves up stage right center with:

So, fare ye well:
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.

They answer, "Our duty to your honour," as Marcellus and Bernardo cross from down left to exit behind Horatio into L.2.E. Hamlet remains up stage and delivers the final lines of the scene:

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well,
I doubt some foul play: would the night were come!
Till then sit still, my soul. Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.

Hamlet turns and exits up center, probably into R.U.E.

The setting is changed, and the lights are brought up full. The scene is set very shallow, only the first grooves are used to depict a room in Polonius' house. The text for scene iii is drastically cut, out of the 136 lines in the scene, seventy-three are eliminated at the
expense of Laertes and Polonius. Of Laertes' fifty-one lines in this scene, thirty-four are cut, almost entirely from his advice to Ophelia to beware of Hamlet's interest in her. Perhaps part of this advice violated Irving's sense of decorum, or perhaps these lines are cut to save time. Regardless of the reason, the colorful warning, of thirty-five lines, is reduced to ten bland, matter-of-fact lines. Polonius, too, lost one of his choicest speeches, his advice to Laertes which begins:

And these few precepts in thy memory
Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.

Polonius' description of Hamlet's motivation for affection for Ophelia is also severely cut.

As the scene opens, Laertes and Ophelia enter from R.1.E. The blocking of the scene is done with the care and pleasant balancing of the movements in coordination with the requirements of the dialogue that is noted in the opening and second scenes of the play. Laertes and Ophelia are joined by Polonius who enters from L.1.E. In the middle of the scene Laertes exits L.1.E. As the scene ends, Irving pays particular attention to the exit of Polonius and Ophelia. Ophelia, who has just agreed to obey her father, starts off stage right. She turns to Polonius, perhaps to plead with him to change his mind and let her continue seeing Hamlet. Polonius holds up
his hand, indicating his mind is set in this matter. Ophelia exits and is followed by Polonius.

The scene is changed as the large bell strikes twelve, and the Ghost music is played. The setting is the same as the opening scene, the platform. Hamlet, Horatio and Marcellus enter from L.2.E. In the brief dialogue that is exchanged in the first of the scene, "Hamlet speaks pacing the stage as if to fight off the cold, but the idea is also conveyed that it is a pretext to conceal his agitation."\(^{39}\) He crosses right as he explains the purpose of the flourish of trumpets from the castle. He crosses left immediately as he answers Horatio's question, "Is it a custom?" Hamlet answers:

\begin{quote}
Ay, marry, is 't;  
And to my mind, though I am native here,  
And to the manner born, it is a custom  
More honoured in the breach than the observance.
\end{quote}

Here occurs the only major textual change in the scene, Irving eliminates the remainder of this speech, some twenty-two lines, in which Hamlet speaks of that quality in man that will categorize another on the basis of one fault; despite all of his virtues.

\(^{39}\) Kenney, "Mr. Irving in Hamlet," p. 187.
At this point in the scene the blocking is heavy on the right, Hamlet is center, Horatio is right center, with Marcellus up stage between them. As in the first scene, the appearance of the Ghost is announced by the sound of the Ghost music, the green float lights are lowered, and the green limelight is turned on. The Ghost enters from L.I.E. Kenney described Hamlet's reaction:

At the Ghost's appearance he seems to be struck down, as it were, upon his knees by the overwhelming sight, and cap and cloak fall off at once as he stretches forth his hands towards the vision. The mingled tones of tremulous tenderness, filial reverence, and awe-struck submission in which he adjoins the phantom are admirably expressive of the spirit of the language, while through the whole address prevades an apparent effort to sustain that firmness of soul which the situation requires of him, and yet renders so difficult. 40

As the Ghost beckons Hamlet to follow him, Marcellus seizes Hamlet's arm, Horatio encircles Hamlet with his arms, but Hamlet breakd free. "Go I'll follow thee," says Hamlet "tenderly." The scene ends as the Ghost leads Hamlet off left, followed slowly by Horatio and Marcellus. The six lines of dialogue between Marcellus and Horatio at the end of the scene are cut, including "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark." The Ghost music is played as the scene changes.

Once the actors are clear of the stage, the full stage is set for "a more remote part of the platform."
The green float lights are half on, now, for the first time, the green mediums are on, as are the border battens.
The green limelight shines on the Ghost from the right flies. The Ghost music dies away as the Ghost enters from the right and crosses to between two trees made of gauze. The Ghost is followed by Hamlet, whose actions are vividly described by Kenney:

the Ghost having been followed by Hamlet, bare-headed and uncloaked, to the distant spot beyond which he refuses to proceed, the same kneeling or half-kneeling posture is preserved during the narrative and until the vanishing of the phantom . . . .41

There are only minor textual excisions in this scene.
Some of the coarser lines of the Ghost are eliminated, such as part of the description of the effect the poison had on his body:

And with a sudden vigor it doth posset,
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
The thin and wholesome blood . . .
And a most instant tetter barked about
Most lazarlike with vile and loathsome crust
All my smooth body.

As the Ghost finishes his story of his murder, the limelight slowly fades out as the Ghost says, "Adieu, Adieu, Adieu, remember me!" The green floats come up a little.

41Ibid., p. 187.
Hamlet falls on the log which is located center. Kenney provides a description:

Hamlet collapses and lies crouching at the foot of a bank of earth immediately below the place whence the apparition had delivered his unearthly message. In this attitude he remains some time, as if utterly overwhelmed, even though the words, 'And you, my sinews . . . bear my stiffly up,' might seem to suggest an accompanying effort to recover himself. 42

Hamlet is interrupted by Marcellus and Horatio calling for him from off stage. Marcellus and Horatio enter from R.l.E. Hamlet is now sitting on the log. In the short dialogue that follows, Hamlet secures their pledge not to reveal what they have seen that night. As the trio moves from stage left to right vowing not to reveal the secret, the Ghost cries "Swear" from beneath. Dawn is breaking as the border lights are brought up gradually. On the last "Swear" the white floats are brought up a little. As Horatio, Marcellus exit, the curtain is lowered as Hamlet turns his head to where the Ghost had appeared in the trees.

Apparently, Irving broke with tradition in his setting for the last scene of Act I. Punch reacted negatively to the setting:

42 Ibid.
I must vehemently protest against the strange innovation in the scenic arrangements, by which the Ghost is made to lead Hamlet out of the castle to a nook among cliffs with a blasted tree. To take the apparition out of the wintry hold on the sea-cliff, is to break the thread both of the imagination and the action. 43

Act II opens not on the first scene, but the second. The entire opening scene with Polonius' instructions to Reynaldo, who is being sent to Paris to spy on Laertes, and the conclusion of the scene where Ophelia tells Polonius of Hamlet's strange behavior is eliminated. The beginning of scene ii is severely cut, also, especially up to the entrance of Hamlet.

The setting for Act II is basically the same as for Act I, scene ii, a room in the castle. The thrones have been removed, however, as is the platform upon which they were placed. A single chair is set in their place on the left of the stage. The curtain rises and the lights are brought up full. The King and Queen are discovered standing stage center with two pages behind them and four nobles up stage center. The King welcomes Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who are standing left by the chair. The Queen thanks them for coming to Denmark. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern exit--their acceptance speech of the King's charge is eliminated. Polonius

enters, not to announce the ambassadors from Norway, but
to show the King Hamlet's letter to Ophelia, a cutting of
sixty lines. The scene jumps to Polonius reading the
letter, his twenty-three line introduction to the letter
is reduced to three. The interjections of the King and
comments by Polonius are eliminated. From the end of the
letter to the entrance of the Players, only an occasional
line or two are cut—and these are usually those between
Hamlet and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. As the King
hides behind the arras, Polonius tests Hamlet, who en-
ters reading a book. (See Plate IV for an illustration
of this moment.) Laurence Irving provides a description
of Irving in this scene:

In Hamlet's scene with Polonius, though his assump-
tion of insanity was intellectually perfect and
rich in subtle and sardonic humour, his tone was
so colloquial and natural that he appeared again
and again to miss the traditional points—even
though to make his purpose plainer Irving had
retained the scene with Rosencrantz and Guilden-
stern which usually was omitted.44

The blocking in the scene with Polonius and later with
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern is like that of the earlier
scenes. The movement is balanced, and integrated with
the movements suggested by the text. Bits of business
are included; for example, Polonius tries to read the
book over Hamlet's shoulder, only to have Hamlet slam it
shut.

44 Laurence Irving, Irving, p. 245.
PLATE IV

SETTING FOR HAMLET (1874), ACT II, SCENE ii
The arrival of the players near the end of the act is a rather modest entrance of three actors and an actress. The text of the scene is unchanged except for the elimination of about half of the poem about Priam's slaughter—probably in order to shorten the playing time of the scene. The movement in the scene is kept rather simple. The first player moves left center to recite the poem, as Hamlet moves as if for the chair, Guildenstern hastens to place it center, bows, and returns to his place down right. Hamlet returns the bow and sits in the chair. After the poem Polonius exits R.U.E. with three of the players. The fourth player receives his instructions from Hamlet, and follows Polonius. Rosen- crantz and Guildenstern are excused and exit R.I.E. What Irving does with his soliloquy, "O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!" is not recorded in the prompt-books. It was spoken in its entirety, however. Laurence Irving describes the scene briefly:

In his first scene with the Players he was not the rich patron, the amateur airing his views to bored professionals, but a young prince, who was a connoisseur of the theatre, who found relaxation among artists and who welcomed them as friends. So Irving came to the rogue and peasant slave soliloquy. The audience stirred. Long before he came to the line 'The play's the thing!'; which earlier Hamlets had delivered as though the idea had struck them like a bolt from heaven, he forced the audience to realize that, while he ruminated, a plan was germinating in his mind. The last
lines announced his decision to act upon it and, as the curtain fell, he started to scribble on his tablets notes for the en
snaring speech . . . 45

The curtain came down "sharply" as he placed his tablet against the pillar up stage center, and began to write.

The curtain rises for Act III. The scenery remains the same, a room in the castle, but the throne on a platform has been returned (as in Act I, scene ii). A chair with its back to the audience is right center, another is located up right (Plate V which is for the Play Scene, indicates the placement of the furniture for III, i). The opening at the back of the setting is closed off with a curtain, behind which is a platform for the stage to be used by the players. The King and Queen are discovered on the throne talking with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Also on stage are Ophelia and Polonius. The text for this scene is almost unaltered. A few lines are cut from Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's speeches, six lines from Polonius, and ten from the King. All of these eliminations appear to be changes to save playing time. In his direction of the blocking of the scene, Irving reveals the same carefully developed movements that are described above in Act I, scenes i, ii, and iii. It is regrettable that the soliloquies of

45 Ibid.
PLATE V

SKETCH OF FLOORPLAN FOR HAMLET (1874),

ACT III, SCENE i
Hamlet do not have the notations on blocking and interpretation that most of the other dialogue has. We do know that the King and Polonius move to behind the arras behind the throne at L.2.E. just prior to "To be, or not to be . . . ." Hamlet's following scene with Ophelia is also void of notations, except that Polonius appears from behind the curtain, briefly, as motivation for Hamlet to say "Where's your father?" Irving does make one change that is noted. He has Ophelia exit after her last line in the scene:

O, woe is me!
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

As she exits R.1.E. Polonius and the King enter from behind the curtain L.2.E. By having Ophelia exit early, Irving must then cut the portion of Polonius' final speech in this scene that refers to Ophelia:

How, now, Ophelia,—
You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said;
We heard it all.

Polonius and the King think they now know the reason for Hamlet's behavior, and they exit. Thus ends standard scene i.

Before the play scene is examined, it should be noted that Irving does not change scenery or set pieces at this point. He plays scene i and scene ii in the same setting. Irving even numbers the play scene as a continuation of the first scene. Immediately after the
King and Polonius exit (the end of the standard scene i), Hamlet enters for his speech to the players. This is done without any change in lighting or set pieces. Hamlet's advice to the players (or in this production to the player, for only one is on stage to hear it) is given without change. At the end of the speech Hamlet dismisses the player, and moonlight is turned on, probably provided by two limelights from the right of the flies. The entrance of Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and their brief dialogue with Hamlet are eliminated. Horatio enters and Hamlet explains the purpose of the play and gives Horatio his charge. As the speech ends, a Danish march is heard, announcing the entry of the royal procession. The six guards dressed in chain mail enter from L.U.E. with torches, three remain at the L.U.E., the others go to the R.U.E. Next comes five ladies; three go to R.1.E., two cross to behind the throne. Ophelia enters and crosses to the chair up right. Polonius escorts her to the chair, and then moves up stage of the Queen. Francisco and Bernardo enter with four courtiers and move down right. Some of the courtiers also have torches. Finally, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern enter and stand in R.U.E. All of this is done to the march music. The scene begins with the King's line: "How fares our cousin Hamlet?" Hamlet
queries Polonius as to his acting experience. Hamlet then crosses to Ophelia and lies at her feet to watch the play. Laurence Irving indicates: "Ophelia held in her hand a fan of peacock feathers. Hamlet took it from her, and playing with it affected a studied lightness of heart." The conversation with the Queen and Rosen- 


crantz is retained, but then the cutting begins. The sequence beginning with Hamlet's line to Ophelia: "Lady, shall I lie in your lap?" is not included in the Clar- 


don edition: this portion was perhaps offensive to the Victorian sense of decorum. Missing, too, are the portions of the dialogue between Hamlet and Ophelia beginning with "Will 'a tell us what this show meant?" and other of Hamlet's suggestive lines to Ophelia. The dumb show, which follows immediately, is eliminated, and the following dialogue, relevant to it, is altered. Instead of:

Ophelia: What means this, my lord?

Hamlet: Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.

Ophelia: Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

Irving changes the dialogue to:

Ophelia: What means this, my lord?

Hamlet: Miching mallecho; it means mischief.

—

46 Laurence Irving, Irving, p. 246.
Ophelia: But, what is the argument of the play? The Prologue enters from L.U.E. and bows. He introduces what is only a small fraction of the players scene, for Irving has eliminated forty-one of the seventy lines. Irving keeps only the information necessary to tell the action of the play. And, as Lucianus pours the poison in the ear of Gonzago, the play scene ends. Not all of the critics approved of the staging of this scene; Punch, for example, published the following negative reaction to it:

The Play Scene itself I disliked, because of another of those wilful departures from the guidance of the text, which seem to me, at the same time, sacrifices of effect and probability, of which I have already complained. I mean the unaccountable arrangement by which the play is made to take place in a hall, or rather corridor, open to the external air, so that the 'murder of Gonzago' is enacted in the moonlight, outside the palace, over the body of Hamlet who lies with his back to the players.

I can only say to Mr. Bateman of this scene as Hamlet says to the players, 'Reform it altogether.'

After Hamlet's brief explanation of the play, the scene proceeds thus in the standard text:

Ophelia: The King rises.
Hamlet: What, frightened with false fire?
Queen: How fares my lord?
Polonius: Give o'er the play.

King: Give me some light. Away!

Polonius: Lights, lights, lights!

Probably, Irving originally intended to play this as written for all of these lines appear in the promptbook. But, after the promptbook was prepared, he lined out several lines, and transposed one. This portion is changed as follows:

King: Give me some light. Away!

Polonius: Lights, lights, lights!

Hamlet: What, frightened with false fire!

The instructions in the promptbook indicate the crowd left "at nearest exits." What happens on stage, then, is not quite clear. Laurence Irving offers the following description:

Then, with a shrill scream which tore through the noisy confusion of the buzzing court, he leapt from the ground and flung himself into the empty chair from which the King had vanished into the protecting cover of flickering torchlight and shadow. 'Why let the stricken deer go weep' was lost in the wild applause that greet this coup de theatre. Hamlet swayed from side to side in ecstasy with the success of his strategem, and then, rising from the chair, began to chant, half crazily:

For thou dost know, oh Damon dear,
This realm dismantled was of Jove himself . . .

Sobered by the words, 'And now reigns here,--a very-very--. . .,' he seemed to be at a loss for words. He hesitated. Then looking at the fan in his hand, cried 'peacock!' and flung the thing away as though, having prompted an idea, it had served its purpose.48

The promptbooks do not entirely support Laurence Irving's reconstruction of the scene. It is quite possible that Irving jumped into the King's throne; as noted above, the blocking of Hamlet is not recorded in much detail. However, "Why let the stricken deer go weep" is not heard because that speech is cut from the text; after "Lights, lights, lights!" the next line in the 1874 production is "For thou dost know, O Damon dear . . . ." Hamlet's business with the peacock fan is not mentioned in the promptbook, but personal properties such as this are not normally noted by Allen. If Hamlet did go to the throne, he certainly did not remain there very long. The promptbook indicates he sits on the stage at the back as he calls for the recorders.

Hamlet's scene with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern follows, and is played without omissions. However, one transposition does occur. The speech comparing Rosencrantz with a sponge from Act IV, scene ii is added to Hamlet's speech which begins "Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me. You would play upon me; you would know my stops . . . ." Polonius then enters for the exchange about the shape of a cloud. Hamlet agrees to visit his mother in her closet, and all leave the stage except Hamlet. For some reason, Irving added a line after "Leave me, Friends": he added "Good night
Horatio." The stage is empty except for Hamlet. The bell strikes twelve. He begins his speech "'Tis now the very witching time of night . . . ." The last three lines of the soliloquy are cut. So as Hamlet concludes with "I will speak daggers to her, but use none," he crosses to the pillar on the right of the stage, takes down a torch, and exits left.

Next is the first change of scenery in Act III; from the hall in the castle to the King's Closet, set in the first grooves. According to the critic for MacMillan's Magazine, this scene was usually eliminated in staging the play. Irving restored it, but only the last half. He cut the opening dialogue with the King, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and Polonius, and began with the King's speech "O, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven," which is given without change. The lights are half on, and a red limelight shines on the King. At the end of his speech, the King kneels behind an altar piece located right. Hamlet enters with a torch from stage left and observes the King. A sketch by Randolph Caldecott made on opening night shows Hamlet as he enters for this scene (see Plate VI): notice the white hankerchief tucked in his belt on the right which, according

49 A Templar, "The New Hamlet and His Critics," p. 238. Also, the same position is taken in "Mr. Irving's Hamlet," All the Year Round, December, 1874, p. 182.
PLATE VI

HAMLET WITH TORCH, ACT III, SCENE ii
to The Theatre, Irving used in all of the scenes. The King rises from prayer, and the scene is over.

Irving may have restored the King's Closet scene in order to show another crisis for Hamlet and to allow further development of Claudius' character. It is also possible that it was restored to provide more time to set up the Queen's Closet scene; that is, it may have been just a "carpenter's scene." The first scene of Act III is the large hall, which is set in the fourth grooves. The King's Closet is set in the first grooves, and does allow time for the set pieces of scene i to be removed, and the flats in the grooves to be changed. After the scene of the King at prayer, the flats in the first grooves are pulled off stage, revealing, for the first time in this production, a box set. The floorplan of the scene (see Plate VII) indicates a symmetrical setting for the Queen's Closet, set in the third grooves. The border lights are lowered, and the Queen is discovered, as Polonius enters from the door L.3.E.

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51 This type of setting, especially a symmetrical one, is not uncommon for this period. See John H. McDowell, "Historical Development of the Box Set," Theatre Annual, 1945, pp. 65-83.
PLATE VII

SKETCH OF FLOORPLAN FOR HAMLET (1874),

ACT III, SCENE iii
The text of the scene is generally not changed except for the ending. A few of the speeches are shortened, especially those of Hamlet. The scene ends with Hamlet's lines:

I must be cruel, only to be kind:
Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.

The remaining thirty-seven lines, Hamlet's charge to his mother not to "Let the bloat King tempt you again to bed . . .," are cut. Perhaps this was considered a little too candid for the Victorian audience. Also omitted is Hamlet's disclosure that he knows the real reason he is being sent to England.

Hamlet enters with a lamp which he puts on the table near the left entrance. Polonius is hiding behind the arras right, marked "draped opening" in Plate VII. Polonius is killed. The scene progresses to the entrance of the Ghost. The Ghost music is played, the lights are lowered, the limelight is brought up on the Ghost, and the large bell strikes one. The Ghost moves about the stage as Hamlet is reminded of his "blunted purpose." As the scene ends, the Queen exits with a lamp. The lights are lowered a little. Hamlet takes his lamp and raises it over the body of Polonius as the curtain is lowered on the end of Act III.
The scene as staged by Irving is, in general, not extraordinary. However, Irving's handling of the "portraits" was the subject of great concern among the critics of the time. The lines in question are Hamlet's:

Look here, upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers . . .

The tradition had been to have actual pictures of King Hamlet and Claudius present on stage. In the time of Betterton, Hamlet would take two pictures or medallions of the Kings out of his pocket; or, the Queen would have a picture of Caludius in a necklace around her neck, Hamlet a picture of his father in his pocket. Macready used two portraits on the walls of the scenery. Charles Kean returned to the old tradition of using two miniatures carried by Hamlet. Fechter wore a medallion of his father around his neck, while the Queen wore one of Claudius. Holman, in a performance in 1874, put a picture of Claudius on the wall of the set, and had a picture of King Hamlet in his pocket.\(^5\) Irving, however, ignored this tradition of having some physical evidence of the "counterfeit presentment." He dispensed with them altogether, and visualizes the portraits.

The critical reaction to this innovation was mixed. *Punch*, for example, did not approve:

But his boldest departure from his author's lines, in quest either of novelty or effect, is the suppression of the pictures in the Closet Scene, thus reducing Shakespeare's

Look here, upon this picture . . .
to a request that his Mother will conjure up with him brain-pictures of the King that was and the King that is. It seems to me that the words will not fairly carry such an interpretation . . . .53

In an article in *All the Year Round*, the position was taken that:

Hamlet's description of the picture seems more properly applicable to a vision of the mind than to an actual painting. At all events, Mr. Irving's representation of the workings of a vivid imagination is so accurate and effective, that one is inclined to give him the benefit of the doubt.54

By the end of Act III, Laurence Irving indicates, it was after eleven o'clock:

The effects of exertion and anxiety were beginning to tell upon the actor; the audience, too, were becoming exhausted and weaker spirits among them wavered at the thought of the play running beyond midnight with the public houses closed. Isabel Bateman then had her moment of triumph. She played the mad scene with such sincerity and show of original thought that she quelled the restive audience, rekindled their interest, and had them once more enthralled.55

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54"Mr. Irving's Hamlet," *All the Year Round*, December, 1874, p. 182.

Act IV begins with Ophelia's mad scene. Irving eliminates the first four scenes of the act in which the Queen tells Claudius of Hamlet's murder of Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern question Hamlet about the location of the body, and the confrontation of Hamlet and the King before Hamlet is sent to England. Also cut are the entrance of Fortinbras and Hamlet's dialogue with the Captain. Scene v, Ophelia's made scene (the first scene in Irving's Act IV), is also heavily cut. The setting is that of the room in the castle as it was in Act I, scene ii. The conversation between Horatio and the Queen leading to the entrance of Ophelia is reduced from twenty lines to five. Ophelia's song is reduced from twenty-eight to sixteen lines, generally those of sexual connotations are eliminated. Ophelia exits with Horatio following her. The King's listing of his troubles is cut. A noise is heard off-stage, Marcellus enters and announces Laertes is coming with his supporters. Laertes enters, armed, with soldiers.

Irving's handling of this crown scene is much like those which came before. He simplifies the requirements of the text by eliminating three lines. The full text reads, beginning with the end of the Messenger's line:
Messenger: Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds, 'Laertes shall be king! Laertes king!'  

Queen: How cheerfully on the false trail they cry! O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs!  

Enter Laertes with others.  

King: The doors are broke.  

Laertes: Where is the king?—Sirs, stand you all without.  

All: No, let's come in.  

Laertes: I pray you give me leave.  

All: We will, we will.  

Laertes: I thank you. Keep the door. O thou vile King, Give me my father.  

Irving's text reads:  

Messenger: Caps, hand, and tongues applaud it to the clouds, 'Laertes shall be king! Laertes king!'  

Enter Laertes, armed; Danes following. L.U.E.  

Laertes: Where is the king?—Sires, stand you all without.  

Laertes: I pray you, give me leave.  

Danes: We will, we will.  

They retire—without the door.  

Laertes: I thank you. Keep the door. O thou vile King, Give me my father!  

Although Irving has only eliminated the Queen's calling the entering men "false Danish dogs"; the King's "The doors are broke"; and the Danes' "No, let's come in"; the effect is to reduce the interaction between the royal
couples and the crowd. One can only speculate why Irving reduced the dramatic effect of the crowd of Danes.

The entrance of Ophelia interrupts Laertes and the King. Her scene with them is acted almost without textual change. And, with a few lines between the King and Laertes after her exit, the standard scene ends. However, Irving's scene does not end here; he jumps to shortly past the beginning of the standard scene vii. (He eliminates scene vi, where Horatio receives a letter from Hamlet indicating he has changed to a pirate ship. Also, the opening thirty-six lines of scene vii, the King consoling Laertes, are cut.) Irving continues with the delivery of the two letters to the King and Queen from Hamlet. The King's letter is read. Then Laertes and the King make their plans for the fencing match with Hamlet. At the end of the scene, the Queen enters with news of Ophelia's death. Act IV ends on Laertes line:

I have a speech of fire that fain would blaze,
But that this folly drowns it [as Laertes exits R.3.E.]

The following speech by the King in which he tells Gertrude that they had better follow Laertes is omitted. The curtain is lowered quickly on Laertes' last word as the King and Queen watch Laertes' exit.
For the final act, the act drop is taken up to the sound of a dirge being played on a harmonium. Red lights are turned on revealing a full stage setting of the churchyard. The gravediggers enter from the left with a pick and spade. The grave is located center stage, parallel to footlights (see Plate VIII). The clowning of the two gravediggers is retained, except for the short section about Adam and his arms. However, occasionally, there were performances in which Act V did not begin until after the exit of the second gravedigger, according to a notation in the Allen promptbook. Thus, the act would begin with the entrance of Hamlet and Horatio and the ensuing conversation with the first gravedigger. The gravedigger is in the grave with his pick and shovel, singing and throwing up bones as required for Hamlet's lines. Hamlet is standing up stage of the grave, Horatio to the left. The scene continues without much textual change, only a few lines are deleted because of their offensive nature, and a few speeches cut, apparently to save some time. The blocking arrangement draws some criticism from Punch:

I thought I had seen the Graveyard Scene much better played. Notably Mr. MacKaye, at the Crystal Palace, was very much easier and more natural in his conversation with the Gravedigger; and this was increased by an arrangement of the Scene, which allowed Hamlet to sit
PLATE VIII

SKETCH OF FLOORPLAN FOR HAMLET (1874),
ACT V, SCENE i
on the base of a great monumental cross while talking.\(^56\)

The organ is heard playing again, the large bell tolls once, and the funeral procession enters from R.U.E. It is lead by two monks dressed in black, carrying candles. They are followed by a monk with a cross, and two more with candles, all dressed in black. Five ladies enter in single file throwing flowers around the grave, which is located center stage (see Plate VIII). Then follows a priest, and four monks in grey carrying the body. Immediately behind the bier is Laertes, who is followed by the King and Queen. They are followed by their four pages. Bernardo, Marcellus, Francisco and some courtiers enter; and, finally, the six guards carrying torches. There is no change in the text from this point to the end of the scene, with one exception noted below. Throughout the rest of the scene, the organ is heard playing in the distance, and occasionally the bell strikes once. As the Queen throws flowers into the grave, Laertes leaps in to hold his sister again. Hamlet then advances to the grave from down left where he has been since the entrance of the procession. Upon seeing Hamlet, Laertes leaps out of the grave and struggles with him. As they fight, the King orders them

\(^{56}\)"Punch on Hamlet," p. 225.
separated with, "Pluck them asunder." The Queen cries, "Hamlet, Hamlet." The crowd's reaction, "Gentlemen!" and Horatio's "Good my lord, be quiet," are both cut, reducing the interaction of yet another crowd scene. As the scene ends, Horatio is sent to look after Hamlet while the King reminds Laertes of their plans.

The setting for scene ii, which is played in the first grooves, is pushed together to form the hall in the castle. The lights are then brought up full, and Hamlet and Horatio enter from R.1.E. The first seventy-four lines of the scene, in which Hamlet relates to Horatio the contents of the letter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern were carrying to England, and how he switched letters, are eliminated. Irving's version of scene ii begins with Hamlet's line:

But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
That to Laertes I forgot myself;

and is immediately followed by the entrance of Osric. Osric presents the challenge to Hamlet. Parts of the text are deleted which are not essential to setting up the match; for example, the King's wager is not mentioned. The entrance of a Lord is also eliminated. Irving's scene ii ends just prior to the entrance of the King and Queen and their party. The standard edition of the text continues scene ii to the end of the play. Irving, however, concludes his scene ii with a
two line transposition from the first of the scene; Hamlet adds to the end of his line: "Not a whit, we defy augury . . .":

There's a divinity that shapes our ends, Rough hew them how we will.

as Hamlet and Horatio exit L.1.E.

A grand flourish is heard as the scene changes to the hall in the castle for Irving's scene iii. The scenery is that of Act I, scene ii, set in the fourth grooves. The set pieces are rearranged to accommodate the fencing scene. (Plate IX illustrates these changes.) The thrones are moved up stage to L.U.E. Two tables are placed on stage, one for the foils, one for the wine and goblets. All of the characters in the scene are discovered on stage, except Hamlet and Horatio, who enter from L.1.E. As in most of the previous scenes, Irving makes some textual alterations. In Hamlet's talk with Laertes before the match, Irving cuts Hamlet's explanation that it was his madness, and not he himself that wronged Laertes. Also, Irving eliminates part of Laertes' qualification of his acceptance of Hamlet's offer of friendship. Without these sections, the meeting and attempt at a reconciliation between Hamlet and Laertes seem unconvincing. The fencing scene proceeds generally according to the text, and is described favorably in The Theatre:
PLATE IX

SKETCH OF FLOORPLAN FOR HAMLET (1874),
ACT V, SCENE iii
In 'Hamlet,' the placing of the fencers diagonally across the stage was judicious, because the play, and especially that of Hamlet, was better seen than if they stood in line with the footlights, and the slight movement of pressing forward by the spectators of the match as the interest rose after the first two hits, was natural and effective. Many critics praised the way in which the exchange of foils was managed. Hamlet disarmed Laertes (played by Mr. Leathes) so that his foil dropped near Hamlet's feet, and Hamlet, seeing this, passed his own foil to Laertes, and himself took that which was on the ground. A man of unsuspicious nature and not solicitous about minute points in the game might easily do this; but perhaps it would have been better if Hamlet had handed the foil to Laertes instead of throwing it.57

The handling of the crowd pleased the writer of the above article. The promptbook gives little indication of the use of the crowd in this scene. But, again, Irving eliminates the only vocal reaction given to the crowd; the cry "Treason! Treason!" after Laertes reveals that the King is to blame. Hamlet grabs the King, throws him to the ground, and runs him through.58 Allen indicates that "the ladies surround her [the Queen]" when she dies. Also, there are instructions for "general movement" when Hamlet calls "Ho! let the door be locked: Treachery!

57 Theatre, XVII, N.S. (April, 1891), 184. Although this article appears in 1891, the author describes the 1874 production and not the later one. It was Mr. Leathes who played Laertes in the 1874 production, in 1878 Mr. F. Cooper portrayed him.

seek it out." And, as the King dies, the courtiers gather in front of him, some kneeling. With the death of Hamlet, the play ends. The entrance of Osric to announce the coming of Fortinbras is cut, as are the lines of Fortinbras and Horatio that compose the actual ending. Irving's ending, as was the tradition in his time, is with Hamlet's speech to Horatio:

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart, Absent thee from felicity awhile, And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain, To tell my story.

Then Irving adds the following from Hamlet's last speech:

O, I die, Horatio! The potent poison quite o'ercrowns my spirit. The rest is silence.

The Ghost music is played softly during Hamlet's last speech. The curtain slowly falls on the reunion of Hamlet and his father.

Summary and Conclusions

From the preceding description of the staging of Irving's 1874 production of Hamlet, it is clear that Irving's version of the play differed significantly from the original work in many respects. Irving worked within the artistic limits of the late nineteenth century. And, although he was innovative in many respects, he was still a product of his time. This fact manifested itself in many ways; and one of the most significant is that the method of staging plays in the 1870's, known today as
"historical realism," imposes specific requirements on the director. The aesthetic principle of "historical realism" required the director to place a historically accurate illustration of the site of the play's action on stage by a realistic representation that gave the illusion of the particular locale. (The term "pictorial realism" is also applied to this type of staging during the late nineteenth century.) Aesthetic senses are to a great extent conditioned senses, and what is "real" to an audience in one period of time may be artificial in another period. In the time of Irving's *Hamlet*, perspective painting on two dimensional flats lined up in symmetrical balance provided the "pictures" needed. A second limitation placed on Irving is the technical facility of the Lyceum Theatre. The Lyceum in the 1870's was still fitted with the wing and groove system of changing scenery.

In addition to the accepted scenic requirements and the physical limitations of the Lyceum at this time,  


60 The lighting also aided in creation of the illusion. Irving began with gas lighting, using limelight for special effects, and kept them throughout his quarter of a century at the Lyceum.
another fundamental factor that helps to form the artistic environment of this period is the dominance of the Romantic movement and the popularity of melodrama.

The Text

As a result of the requirement of specific sets for each different locale, of the type of scenic shifting at the Lyceum; and of the fact that Hamlet is a long play, like other directors of this period Irving had to eliminate parts of the play.

Irving had the full text of Hamlet in his possession when he was preparing the production of 1874. The studybook, which bears Irving's signature, is the Clarendon Press Series edited by Clark and Weight published in 1873—the Cambridge edition. This edition is a complete text except for a few minor portions that are deleted because of their offensive content; for example, the suggestive dialogue between Hamlet and Ophelia in the Play Scene (III, ii) which contains descriptive sexual connotations. Omissions because of violation of the Victorian sense of decency accounts for only a small number of the lines deleted in Hamlet. With the exception of these portions of the play, Irving was working from a full text in his preparation of the production.
Before the judgments which Irving made in his selection of portions to be deleted from the production are summarized, an overview of the cuttings can be obtained from an examination of Table 1. Not a scene is played without change, and six scenes are omitted entirely. Overall, one out of every three lines is omitted; out of a grand total of 3,860 lines, 1,484 are cut, about thirty-nine percent of the play.\textsuperscript{61} Certainly Irving is not unique among late nineteenth century directors in finding it necessary to reduce the length of \textit{Hamlet} in order to have a reasonable playing time. The acceptance of this practice in the 1870's is supported by \textit{Punch} who indicated:

That an actor or manager is free to alter and adapt a play so far as abbreviating, condensing, and even altering the order of scenes, and omitting personages goes, will be admitted by all.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{61}The standard text used in Table 1 is the Signet Classic Shakespeare edition of \textit{Hamlet}, edited by Edward Hubler and published by The New American Library, Inc., 1963.

\textsuperscript{62}"Punch on Hamlet," p. 224.
Table 1

Comparison of Scene Length of the Standard Text of *Hamlet* and Irving's Version

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>SCENE</th>
<th>STANDARD</th>
<th>TEXT</th>
<th>IRVING</th>
<th>TEXT</th>
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<td>I</td>
<td>i</td>
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The nature of Irving's version of *Hamlet* reflects all of the categories of change in *Punch*’s list, except rearranging the order of scenes. And, more specifically, the nature of the eliminated material falls into four general groups, each revealing something of the nature of Irving the adapter of plays. The four basic categories for Irving's deletions are: first, elimination of lines of a vulgar nature; second, elimination of the political environment; third, elimination of certain dialogue that is not essential to the development of the plot; and fourth, deletions to facilitate his staging concepts.

Although a few of the more earthy portions of the text were not printed in the Clarendon edition of *Hamlet*, there were still some sections that Irving omitted because they would be offensive to his audience. The lines deleted by the editors of the Clarendon edition are relatively few when compared with Irving's cuttings for the same reason. For example, Act I, scene iii, the portion between Laertes and Ophelia in which he tells her to beware of Hamlet's advances, accounts for thirty-one lines omitted in this scene, lines such as:

```
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
To his unmastered importunity.

... . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
And keep you in the rear of your affection
Out of the short and danger of desire.
```

Lines of this general tone were consistently omitted by Irving.
A second category of omissions is the elimination of the political environment of the play. Apparently this portion of the play was traditionally omitted, and seems to be the natural outgrowth of the nineteen-century notion of Romanticism that the overwhelming interest in the play was the individual character of Hamlet. The Romanticist was not concerned with who becomes king after Claudius and Hamlet die, which was unsettled in the Irving version. Thus, Fortinbras and the political problems of Denmark and Norway were completely eliminated. Cuttings for this reason accounted for a significant portion of the omissions; fifty-nine lines from Act I, scene i alone are for this purpose. As a result of cutting the Fortinbras story, Irving eliminated, in addition to the character of Fortinbras, Voltemand and Cornelius, the ambassadors to Norway, a Courtier, the Norwegian Captain, and the English ambassadors who enter with Fortinbras in the standard ending of the play.

Even with the above two categories of cuttings, Irving still had to find other portions to omit in order to keep the playing time within reason. So, he occasionally omitted portions of speeches that added coloring to the dialogue, but were not essential to furthering the action of the play Irving was concerned with. An example of this type of cut was the omission of a
substantial portion of Osric's social chit-chat with Hamlet in Act V, scene ii. Omissions of this type accounted for the second largest number of lines deleted.

In reducing the size of the text, Irving generally did not favor any particular character. Certainly the elimination of lines was not made to increase the proportion of the part of Hamlet; he, too, was subject to cuts. An illustration of this is the Queen's closet scene in which Hamlet suffers severely from deletions. Not only were lines being cut because of their vulgar tone, but lines were cut that add coloring. In addition, Irving also omitted complete scenes in which Hamlet is involved.

The character of the King benefited from Irving's restoration of the King's closet scene, Act III, scene iii (Irving's scene ii). The restoration of the King at prayer added significantly to the development of the character of the King. Of course, the reason for this restoration is not clear, it might have been to add dimension to the character, or to place Hamlet in another crisis, or it might have been just to allow time for the stage carpenters to set up the box set for the Queen's closet which followed immediately. However, if Irving was attempting to present the King as a more developed character, he missed another opportunity when he later cut the King's listing of the troubles that afflict him that,
as he says, "Gives me superfluous death" (Act IV, scene v, Irving's scene i).

Of all the characters in the play retained in the Irving version, it was perhaps Polonius that suffered most from deletions. As Polonius' parting advice to Laertes is almost entirely eliminated. Also cut was the portion of Act II, scene i where Polonius sends Reynaldo to Paris to check on Laertes. The scene in which Ophelia first tells Polonius of Hamlet's strange behavior toward her was cut in its entirety. In addition to these sections, Polonius' lines were deleted occasionally throughout his scenes according to the factors indicated above that control deletions for all the characters.

In addition to the above three categories of reasons for elimination of portions of the text, Irving also made textual changes in order to facilitate his directorial concepts in staging the play. This type of alteration involved elimination of certain lines in coordination with a change of exit time of a character, or with a change of dialogue by the addition of words that are not Shakespeare's. For example, in his effort to improve the theatrical effectiveness of the end of Act III, scene i, in the latter half of which Hamlet's meeting with Ophelia is observed by the King and Polonius, Irving had Ophelia exit on the end of her last line. Irving dispensed with her remaining on stage with the King and
Polonius as they conclude the scene. This, of course, necessitated cutting Polonius' reference to Ophelia that she does not have to tell what happened because they observed it. An example of inserting words into the text of the play is seen in Irving's decision to eliminate the pantomime in Act III, scene ii. The textual change is Ophelia's line from "Belike this show imports the argument of the play," referring to the meaning of the pantomime, to Irving's version, "But, what is the argument of the play?"

Another type of textual change was made to accommodate Irving's blocking scheme. In Act I, scene i, Irving deleted two lines. Bernardo's "Sit down awhile," and Horatio's "Well, sit we down," in order to keep the actors standing.

A final reason for cutting lines in order to adjust the play to Irving's staging conception occurred consistently in the scenes that require interaction between a crowd and the principals. This type of scene occurs three times in Hamlet: first, the Danes that break into the palace with Laertes; second, the members of the funeral during the fight of Laertes and Hamlet over Ophelia's grave; and, finally, the court's reaction during the fencing scene. At the forced entrance of Laertes and his Danes (IV, v), the Queen's "false Danish

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63 Irving's reason for this textual change is discussed in Irving's 1878 version of this scene in Chapter V.
dogs," the King's "The doors are boke," and the crowd of Danes' "No, let's come in," and Laertes' lines to his Danes "I thank you. Keep the door," are deleted. The identical thing happens as Hamlet and Laertes fight at the grave of Ophelia (V, i) Irving cuts the crowd's line "Gentlemen," and Horatio's "Hamlet, Hamlet." Finally, in the last scene of the play (V, ii) when Laertes tells the court that the King is responsible for the treachery, the crowd's reaction of "Treason! Treason!" is deleted. The effect of these deletions was to reduce the dramatic impact of the various crowds.

Instances of alterations of the text because of staging requirements are not numerous, yet it is interesting that Irving would put these practical decisions of a director before the integrity of the Shakespearean text.

The Blocking and Stage Business

The textual changes noted above validate the conclusion that Irving deliberately minimized the part that the crowds play in Hamlet. One can only conjecture as to the reason. Certainly Irving had sufficient actors to stage these scenes properly--at one point in the action, the gathering for Play Scene, the promptbook accounts for forty-six people on stage at once. Perhaps Irving did not have enough time during his four week rehearsal
period to develop the crowd scenes adequately. One does wonder, however, if Irving's facility as a director had developed sufficiently to stage these crowd scenes in a believable manner. At those points where Irving did use many actors in a scene, the processional entrances, nothing out of the ordinary occurred. Certainly his processional entrances, the opening of Act I, scene ii, early in the Play Scene, and the funeral procession, are presented with only a modest degree of inspiration—the actors apparently are just lined up, marched on stage to specified positions, remaining around the periphery of the action until the end of their scene. Irving is equally unimaginative in moving his crowd off stage at the end of the play scene; the instructions in the prompt-book indicate that the crowd leaves "at nearest exits."

While these processions are probably adequate, the staging of other crowd scenes was inadequate such as the angry mob of Danes that enters with Laertes. To make confrontation and interaction between a stage crowd and principal actors believable is a distinct challenge for the director, one that Irving purposefully avoided in his 1874 staging of Hamlet.

While the use of crowd scenes in Hamlet were not developed to their full dramatic potential, Irving did reveal himself as an extremely skillful director in his
conception of the blocking of the other scenes in the play. The opening scene provides a good example of Irving's carefully planned and artistic blocking. The entrances and exits were designed to agree with the text; Horatio's first entrance is delayed, for example, while his first line is given off stage, "Friends to this ground." This is done to make Bernardo's line, "Say, what, is Horatio there?" seem more natural since he actually could not see Horatio. The movements onto and off the stage are made by way of the "ramps" of the battlements, and not through "solid" walls, as created by the wing and groove scenery. While careful coordination of entrances and exits with the text is standard practice today, the important of this is that it demonstrates the directorial intention of Irving to block all the scenes of the play with equal care, and not just those in which he himself played. The blocking of the play, as indicated by the promptbooks, is of unified quality and style throughout the play.

Close examination of the blocking in the opening scene reveals Irving moved actors only when it was required to reflect the meaning of the text or to reveal the emotional feelings of the characters. Slight movements are used to point up lines, and to balance the movement of other actors. The opening of the scene
demonstrates Irving's balancing of moves. Francisco is discovered on stage. Bernardo enters from L.2.E. on "Long live the King!" Francisco asks, "Bernardo?" Bernardo, who is stage left, answers, "He." Francisco moves slightly toward him. Bernardo takes his halberd, crosses to Francisco's right, and shakes his hand. Bernardo turns right and exits into R.2.E. Marcellus enters from L.2.E., Francisco then would be expected to exit left toward the direction the guard is mustered; but, instead he exits R.1.E. and balances Marcellus' entrance from L.2.E. This balancing of the movements is a basic technique of Irving, and is used throughout the play.

Integrated with the blocking are pieces of stage business that further enhance the naturalness of the action; for example, the use of the hand shake when greeting one another, and the exchange of the halberd between the old watch to the relief. Throughout the play basic business is mentioned in the promptbooks which indicate Irving consistently utilized actions to help delineate the characters, and make their actions appear to be reflections of nature.

One point in the play, however, Irving seems to have let his blocking become too consistent with the pattern he established early in the production. The various royal processions that are staged are all very similar. Naturally, the order of entrance is established
by the various ranks of the characters. And, all entrances except one are made into the large room in the castle from the R.U.E. The one procession where Irving has an opportunity to vary the procession, he does not. The funeral procession enters from R.U.E. just as the other two do. There is variety demanded by the different purpose of this procession. But, Irving utilizes the R.U.E. for its entrance just as he does for all the previous ones. And, moreover, he places the six guards far up stage center in a line, just as he arranges them in their previous scenes. This lack of variety may be caused partially by off stage technical situations of which the promptbooks do not provide evidence.

Of particular concern to Irving was the way in which he staged the end of each act. Irving's general technique was to add touches that revealed something of the characters involved. The end of Act I, for example, Hamlet has heard the story of the Ghost and is about to leave the stage with Marcellus and Horatio. As the Prince exits, he turns his head to look where the Ghost had appeared in the trees, perhaps to reveal the depth of his sorrow, or perhaps foreshadowing Hamlet's later questioning of the validity of the Ghost. Act II ends with a similar piece of business, Hamlet has decided to alter the "Murder of Gonzago" to fit his end, and after he finishes his last line, Hamlet places his tablet against
the upright pillar to write his additions. Again a small touch, but one that adds to the naturalness of the scene, and allows the curtain to close on action. Act III ends with the Queen's closet scene, the Queen exits to her bedroom. Hamlet crosses to Polonius' body which is lying stage right, he raises his lamp over the body, and as the curtain falls, Hamlet pauses and looks upon the results of the role which "heaven" has cast for him. The ending of Act IV involved a textual change. The Queen has just told Laertes of his sister's death, and Laertes exits. Irving eliminated the King's last line:

Let's follow, Gertrude.
How much I had to do to calm his rage!
Now fear I this will give it start again;
Therefore, let's follow.

Instead, Irving focused upon Laertes' grief and ended on Laertes line:

Adieu, my lord
I have a speech o'fire, that fain would blaze,
But that this folly drowns it.

spoken as he exits, and the curtain falls. It is possible that Shakespeare's ending in which the King and Queen follow Laertes' exit represents a technical requirement of the Elizabethan theatre to clear the stage for the next scene. Nevertheless, Irving in his alteration again attempts to make the ending of an act more effective.
Textual changes, too, occurred at the end of the play. The deletion of the character of Fortinbras naturally requires the play to end with Hamlet's death. This ending was traditional in the last century, and Irving did not change it. Irving did embellish the death of Hamlet technically by having the Ghost music played softly as his last lines are spoken symbolizing the completion of Hamlet's task, the soul of his father finally at rest, or perhaps the eerie music signifies the presence of the Ghost suggesting the union of young Hamlet with his father. The specific meaning of Irving's special bits at the end of the acts are naturally open for various interpretations, the significant point is that as a director Irving attempted to make the ending of the acts as theatrically effective as possible.

The Scenery and Properties

The technical aspects of the *Hamlet* production of 1874 were not emphasized to any great degree, and certainly were not out of the ordinary for the period. The production was complimented because the scenery and costumes are not extraordinary. The critic for *The Graphic* stated:
Though scenery and costumes generally are unexceptionable there is no attempt to make these prominent features of the revival—a fact which may be noted as a healthy token. 64 Also, of all the reviews examined, none gave more than a brief two or three sentence discussion of the technical elements of the production. They generally agreed on the adequacy of it, but none mentioned anything innovative, as they noted in other aspects of the production. Irving himself admitted that very little special preparation was made for the production. It was "hurriedly put on stage . . . and with only such care as can be used within a very short period."65 Some of the settings were from earlier Lyceum productions; for example, the church-yard of Act V, scene i, was from Eugene Aram. 66

In 1874 the Lyceum Theatre employed a wing and groove scene shifting scheme, which required the scene designer to work within a symmetrical pattern. Also, the wing and groove system produced a series of alterations between very shallow settings in the first or second grooves with settings in the third, or fourth groove, or full stage

64."Theatres," Graphic, X (November, 1874), 443.

65.Henry Irving, Theatre, XXIII, N.S. (December, 1894), 33.

which permitted a fast scene change from one setting to another. With one exception, a box set for the Queen's closet, Irving's scene designer, Hawes Craver, followed the above requirements in his design for Hamlet. There are eight different settings for Hamlet which are used for thirteen scenes. (Table 2 illustrates the alteration of shallow and deep sets.) The settings are generally at stage level, including the battlements of Elsinore, although a low platform is used to elevate the thrones, and a platform provides the Ghost in I, v, standing on a low platform which represents a knoll, visibility for the actors of the "Murder of Gonzago." There are no step units or similar set pieces to provide variety in the blocking of the actors. The graveyard scene, for example, is played without grave stones or monuments, Hamlet and Horatio simply stand by the hole in the stage and talk with the gravedigger. Also, with the exception of the Queen's closet, there are no doors used in the scenery, only large arches of the Romanesque style--at least this is true of the only iconographic material discovered of an interior design (see Plate IV). This setting indicates a center focus in the design and symmetry in construction, only varied by the motif on the columns. In nearly every scene, this type of conventional design was used, and it presented a constricting setting that did
Table 2

List of Scenes Showing Groove Placement

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<th>Groove Bank</th>
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<tr>
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<td>2nd  - Scene i - A Platform before the Castle</td>
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<td>4th  - Scene ii - A Room of State in the Castle</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1st  - Scene iii - A Room in Polonius' House</td>
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<td>2nd  - Scene iv - The Platform</td>
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<td>Full Stage - Scene v - A More Remote Part of the Platform</td>
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</table>

Act II

4th - Scene i - A Room of State in the Castle

Act III

4th - Scene i - A Room in the Castle
1st - Scene ii - King's Closet
3rd - Scene iii - Queen's Closet

Act IV

4th - Scene i - A Room in the Castle

Act V

Full Stage - Scene i - A Churchyard
1st - Scene ii - A Hall in the Castle
4th - Scene iii - A Room in the Castle
not allow Irving to place his actors into the settings; rather, the scenery generally provided only a pictorial background for the actors.

The above conclusion is also somewhat true of the box setting used in the Queen's closet scene. While the walls are solid (see Plate VII), the symmetry required by the wing and groove stage, is maintained; and, although a front elevation of this set has not been found, the painting probably continues the center focus of the other sets. There is a door up left, and an arras directly opposite. Also, there is an entrance up center. The furniture is also rather symmetrically arranged. The larger table is down center with two chairs, one on either side; a stove is up stage of it, and a table is placed up left and another piece of furniture up right. This furniture does prove to be useful to the actors in this scene. Polonius enters through the door up left, later followed by Hamlet. Hamlet places his lamp on the table near the door. Polonius hides behind the arras; the Queen and Hamlet use the two chair; the table center has a lamp on it which the Queen picks up as she exits. The Ghost and the Queen both leave by the center entrance up stage.
The setting provides more items for use by the actors than any other scene in the production. 67

Perhaps the most creative setting in the production was that of Act I, scene iv--another part of the platform. In this setting Craven placed two trees made of gauze up left center between which the Ghost appeared. The Ghost was elevated, the trees appear to be on a mound. Hamlet listens to the Ghost's tale standing down stage of the trees. This setting was unique in this production because it allowed Irving to place his actors within a piece of scenery, and not just in front of it (with the exception of the box set for III, iii).

Furniture is also found in most of the other settings. The main room in the castle, for example, always has a few chairs in it, and two tables are placed in it for the final scene of the play. These items are used by the actors: a noteworthy instance is Hamlet's leap into the King's chair in a moment of triumph and exhilaration after the King has fled the "Murder of Gonzago" performance.

67 It would not be unusual for this period if the three walls of the setting were enclosed on the top by a ceiling piece. The promptbooks, however, do not indicate whether or not a ceiling is used.
The few hand properties used are quite effective. The halberd in the opening scene adds variety to the visual image of the trio. Also, in the same scene, the glass truncheon carried by the Ghost effectively adds to the supernatural atmosphere of the scene. The torches carried by some of the characters into the Play Scene add to the spectacle; and Hamlet's exit from the end of Act III, scene i with a torch as he makes his way to the King's closet furthers the suspense of the exit.

Lighting

The scenery provides the pictorial background of the production, but it is in Irving's use of lighting, music, and sound effects that the atmosphere of the production is created. The lighting is in the representational style of the scenery. It attempts to indicate the time the action takes place; for example, the dimly lit stage for the just-before-dawn of Act I, scene 1; or the moonlight on the actors in the Play Scene. Most of the settings, however, are of interiors. In these scenes the time is assumed to be daylight hours, and Irving uses general illumination. For interior scenes that occur at night, Irving always provides a source of illumination on stage. For example, the Play Scene is supposedly illuminated by torches carried by the actors: the following scene between Hamlet and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern,
which occurs the same night as the Play Scene, has torches placed on the pillars; Hamlet observes the King praying as Hamlet holds a torch; and, the Queen's closet scene has a lamp on a table, and Hamlet enters with another lamp.

The same representational style is seen in the special lighting effects, such as a light in the back cloth that represents a twinkling star (Act I, scene i). The most significant special effect in the lighting design is the use of a green limelight as a follow spot for each appearance of the Ghost. Whenever the Ghost appears, the existing lighting is dimmed, and the green limelight is turned on the Ghost, the ever-present glass truncheon reflecting its rays, creating an eerie atmosphere.

The method of employing the light is subtle and artistically conceived. The lighting cues are often coordinated to a specific word in the text. Also, Irving follows the general policy of no abrupt changes of lighting within a scene—except the supernatural lighting for the Ghost. The lighting cues are for gradual changes like the following from the end of Act I, "Borders gradually up, also float during the following," and later "white float up a little."

Irving's procedure for transition between scenes generally follows the pattern noticed in Act I, scene iii
to iv. Irving does not conceal the scene change from the audience. Scene iii is played with the lights "full-on" the large room in the castle. Polonius and Ophelia exit R.1.E., a large bell strikes twelve, the ghost music is heard, the lighting is changed to "green float half on," the flats for the battlements are pushed together forming the set, and Hamlet, Horatio and Marcellus enter from L.2.E. No scene curtain is dropped as happens at the end of the acts.

The timing of the act curtain is given a great deal of attention. First, it is always coordinated with a specific move, line, or gesture of an actor, such as the end of Act I, "ring down as Mr. Irving turns his head to where Ghost was"; or "ring down sharp as Mr. Irving places his tablets against the pillar (up RC) to write"; or the "slow" curtain at the end of the play. Whether the scene changes are done with the house light out, or even whether the scenes are played with the house in darkness are questions that are not answered by the prompt-books or by the reviews.

As indicated above, the scene change between Act I, scene iii and iv is done with "ghost music" being played during the change. Irving employs music during scene changes to set the tone for the succeeding scene, the "ghost music" in this instance foreshadows the appearance of the Ghost in scene iv. Going from scene i to ii,
the platform to the room in the castle, the promptbook indicates "as change takes place music, and after change lights full on." The music is a Danish march announcing the royal procession which opens scene ii. The music continues well into the scene. Irving consistently uses music to bridge scene changes, and at times a tolling of a large bell, too.

The bell is also used throughout the burial of Ophelia, tolling in the distance. The use of the bell is the main sound effect in the production.

The Cast

For the production of *Hamlet*, Irving added three experienced actors to the company. For the part of Polonius he engaged Mr. Chippendale, who had played with Edmund Kean; another old and experienced actor, Henry Compton, was cast as the First Gravedigger which he had played for almost half a century; and, finally, Tom Meade was hired to portray the Ghost. The part of Ophelia, of course, was played by Isabel Bateman, daughter of the manager. Others in the cast included Mr. Swinbourne as the King, Miss G. Pauncefort as the Queen, and Mr. Leathes as Laertes. The critic for *The Graphic* approved of the general quality of the cast:

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This Shakesperian [sic] revival, however, is by no means a mere 'star' performance. The general cast is, indeed, exceptionally strong.\textsuperscript{69}

Among the specific criticisms of the cast is the following about Isabel Bateman from Punch: "[the role of] Ophelia ... is graceful and tender, though it loses much from the recitation substituted for singing in some of her pathetic snatches of old melody."\textsuperscript{70} The Graphic indicates that Isabel Bateman's Ophelia:

is a sweet and gentle personage, a little formal in her utterances of blank verse, but in the mad scene picturesque in attitude and gesture. Her crazy abstraction was perfectly natural, and there was much of simplicity and pathos in her bye play, and in the law wailing with which she made her final exit.\textsuperscript{71}

The Illustrated London News, however, reacted negatively:

Miss Isabel Bateman took infinite pains with Ophelia; but she has no positive aptitude for the part, and, for some reason, which we could not understand, the house grew impatient.\textsuperscript{72}

Little comment is made on the other actors in the production. Chippendale and Compton are briefly mentioned by The Graphic in that their portrayals "present the well

\textsuperscript{69} The Graphic, X (October, 1874), 419.

\textsuperscript{70}"Punch on Hamlet," p. 225.

\textsuperscript{71}"Theatres," Graphic, X (November, 1874), 443.

\textsuperscript{72}"Theatres: Lyceum," Illustrated London News, LXXV (November, 1874), 447.
known qualities of those excellent actors."\textsuperscript{73} Leathes
draws a negative comment, he:

\textit{looks well as Laertes, and fences gracefully, but in delivering his words [he] has an unfortunate habit of looking upwards like a fowl who has just drunk water, though not always with so good an excuse as might be pleaded for the fowl.}\textsuperscript{74}

In regard to the cast, however, the important fact is that Irving improved the quality of the Lyceum company by the addition of three experienced actors, which indicates his concern for the quality of the total production.

Irving's Hamlet of 1874 is not a production to exhibit a "star." The infinite care which Irving took with all of his directorial responsibilities—the selection and adaptation of the play, the blocking, the interpretation of the parts, the addition of bits of business, the improvement of the cast, the integration of the technical elements into the production—shows Irving to be a director who was not only in complete control of all the elements of production (except the financial matters), but he integrated the elements into a unified production

\textsuperscript{73}"Theatres," \textit{Graphic}, X (November, 1874), 443.

\textsuperscript{74}Ibid.
to fulfill his specific artistic scheme. After the 200th performance of Irving's Hamlet, Laurence Irving concluded:

The run of Hamlet ended on June 29th [1875]. When all criticism and comment, shorn of fatuous adulation and of the gall of personal enmity, had been digested, Irving had every reason to regard his venture with satisfaction.75

75 Laurence Irving, Irving, p. 256.
CHAPTER III

THE MACBETH PRODUCTION OF 1875

Introduction

The deep and enduring impression made by Mr. Irving's first Shakespearean impersonation, and that in a part which had frequently been repeated without leaving any impression at all, naturally made all London curious as the success of his second venture in the same direction.¹

The unprecedented success of Hamlet made the selection of another Shakespearean play the obvious bill of fare: Mrs. Bateman announced Macbeth as the next major production.² While Chatterton's warning of the financial problems of Shakespearean production was not completely invalidated by the 1874 Hamlet, the choice of Macbeth created noticeable anticipation among the London theatre audiences.

The selection of Macbeth appeared to be a wise one. The play, like Hamlet, had enjoyed a history of numerous productions throughout the nineteenth century by the most prominent actor-managers of the period. Although the productions of Macbeth had been embellished with the music of John

¹"Macbeth at the Lyceum," The Times (London), October 2, 1875, p. 10.

²Mr. Bateman died during the run of Hamlet, and was succeeded in the managership of the Lyceum by his wife, Sidney Frances Bateman.
Locke, and, occasionally, other remnants of the Restoration period such as D'Avenant's changes in the text and the songs of Thomas Middleton, the play was regularly produced by many of the great nineteenth century actors. John Kemble performed the play with Mrs. Siddons as Lady Macbeth, one of her most noteworthy parts. Edmund Kean's romantic interpretation of Macbeth was an innovation after the "classical" version of Kemble: Kean was especially noted for his acting in the murder scene. Macready also played Macbeth which became one of his favorite parts. Charles Kean chose Macbeth for one of his grand revivals at the Princess's Theatre in the mid-fifties. Phelps, too, produced Macbeth at Sadler's Wells and later at Drury Lane, in about 1864—the last significant production of the play before Irving's. Macbeth, therefore, had been an extremely valuable play for the major actor-managers of the century.

This record of successful productions of Macbeth, the success of Irving's Hamlet, and the opportunity offered by the role of Lady Macbeth for Kate Bateman, thirty-two year old elder sister to Irving's Ophelia, were all enticing reasons to announce the opening of Macbeth for September 25, 1875. Before the production is examined for evidence of Irving's directorial practices, a brief look at his interpretation of the character of Macbeth will provide a framework for a discussion of his directorial efforts.
Although there was a great amount of disagreement about the acceptability of his interpretation of Macbeth, the critics generally agreed that his interpretation was novel. The critic for The Times, for example, indicated that "there is no doubt that his Macbeth differs widely from the person present to the mind of the ordinary playgoer."\(^3\)

And, as he did with Hamlet, Irving ignored the traditional "points" of the part that had accumulated over the years.\(^4\) In creating his interpretation, Irving's basic premise was that from the very beginning of the play Macbeth possesses the desire for the throne. This assumption was contrary to the general conception of the character which was described in The Times as:

> an apparently well-disposed man, who might have gone on safely to the end of his days had he not unluckily met three evil old women on a heath, who put wicked thoughts into his head, and had he not, moreover, been cursed with an unscrupulous wife, who did her best, or rather her worst, to mature these thoughts into action.\(^5\)

To Irving, Macbeth was not the noble character at the beginning who is led astray by the witches; to Irving, the witches appear because within Macbeth lies the ambition to become king. Those noble qualities of the warrior

\(^3\)"Macbeth at the Lyceum," The Times (London), October 2, 1875, p. 10.

\(^4\)Ibid.

\(^5\)Ibid.
which Macbeth possesses are immediately overshadowed by
the prophesy of the witches, which only catalyzes a flaw
which is already within him. The lack of nobility or dig-
nity in Irving's impersonation of Macbeth was a central
issue in many discussions of the actor's performance. The
Graphic, for example, saw no "dignity" in his characteriza-
tion:

It would be difficult, indeed, to discover in
Mr. Irving's impersonation much trace of the
'dignity' which [is] reckoned among its char-
acteristics.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
It seems to be the aim of Mr. Irving to repre-
sent Macbeth, from the very opening of the play
down to the commencement of the warlike bustle
of the fifth act, as a coward too abject to
awaken in the spectator any feeling of sympathy. 6

Nor did Punch "sense . . . the height of nobleness" in
Irving's Macbeth; rather, it was an:

exhibition of physical terror and cowering,
shrieking remorse, with no suggestion of
strength and manhood behind it . . . . We
turn from it with a feeling of loathing,
largely dashed with contempt. 7

The Graphic, on the other hand, saw the "physical terror"
and "shrieking remorse" as emotions natural to the charac-
ter:

6 The Graphic, XII (October 2, 1875), 334.

7 "Macbeth at the Lyceum," Punch, LXIX, 138.
Seldom, perhaps never, has there been a Macbeth who is so penetrated with the enormity of the crime he is about to commit, or so filled with remorse after he has committed it. The exhibition of these feelings does not necessarily detract from Macbeth's personal bravery as a soldier, and it seems to me that in thus depicting the murderous usurper, Mr. Irving has successfully grasped the leading idea which was present in Shakespeare's mind, namely, the terrible mental retribution which indulgence in crime inflicts.8

Edward R. Russell, writing in the *Fortnightly Review*, agreed with The Graphic's critic in accepting Irving's interpretation of Macbeth without the "noble" warrior quality that audiences had expected of him:

The true Macbeth, as portrayed by our latest great actor, is neither a generous hero nor an insensate criminal. He is a man who, though not devoid of moral feeling, is without operative conscience—a man who, innocent of cruel tastes or malignant resolve to be a villain, is always, and knows he is always, open to the suggestions and invitations of his besetting passion—a man ever ready to meet such cues to wickedness halfway—and not capable, even when racked by fear and misery, of entertaining the idea that moral considerations are to veto any act which he considers for his interest.9

Thus, Irving's performance of Macbeth created far greater controversy than his Hamlet did; nevertheless, the production ran for eighty performances. Irving's staging of the play, however, received generally favorable comments from the critics of London, and this perhaps was partially responsible for the eighty night run.

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8 "Macbeth at the Lyceum," *The Graphic*, XII (October 2, 1875), 327.

9 Edward R. Russell, "Mr. Irving's Interpretation of Shakspeare [sic.]," *Fortnightly Review*, XXXIV, N.S., 477.
An Analysis of the Directorial Aspects of the Production

The grandest of Shakespeare's tragedies, mounted with a quiet artistic taste which pervades every detail of scenery and stage business, and most carefully acted throughout, is now engaging the attention of the public, and filling the Lyceum theatre nightly with a rapt and profoundly interested audience.\(^{10}\)

The evidence available for examination of the 1875 \textit{Macbeth} production is rather limited: the prompter's and stage manager's promptbooks have disappeared, and all that is left is Irving's studybook.\(^{11}\) In addition, the reviews of \textit{Macbeth} do not reveal much about the staging of the play. Thus, a detailed reconstruction of the play is not possible. Nevertheless, a limited view of Irving's directorial techniques can be derived from examination of his text of the play, and, occasionally, some information on mounting the production can be found in the reviews. Therefore, the following discussion of Irving's production techniques tends to be summary in nature in its examination of the text, scenery and properties, lighting, and the cast.

\[^{10}\text{"Macbeth at the Lyceum Theatre," Belgravia: A London Magazine, VIII, 3rd Series (February, 1876), 69.}\]

\[^{11}\text{Irving's studybook was made from the edition of W. G. Clark and W. A. Wright, Shakespeare Selected Plays: Macbeth (Oxford: Clarendon Press Series, 1874). Irving's studybook contains notes on his acting, the acting of other characters, cuts on the text, and a few notes on staging. The studybook is now held in the Furness Collection of the University of Pennsylvania.}\]
The Text

Before a discussion of some of the changes Irving made in the text of Macbeth is made, a comparison of scene length between a standard text and Irving's version can be seen in Table 3. The total length of the play was reduced about twenty-three percent by Irving; the actor played 1,861 lines out of 2,402. He completely omitted five scenes and significantly reduced the length in three, while he made only minor omissions in six, out of a total of twenty-eight scenes. Even with this reduction in the length of the text of the play, the production took four hours to perform.

When preparing his acting edition of the play, Irving had before him the full text of Macbeth with only one exception. The Clark-Wright edition does not include the Porter's discussion of the three things that drink "provokes":

"Marry, sir, nose-painting, sleep, and urine. Lechery, sir, it provokes, and unprovokes: it provokes the desire, but it takes away the performance. [Etc.]

This section involves sixteen lines (lines 23-38) of dialogue between the Porter and Macduff in Act II. The language is obviously too strong for the Victorian audience—a common reason for deleting material during this period. This is the only portion of the text that is not printed in the Clark-Wright edition.

The standard text used in Table 3 is the Folger Library edition of Macbeth, general editor Louis B. Wright, published by the Washington Square Press in 1959. The line number references in this chapter are according to this text.
Table 3

Comparison of Scene Length of the Standard Text of *Macbeth* and Irving's Version

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>SCENE</th>
<th>STANDARD TEXT</th>
<th>IRVING TEXT</th>
<th>SCENE</th>
<th>ACT</th>
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<td>545 Total</td>
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<td>625 Total</td>
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<td>viii</td>
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<td>325 Total</td>
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<td>2,402 Grand</td>
<td>1,861</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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</table>
Of the almost one fourth of the play that is omitted by Irving, it is in the scenes showing the reaction of Malcolm and his friends to the actions of Macbeth that most of the deletions occur. From Malcolm's first appearance in Act I, scene ii, the bleeding sergeant's scene (which is deleted entirely) to the final lines of the play where Malcolm invites all to his coronation (which is also omitted completely), Irving purposefully expunges Malcolm from the play. This is not to say the character disappears, but his role is not that of the hope of the people for a return of peace to the land, an important element for the Elizabethan playgoer. The most obvious illustration of the removal of Malcolm from his important role in the play is the deletion of all of the dialogue after Macduff slays Macbeth. Irving completely removed Shakespeare's denouement, and has eliminated most of the lines and scenes that lead to it, such as severely cutting Malcolm's lines in Act IV, scene iii (standard) in which Malcolm and Macduff bemoan the state of things in Scotland. Equilibrium is not restored at the end, and the continuity of good government in the person of Malcolm is almost completely eliminated as a theme of the play.

As a result of cutting much of Malcolm's part, the play places even more emphasis on the Macbeth versus Macduff conflict. Macduff, however, also suffers from deletions, but not to the extent that Malcolm does. Omitted is
Macduff's scene with Ross after the murder of Duncan and the flight of Malcolm and his brother (II, iv). Also, the murder of Macduff's wife and son is completely cut from the play. Macduff does retain his position, though, of the avenger, and, as noted above, the play ends with the sword fight between Macbeth and Macduff.

There is another deletion that illustrates Irving's reduction of the "public concern" in the play as personified by Malcolm. In the middle of the scene in England where Malcolm and Macduff reflect on the situation in Scotland, a doctor enters to report on the condition of the King of England. Irving eliminated the doctor from his version, and the critic for *The Illustrated London News* objected, feeling that this cut left out an important element of the play. The speech omitted was Malcolm's discussion of "the evil" (lines 164-77) and how to cure it with superstition:

Shakspeare [sic.], however, had a profound meaning in it. He wanted to show that not only Scotland was superstitious, but England also; and perhaps to suggest that if bad spirits acted in the interest of Macbeth, good spirits were interested in the cause of Malcolm. At any rate, the allusion to the fact gave a colouring to the action of his play, not altogether inappropriate.  

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13 *Illustrated London News, Christmas Number*, December 15, 1875, p. 3.
This is another example of a broader, more philosophic theme and concern of Shakespeare that Irving tended to neglect in order to display the more dramatic and spectacular elements in the play. The critic cited above even made an application of the position of Shakespeare to the contemporary situation:

We the English people of 1875 have survived that superstition; but we have others, 'new-hatched to the' present 'time,' as strongly attested and as firmly believed. We shall doubtless outlive these also.  

While the elimination of most of the Malcolm element and of other more philosophical concerns accounts for the majority of the omitted material, there were other deletions which should be mentioned. One omission that received a great amount of attention from the critics was the bleeding sergeant scene (I, ii) which Irving omitted entirely. The first part of the scene in which Duncan hears of Macbeth's brave deeds from the bleeding sergeant (lines 1--38) was missed the most. Punch, which criticized Irving for lack of "nobility," also regretted the omission of this scene:

And, as in Hamlet, Mr. Irving expunged those passages of the text which he found in the way of his interpretation; so, in Macbeth, the introductory scene, of which Macbeth's fighting feats are the theme, is bodily struck out, and we lose even our

14 Ibid.
old friend, 'the bleeding sergeant,' because, for the actor's purpose, the thought of Macbeth as a mighty warrior must not be called up in the spectator's mind.15

Edward R. Russell, who generally approved of Irving's interpretation, took the opposite position:

Most likely the bleeding sergeant was deleted because it was desirable to shorten the play; because there seemed to be enough about Macbeth's valour without this scene . . . .16

It is difficult to resolve which of the two points of view are closer to the truth. Laurence Irving tends to follow *Punch*:

unable to reconcile the report of Macbeth's valour in the field with the brutal cowardice of the character which Shakespeare drew in the rest of the play, he cut out the speech of the bleeding sergeant.17

But, in the 1888 revival of *Macbeth*, Irving restored the bleeding sergeant scene, and he did so without changing his interpretation.18 So, the question remains unanswered.

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18 Ibid.
Aside from deleting about one fourth of Shakespeare's play, Irving made additional eliminations from the usual nineteenth century productions of Macbeth. As noted in the Introduction, the play as produced in the nineteenth century had often retained the music of John Locke and Thomas Middleton's chorus of witches, both of which had been added to the play in the Restoration period. As recently as 1864, Macbeth had been performed by Phelps at the Drury Lane with Locke's music (although Phelps' original production at Sadler's Wells was done without his music). Charles Kean produced the play with the music of Locke at the Princess's Theatre in the 1850's. By reducing the chorus of witches to the original three, and eliminating Locke's music, Irving took a significant step forward in Shakespearean production. It should also be noted that by rejecting the chorus of witches, Irving passed up a chance for a spectacle that had previously been very popular with the audiences because of the elaborate scenic effects created in conjunction with the mass of witches.  

As a restorer of Shakespeare to the stage, Irving also received the approval of the critic for The Illustrated  

19 "Macbeth at the Lyceum," Belgravia, VIII, 3rd Series (February, 1876), 76.
London News for returning the Porter scene. (Of course, the scene was not restored entirely; see the note above on textual deletions in this scene.) This seems to have been the only restoration in Irving's text.

There is one final type of alteration made in the text which illustrates one of Irving's directorial choices: Irving paid special attention to the ends of acts. The end of Act I remains the same textually. The scene is inside Macbeth's castle; he and Lady Macbeth have just resolved to kill Duncan as he sleeps. As they exit, a curtain is raised which reveals "the banquet-hall within, where the old King sits at his last revel." The use of this tableau adds to the suspense of Duncan's pending murder by showing the good King enjoying the supper as, unknown to him, his death is being plotted.

The end of Act II is altered textually and staged to create an exciting finale. From the moment the alarm is rung, when Macduff discovers Duncan's murder, Irving cuts the non-essential lines to concentrate on the physical excitement of the scene. This moment is described in Belgravia:

20 The Illustrated London News, Christmas Number, December 15, 1875, p. 11.

21 "Macbeth at the Lyceum Theatre," Belgravia, VIII, 3rd Series (February, 1876, 74.
Then, in the dim early dawn, come the hurry of feet, the ringing of the alarm-bell, the blaze of torches, and gathering crowd—the passion and clamour which close an act unparalleled in power and splendid gloom.22

The excitement and commotion of this scene is Irving's curtain for Act II, not the calm speculation of the "how goes the world" conversation of Macduff and Ross, which is the standard ending of this act. To permit the closing of the act on this scene of excitement and turmoil, Irving also cut the dialogue between Duncan's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, and completely eliminated scene iv in which Macduff provides information that the sons are under suspicion for the murder of their father.

At the end of Act III, the same types of changes occurred. The act ended with the banquet scene; and not the standard ending of scene vi which is the meeting of the witches with Hecate; nor with scene vii in which Lennox and a Lord discuss their hope for their country's return to normal. Instead Irving chose to end the act on what he called "one of the most thrilling horrors of the tragedy,"23 and which was described in Belgravia thus:

22Ibid., pp. 75-76.

This scene of horror is powerfully acted by Mr. Irving and Miss Bateman. Mr. Irving's peculiar attribute, intensity, is here displayed to the utmost. Nothing could be finer than his wild defiance of the phantom, when he tosses off his crown and for a moment is the soldier again, ready to dare and do: nothing can be conceived more awful than the writhing shrinking figure cowering upon the steps of the throne, the face covered by the royal mantle; the convulsive effort to avoid the sight of that spectral form; the vain endeavour to recover self-possession; the wild wonder that others can see such sights and be unmoved; and lastly, when the affrighted guests have hurried out, with strange suspicious glances at their disordered host, the utter collapse of the crime-haunted wretch, as he sits with wan face and dreamy eyes, oblivious of all external influences, nerveless, broken; verily... 'the appalling ruin of a crime-entangled soul!'

He goes up the stage with Lady Macbeth, calmed and fortified by his resolve to put spies in the households of his thanes, and to seek immediate counsel of the weird sisters; but at the spot on which he saw the spectre of his last victim he stops suddenly, and gazes into empty space with eyes which still behold that bloody phantom.24

Again, Irving lowered the curtain on a theatrically exciting scene, rather than on the standard ending; he furthered the suspense for the next meeting with the witches; and, he focused attention on the plight of Macbeth.

Irving also altered the standard end of Act IV; he played the usual end in which Ross relates to Macduff the murder of his wife and children (IV, iii); but, Irving

24 "Macbeth at the Lyceum Theatre," Belgravia, VIII, 3rd Series (February, 1876), 75-76.
did not bring down the curtain until after Act V, scene i, Lady Macbeth's sleep walking scene. Thus, he concluded the act with one of the most dramatic and macabre scenes in the play.

But, it is with his alteration of the ending of the play that Irving most emphasized his concentration on physical action and theatrically exciting events: Irving chose to conclude the play with the death of Macbeth. The last lines of the play are Macbeth's:

Lay on, Macduff, 
And damned be him that first cries 'Hold, enough!'

They fight, and Macbeth is killed by the sword of Macduff, and thus ends Macbeth.

Hence, it is apparent that Irving took great care in staging the end of each act in order to lower the curtain on a theatrically exciting moment by either furthering the element of suspense or by concluding on a physically exciting action.

One final note about Irving's staging and the text of the play should be made. In the two scenes where the text requires a group of characters to speak, specifically, in Act II, scene iii when the court hears of the murder of Duncan, and during the banquet scene when Macbeth sees the ghost, Irving retains all of the dialogue of the crowds. Also, all of the group responses of the witches are played as written (except for the scene with Hecate, which is omitted).
In conclusion, Irving's text for his 1875 production of Macbeth reveals his sense for the melodramatic in that it stressed the conflict between Macbeth and Macduff and reduced the importance of Malcolm and the "public concern," as well as some of the more intellectual elements of the play. Furthermore, Irving's text is melodramatic because he rearranged the end of each act to heighten suspense or to conclude on a physically exciting moment at the expense of elimination of some of the more contemplative scenes. In addition, Irving's restoration of the Porter scene to the play added an entertaining moment. However, by omitting the bleeding sergeant scene, Irving unaccountably removed an important element of the play.

The Scenery and Properties

Although little is known about the technical aspects of this production, apparently they were not extraordinary for the period. Had the scenic arrangements been of a spectacular nature, such as Kean's settings for Macbeth at the Princess's Theatre sixteen years before, the critics would have been quick to make comparisons (as they did with the textual differences between Irving's Macbeth and that of Phelps). Generally, the comments on the scenery are limited to a few sentences of approval, such as the following from The Illustrated London News:
The general scenery is excellent, and does honour to the fancy and professional skill of Messrs. Hawes Craven and H. Cuthbert. It is distinguished by considerable novelty and certain positive artistic beauties which will go far to add to the popularity of the revival.25

Based on the few descriptions of the visual aspect of the production that are available, it is apparent that the scenic designers attempted realistically to depict the settings in which the action of the play takes place. The Lyceum had not undergone any renovations of the stage since Hamlet, and the wing and groove system of scene changing was used for Macbeth. The pictorial realism noted in Hamlet was the style of the settings created for Macbeth.

A few descriptions of the scenery were made in the reviews of the production and provide a sense of the general appearance and style. The setting for the first meeting of Macbeth and the witches (I, ii) was described as an "uncanny-looking heath, dimly seen in a lurid sunset," a description which would suggest a Romantic style.26

25Illustrated London News, Christmas Number, December 15, 1875, p. 3.

26"Macbeth at the Lyceum Theatre," Belgravia, VIII, 3rd Series (February, 1876), 78.
One of the major settings of the production was described as "the central hall of the castle, grand in its Norman-Gothic simplicity, staircase and lofty arches giving the idea of vast size." The critic was not clear as to which setting he was describing; it was either the Palace at Forres or Macbeth's castle. Most probably the scene described was Macbeth's castle, because other evidence indicates that Lady Macbeth used a stairway in her sleep walking scene: Belgravia referred to "the vaulted staircase which leads to her bedchamber;" another reviewer spoke of "a long flight of steps." Punch provided a description of another setting, the exterior of Macbeth's castle (I, v), in which the critic objected to the scenic arrangement:

What is the meaning of bringing Duncan and his train in front of Macbeth's Castle by moonlight, and setting the Castle at a distance which deprives of all meaning the reference to the martlets' nests under its eaves and cornices? Is it not evident that Shakspeare [sic.] meant to conjure up in the minds of his audience of the Globe . . . a close view of the grim, grey Castle front, basking serenely in the pleasant air of summer afternoon, as if in contrast to the dark deeds of blood and horror about to be wrought within it after set of sun.

27"Macbeth at the Lyceum Theatre," Belgravia, VIII, 3rd Series (February, 1876), 78-79.

28 Ibid., p. 78.

29 Illustrated London News, Christmas Number, December 15, 1875, p. 3.

30"Macbeth at the Lyceum," Punch, LXIX, 78.
It does seem strange that Irving would have Lady Macbeth greet Duncan so far from the castle at night. The only other piece of information about the appearance of the settings is a brief comment about the scenery for Act V which used a "moving panorama of heather-clothed hill and castle walls." \(^{31}\) The use of a panorama was not unusual for the period, and its use is consistent with the production's scenic arrangement.

There were two special effects used in the production which were noticed by the critics. First, Macbeth's final meeting with the witches (IV, i) used a real fire under the cauldron, while "a wintry moon" was seen "riding in a wind sky." \(^{32}\) The critic for The Graphic expressed concern for the safety of the actors:

> I hope their flimsy garments are dipped in an anti-inflammable liquid, or some night, when they are dancing round the cauldron, there will be a horrible flare-up. \(^{33}\)

A second special effect received a strong negative reaction among the critics: the appearance of Banquo's ghost in the banquet scene. The ghost was described in Belgravia as a:

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\(^{31}\) "Macbeth at the Lyceum Theatre," Belgravia, VIII, 3rd Series (February, 1876), 78.

\(^{32}\) Ibid., p. 79.

\(^{33}\) "Macbeth at the Lyceum," Graphic, XII (October 2, 1876), 327.
blue transparency . . . rising obviously through a hole in the stage, rising and sinking at command, never quite up to time, by the way, and an illusion to no one! 'If thou canst nod,' cries Macbeth; but the audience are painfully aware that this property spectre cannot nod.\(^{34}\)

The Graphic agreed that Banquo's ghost was "very cardboardy and artificial, and from the place where Mr. Irving stands, must present the appearance of a thin line."\(^{35}\) One wonders what prompted the use of an artificial ghost, and why Irving did not use an actor appearing in limelight for the spectre in Macbeth as he had done in Hamlet. Perhaps the mechanical ghost was used because Shakespeare did not write lines for Banquo's ghost. Regardless of the reason, the effect received a great amount of negative attention in the reviews of the play because of its unbelievability.

**Lighting**

The lighting for Macbeth seems to have been an important part of the production. The opening scene illustrates the artistic use of lighting to enhance the mood for the first meeting of the witches: "The witches are seen through a gap in a mass of clouds, lighted, only at intervals, by flashes."\(^{36}\)

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\(^{34}\)"Macbeth at the Lyceum Theatre," *Belgravia*, VIII, 3rd Series (February, 1876), 75.

\(^{35}\)"Macbeth at the Lyceum," *Graphic*, XII (October 2, 1875), 327.

\(^{36}\)"Macbeth at the Lyceum," *The Times* (London), October 2, 1875, p. 10.
plan for the other scenes except that the banquet scene had a "moonlit window" in it.\textsuperscript{37} Whenever a nighttime setting was required, Irving provided a source of illumination on stage, such as the torch carried by Macbeth as he exits to murder Duncan: "the lurid light of the torch shines on the assassin's face as he lifts the curtain and goes to do the deed;"\textsuperscript{38} or the torches used at the end of Act II when Duncan's murder is discovered. Thus, the general style of lighting seems to be representational, as it was in \textit{Hamlet}.

Costumes

The only piece of iconographic material found for the Macbeth production of 1875 is a drawing of Irving in costume. The illustration does not indicate the specific scene in which this costume was worn, but it is probably the banquet scene (Plate X). The long robe hanging from his left shoulder was used to hide from the vision of Banquo as Macbeth covered on the steps of the throne. Also, notice the tousled hair which indicates Irving's concern for the total appearance of the character. Another of Macbeth's costumes was described in \textit{Belgravia}:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{37}\textit{"Macbeth at the Lyceum Theatre," Belgravia, VIII, 3rd Series (February, 1876), 79.}.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{38}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 74.
\end{flushright}
PLATE X

IRVING AS MACBETH, ACT III
Very picturesque is the actor's make-up in this act—the grizzled hair, wan face, and disordered mien, which outwardly show the consuming fever within. A detail of costume that might be objected to is the violet-silk scarf he wears across his armour—a pleasing bit of colour in the abstract, but savouring rather too much of the 'pretty-pretty,' and suggesting a touch of foppery in the wearer.\(^\text{39}\)

**Cast**

The cast did not receive much attention in the reviews of the production. Generally, however, what reaction there was followed the critic for *The Graphic* who indicated:

> Miss Bateman's impersonation of Lady Macbeth, though careful and well-studied, presents no very noteworthy characteristics, and the remainder of the personages are but poorly represented. Exception must, however, be made in the case of the witches, who are truly 'weird sisters;' by the aid of the scenery, which is throughout picturesque, they are able to make a strong impression on the imagination of the spectators.\(^\text{40}\)

The witches were played by Thomas Mead, the Ghost in *Hamlet*, Mr. Archer, and Mrs. Huntley.

**Summary**

Although only a limited view of Irving the director can be seen in this 1875 production of *Macbeth*, several elements of his directorial approach to a Shakespearean play

\(^{39}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 78.}\)

\(^{40}\text{Graphic (October 2, 1875), XII, 334.}\)
and specific techniques in staging are apparent. Irving's interpretation of Macbeth was created without regard to the way the part had been performed traditionally. Irving's acting version of the play omitted nearly one fourth of the text, primarily by deleting most of the lines of Malcolm and the "public concern" of the play. As a result, Irving's text is somewhat melodramatic, especially when one considers Irving's rearrangement of the end of each act which focused attention on the element of suspense, or ends on a physically exciting scene. Perhaps the most significant aspect of Irving's Macbeth was the elimination of Locke's music and Middleton's witches; of course, the partial restoration of the Porter sequence was also a definite improvement. Also, it is interesting that Irving permitted the crowd to retain their lines on the two occasions where Shakespeare assigned lines to a mass of characters.

The visual elements of Macbeth did not assume the proportions of elaborate spectacle, for which Irving's later productions became famous. However, the style of pictorial realism employed in the settings, the use of the settings by the actors, the importance of effects created with lighting, are consonant with his later production techniques. It is probable that only limited financial means prevented a more elaborate production, for certainly the basic style and elements were present in the 1875 production of Macbeth.
The most significant contribution Irving made to the nineteenth century English stage with Macbeth, however, was noted by a critic for The Times in his review:

The revival itself, and the interest taken in it by a very large portion of the public, confirm the opinion formed last year, that a taste for intellectual and poetical drama is once more among us.41

41"Macbeth at the Lyceum," The Times (London), October 2, 1875, p. 10.
CHAPTER IV

THE RICHARD THE THIRD PRODUCTION OF 1877

Introduction

Since the success of Hamlet in 1874, it had been the practice of the Bateman management to present a Shakespearean play as a major production each season: Hamlet was followed by Macbeth in 1875, Othello in 1876, 1877 brought Richard the Third. However, the Lyceum company had not been doing well. Laurence Irving gives the following account:

The [1876] season ended with a performance of Hamlet, which may have given it an illusory semblance of success, self-deception was not one of Irving's failings. The year had begun triumphantly, but since Bateman's death [during the 200 night run of Hamlet] there had been a marked decline in the fortunes of the Lyceum . . . . His Macbeth and Othello had been too carelessly presented. Having announced that in the coming season he would play Richard III, Irving applied himself in the preparation of the part with the same intensity that he had devoted to Hamlet.¹

In his attempt to reestablish himself as fully capable of Shakespearean endeavor, Irving, under the management of Mrs. Bateman, faced a formidable challenge.

¹Laurence Irving, Irving, pp. 275–76.
Like Hamlet and Macbeth, Richard the Third had a record of successful productions by the outstanding actors of the nineteenth century; however, these earlier productions had employed Colley Cibber's adaptation of Shakespeare's play. When Irving directed Macbeth he only had to omit Middleton's witches and Locke's music and he had Shakespeare's Macbeth. This rather simple procedure was not adaptable to Cibber's Richard the Third, for Cibber's spurious play was so thoroughly rewritten and rearranged that the Shakespearean original was difficult to see.

Shakespeare's text of Richard the Third was relatively unknown to the nineteenth century English stage. Macready had attempted a production of a partial restoration of the Shakespearean text in 1821, but he withdrew it after a few performances. Phelps produced the Shakespearean text in 1844, but it was not successful.\(^2\) The history of the Cibber text, however, was a different matter. Cibber's play was used very successfully by many of the most prominent actors and actor-managers of the period: Charles Macready, Edmund Kean, and Charles Kean. As recently as 1875, Barry Sullivan had appeared at Drury Lane in Cibber's

version. Also, after Phelps' 1844 production of Shakespeare's Richard the Third, he produced Cibber's version of the play in 1862, and it met with success.  

When Irving prepared his acting version of Richard the Third, however, he chose to dispense with the popular version of the play, which had become the standard text since Cibber wrote it in 1700. It would be interesting to make a detailed comparison of the Cibber play and Shakespeare's to see the decisions Irving made in rejecting Cibber. However, this would be outside the purpose of this study. In general, Cibber's play is characterized by several factors. First, it runs only 2,380 lines as compared with Shakespeare's 3,603. Many of the 2,380 lines are not from Shakespeare's Richard the Third: Cibber added his own lines, plus lines from Shakespeare's Henry the Sixth, Part III; Richard the Second; Henry the Sixth, Part I; Henry the Fifth; Henry the Sixth, Part II; and Henry the Fourth, Part II. In addition, Cibber deleted about one half of Shakespeare's characters and omitted entire scenes from the Shakespearean text--usually those of an "epic" nature (for example, Act III, scene iii, vi, and Act V, scene i).  


\[4\] Ibid., pp. 84-89, passim.
Cibber also added many soliloquies to the play for Richard:

Perhaps the most puzzling [additions] in this bustling play are the soliloquies, which occur at every turn. There are frequent in the original form, but Cibber, in excess of Shakespeare, ends every act with them, beside introducing many within scenes. They tend to call attention to Richard, and to fix his character, for every stage of the action is closed with the hero on the stage revealing his motives and hopes.\(^5\)

The critic for *The Illustrated London News*, in a review of Irving's 1877 production of *Richard the Third*, referred to Cibber's version as "a sacrilegious outrage," but continued partially to account for the popularity of Cibber's text:

The whole being so cleverly arranged that its representation was within the means of any theatrical troupe possessing a performer capable of sustaining the role of Richard. Moreover, by the alteration and introduction of single lines, what are called points were supplied, which a popular actor by a degree of technical skill, might render very effective. It was natural, therefore, for great actors to prefer a drama so constructed and so readily available to stage purposes and to the personal distinction of gifted individuals. Accordingly, we have generally had the tragedy in a mutilated and depraved form, accompanied sometimes by the exhibition of exceptional talent, not sufficient, however, to relieve the transaction altogether from censurable characteristics, which only the parties immediately interested would care to excuse.\(^6\)


Despite the technical advantages of the Cibber play, the history of popularity, and the failure of earlier attempts to restore Shakespeare's play, Irving decided to use the Shakespearean text. This decision is especially interesting since Irving's respect for Phelps, one of those who attempted to restore Shakespeare's play but failed, did not persuade Irving to accept Cibber.

H. Barton Baker indicated his hope that Irving's production of Shakespeare's text of Richard the Third would succeed:

If Mr. Irving should succeed in banishing from the stage the last, although perhaps the least objectionable, of the alterations of Shakespeare, that good deed alone will entitle him to a conspicuous niche in theatrical history.\(^7\)

Irving did succeed in banishing Cibber's Richard the Third from the stage, but one is not sure whether this was because of his respect for Shakespeare's text, or whether Cibber was vanquished because of Irving's performance of the Duke of Gloucester. The Times indicated the extent of the success of Irving's interpretation:

In this play Mr. Irving surpasses all his former representations of the characters of Shakespeare. There is no one passage in his Richard as good, perhaps, as one or two which we can remember in the earlier days of his Hamlet, but as a whole the

\(^7\)H. Barton Baker, "Colley Cibber vs. Shakespeare," p. 343.
performance is, we think, a better one and, beyond all comparison, superior to his Macbeth or his
Othello. 8

Few Critics disagreed with the opinion of The Times about the appropriateness of his interpretation and its execution.

Even William Archer, who generally objected to Irving's Shakespearean roles, approved of his Duke of Gloucester:

The range of emotion . . . which is usual in characters parts, comes completely within the sphere of Mr. Irving's magnetic personality. Hatred, malignity and cunning dwell familiarly in his eye, his jaw can express at will indomitable resolve or grotesque and abject terror. Grim humour lurks in his eyebrows, and cruel contempt in the corners of his mouth . . . . It is in the deeper emotions of this order . . . that Mr. Irving is most at home. 9

Since Irving was interpreting a Shakespearean character that had not been seen on the English stage for nearly 200 years, one would not expect the critics to compare him with Cibber's Duke of Gloucester, but many did. The Theatre referred to the general conception of the Duke of Gloucester as:

a vulgar, noisy impostor, whose villainy was as obvious as his hump, and who went about the world foaming at the mouth and uttering such bombastic phrases as 'Off with his head; so much for Bucking-

ham!' 10

8"Shakespeare's Richard the Third," The Times (London), February 1, 1877, p. 6.


10"At the Play," The Theatre, January, 1897, p. 35.
The Illustrated London News spoke of Irving's interpretation being different from this general view of the Duke of Gloucester; their critic referred to Irving's interpretation as being "marked . . . with decided originality."\textsuperscript{11} Irving's characterization, according to Baker, was based on "the bitterness born of deformity [which was] the key-note of the whole character; for this ambition, power, can alone compensate, and these he pursues with a remorseless purpose."\textsuperscript{12} The Theatre described Irving's characterization much as did Baker:

Irving gave us a man of subtle brain and vast intellectuality, who recognized and enjoyed his superiority over those surrounding him, and who set out with the fixed principle that since he could not be a lover he was determined to be a villain.\textsuperscript{13}

The Illustrated London News noted Irving's interpretation as being characterized "with extraordinary intelligence."\textsuperscript{14}

However, Irving flourished in an era of melodrama; Irving himself was much indebted to successful melodramas for the prosperity of his company. The Bells, for example,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{11}"Theatres: Lyceum," \textit{Illustrated London News}, February 3, 1877, p. 114.
  \item \textsuperscript{12}Baker, "Colley Cibber vs. Shakespeare," p. 351.
  \item \textsuperscript{13}"At the Play," \textit{The Theatre}, January, 1897, p. 35.
  \item \textsuperscript{14}"Theatres: Lyceum," \textit{Illustrated London News}, February 3, 1877, p. 114.
\end{itemize}
proved to be a valuable piece to fill the coffers of the Lyceum. Irving's most successful production financially was another melodrama, an adaptation of *Faust* that was not as much like Goethe's play as Cibber's *Richard the Third* was like Shakespeare's drama. Irving increased the melodramatic character of the Duke of Gloucester by omitting lines that revealed aspects of his characters that indicated more complexity, such as the elimination of the following lines from the tent scene that indicate he is perhaps not the total villain:

I am a villain. Yet I lie, I am not.  
Fool, of thyself speak well. Fool, do not flatter.

The critic for *The Times* noted that Irving did not deliver effectively another line that indicates that the Duke of Gloucester is more complex psychologically than he appears on the surface: *The Times* called the following lines the Duke's "one moment of remorse":

There is no creature loves me;  
And if I die no soul shall pity me.\(^{15}\)


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Although Irving's interpretation of the character tended to be more melodramatic than Shakespeare intended, the characterization was generally well received both by the critics and the Lyceum's audiences. Irving's conception of the part was original and his portrayal was more "natural" than audiences had been used to in the interpretations of Cibber's character. An examination of Irving's script will further illustrate the nature of his Duke of Gloucester.

The Text

Irving approached his stage version of Richard the Third as he had his productions of Hamlet and Macbeth, with the full text of Shakespeare's play before him. Irving had an edition of the play published in 1874 by Longmans, Green, and Company, which contained the full text of the play.\(^{16}\) This text was used to make his studybook in which he noted his ideas for staging the production. Also, he had an older promptbook of an earlier production which was basically Cibber's text in which Irving deleted Cibber and entered restorations from Shakespeare.\(^{17}\)

\(^{16}\) This promptbook is held in the Harvard Theatre Collection, uncatalogued.

\(^{17}\) This promptbook is held in the Folger Shakespeare Library, Rich III, 8.
Shakespeare's *Richard the Third* is epic in structure and depicts a particular historical sequence of events centered around the Duke of Gloucester's struggle for the throne. Along with the central action of Richard's manipulation of events and people, Shakespeare has placed throughout the play many lines and scenes which either help explain peripheral historical events or provide reaction to or reflections of the main course of events. In preparing his acting script, Irving chose to delete much of the material tangential to the primary thrust of the play in order to keep the playing time of the performance within reason. The plot of *Richard the Third* was thereby simplified at the expense of some of the historical material and many of the brilliant scenes that reflect Richard's evil character.

Before discussing the judgments Irving made in creating his acting edition, an overview of his excisions can be obtained from an examination of Table 4. The vast majority of the scenes were subject to deletions, and nine are omitted completely. As the table indicates, Irving deleted 1,669 lines out of 3,991, or about forty-three percent. (Irving's text was fifty-eight lines shorter than Cibber's.)

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18 The standard text used in Table 4 is the Folger Library edition of *Richard the Third*, general editor Louis B. Wright, published by the Washington Square Press in 1960. The line number references in this chapter correspond to this edition.
Table 4

Comparison of Scene Length of Standard Text of *Richard the Third* and Irving’s Version

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*Plus twenty-three lines transposed from various acts and scenes.

**Irving divides the standard scene iii into five separate scenes.
As Table 4 illustrates, Irving did not follow the standard division of act and scenes, but gave special attention to the beginning and especially the ending of the acts and scenes in order to bring down the curtain on a theatrically exciting moment. A brief discussion of how Irving changed these portions will illustrate his keen sense of theatrical effectiveness in lowering the curtain at a dramatic moment, an important directorial concern.

Irving follows the usual opening of the play with Richard's "Now is the winter of our discontent" soliloquy. With a few deletions, he plays the first scene through to the end. However, he does not take a scene break; instead Irving continues with the Lady Anne's entrance and the funeral procession of Henry the Sixth. The procession stops and the scene continues without a break. Irving ends his Act I with the wooing scene of Richard and Lady Anne (the standard I, ii).

Irving's Act II begins with the confrontation between Richard and Queen Elizabeth at the palace in London (the standard I, iii). Scene ii is the murder of Clarence in the Tower (the standard I, iv). At the end of the scene, Irving omits the thirteen lines after the Second Murderer's:

How fain, like Pilate, would I wash my hand
Of this most grievous murder done!

Irving ends the scene on the act of the murder rather than on the bickering between the two murderers. Scene iii (the
standard II, i) is King Edward and his court at the palace. This scene concludes Irving's Act II, which culminates with the plotting of Richard and Buckingham, and not with the standard ending in which the Duchess of York, Queen Elizabeth, and the young Duke of York leave the palace for the sanctuary of the Church (the standard II, iv).

Irving follows the standard beginning of Act III which is the meeting of Richard and Buckingham with Prince Edward. At the end of the scene, Irving follows his practice of omitting the exit lines of the characters in order to put more attention on the more important matters of the scene. In this instance, Irving deletes the last two lines of Richard's final speech of the scene:

Buckingham: I'll claim that promise at your Grace's hand.

Richard: And look to have it yielded with all kindness. Come, let us sup betimes, that afterwards We may digest our complots in some form. (224-27)

Another example of this type of change occurs at the end of Act III, which is the standard end of the act and is set at Baynard's Castle in London: the scene in which Buckingham "persuades" Richard to become king before the Lord Mayor and citizens of London. The act closes on Buckingham's line:

Then I salute you with this royal title-- Long live King Richard, England's worthy King! (251-52)
Thus, the act ends with the crowd shouting "Long live King Richard!"—a much more exciting ending than the original dialogue in which Buckingham and Richard set the time of the coronation.

Irving omits the opening scene of the standard Act IV which shows the Duchess of York, Queen Elizabeth, and Lady Anne coming to visit the young Duke of York. Irving opens his Act IV with King Richard upon the throne, plotting the murder of his nephews in the Tower. Again the attention is on Richard and his rise to the throne, and not on those who got in his way. Act IV ends with the standard IV, v, as Richard receives news that Buckingham has been captured. Irving omits the standard ending, scene vi, in which Stanley sends a message to Richmond. Thus, the act closes on the action of Richard, not on the reaction of other characters.

Irving's Act V opens with Richard at Bosworth Field (the standard V, iii). Irving omits the first two scenes of the act. In the standard text, Richard sets up his camp on one side of the stage, and later Richmond encamps on the other side. This arrangement allows the ghosts to appear in both camps as the two combatants sleep. Irving's aesthetic sense, however, did not permit showing two different places at once on a stage. Therefore, Irving breaks the standard iii into five separate scenes—alternating between Richard's and Richmond's camps. In Irving's version,
the ghosts appear only in Richard's dreams, omitting their references to Richmond. The ghosts of Prince Edward, Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan are omitted. Irving's scene iii ends with Richard's speech as he wakes from his dream. Irving's final scene, scene vi, combines the standard iv and v, ending when Richard is slain.

In selecting the portions of the play to be excised, Irving chooses lines that fall into the following general categories: he tends to omit sections that reflect the evil actions of Richard; he reduces the political impact of the action on the English people; he omits many references to the historical background of the play; he reduces the role of Queen Margaret and her curses; he limits the amount of oration in certain scenes; and, naturally, he deletes a few lines because of their vulgarity. An examination of each of these types of deletions will illustrate Irving's approach to the script.

The largest portion of deleted material is the scenes and portions of scenes that depict the results of Richard's actions on other characters and provide a reflection of Richard's evil character. For example, Irving omits the scene where Clarence's children learn of their father's death in which the treachery of Richard is shown, for he will not even stop with deceiving nor even murdering his own niece and nephew.
Although Irving does stage the murder of Clarence (the standard I, ii), the scene is greatly reduced in length. The opening dialogue between Clarence and Brakenbury (who has replaced the Keeper) is retained with only a few lines deleted. The murderers enter as Clarence sleeps. The Second Murderer hesitates because of the "dregs of conscience," Clarence wakes and cries "In God's name, what art thou?" (line 167). And he is killed. Irving omits the long exchange between Clarence and the murderers—116 lines. By eliminating this portion of the scene, Irving continues his limitation of reflective material.

There are several examples of entire scenes expunged because they show the results of Richard's evil actions. The scene in which Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan are led to their deaths at Pomfret Castle (standard II, iii) is omitted, as is Buckingham's similar scene. Irving also omits Stanley's scene in which he sends a messenger to Richmond telling of his change in loyalty. Also omitted are Richmond's later reference to the hostage (Stanley's son), and Stanley's visit to Richmond's camp.

Perhaps the deletion that most illustrates Irving's omission of scenes which provide reflections of Richard's action, rather than focusing on Richard, is Irving's arrangement of the text at the end of the play. After Richard is slain by Richmond, the play ends quickly with the following seven lines by Richmond (out of Shakespeare's original forty-three):
God and your arms be praised, victorious friends!
The day is ours.
We will unite the White Rose and the Red.
Smile heaven upon this fair conjunction,
That long have frowned upon their enmity!
Now civil wounds are stopped, peace lives again;
That she may long live here, God say amen!

Now that Richard is dead little else interests Irving. The fate of Lord Stanley's son is left unresolved. The fate of Richard's supporters is also unknown. Richmond's moving speech in which he pleas for peace to return to the land so long ravished by civil war is also omitted, for Richard is dead, and Richard was the play. The return of the country to equilibrium by the marriage of Richmond and Elizabeth goes unmentioned.

The character of Richard is not amenable to separation from the political environment of the play as Irving had done in Hamlet. Nevertheless, Irving did manage to diminish the political implications of the play. Irving reduced what might be called the "public concern" that is the effect which the struggle for the throne had on the English people. For example, the scene in which three London citizens speak of the people's fear that civil disorder is about to return to England, and that Gloucester nor the Prince's uncles are trusted by the citizenry (standard II, iii) is omitted. Another public scene deleted is the short speech by the Scrivener (standard III, vi) that reveals the people's opinion that Hastings is being executed unjustly, but the nature of the time prevents them from objecting:
Bad is the world, and all will come to nought
When such ill dealing must be seen in thought. (14-15)

A similar example is the deletion of Hasting's prophesy of
bad times for England as he exits to his death. Perhaps the
most noticeable omission of the public concern is seen in
Irving's revision of the play's ending. As noted above,
Irving plays only seven of the last forty-three lines.
Aside from leaving several matters unsettled, such as what
became of Richard's supporters--Norfolk, Brakenbury, Bran-
don, etc.--Richmond's plea for the return of peace to the
land and forgiveness for all "traitors" is omitted, as is
the specific mention of the marriage of Richmond and Eliza-
beth. Irving's seven line conclusion hardly restores the
sense of balance and equilibrium so upset by Richard.

Another type of omission is Irving's limiting of the
historical background of the play. For example, Irving
tends to simplify the scene between Queen Elizabeth and the
Earl of Derby's wife by eliminating the reference to the
conflict between them (Act I, scene iii). A similar cut-
ting is the elimination of extended references to exposi-
tory material, such as Richard's account of the history of
Queen Elizabeth's husband and his death and other earlier
conflicts (Act I, scene iii). The following speech of
Richard (Act I, sceneiii) is omitted, for example:
In all which time you and your husband Grey
Were factious for the house of Lancaster:
And, Rivers, so were you. Was not your husband
In Margaret's battle at St. Albans slain:

[EtC.]

While Irving does not eliminate the background necessary to understand the conflict between Queen Elizabeth and Richard, he does reduce or eliminate some of the more lengthy references to them. Another example of elimination of historical material occurs in the opening of Clarence's death scene (standard I, iv) when Clarence talks with Brakenbury (the Keeper); the dialogue remains unchanged until Clarence falls back to sleep, except his reference to the history of civil war:

. . . thence we looked toward England
And cited up a thousand heavy times,
During the wars of York and Lancaster,
That had befall'n us.

Irving specifically reduced references to the previous history of the events in the play wherever possible without omitting essential information.

An interesting series of deletions occur in Irving's handling of the various curses spoken by the bitter Queen Margaret. Irving retains the character of Queen Margaret in his version of the play, but her role is reduced in size and importance. Her first scene (standard I, iii) in which she curses those who created her sorrow is retained. Irving omits, however, her last appearance (standard IV, iv) when she joins Queen Elizabeth and the Duchess of York in
lamenting the deaths caused by Richard, a powerful scene that provides a sounding of the depth of Richard's evil. Gone is the intense scene of the old Queen's rejoicing that her curse has been fulfilled. Little is left of this portion except a short lament between the Duchess of York and Queen Elizabeth over the death of the princes. In addition to the reduction of the significance of Queen Margaret's curses, Irving also eliminates the Duchess of York's cursing of Richard:

Therefore take with thee my most grievous curse,  
Which in the day of battle thee more  
Than all the complete armour that thou wearest!  

(standard IV, iv)

Irving thus totally eliminates the motif of prophetic curses in the play. Perhaps his reason was to shorten the length of the play, but these deletions could also indicate Irving's belief in the romantic philosophy of freedom of action, which would cause him to find unacceptable the idea of a previsioned end.

Another reason for deletions in the Irving script is a reduction of dialogue that is forensic in nature, such as the long speeches of Buckingham as he "persuades" Richard to accept the throne (standard III, vii). This reduction occurs from the entrance of Richard at line 100 and continues to the end of the scene at line 261: out of 161 lines Irving cuts almost half. Typical of the deletions is part of Buckingham's plea to Richard:
Know then, it is your fault that you resign
The supreme seat, the throne majestic,
The scept'red office of your ancestors,
Your state of fortune and your due of birth,
The lineal glory of your royal house,
To the corruption of a blemished stock;
Whiles, in the mildness of your sleepy thoughts,
Which here we waken to our country's good.
The noble isle doth want her proper limbs;
Her face defaced with scars of infamy,
Her royal stock graft with ignoble plants,
And almost should'ved in the swallowing gulf
Of dark forgetfulness and deep oblivion.
Which to recure, we heartily solicit
Your gracious self to take on you the charge
And kingly government of this your land.

Of this speech, Irving retains only the last three lines, beginning with "we heartily solicit." This is not to say that Irving eliminates the give and take between Richard and Buckingham as they fool the Lord Mayor and citizens of London. However, Irving does shorten the scene by cutting some of the more verbose portions of the dialogue. There are several other instances where Irving makes the same sort of deletions. The scene where Richard persuades Queen Elizabeth to consent to his marriage to her daughter (standard IV, iv) is cut from 268 lines to seventy. Richard's line of argument in Irving's version is stripped of the verbal battle between the two. This abbreviated version does nothing to further its believability, which taxes credibility even when played with the full text. Oratorical material is also deleted in Irving's shortened version of Richard's speech to his soldiers, and later in Richmond's speech to his men which is almost entirely omitted.
Naturally, there are those lines that are deleted for reasons of vulgarity or coarseness of language. The instances of this are not many in Richard the Third. The largest portion omitted for this reason are some of the more vile descriptions used by Lady Anne in her confrontation with Richard over the body of her husband (standard I, ii). Omitted are such lines of Lady Anne as:

If thou delight to view thy heinous deeds,
Behold this pattern of thy butcheries.
O gentlemen, see, see, dead Henry's wounds
Open their concealed mouths and bleed afresh!
Blush, blush, thou lump of foul deformity;
For 'tis thy presence that exhales this blood
From cold and empty veins where no blood dwells.

Toward the end of this scene, Irving deletes the sequence where Lady Anne spits at him. Occasionally, individual words are eliminated such as Lady Anne's calling Richard a "hedgehog," later the word "sweating" is omitted. Another example of this type of omission is the stronger lines in Queen Margaret's attack on Richard (standard II, iii) such as:

Thou slander of thy heavy mother's womb!
Thou loathed issue of thy father's loins!

All in all, however, Richard the Third does not contain many lines that Irving thought necessary to delete because they would be objectionable to Victorian taste.
One final type of textual alteration may be mentioned: changes required to accommodate Irving's concept of staging the play. The most noticeable and damaging accommodation Irving made with the text was dividing the appearances of the ghosts in the camps of Richard and Richmond in the last act of the play. By not permitting the appearance of both camps on stage at the same time, many lines had to be omitted, and several changes of scenery interrupted the dramatic effect of the ghosts.

The question of what Irving did with the dialogue Shakespeare assigned to the crowds is a relevant concern. Richard the Third provides only two scenes in which crowds have specific dialogue. At the end of the scene where Richard is "persuaded" by Buckingham to accept the crown (standard III, vii), the Lord Mayor and Aldermen say "Amen" to Buckingham's salute to Richard. Irving omits the "Amen" and the following exit lines of the characters, and replaces it with a line for "all": "Long live King Richard," a somewhat more exciting way to end an act. The only other place a crowd is given lines occurs in the camp of Richard (standard V, iii) which is a conversation between the Lords and Richmond as he wakes from his night's slumber. Irving gives these lines to Blunt—an elimination of the crowd's dialogue. Irving, then, did not fully involve crowds in his staging of Richard the Third.
The Technical Elements

Without the promptbook of the stage manager or the prompter, little can be said of the mounting of this play, except by inference from the textual changes just discussed. A few notes were made by Irving in his studybook which give some indication of the nature of the technical arrangements for his production, however. It is regretted that the critics of the newspapers and periodicals did not describe the scenery and effects in any detail, for little information was obtained from the reviews of the period. In fact, it appears that the critics tended to ignore Irving's production of Richard the Third, perhaps because his previous two productions, Macbeth and Othello, had been disappointing.

The scenery and other technical elements of the production received general approval from the critic of The Athenaeum, who usually did not favor the Lyceum productions: "The general mounting of the play is admirable." He did not elaborate. The Times indicated that "the play is well and handsomely placed upon the stage. The scenery is good, the dresses correct and sumptuous, and the general decoration

and appointments in all respects such as they should be.  

Irving made several sketches in his studybook that indicated the floorplan of a few scenes; the floorplan indicates no change from his previous practice. The opening of Irving's Act II (standard I, iii) is set in the palace in London. King Edward is sitting in a chair center stage, with his court scattered around the periphery of the set filling up the spaces between the grooves. The King and his court are discovered as the curtain goes up. The opening arrangement of the characters for Act III, scene i, also shows this familiar placement: two rows of six guards were far up stage center, a group of lords filling up R.2.E. and R.3.E., and directly opposite them were Rivers, Ratcliff, Catesby and others. The principal characters, Richard, Hastings, and the Prince, were down stage center. During this scene the Lord Mayor enters with his entourage—twenty-three characters plus lords and guards. Later in the production, the setting and positioning of characters present a perfectly symmetrical picture. For the opening of Act IV (standard IV, ii), King Richard is seated on his throne which is up stage center with a page to either side, a group of lords

20 "Shakespeare's Richard the Third," The Times (London), February 1, 1877, p. 6.
on the stage right side, lined up along the edge of the wings filling the entrances; opposite them is another group of lords. In the center are those characters who have dialogue in the scene: Buckingham, Ratcliff, and later Stanley.

One description of Richard's setting for Act V, iii, Richard's tent, is provided by Laurence Irving:

The king's tent filled the stage. A small red lamp on the table gave it its only illumination, and the blood-guilty Plantagenet sat scanning the plans of the morrow's battle array. Presently he put the paper from him, and with a groan of weariness rose, turned, limped his way to the back of the tent, and drew its entrance curtains apart, disclosing a scene steeped in moon light and a sky glittering with stars.21

Only one other lighting effect is mentioned, the moon was shining on Clarence at the opening of his death scene in the Tower.

The Cast

The adequacy of the Lyceum supporting cast was commented upon by several critics of the time. The Times reported that the low quality of the cast was the single most distracting element:

It is a pity that the general tone of the acting is not more worthy of the occasion. It would make that which is already good seem even better, and supply the one thing wanting to complete a most interesting and, in so many respects, a most able performance. 22

The Athenaeum was a little more blunt. After commenting upon Irving, the critic wrote, "The remainder of the cast affords little opportunity for favourable comment." 23 Dutton Cook, however, was more specific in his criticism of the poor quality of the cast:

The fact that the Lyceum company includes several very inefficient performers may be accepted as a sufficient reason for the excision of much matter which otherwise might well have been retained . . . . If, for instance, we are to have a ranting Duke of Clarence, it seems but prudent to limit his opportunities of speech; and so, considering the monotonous violence of Miss Bateman's Margaret of Anjou, there is sound judgment manifested in the elimination of that vociferous character from the later acts of the tragedy. 24

It is interesting that the quality of the cast drew so much negative reaction from these critics.

22 "Shakespeare's Richard the Third," The Times (London), February 1, 1877, p. 6.


Summary

In creating his acting version of Richard the Third, Irving rejected the popular Cibber adaptation of the play, and created his stage script from Shakespeare's play. Irving omitted a significant portion of the text, over forty percent, by deleting material that was not related to the actor's main interest in the play—the Duke of Gloucester. Irving revised the endings of several scenes to make them more theatrical. And, finally, Irving's aesthetic sense required extensive revision and omission of portions of the last act of the play. Of course, any adaptation of the play is going to require deletions if it, utilizing the staging techniques of the late nineteenth century, is to meet the limitations of a reasonable playing time. As Baker indicated, "all allowance, however, should be made for the difficult and delicate task that lay before the adapter." 25 Irving's text and production did have one very positive effect on the London stage: it removed forever the version of Colley Cibber. As Baker concluded after Irving's production:

Those . . . who after listening to the incomparable language of Shakespeare, and witnessing the superiority of his magnificent play, can ever again tolerate the rubbish which has usurped its place for a century and a half, can have little pretensions to taste.  

Although the technical aspects of the production are not described in any significant detail, it is probable that the scenery and other technical elements were similar to Irving's previous two productions. Certainly, had they been the elaborate scenic displays for which Irving's later productions were celebrated, more would have been said of them. The Lyceum stage was still utilizing the wing and groove system of shifting scenery, and the symmetrical settings and blocking imposed by this system was still evident in the Richard the Third production.

Negative criticism of the Lyceum cast was especially elicited by this production, and pointed out a weakness of which Irving must have previously been aware. In his next production, Irving resolved this problem.

Nevertheless, the Lyceum and Irving were again successful in the realm of Shakespearean production. And, as the critic for The Illustrated London News concluded:

This theatre has again been distinguished by a movement in the right direction— that of dramatic reform.  

26. Ibid.

CHAPTER V

THE HAMLET PRODUCTION OF 1878

Introduction

The extraordinary interest which has been manifested in the reopening of the Lyceum Theatre under the management of Mr. Irving betokens an impression that hitherto that distinguished actor, though so long associated with this theatre, has not been entirely free to carry out the policy which he is desirous of adopting in the direction of that house. Much gratitude is due to the Bateman management; but it may yet be confessed that the system hitherto adopted at this theatre has not reached an ideal standard of excellence. Mr. Irving's reign commences with abundant signs of vigour. Mr. Irving recommences with a revival of Hamlet, which has not in itself any sort of novelty, having been performed and revived so often since its first production on this stage four years since. Changes, however, have been introduced, both into the play and into the cast, which are important and significant of the spirit of the management.¹

The critic for The Graphic in the above quotation proposed what is the purpose of this chapter: to examine Irving's 1878 production of Hamlet in order to discern his directorial practices as they had been developed to that time.

Irving planned the 1878 production as the grand opening of his tenure as manager of the Lyceum. Irving assumed the lease of the theatre from Mrs. Bateman on the first of September, 1878.² And, by the middle of October, Irving had decided upon Hamlet as the production for the opening of the theatre under his aegis on December 30, 1878.³ In an address to an audience in Liverpool, Irving gave the following reasons for becoming manager of the Lyceum:

When actor turns manager, it is not with a greedy wish to monopolize either profits or opportunities. I, at least, most earnestly profess that it will be my aim at the Lyceum Theatre, of which I am now the manager, to associate upon the stage all the arts and all the talents within my power to subsidize, so as to make the theatre a true school of dramatic art.⁴

The 1878 Hamlet is significant, as The Graphic indicates, because it is Irving's first production as sole lessee and manager of the Lyceum, and offers a view of Irving as actor-manager without the influence of Bateman, the reluctant manager of the 1874 Hamlet. And, in his new office, Irving made changes both as a manager and as a director that effected the quality of the productions at the Lyceum.

²Lawrence Irving, Irving, p. 305.

³Ibid., p. 332.

⁴"Echoes from the Green-Room," Theatre, I, N.S. (October, 1878), 250.
First, Irving engaged Alfred Darbyshire to renovate the interior of the theatre, changes that primarily enhanced the appearance and comfort of the house. The renovations included putting backs and "rails" on the seats in the orchestra, as well as the gallery. Also, the auditorium was painted sage green and turquoise blue. In addition, Irving added the unusual feature of a fireplace in the lower vestibule which was lit when the weather required. Finally, Irving had Hawes Craven paint a new act drop. Apparently, the new act drop was as close as Irving got to the stage itself in his renovations at this time, at least there is no mention of alterations of the stage in the papers or periodicals of the period.

A more important change came in the composition of the Lyceum company. Many of the old company were retained: Chippendale portrayed Polonius, Meade still played the Ghost, and Miss Pauncefort was again the Queen. Swinbourne changed, however, from the King to


7 Lawrence Irving, Irving, p. 311.


Horatio. The new actors included Mr. Forrester who played the King; a young actor named Arthur Wing Pinero, later to become a playwright, played Guildenstern; and, of greatest importance, Ellen Terry became Irving's co-star as Ophelia. The significance of adding Miss Terry to the company was noted by The Theatre:

By engaging so gifted and accomplished an actress as Miss Terry, the new manager has begun well, and a further proof that 'all-around excellence' is aimed at is to be found in the fact that Mr. Forrester has been added to the company.\textsuperscript{10}

Up-grading the quality of the company was a decision made by Irving the director, and was paid for by part of the 8,000 pounds that Irving as manager spent in preparation for the Hamlet production, half of which went for the renovation of the theatre, the rest going for production and rehearsal costs and new scenery--a significant difference when compared with the 100 pounds Bateman allotted Irving for the 1874 Hamlet.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{10}"Echoes from the Green-Room," Theatre, I, N.S. (October, 1878), 250.

\textsuperscript{11}Lawrence Irving, Irving, p. 312.
Before the changes which Irving made in the direction of the play are examined, a brief look at his portrayal of Hamlet will provide a background for subsequent discussion. Irving's conception of the part "remains substantially the same as before, but [it] seems to have gained in clearness of outline, force of expression, and variety of illustrative detail," according to *The Theatre*. The *Illustrated London News* also noted an improvement in Irving's interpretation:

Mr. Irving has greatly improved since we last saw him as the Prince of Denmark. Though not yet entirely divested of some eccentricities, he has subdued many, and now presents a more severe outline with fewer irregularities. In a word, he has profoundly studied the part, and brings out minute points with as much delicacy as, on the other hand, he expresses the more violent emotions with corresponding vehemence and force.*

"Profoundly" studying a part was basic to Irving's approach to a character; his interpretation of Hamlet in 1874 has been noted for its originality. And, his 1878 Hamlet was basically the same as the earlier one. Again

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12 *At the Play: In London,* *Theatre, II, N.S.* (February, 1879), 46.


Irving rejected the traditional points of the part and created a character which was "free from the bonds of tradition."\textsuperscript{14} As Irving interpreted Hamlet in 1878 he was "essentially tender and noble [in] nature, and therefore no more fitted to accomplish the terrible mission confided to him than 'a vase of porcelain to hold an oak.'"\textsuperscript{15} This description is very much like the following description of Irving's Hamlet which appeared in The Times in 1874:

\begin{quote}
... essentially tender, loving, and merciful. He is not a weak man called upon to do something beyond his powers, but he is a kindly man urged to do a deed, which ... may be righteous, but which is yet cruel.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

Thus, as sole lessee and manager, Irving set out on a course that in the following two decades would take him to the height of the English theatrical world, and would crown both him and his profession by the recognition of a knighthood bestowed in 1895, the first ever bestowed upon an actor. With an improved cast, a renovated theatre, sufficient funds to permit proper rehearsal time and to meet the cost of new scenery, and with

\textsuperscript{14}"At the Play: In London," Theatre, II, N.S. (February, 1879), 47.

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{16}"Lyceum Theatre," The Times (London), November 2, 1874, p. 8.
an improved interpretation of the title character, Irving revived Hamlet with many changes in its staging which illustrate his development as a director.

An Analysis of the Directorial Aspects of the 1878 Hamlet as Compared with the 1874 Production

The 1878 production of Hamlet was essentially the 1874 production with occasional changes made by Irving in the staging of the play.\textsuperscript{17} Rather than reconstruct the entire 1878 production, a brief look at each scene with attention focused on a comparison of the productions provides the information necessary to detect the development of Irving as a director.

Irving's version of the text for Act I, scene i in the 1878 production is nearly identical to his Hamlet of 1874. There are no textual changes up to the first exit of the Ghost, except the two lines of Bernardo and Horatio that indicate they sit at one point are eliminated just as they were in 1874. Bernardo's line in question is:

\begin{center}
\underline{17}J. A. Allen's promptbook for the 1878 Hamlet was used for the reconstruction of this production. The promptbook is held in the Shakespeare Centre, 72.907/Irving. A microfilm copy is held in The Ohio State University Theatre Research Institute, McDowell, P. 1937.
\end{center}
Sit down awhile,
And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story,
What we have two nights seen.

Horatio responds:

Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

In addition to cutting Bernardo's "Sit down awhile," in 1878 Irving changes "and let us once again" to "come let us once again;" also, he again deletes Horatio's "Well, sit we down," but he now changes "And let us hear Bernardo" to "Well let us hear Bernardo." In both instances, Irving is making his omissions less noticeable by a minor change in wording.

The remainder of the deletions in the scene are the exact ones Irving made in 1874: the discussion of the history of war between Denmark and Norway, and the current preparations for war with young Fortinbras are completely eliminated; and, a few lines that further the credibility of the supernatural are deleted, such as Horatio's description of the occurrences before Julius fell.

There is one restoration, however, in this scene, and it occurs just after the cock crows and the Ghost disappears:
Bernardo: 'Tis here!
Horatio: 'Tis here!
Marcellus: 'Tis here!' (lines 141-42)

This restoration is probably related to the use of a second ghost, discussed below.

The greatest change in staging the opening of the play is that Irving used the full stage (fifth grooves) for "A Platform Before the Castle," as opposed to a set in the second grooves as before. The critic for The Graphic said that "the most striking change in the performance . . . is the scenery."  

18 The new scenery for the opening illustrated "the battlements at Elsinore, with illuminated windows of the palace in the background."  

19 Not only did this set draw praise for its beauty, the added space had a very positive effect on the blocking, especially on the appearances of the Ghost.

The blocking is almost the same as in 1874 except that the greater depth of the set allowed the actors to use the deep as well as shallow exits.

Irving's technique of gentle balancing of movements of actors and creation of the focus of attention on the


more important actor in a particular sequence is evident. One small change in the blocking corrects a problem noted in the earlier production. After Francisco has been relieved he exited R.1.E. in 1874, apparently in order to balance the entrance from L.2.E. made by Marcellus. In 1878, Irving recognized the illogicality of Francisco's exit toward the area in which he had been walking guard. Irving, disregarding his sense of balancing of entrances and exits, changed Francisco's exit to L.2.E., the direction from which his relief came.

Later in the scene, as in the earlier production, Bernardo, Marcellus, and Horatio overload the up stage right area in preparation for the entrance of the Ghost at L.4.E. (instead of L.1.E. as in 1874). Its second appearance is made from R.4.E., and the Ghost remains far up stage during this scene. By removing the Ghost from the footlights, Irving was able to make the phantasmic appearance of the Ghost more believable.

The critic for The Theatre approved of this arrangement:

The ghost now no longer stalks--that is we believe the correct term--on a narrow border of the stage between the footlights and a forward painted cloth to the destruction of his ghostly dignity. By an arrangement, originally suggested by Mr. Tom Taylor,
the scene is so constructed as to allow of the phantom appearing to Marcellus, Bernardo, and Horatio, on the battlements of the castle. 20

Since the depth of the setting is greater, Irving had to expand his lighting. The green float lights were used as before, set at "1/2 up." Irving adds "border battens 1/4 up-Blue Mediums on." Irving followed his earlier practice of playing this scene in dim light, and whenever the Ghost appeared, the floats would be taken down "sharp." The Ghost would then appear in the distance in the "Blue Mediums" with the limelight on him and his glass truncheon. And, when the Ghost exited, the floats would be brought up "sharp."

At the end of the scene, the promptbook indicates "when all off, darken for change of scene." Evidence regarding whether or not the house lights were off or lowered during the performance has not been found. However, we at least know the stage lighting instruments were "darkened."

Irving retained his special effects in this scene, special music that accompanied the appearance of the Ghost, this time there is a specific cue for a "cock crow," the bell tolls occasionally, the star

20"Theatres," Graphic, January 4, 1879, p. 7. This staging of the Ghost had been used in Tom Taylor's production of the play at the Crystal Palace in 1873.
twinkles at the appropriate time, and the Ghost still carries his glass truncheon. 21 An interesting note occurs before the scene begins that says "Ghost double, behind set piece L.C." The promptbook does not indicate where the second ghost made its appearance, but it was probably just after the cock crows when Bernardo and Marcellus seem to see it at two different places as they each cry "'Tis here!" (lines 141-42).

With the exception of a two-line deletion, the text of Act I, scene ii is identical to the 1874 production. As in 1874, Irving eliminates references to Fortinbras and the threat of war--this accounts for about half of the eliminated lines. Also, the characters of Cornelius and Voltemand, messengers to Norway, are cut as a result of elimination of the Fortinbras subplot. The remaining lines deleted are from those speeches of the King which amplify his request for Hamlet to remain in Denmark. The new deletion is from the lines of Polonius, where he answers the King that Laertes has his permission to leave; cut is:

By laborsome a petition, and at last
Upon his will I sealed my hard consent.

This omission is not of great importance to the general composition of the 1878 text.

The setting for "a room of state in the castle" is a series of four wings with a backing piece, just as it was in 1874. The placement of the throne up stage left, and a chair down stage of the throne, and one directly opposite, is exactly the configuration of the earlier production (see Plate XI for the 1878 ground plan). There is one difference in the 1878 setting: the throne is placed on a higher platform than before, using two steps instead of one. By placing the King and Queen higher, Irving adds a little more variety to the setting and permits better contact between the court and the King and Queen since now Polonius, Laertes, etc., do not look down on the royal couple as they speak to them. Notice also in Plate XI that the steps are of a more graceful design than the 1874 platform unit: they are curved rather than square. No evidence of the painting of the backing and the wings has been discovered; perhaps the setting for Act III, scene ii of Forbes-Robertson's production of Hamlet is similar (see Plate XII).²²

²²Forbes-Robertson borrowed Irving's 1878 Hamlet scenery for his 1897 production. Compare, too, Plate XII with Irving's setting for the same scene in Plate V, notice especially the motif on the arches. See Raymond Mander and Joe Mitcheson, Hamlet Through the Ages (London: Rockliff Salisbury Square, 1952), p. 68.
PLATE XI

FLOORPLAN FOR HAMLET (1878),

ACT I, SCENE ii
Boating

Guard

Pages behind Chains

Hamlet

Peas wing

Peas wing

R. 2 & 3.

Heratic

Marcellus

Bernardo
PLATE XII

SETTING FOR FORBES-ROMPTON'S HAMLET,

ACT I, SCENE iii
Irving adds a bit of business at the opening of the scene that he did not use earlier: two of the King's pages enter and place a chair for Hamlet down stage left of the throne, they also put "skins" in front of the chair and throne, then cross to their posts behind the throne. The blocking in the scene is the basic design of the earlier production, utilizing the techniques described above in this chapter and Chapter II. Two changes are to be noted, however. First, Irving adds ten extras to the scene giving him forty-three actors on stage instead of thirty-three as in the 1874 production. One interesting addition is the "court fool" who is assigned a prominent position just up stage of the throne. The procession enters from L.4.E. rather than R.U.E. in the previous performance. The second change is in the disposition of the actors after the initial entrance (see Plate XI). In his original production, the court generally makes a curved line from the right proscenium wing up to and in front of the guard up stage center. This meant the King and Queen generally ignored part of the court during the dialogue. In 1878, however, Irving has moved the ladies that were in front of the guards to just up stage of the chair in R.2.E., thus placing the entire court slightly down stage of the King and Queen and allowing all of the court in a more realistic position for action and
reaction to the royal couple. Hence, Irving's staging of this opening makes the actors less decoration, and more a part of the action. Notice that Irving retains the six guards up center, but that he has added two pages, making a total of six, and a court fool, which help to balance the stage picture.

The lighting for the scene appears to be as it was in his earlier staging: the lights were "full on" at the opening and remained so until the end of the scene. There is no direction to darken the stage at the end of the scene, but undoubtedly this is what happened because the opening of scene iii has the note "lights full on" at the beginning of the scene.

The sound effects in scene ii were the same as in 1874: the scene change from scene i to scene ii was made while march music was playing softly, the procession entered to the music which died away as the King began to speak.

In scene iii, Irving continues to polish and improve his earlier text. Again he changes a word to make a line following a deletion more logical. In this instance, Laertes opening speech is changed:

My necessaries are embarked. Farewell. And, sister, as the winds give benefit And convoy is assistant, do not sleep, But let me hear from you. (lines 1-4)
Irving cuts the third line in this speech in both of his productions. But, in the later text, he changes "But let me hear from you" to "Pray let me hear from you," thus making the deletion less noticeable. The part of Polonius is treated much more respectfully in Irving's second version, for rather than cutting the part by thirty-nine lines, he only cuts part of Polonius' warning to Ophelia to beware of Hamlet's intentions, some fourteen lines. The most significant point, however, is the almost complete restoration of Polonius' advice to Laertes that begins:

And these few precepts in thy memory  
See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue.  
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.  
[Etc.]

Thus, Irving is allowing fuller revelation of the character of Polonius.23

The setting for "a room in Polonius' house" is set in the first grooves as in the earlier production. The blocking is a repetition of the 1874 plan, utilizing the pleasant balancing of moves in coordination

23 The promptbook for the 1878 Hamlet was made of pages from Irving's 1878 published edition of the play. Nevertheless, Irving made further deletions as he prepared his production; and, therefore, an examination of his acting edition will not reveal to the reader the 1878 Hamlet text precisely as it was presented in actual performance.
with the dialogue. There appears to be no change in the staging of the 1878 production of scene ii, aside from the textual matters noted above.

The bell tolls twelve times, and the scene returns to the opening setting, the platform before the castle (I, iv). The setting is dimly lit as before. Hamlet and Horatio enter and join Marcellus who is already on guard. One minor change from the earlier production, aside from the physically different setting, is that Irving does not use the Ghost music during the scene change—only the striking of the bell. The text of scene iv is cut exactly as in the 1874 version, which was generally played as written.

The blocking is identical to the earlier production except that since the full stage is used, the entrances are made in the second entrances rather than in the first. The blocking of the trio is heavy on the stage right as the Ghost enters from L.2.E. putting the Ghost slightly down stage of Hamlet. The scene ends with Hamlet following it off stage at L.2.E., followed by Horatio and Marcellus.

The appearance of the Ghost and the lighting plan of the scene is the same as in scene i. At the end of the scene, the lighting is more refined than in the 1874 production. Earlier, Irving used the green floats off, with the limelight on the Ghost as he and Hamlet
exit, leaving Horatio and Marcellus to follow silently in the near dark of the stage. In 1878 Irving returned the green float to 1/2 up after the Ghost and Hamlet exit, so the exit of Horatio and Marcellus is made to the natural light, and not the ghost light, thereby cutting them off from contact with the Ghost and indicating by the lighting that Horatio and Marcellus are not with Hamlet and the Ghost and that the following scene between Hamlet and the Ghost would not be witnessed by the two sentries. When all were off stage, the promptbook directs "Lower all lights before change of scene."

As scene v opens, the Ghost is discovered up stage center in a deep setting. Plate XIII is a drawing of the Ghost from the 1878 promptbook. This is a completely different setting from the earlier production. The effect of the massive rock cliff overlooking the sea is described in The Theatre as:

The soft light of the moon falls upon the spectral figure; not a sound from below can be heard, and the first faint flushes of the dawn are stealing over the immense expanse of water before us. The weird grandeur of the scene can hardly be appreciated from description.

PLATE XIII

DRAWING OF GHOST, ACT I, SCENE v
Punch also approves of the picture created: "the change gives us an impressive and effective stage picture, and is an immense improvement on the closed glen shut in by mountains which it replaces at the Lyceum." 25

The text of this scene was only modified by a few minor omissions as was the case in 1874. There is one interesting restoration, however, as noted above. Toward the end of the scene, Hamlet requires Horatio and Marcellus to swear they will not reveal what they have witnessed. In the 1874 production, Irving cut fourteen lines (two "swearing" portions) of this sequence. In 1878, he restores these lines, and plays the end of the scene as written, so that Horatio and Marcellus swear at four different times at four different positions on stage. These restorations make the staging of the scene more dramatic by allowing the intensity of the scene to build longer as the trio move from place to place while the Ghost cries "Swear" from beneath the stage. Just before the Ghost exits, a lighting note indicates that the green floats were brought up a little (after the limelight is turned off) as the Ghost exits. Later as

Horatio and Marcellus swear not to reveal the apparition, the floats are brought up a little with the first two "swears," and on the third they are gradually turned from green to white, on the fourth the border battens are brought up. Thus, during the "swearing" sequence dawn has come. This is the same effect created in 1874, but in 1878 it is created more gradually, over a slightly longer period by the addition of two of the "swear" portions which were eliminated in 1874.

The blocking of the scene remains the same as in 1874. Notice in the lower left portion of the illustration in Plate XIII Irving retained the log used by Hamlet as he listens and reacts to the story of the Ghost. The scene closes as Hamlet is joined up stage right by Horatio and Marcellus, and as Hamlet turns his head towards where the ghost had been, the curtain is lowered at a "moderate" rate.

Despite the new setting for scene v, the critic for Punch was still not entirely satisfied; he restated an earlier criticism:

The mounting of the play at the Lyceum leaves little or nothing to be desired. The giving the Ghost the full range of the platform of Elsinore for his martial stalk, in the opening scene, is a conspicuous improvement, though not a new one. But, Punch is not yet satisfied that the Ghost has any business out of the Castle.26

26 Ibid.
The standard Act II, scene i, in which Polonius sends Reynaldo to visit Laertes and later in which Polonius first learns from Ophelia of Hamlet's strange behavior, was deleted from the 1874 production. In 1878, however, Irving restores the latter portion of the scene exactly as written from the entrance of Ophelia where she tells her father of Hamlet's appearance:

... with his doublet all unbraced,
No hat upon his head, his stockings fouled,
Ungarter'd, and down-gy'ed to his ankle,
Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
[etc.]

The scene ends as she and Polonius exit to tell the King of Hamlet's condition. Perhaps this restoration may be attributed to the fact that Irving wanted Ellen Terry to have the entire part of Ophelia to demonstrate her powers as an actress.

The staging of this scene was kept rather simple. The setting was the same as Act I, scene iii, a room in Polonius' house set in the first grooves. The light was just "white floats full on."

The text and staging of scene ii was essentially the same as it was in 1874. The only difference that can be determined from the promptbook is that Irving used the exact setting and arrangement of furniture in 1873 of Act I, scene ii--the throne with its curtain backing and two chairs down stage of the throne. In 1874, however, Irving removed the throne from the stage and the two chairs, and replaced all with just one chair
down left. (See Plate XIV for a sketch of the floor-plan of the 1874 setting, and compare with Plate XV which is the floorplan for this setting in 1878.)

The effect of utilizing the entire setting of Act I, scene ii, in this scene is that the actors are able to use the furniture to provide more variety in the blocking. For example, rather than having the King and Queen stand through their portion of the scene, the King is able to move to the right chair and sit just after the entrance of Polonius, as the King tells him "O speak of that [the cause of Hamlet's illness]; that do I long to hear." Later, Hamlet uses the throne by walking up on the steps when he says "He that plays the King shall be welcome," when he has heard of the arrival of the players. This is a minor change from his staging of this scene in 1874, but it is interesting because the throne and two chairs were available in 1874, and, then, Irving chose not to use them.

In addition to improvement in the blocking of this scene noted above, the initial arrangement of actors in 1878 was better planned than in 1874. An examination of Plate XIV which is of the 1874 production, and Plate XV, the 1878 staging, will illustrate this improvement. Notice the emptiness of the stage in Plate XIV as compared with the 1878 floorplan.
PLATE XIV

SKETCH OF FLOORPLAN FOR HAMLET (1874),

ACT II, SCENE ii

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PLATE XV

FLOORPLAN FOR HAMLET (1878),
ACT II, SCENE ii
Act 1.

Pages behind Chairs

King

Queen

Roo

Guild

Press wing

King goes up outside up RE
Compare also the placement of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern down left surrounding the chair and the two pages directly up stage of the King in Plate XIV. This clustering of actors is not evident in Irving's arrangement for 1874. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are set by themselves with the chair up stage and right of them in Plate XV. The King and Queen have changed placed giving the King center: it is the King who has the lines. The pages are moved to behind the throne on the platform which helps to break up the plane of the stage picture by adding actors at a higher level. Also, since the pages are behind the throne, they are not upstaging the King and thereby detracting from him. A more artistic arrangement of actors was used in 1874.

The opening scene of Act III is presented without any major change in the text, as was true of the 1874 version. A few more of the lines of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, in which they report the progress of their observation of Hamlet to the King and Queen, are cut in 1874. Irving retains his earlier change in the ending of the scene by having Ophelia exit after her last line:

O, woe is me
T' have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

and not waiting to exit with the King and Polonius. This, of course, necessitates deletion of Polonius' reference to Ophelia in his last line:
How now, Ophelia?
You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said;
We heard it all.

It seems probable, according to Irving's interpretation of this scene in *The Nineteenth Century*, that the actor-manager removed this line because it conflicted with his belief that Ophelia is not aware that her father and the King are using her to test Hamlet's condition. Irving maintains that Ophelia is not guilty of "complicity," although "she knew that the interview with Hamlet was devised."\(^\text{27}\) The early exit of Ophelia and the removal of Polonius' line to her helps Irving to ensure the acceptance of his interpretation.

The setting for this scene is exactly as it was in 1874, the throne has been moved down to the L.2.E. (see Plate XVI). The scheme for the blocking is a repeat of the earlier plan. One additional matter is known about the 1878 blocking, the King and Polonius hide behind the arras back of the throne (see Plate XVI). There is no indication of the lighting plan; probably it is all lights on full as was common with this setting in Act I, ii and Act II, ii.

\(^{27}\) Irving recorded his interpretation of this meeting in a very revealing article in which he thoroughly discusses the psychological state of Hamlet's mind and motivation for his lines in "An Actor's Notes on Shakspeare [sic.]," *Nineteenth Century*, May, 1877, p. 525.
PLATE XVI

FLOORPLAN FOR HAMLET (1878),

ACT III, SCENE i
After the King ends the standard scene i with "Madness in great ones must not unwatched go," he and Polonius exit. Then Hamlet enters with a player as in 1874. During the speech to the player and Hamlet's conversation with Horatio, the lighting gradually is changed for the Play Scene: the lights are gradually darkened, the limelight is turned on, and the batten lights are lowered.

As in 1874, what textual changes there are in the Play Scene occur primarily after the entrance of the King and Queen and the court to see the play. The pantomime is omitted again in 1878, and Irving's rewriting of the portion of dialogue following it is retained. The play within the play is cut in half. Also, the reaction of the King to the play is changed as it was in 1874. The only difference between this text and the earlier one is the seemingly random cutting of a few lines throughout the scene.

The staging of the Play Scene is identical with the earlier production. The platform, tressel, and bank for the actors are placed up stage center at the opening in the fourth groove. Torches are again carried on stage by the guards, recreating the festive and somewhat mysterious atmosphere of the Play Scene with the usual stage lighting low, and the limelight on the actors.
In the 1878 production, Irving retained the King's closet scene, just as he had in 1874. However, there is a significant change in the later version. Cut in both productions is the opening portion with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's discussion with the King; also cut is the appearance of Polonius. Both texts open with the King's speech, "O, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven." The similarity between the two productions ends here, however. Irving omits the appearance of Hamlet in the 1878 production. Also, Irving shortens the King's soliloquy by fourteen lines. Earlier Irving had received the approval of many critics for restoring this scene to the play; and, likewise, elimination of Hamlet from it in 1878 was "to be deplored."\(^{28}\)

The setting for the King's closet scene is rather simple. It is a set in the first grooves, bathed in blue light.

The Queen's closet scene closely follows the text of his 1874 production. However, no evidence of the nature of the scenery for this scene has been uncovered. Perhaps Irving followed his previous production

\(^{28}\)"Mr. Irving's Hamlet," Temple Bar, LV (January-April, 1879), 402.
and utilized a box set: the previous scene of the King at prayer allowed time for setting up a box set. The blocking directions only indicate that there was at least one chair in the set and a curtain for Polonius to hide behind. The lighting effects were a continuation of the ghost lighting whenever the Ghost appeared. As in 1874, the scene ends as Hamlet goes to the arras to get Polonius' body—there is no indication of repetition of the business in 1878.

The text of the scene drew no comment from the critics, but some aspects of the staging did. The critic for *Punch* repeated his earlier objection to Irving's use of imaginary portraits of his father and uncle:

*Punch* must still protest in as unqualified terms as ever against the absence of visible pictures in the Closet Scene. Counterfeit presentment can by no fair stress of words be made to mean the image of his father and of his uncle which Hamlet carries in his mind's eye.²⁹

The critic for *Temple Bar* also objected, in a mild way, to the imaginary portraits:

It may be doubted whether he is right in having no visible portraits of the two kings upon the scene, so that he points his mother's attention to air-drawn pictures only, or, as he suggests in a recent paper, to pictures on the fourth wall of the room . . . 30

While Irving's staging of the portraits portion was the same as in his earlier production, he did have one innovation in 1878: he dressed the Ghost according to a stage direction in the first quarto, "Enter the ghost in his night gowme." 31 This change drew favorable notice from The Theatre and Temple Bar. 32

As he did in 1874, Irving cuts the first four scenes of the standard Act IV. Irving's scene i is Ophelia's mad scene. The scene opens with the Queen and Marcellus (instead of a Gentleman), and the Queen says, "I will not speak with her." Marcellus pleads, "She is importunate, indeed distract." The rest of Marcellus' (i.e., a Gentleman's) lines are cut. Horatio's lines are given to Marcellus:

'Twere good she were spoken with, for she may strew Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

30"Mr. Irving's Hamlet," Temple Bar, LV (January-April, 1879), 402.


32Ibid., and "Mr. Irving's Hamlet," Temple Bar, LV (January-April, 1879), 402.
The Queen answers, "Let her come in." Thus the opening of the scene is shortened from twenty lines to five. Ophelia's portion of this scene is unchanged, except for the last part of her song that was not printed in the Clarendon edition. A noise is heard off stage; Marcellus enters and announces Laertes is coming with some men. The entrance of Laertes is very similar to the earlier production which changed the text considerably by almost eliminating the interaction between the crowd and the principal players. In 1878, Irving deletes two more lines: Laertes' "Where is the King?" and his line to his men, "I thank you, Keep the door."

The entrance of Ophelia interrupts Laertes and the King. Her scene with them is acted almost without textual change. Three of the lines from Ophelia's song are restored in 1878, a restoration made possible because Ellen Terry actually sang the song, which Miss Bateman did not do. The lines restored are:

Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny (line 165)

... You must sing 'A-down a-down, and you call him a-down-a.' O, how the wheel becomes it.

(lines 170-71)

Restoration of these lines, and the fact that the song was sung were definite improvements in the production and were, of course, the result of Irving's upgrading of the quality of the Lyceum company.
Irving's scene i does not end here, however. He jumps to the standard scene vii and eliminates all of scene vi in which Horatio receives Hamlet's letter from a sailor. Irving omits the beginning of the scene vii between the King and Laertes. In the 1878 edition of the play, he continues with the entrance of a Messenger who brings letters from Hamlet for the King and one for the Queen (lines 36-58). However, in the promptbook, this portion is lined out. This, of course, is a change from his 1874 production in which Irving played this portion without change. The plotting between the King and Laertes is greatly reduced in length from 122 lines to fifty-four. Finally, Irving's scene i ends with the entrance of the Queen to tell of Ophelia's death. This portion is rendered exactly as in his earlier production: the Queen's report of Ophelia's death is void of the more descriptive passages.

The setting for Act IV is the room of state used previously (I, ii; II, ii; III, ii). The promptbook provides no evidence of the nature of the set pieces or lighting. One improvement is noted in the staging of the scene: the six guards do not enter at the beginning of the Act, as they did in 1874. Rather, Irving provides motivation for their entrance with the commotion of Laertes' entrance with his armed men as the cue for the entrance of the King's "Switzers."
Act V opens with the graveyard setting on a hill; night is approaching as the curtain rises and the two gravediggers are discovered—one in the grave, the other stage right of it. In 1874, Irving played the opening between the two gravediggers with only four lines omitted; however, in this production he deletes twenty-six. The discovery of the gravediggers at work is a change from the previous staging where they walked on as the curtain went up. In this scene, the First Gravedigger was played by S. Johnson, an old friend of Irving's who was new to the company, and received a favorable reaction from Punch:

After Hamlet, Ophelia, and the Ghost, the Lyceum Gravedigger's is by many degrees the best acted part in the piece. Mr. S. Johnson, whose name is new to Punch, played without any of the conventional false emphasis and exaggeration which have crusted over this, like most of the short parts in Shakespeare's play . . .

This sequence of lines between the gravediggers apparently was the normal opening of this scene; at least there is no notation that indicates the scene sometimes began with the entrance of Hamlet, as was the case in the 1874 production.

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35 Ibid.
With the entrance of Hamlet and Horatio, Irving returns to the 1874 text which is essentially the full text with only a few deletions of the more earthy lines. In staging this scene earlier, Irving drew criticism for not providing set pieces for the actors to use. While no iconographic representation of this scene has been found, the promptbook does indicate in a blocking note that Hamlet speaks his first few lines of this scene from a platform, apparently located somewhere on the right side of the stage. There is no indication of what this platform represented in the scenic design. With the sound of the procession approaching, Hamlet and Horatio move to L.2.E. as they did in 1874.

The procession enters to the sound of organ music as in 1874. This time, however, Irving has added soft chanting of the monks. As before, a bell tolls intermittently throughout the interment. Again, Irving creates the effect of night coming on while the "procession winds slowly up the ascent."36 The procession is the 1874 one which has been embellished with more extras. Irving adds an incense boy at the head of the procession, uses six monks with candles instead of four, six ladies in white strewing flowers instead of five, and adds six monks chanting, two friends of Laertes, and a group of peasants who were not in the earlier

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production. In all, Irving has over fifty people on stage at this time as compared with thirty-seven in 1874.

From the entrance of the procession to the end of the scene in 1878, the text is performed with only minor deletions as in 1874. One change is to be noted, Irving restores the standard script at the moment of the fight between Hamlet and Laertes. In his 1874 text, Irving played this portion of the scene without the crowd's line "Gentlemen!" (line 268) and the following line of Horatio "Good my lord, be quiet." Both are restored in 1878. A few lines after this, Irving gives another line to the crowd, "Gentlemen! Gentlemen!" which is inserted after Hamlet's "What wilt thou do for her." (line 273). These are significant developments because Irving previously was reluctant to let the crowds speak the lines Shakespeare gave them: here Irving not only returns Shakespeare's lines for the crowd, but adds one of his own.

The setting for scene ii is an innovation from previous productions of Hamlet including Irving's earlier production when he placed the action in a hall in the castle (first grooves). In 1878 Irving set the scene outside the castle in an outdoor setting.37

37 Ibid., p. 49.
The text of the scene is generally the same cutting as described in the 1874 production. Irving's scene ii begins with Hamlet's line to Horatio:

I am very sorry, good Horatio,  
That to Laertes I forgot myself,  
For by the image of my cause I see  
The portraiture of his. I'll court his favors.  
But sure the bravery of his grief did put me  
Into a tow'ring passion.

The last two and one half lines are restorations to the text of the earlier production, and probably is part of an attempt to define the relationship between Hamlet and Laertes after the graveyard scene more fully than Irving did in the 1874 text. Later in the scene Irving deletes a few lines that are not essential to arranging the duel, as in 1874. Just before the exit of Osric, Hamlet tells him:

Sir, I will walk here in the hall. If it pleases his Majesty, it is the breathing time of day with me. Let the foils be brought . . .

Irving eliminates the "I will walk here in the hall" probably in order to make his scenic arrangement more consonant with the dialogue.

Irving changes settings for the duel scene, as he did in 1874, and thus his text has a scene iii. The setting for the 1878 production was very different from that of 1874. In 1878 Irving uses a special setting for the last scene, described as "a hall in the castle" in the promptbook. The Graphic described the scene as
"a hall open on one side through arches to a garden, or orchard."\textsuperscript{38} Apparently this was an innovation, and it was not approved of by \textit{Punch}:

Nor can the transfer of the fencing-scene to an open gallery looking on the Palace orchard be reconciled . . . with Hamlet's cry--Ho! let the door be locked. Though, here again, we get a pretty stage-picture, which may well excuse the disregard to Hamlet's words.\textsuperscript{39}

As in 1874 the dialogue from the beginning of this scene to the death of Hamlet is retained with the minor deletions noted in the 1874 text. One important line is restored to this scene. Irving returns the crowd's written response which occurs after Laertes' line "The King, the King's to blame." The line restored is "Treason! Treason!" The staging of this portion of the scene is described in \textit{Temple Bar}:

He rushes upon the King, drags him from his place, and having stabbed him with passionate scorn with the unbated sword, staggers to Horatio's support, from which, having spent his last strength in wresting the poisoned cup from him, he sinks gradually to the ground. In his dying words there is a deep tenderness, and when with a rapt look he leaves speech for silence, with grief at his death is mingled thankfulness that he has at last found rest.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{38}"Theatres," \textit{Graphic}, January 4, 1879, p. 7.


\textsuperscript{40}"Mr. Irving's Hamlet," \textit{Temple Bar}, LV (January-April), 402.
Irving's ending, which reads as it did in 1874, was accompanied by an oboe solo:

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story.
O, I die, Horatio!
The potent poison quite o'ercrews my spirit.
The rest is silence.

Summary

Irving's revival of Hamlet in 1878 was basically a restaging of his 1874 production with a number of changes in his approach as a director. The changes made effected all areas of the production; while they were generally minor, they occasionally were noteworthy. There were no basic differences between the two productions: Irving used his Romantic text of Hamlet, with small changes, and staged it in the tradition of nineteenth century "historical realism." Also, the Lyceum stage still used the wing and groove system of changing scenery. The changes Irving made in the 1878 production, however, are significant ones that improved the artistic quality of the performance, and, are of interest because they illustrate development of Irving as a director.

The following summary notes the nature of these changes in the text, blocking and stage business, scenery and properties, lighting, and the Lyceum company.
The Text

In preparing his 1878 acting edition of Hamlet, Irving used his text for the 1874 production as the basis for the later version. F. A. Marshall, who introduced Irving's printed edition of the play, indicates:

The text of this acting edition of Hamlet has been carefully revised by Mr. Irving. It will be found to differ slightly from that used by him on the first production of the play at the Lyceum Theatre (Oct. 30th, 1874), when Mr. Irving played Hamlet for two hundred consecutive nights; the alterations introduced have been made in accordance with the experience gained then, and by many later representations of the character of Hamlet. 41

Examination of the 1878 text does indicate that the script is essentially that of 1874, except for minor changes. Although the differences between the two versions are small, they occasionally indicate noteworthy changes in Irving's directorial approach to Hamlet.

Before an examination of these differences is made, comparison of line-length between the 1874 and 1878 productions can be obtained from Table 5 (see page 221). This comparison offers an overview of the lines which Irving deleted and those restored in the 1878 text. The total length of this version is almost exactly the same as in 1874, five more lines are played in 1878 than in

1874. Of course, the reduction of length of a Shakespearean text is not uncommon in the late nineteenth century. An interesting factor is that the two Irving texts are of almost the same length.

The material selected for omission, as in 1874, falls into three general categories. First, Irving omits lines that might be offensive to the audience because of their vulgar nature, e.g., Hamlet's sexually suggestive lines to Ophelia just before the player's scene in Act III. Second, Irving again deletes the references to the political problems between Norway and Denmark, by cutting the Fortinbras subplot, a significant percentage of the total deleted material. Third, Irving omits dialogue that he considers non-essential to the development of the plot, portions such as the majority of the poem about Priam's slaughter in Act II, scene ii, and much of Osric's chit-chat with Hamlet in Act V, scene ii.

The deletions in the first and second categories are exactly as they were in the 1874 text. The changes that Irving made in the 1878 script are all from the third category. Since Irving did not change the length of the acting version, he deleted in the 1878 script portions that he had played in 1874 in order to allow for some restorations. There are only two significant places where this occurred. The first is in Act III, scene ii, where Hamlet's appearance in the King's closet as the
Table 5

Comparison of Scene Length of the
Standard Text and Irving's 1874
and His 1878 Acting Versions

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<th>STANDARD TEXT</th>
<th>IRVING 1874</th>
<th>IRVING 1878</th>
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<td></td>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>SCENE</td>
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*In 1874 the first scene was the standard scene ii, in 1878 Irving retained both scenes.
King prays is cut. Irving received compliments on his restoration of this scene in 1874, and he does retain the King at prayer in 1878, but he omits Hamlet's portion of the scene. The second deletion of note is Hamlet's line "I will walk here in the hall" which occurs at the end of his scene with Osric in Act V, scene ii. Apparently this omission was prompted by Irving's scenic scheme for that scene. There are other parts deleted such as the Messenger with letters from Hamlet in Act IV, scene i. Most of the additional deletions of 1874 material, however, occur throughout the text in an almost random manner deleting a line or two here and there, although the minor characters such as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern tend to have more of their lines cut than do the major characters.

There are several sections of dialogue restored to the 1878 text. One of the major portions restored is certain lines of Polonius whose part is significantly larger in the 1878 production. The restorations include Polonius' advice to Laertes in Act I, scene iii that is so revealing of the old counsellor's character. Part of Polonius' warning to Ophelia is also restored in this scene. A portion of Act II, scene i, which was entirely cut from the 1874 production, is partially restored, readmitting the Polonius-Ophelia exchange. The character
of Polonius is returned to almost its full length, and he is allowed to reveal himself fully to the audience. Among the other restorations is Irving's return of two "swearing" sequences at the end of Act I, scene v, as opposed to the 1974 text which permitted only two "swearings." Another restoration, and a very significant one, is three lines of Ophelia's song in her mad scene. This restoration was possible because Ellen Terry actually sang the songs whereas Miss Bateman only recited them. Irving also restores a few lines in Act V that makes the Hamlet-Laertes relationship more believable than it was in 1874.

One of the most significant restorations, however, is Irving's revision of two of the crowd scenes because it shows Irving maturing as a director. The 1874 script illustrates Irving's deliberate reduction of the interaction of the crowd and the principal actors in each scene where Shakespeare had given a crowd lines. In 1878 Irving retains some of his previous deletions of crowd lines, such as omitting the crowd of Dane's lines at the entrance of Laertes in Act IV, scene i. But, he does restore crowd lines at two significant points in the play. The first restoration is during the fight of Laertes and Hamlet at the grave of Ophelia in which Irving returns the crowd's reaction of "Gentlemen!" Again, toward the end of the fencing match between Hamlet and Laertes,
Irving restores the crowd's "Treason! Treason!" after Laertes says "the King's to blame." Again the restoration is a single line, but it does indicate that in 1878, Irving was attempting to handle dialogue between principals and masses of extras—something he purposefully avoided in 1874.

The Blocking and Stage Business

Generally, Irving did not change the blocking scheme of Hamlet for the 1878 production; the changes made are only minor improvements and usually are a result of the utilization of different scenery for some scenes. Irving retains most of the carefully worked out blocking of 1874 with its pleasant balancing of movements in coordination with the requirements of the dialogue and emotional action of the scene. In the opening scene, for example, Irving's blocking in 1878 is exactly like the earlier production except for two instances. First, Irving uses a very deep setting in 1878 as opposed to an extremely shallow one in 1874; this permits the actor-manager to adjust his entrances and exits to the available entrances further up stage. Thus, Irving creates a much better effect in the Ghost stalking the battlements by having him appear far up stage, rather than down stage near the footlights. The second instance where Irving changed his plan in 1878 was in the exit of
Francisco which originally was made to the right in order to balance an entrance from the left by another actor, Irving realized the illogicality of having him exit toward the battlements and changed it to the left toward the area from which his relief came. Thus, while retaining his original plan, Irving modified it to appear more believable.

Other small improvements which help to make the blocking less artificial include the addition of stage properties to scenes in order to give the actors objects to use. For example, in Act II, scene ii, Irving adds the throne and one extra chair to the setting and they are used by the actors to add variety to the blocking: the King sits in the chair, weary with the problem of Hamlet as he listens to Polonius; Hamlet climbs on the steps of the throne as he reacts to the news that players have arrived, "He that plays the King shall be welcome." This staging could have been done in 1874 because Irving used similar stage pieces earlier in that production, but he did not so employ them: by 1878 Irving recognized their value in this scene. A similar addition of set pieces to a scene is noted in Act V, scene i: in 1874 the stage was barren except for the grave; in 1878 Irving added a platform (exactly what it represented cannot be determined) from which Hamlet speaks as he addresses the First Gravedigger.
Aside from blocking changes made possible by changes in scenery and set pieces, Irving altered his original plan in other ways. Rather than have the Grave-diggers walk on after the curtain went up for Act V, Irving puts one in the grave and the other beside it, and as the curtain goes up they are discovered at work. In 1874 the fourth act began with the six guards up stage center as usual. However, in 1878 Irving provides motivation for their entrance by keeping them off stage until Laertes and his men force their way into the room, making this disturbance the cue for the King's guards to enter. Another small touch is the addition of two pages at the beginning of Act I, scene ii, who enter before the procession of the court and place a chair for Hamlet and scatter some "skins" on the floor before the throne. An interesting change is the use of a second ghost which appears at the exit of the Ghost at the end of Act I, scene i. By the use of this extra ghost, Irving creates the effect of having the ghost appear at two places almost at once, and permitted the restoration of the three "'Tis Here" lines of Bernardo, Horatio, and Marcellus who all see the Ghost at different places—a nice directorial touch.
The most noticeable improvement in the blocking of the 1878 Hamlet is in Irving's handling of the crowd scenes. First, Irving increases the size of the processions. The court is increased from thirty-three to forty-three people and is given better definition which creates more interest by its variety and with the addition of such characters as the court fool. The funeral procession in Act V is increased from thirty-seven to over fifty, and is distinguished by the addition of different types, such as an incense boy, six monks chanting, and a group of peasants. Thus, additions to the crowd scenes are more than just arithmetical: Irving adds dimension in characterization as well. Once Irving gets his processions on stage in 1878 he makes better use of them. In Act I, scene ii, Irving's disposition of the actors on stage is more realistic in that they are not strewn around the periphery of the setting like pieces of decoration. Rather, he arranges them in front of the King to provide an audience for him. Of greater importance in tracing the development of Irving as a director is restoration of dialogue to the crowd in the funeral scene and the fencing scene which has been mentioned above. This illustrates that Irving not only blocked his crowds more realistically, but he was able to work their lines into the scene—something he had not attempted in the 1874 Hamlet. It should be remembered, however, that Irving did not return all of the crowd lines to the 1878 Hamlet.
The blocking of Irving's 1878 production of *Hamlet* demonstrates Irving's growth as a director, since nearly all of the changes made in 1878 were choices that were available to him in 1874 (excluding perhaps the increased use of extras and some of the changes permitted by new scenery). Nevertheless, by 1878 Irving was able to stage crowd scenes more effectively, and generally make improvements in blocking that created a more believable performance of *Hamlet*.

**Scenery**

The above improvements in the blocking notwithstanding, as the critic for The Graphic said, "the most striking change in the performance . . . is the scenery."\(^{42}\) The scenery for the 1878 production was designed by Hawes Craven especially for the opening of the Irving management. Although the scenery was all new, it did follow the general scheme of alternating deep and shallow settings, and usually represented the same locales as the scenery for the 1874 production. There are several improvements especially worthy of note. The opening scene of the play was a definite improvement, because it allowed the Ghost to appear up stage, away from the footlights

which made its appearance more spectral. The setting for "a more remote part," which shows the Ghost standing on a cliff overlooking the sea, received praise from several critics, and was noted as being a great improvement on the earlier setting for this scene. In Act V, scene ii, Irving provides an innovation by setting Hamlet's walk and talk with Osric out of doors. For Act V, scene iii, Irving again provides a setting that hitherto had not been seen in the production, which was a hall that looked out upon the palace's orchard. By utilizing a setting built and painted especially for the last scene, Irving is demonstrating his sense of showmanship and desire for the different. In fact, as Punch pointed out, by setting this scene in a gallery like room, Hamlet's line about locking the doors seem somewhat out of place. Nevertheless, the setting was admired for its beauty, and the change was probably theatrically effective and appreciated by his audience who had sat through a four-hour performance. A fresh scene at the end was a nice touch.

Lighting

The lighting plan of the 1874 production is used for the 1878 Hamlet. Irving retains the representational style of lighting which indicates the time the action takes place; for example, if a scene takes place indoors at
night, Irving provides a source of illumination on stage—a lamp or a torch. Irving also retains the special effects such as having a star twinkle when the text requires it in Act I, scene i. Also, the Ghost always appears bathed in limelight. He adds another special effect in 1878, though, which is the result of using a different setting for the opening scene: Irving adds light coming out of windows of the palace in the view from the battlements.

As in 1874, Irving coordinates his lighting plan with the dialogue of the play in creating artistic moments of lighting. Perhaps the best example of this is the approach of dawn at the end of Act I. As the scene nears its end, the lighting is blue moonlight; after the Ghost leaves, Hamlet is alone in this light, he is joined by Horatio and Marcellus and during the "swearing" portion the lights change by bringing up the green floats which gradually turn to white as the border battens are brought up, and dawn has arrived on stage. This change is done gradually and is coordinated with the "swearing" sequence.

There is one change in the 1878 lighting that shows an increased appreciation of what stage lighting can do to help the audience understand the play. At the end of scene iv of Act I, Hamlet follows the Ghost off
stage in the near darkness of the stage after the lime-light has been turned off; shortly after this Horatio and Marcellus follow too, in the same lighting. In 1878 Irving returns the green float up one half after the Ghost and Hamlet exit; thus the exit of Horatio and Marcellus is made in the natural light, and not in the Ghost light. Therefore, by the use of lighting Irving indicates that Horatio and Marcellus are not physically with Hamlet as they exit, and this makes the point that the following scene between Hamlet and the Ghost would not be observed by Horatio and Marcellus.

One final note on lighting: as in 1874, Irving dimmed the stage lighting when he made a change of scenery. Again, there is no indication of whether or not Irving performed his productions with the house lights on, off, or dimmed.

The Cast

While it is almost impossible to determine how Irving worked with the members of his cast in directing them, except in a very general way, one note can be made about S. Johnson who played the First Gravedigger. Punch noted in his review of the play that Johnson, a new actor to the company, played the role without utilizing the traditional "points" of the part.\textsuperscript{43} Although it is not

specifically stated, it seems highly probable that this is the result of Irving's direction, for Irving himself consistently avoided the usual "points" when interpreting his Shakespearean characters. Perhaps the single most important change in the *Hamlet* production of 1878 was the fact that Irving now had a leading lady who was equal to Irving in portraying Shakespearean characters.

With the 1878 *Hamlet* production, Irving ended his early years at the Lyceum. He had directed for the Batemans five Shakespearean plays as well as a number of other works, and had applied his principles of production over five years of directing. It is apparent from his 1878 *Hamlet* that he has not yet reached the level of production for which he is remembered, although certain trends in his directing style are apparently developing by this time.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

During Henry Irving's first four years of Shakespearean production at the Lyceum Theatre, there were no surprising developments in his directorial techniques. In some respects Irving was already an accomplished director, especially in his blocking and integration of stage business--aspects of production that are part of the actor's art. In other matters such as his staging of crowd scenes, Irving appeared to have developed slowly. Irving's acting versions of the plays indicated minor improvements during this period. By the time he assumed management of the Lyceum in 1878, his mountings of Shakespeare had not achieved the quality of his productions in the 1880's and later.

The Texts

In preparing his acting versions of the Shakespearean texts, Irving was faced with the requirement of omitting substantial portions of the plays in order to maintain
the playing time of the performances within a reasonable period, usually about four hours. Deletion of material in the plays was necessary because of the extreme length of the texts: *Hamlet* was cut by thirty-nine percent; *Macbeth* by twenty-three percent; and *Richard the Third* was reduced by forty-three percent. In addition to the length of the plays, the style of staging demanded by the conventions of the late nineteenth-century theatre, which required a pictorial depiction of the various settings of the plays, required Irving to omit large portions of the plays.

When Irving created his acting versions of the Shakespearean scripts he always worked from generally complete editions of the plays. Irving used the Cambridge editions of two plays edited by W. G. Clark and W. A. Wright published by the Clarendon Press: *Hamlet* (1874) published in 1873; and, *Macbeth* published in 1874. The *Richard the Third* production was based on Longmans edition of the play published in 1874; it is with this production that Irving began publishing his acting editions of his productions. Irving's second production of *Hamlet* utilized the same text as his first.

In working with the Shakespearean texts, Irving chose to reject material that had been added to the scripts by previous producers through the centuries.
In particular, \textit{Macbeth} in the nineteenth-century English theatre was still performed with the additions of Thomas Middleton's chorus of witches and John Locke's music. Irving omitted the work of Middleton and Locke, and did so at the expense of elimination of a popular stage spectacle usually associated with Middleton's witches. \textit{Richard the Third} presented an even greater challenge to Irving's judgment. Shakespeare's text was relatively unknown to the nineteenth-century stage. The popular version was Colley Cibber's adaptation of the play in which Shakespeare's play was very difficult to discern. Despite the lesson of the failure of Macready's attempt to restore Shakespeare's play and the failure of Phelps' production of it, Irving decided to use Shakespeare. This decision shows Irving's keen perception of the theatrical value of Shakespeare's \textit{Richard the Third}. And, it is even more to Irving's credit that this decision was made at a time when the future of the Bateman management of the Lyceum and Irving's ability as an interpreter of Shakespeare were in serious question after the relatively unsuccessful productions of \textit{Macbeth} and \textit{Othello}. Nevertheless, Irving's \textit{Richard the Third} was received with acclaim by even his most consistent critics such as William Archer. Thus, in Irving's early years at the Lyceum, one of his achievements was that of a partial reformed of Shakespearean texts.
Although Irving's textual reforms in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* were not as noteworthy as his restoration of Shakespeare's *Richard the Third*, he did return some important sections to these texts. For example, in *Hamlet* Irving returned Act III, scene iii in which the King is seen at prayer. In *Macbeth* he restored the first part of the Porter's scene (II, iii).

Although Irving was noted for his textual reforms, he did omit significant portions of the texts in production. In selecting material for deletion, Irving followed the precedent of earlier productions by omitting portions that might be offensive to the audience due to the "vulgar" nature of the language. In *Hamlet*, for example, there are several references to sexual matters between Hamlet and Ophelia which Irving eliminated such as Laertes' warning to Ophelia to beware of Hamlet's advances (I, iii). In *Macbeth* part of the Porter's lines that describe the three things that drink provokes are eliminated for similar reasons. In *Richard the Third* Irving omits Lady Anne's spitting on Richard as well as other material of similar tone. However, deletions of objectionable language and acts by Irving and the editors of the texts from which he was working account for only a very small portion of the eliminated material.
Other cuts were made by Irving that reveal more significant directorial judgments, and that changed the nature and theatrical effect of Shakespeare's plays. Before these omissions are examined, the question of how much Irving followed the tradition of other nineteenth-century productions of these plays should be considered. This study did not attempt to examine this question in detail. Irving obviously, in some instances, followed the traditional stage versions of these texts such as eliminating the character of Fortinbras from *Hamlet*. Even though Irving was clearly mindful of the traditional ways of presenting these plays, he approached the plays with a fresh outlook. Whenever Irving prepared his scripts, he had before him the complete texts of the plays. And, if Irving was not bound to tradition by the popularity of Cibber's *Richard the Third* (a version which was rejected at what was perhaps the lowest point in his early years at the Lyceum), Irving very probably would have been capable of presenting Fortinbras or any other heretofore neglected part of Shakespeare had he thought it warranted. Thus, while the question of how much Irving followed his predecessors is interesting, it is somewhat unimportant. Irving was a reformer of Shakespearean texts and a restorer of portions—when he thought it appropriate.
This is not to say that Irving was not in the mainstream of thought of his time, certainly he was well aware of what his audiences wanted to see, and was very responsive to their demands. The great box office successes of the period were the melodramas such as Irving's *The Bells*, and later his most financially successful production, a melodramatic adaptation of Goethe's *Faust* in which the principal character was Mephistopheles, not *Faust*. Irving's versions of *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *Richard the Third* reflect the romanticism of Irving's period with the emphasis on the single individual personality. Also, Irving's acting texts reveal the demand for the spectacular and excitement of the melodramas at the expense of some of the more sublime and philosophical elements of Shakespeare's plays.

In creating his acting versions of the plays, Irving followed general patterns in the nature of the material he omitted which enabled him to emphasize the romantic and melodramatic elements in Shakespeare's plays. Generally, though, Irving eliminated those portions that he deemed unessential to furthering the main action of the play. Occasionally, this meant eliminating portions of the central figure's role, too.
In all three of the plays Irving reduced the importance of the historical-political environment to the action of the plays. In his *Hamlet* of 1874 and 1878, Irving omitted much of the political environment of the play. This omission was consonant with the romanticism of the period since the overwhelming interest in the play was the individual character of Hamlet. The romanticist seemed to be less concerned with who became king after Claudius and Hamlet die. Therefore, this question was left unsettled in Irving's text. The character of Fortinbras and the political problems of Denmark with Norway were completely eliminated. A similar reduction in the political scene and the question of continuity of good government was also seen in *Macbeth*. The role of Malcolm as the hope of the people for return of good government to the land was severely reduced in Irving's text. An obvious illustration of this reduction is the end of the play where Irving concluded with Macbeth's death omitting Shakespeare's denouement in which Malcolm is hailed as the new king. In addition, Irving omitted nearly all of the lines that led to Shakespeare's conclusion, such as deletion of most of Malcolm's lines in IV, iii in which he comments on the political problems of Scotland. The same sort of reduction of the concern of the public for good government (which resulted in emphasizing the
central figure of the play) was also seen in Irving's Richard the Third. While the political environment of the play could not be entirely separated from the central action, Irving did reduce the political implications of the play to a certain extent. Specifically, he omitted scenes showing the English public commenting on the actions of the Duke of Gloucester such as the three citizens of London of II, iii in which they speak of their fear of civil disorder, and the Scrivener's speech on the unjust execution of Hastings. Also, Irving slighted Shakespeare's ending by concluding with an abbreviated speech by Richmond just after Richard is slain. Irving does not mention Richmond's forgiveness of all traitors, his plea for return of peace to the land, nor does he mention the resolution of the rule by the pending marriage of Richmond and Elizabeth.

In the category of the political environment of the plays, Irving's texts show no change of judgment during his early Shakespearean productions. Irving consistently omitted reference to the broader political implications and historical background of the central action of the plays. Furthermore, there was absolutely no change in the political deletions between his first Hamlet and his later production in 1878 although there were a few changes in the 1878 Hamlet such as the restoration of some of Polonius' lines.
In addition to eliminating many of the political aspects, Irving also omitted many other portions that did not seem to him to further the main action of the plays. In *Hamlet* of 1874, for example, he omitted much of the social chit-chat between Hamlet and Osric. In 1874 Irving deleted much of Polonius' part, especially missed was Polonius' advice to Laertes as he departs for Paris. Also, Ophelia's scene in which she first tells Polonius of Hamlet's strange behavior was omitted. Other omissions of this type occurred throughout *Hamlet* of 1874, and with exceptions throughout the 1873 *Hamlet*. The same omissions were made in *Macbeth*, namely Ross's story to Macduff of the murder of Macduff's wife and children, and other portions relating to the Malcolm-Macduff element of the play. *Richard the Third* contained many sections that Irving eliminated because they were not relevant to the main course of events of the play. Irving deleted much of the historical background such as the conflict between Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Derby's wife; Richard's account of the death of Queen Elizabeth's husband and other earlier conflicts; also, references to the wars between York and Lancaster are omitted. Too, Irving omitted many of the lines that were persuasive speeches of an oratorical nature like the long speeches of Buckingham as he convinces Richard to accept the crown.
Through these early productions, Irving tended to eliminate portions of the plays that were not relevant to the action of the play of concern to him. However, Irving made two changes in his 1878 Hamlet that indicated a change toward a more balanced view of the total play of Hamlet. First, Irving returned Polonius' advice to Laertes (I, iii) and part of Polonius' warning to Ophelia to beware of Hamlet (II, i). Ophelia benefited from the restoration of Polonius' warning to her in II, i, and Irving also restored more of her song in the mad scene. In addition, Irving restored lines to the Hamlet-Laertes exchange in Act V that made their relationship more credible in the last act. While these changes in the 1878 Hamlet were minor, they were textual improvements over his earlier Hamlet since lines of Shakespeare were returned to the stage. However, since the two Hamlet productions were almost exactly the same in line length, Irving made these additions at the expense of Hamlet's appearance in the King's closet scene, and by occasionally cutting lines from other characters, principally from Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

In addition to alteration of the text by omission of lines, Irving rearranged the ending of the acts of the plays. These rearrangements tended to emphasize the element of suspense, exciting incidents, and physical action.
Irving's staging of the end of Act I of Macbeth provides an example. Irving retained the standard ending textually: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth resolve to kill Duncan as he sleeps. After their exit, Irving staged a tableau of Duncan as he enjoyed what was to be his last meal. This tableau added to the suspense of the pending murder by showing the unsuspecting King peacefully dining as his murder was planned by his host. In Act II of Macbeth, Irving chose to conclude the act on the excitement and commotion caused by the discovery of the murder of Duncan rather than on the standard ending of Macduff and Ross's conversation in which they speculate on "how goes the world." In Richard the Third, Irving followed the same technique of concluding scenes on theatrically exciting events. The murder of Clarence is an example. Rather than end with the bickering between the two murderers, which is Shakespeare's ending for the scene, Irving omitted the bickering and concluded with the actual murder of Clarence. Irving's Act II concluded with the plotting between Buckingham and Richard at the end of the standard Act II, scene iii and not with the Duchess of York, Queen Elizabeth, etc., seeking sanctuary in the Church. Act IV ended with Richard receiving news that Buckingham has been captured, not with the standard ending which shows Stanley sending a messenger to Richmond: the act closed on the action of Richard, not the reaction of
Stanley. *Hamlet* did not lend itself to this type of alteration because of the rather tight integration of the endings of the acts with the central action of the play. However, Irving did omit some exit lines in order to concentrate on the main action of the scenes. For example, at the end of Act IV when Laertes learns of his sister's death Irving ended the act on Laertes' lines:

> I have a speech o'fire, that fain would blaze,  
> But that this folly drowns it.

Irving omitted the following four line exit speech of the King. Of course, the most noticeable alteration of the ending of an act occurred in Act V in all of the plays. Irving's texts all end with the death of the central figure, followed in most cases with a much abbreviated concluding speech. Irving ended his versions of these plays with the climatic action, and without any denouement in *Macbeth*, and a much abbreviated denouement in the other three productions. In all instances mentioned above and at other times, Irving concluded the acts on incidents that focused attention on the theatrically exciting elements in the plays.

One of the most revealing aspects of the early Shakespearean productions at the Lyceum that illustrates Irving's development as a director was his staging of the various crowd scenes. In his first production of *Hamlet*
Irving consistently reduced the dramatic impact of the crowds by deleting their lines. At three points in the play, Shakespeare has written lines for the mass of characters: first, at the forced entry of Laertes and his Danes (IV, v); at the struggle between Hamlet and Laertes at the grave of Ophelia (V, i); and, during the fencing match in the last scene. In all instances Irving deleted the lines of the crowds—except for Laertes' Danes who retained one of their responses. These omissions do not occur in a series of deletions, rather they are isolated instances, and can only be interpreted as intentional reduction of mass responses. This does not mean that Irving did not use masses of characters. Occasionally he did have over forty people on stage during these scenes, and they must have ad libbed some sort of responses. Perhaps Irving did not initially have sufficient time to integrate Shakespeare's crowd dialogue into the production since the 1874 Hamlet was hurriedly prepared. Allen's promptbook of this production was signed in 1877 and noted as being of the 200 night Hamlet. Thus the promptbook more likely represents the 1874 Hamlet in its final form. Certainly, had Irving wished to use the crowd to its full effect, he had sufficient time during the run of the production to integrate the dialogue of the crowd into the performance. Since he did not, it may have been
the result of Irving's lack of experience in directing masses of characters that prevented a more effective use of this element of the production. *Macbeth* has two instances of group responses, two lines for "all" after the discovery of the murder of Duncan, and two lines for the "Lords" during Macbeth's unstability in the banquet scene. In both instances Irving retained the dialogue of the groups. In *Richard the Third* Irving again reduced the lines Shakespeare wrote for groups of characters. He eliminated the "Amen" of the Lord Mayor of London and the Aldermen, although Irving did have them repeat Buckingham's lines "Long live King Richard." In the conversation between the Lords and Richmond as he wakes from his night's rest in Act V, Irving gave their lines to Blunt. Thus, in 1877 Irving still reduced the impact of the groups of characters. By 1878, however, Irving apparently was able to manage his crowd scenes to the extent that he restored the crowd's dialogue in the scene of Ophelia's burial and during the fencing scene. Thus, Irving's development in handling crowd scenes was from severe reduction of crowd responses in the 1874 *Hamlet* to partial restoration of the crowd's lines in 1878. It is safe to conclude that during the period under consideration, Irving achieved some improvement in this matter, but by 1878 he was still not fully able to integrate the
dialogue of the crowds into the action of the scenes in which they appear. This conclusion is supported by Irving's blocking scheme for these scenes, discussed later in this chapter.

An interesting aspect of Irving's staging of these Shakespearean plays is that where the text of Shakespeare was in conflict with his concept of mounting the plays, Irving would alter the text of the plays. While this is not unusual for the period, it is unusual for Irving because he thought the proper production of Shakespeare to be the highest achievement of his art. In his 1874 Hamlet Irving omitted references in Act I, scene i which required Bernardo, Marcellus and Horatio to sit as they speak of the ghost's appearance. Irving deleted these lines in 1874 and again in 1878. Later in Hamlet, Irving did not stage the pantomime which is the prelude to "The Murder of Gonzago," and as a result Irving omitted reference to the pantomime and rewrote some of the dialogue that follows the pantomime. This change was also retained in the 1878 production. In the 1878 Hamlet Irving made two additional changes in dialogue to accommodate his staging. Irving omitted Hamlet's line (V, ii) to Osric indicating that he would "walk here in the hall" in order to permit staging this scene in an outdoor setting. The most noticeable alteration of the text of Richard the Third that Irving made to adjust the text to
his concept of production occurred in the fifth act. Irving's aesthetic sense did not permit two different places to be depicted on stage at once, so he eliminated the appearances of the ghosts in the camps of Richard and Richmond simultaneously. By not permitting both camps to be on stage at the same time, many lines of the characters had to be deleted, and several changes of scenery interrupted the dramatic flow of the act. Instances of alterations of the text to accommodate Irving's staging requirements are not numerous; yet it is interesting that Irving would place practical decisions of the director above the lines of Shakespeare.

In conclusion, during his early years at the Lyceum, Irving's work indicates he was a restorer of several previously neglected portions of the texts of Hamlet and Macbeth, and the restorer of Shakespeare's Richard the Third to the stage. Irving's versions of the plays were always created from full texts of Shakespeare. However, the staging conventions of the time required significant reduction in the length of the texts. Irving's acting editions tended to emphasize the romantic qualities of the plays by reducing the importance of the political setting of the plays, and by reducing the portions of the plays that drew attention away from the principal character. However, by 1878 Irving restored several portions of the text that created a more balanced
view of *Hamlet*. Also, Irving's scripts stressed the melodramatic aspects of the plays by emphasizing the element of suspense and by focusing attention on the theatrically exciting scenes in the plays. In his staging of the plays, Irving demonstrated a definite development in his ability to stage crowd scenes, indicated by his returning several crowd's lines to the 1878 *Hamlet*. Finally, it is interesting that occasionally Irving changed lines of Shakespeare to permit particular mounting practices.

**The Blocking and Stage Business**

The examination of Irving's blocking and stage business indicated that from his first production of *Hamlet* Irving's skill in directing his actors was already highly developed—excluding, of course, the crowd scenes. Irving's blocking showed careful coordination of entrances and exits with the text; it reflected the meaning of the text and revealed the emotional undercurrent of the scene. Irving's blocking utilized pleasant balancing of the movements of the actors utilizing diagonal crosses and grouping of actors to indicate subtly the dominant character in the scene. Also, Irving used the technique of overloading one portion of the stage in preparation for the entrance of an actor on the opposite side. Examination of the 1878 *Hamlet* indicated that Irving's basic blocking
plan of 1874 was followed with only slight changes. However, certain changes in the scenery permitted Irving to create more natural blocking schemes such as having the Ghost appear far up stage in I, i. One point in which definite development was seen in Irving's blocking was in his use of more set pieces which were used by the actors to provide variety in their movements by utilizing furniture and platforms. These changes are interesting because, for the most part, the set pieces were available to Irving in 1874. Generally speaking, Irving's blocking of scenes in which a small number of characters were used would probably not be noted as old-fashioned if remounted on stage today.

Irving's development as a director was most noticeable, however, in his staging of the crowd scenes. Aside from restoring many of the crowd's lines as mentioned above, in his 1878 Hamlet Irving increased the size of the court and gave the court and the funeral procession greater definition of character by adding distinct types of characters. His amplification of the crowds was not just in numbers, but also in quality. His placement of the crowds on stage, while still limited by the symmetrical arrangement required by the wing and groove scenery, Irving managed to lessen his earlier tendency of placing the actors around the periphery of the stage and filling in the areas between the flats.
In 1878, Irving tended to put most of the characters into the action of the play by placing them in positions to see and react to what was happening on stage. Thus, Irving's manipulation of his actors showed progress of development during his first four years as a Shakespearean director.

The Technical Elements

As in other late nineteenth-century theatres, the scenery was an important element of the productions at the Lyceum. From the first *Hamlet*, in which the scenery was just gathered from the productions of other plays, to Irving's 1878 *Hamlet* in which Hawes Craven (Irving's scenic designer) painted all new scenery, the trend was toward more elaboration in scenic display. However, throughout this period the stage of the Lyceum was fitted with the wing and groove system of shifting scenery which placed definite limitations on what could be done scenically. The trend, nevertheless, in both scenery and stage properties was for more elaboration. This scenery tended to prevent Irving from placing his actors into the setting, rather the scenery provided a pictorial background for the actors (with minor exceptions such as the appearance of the Ghost in the 1874 *Hamlet*, Act I, scene v).

It was not until 1881 that Irving renovated the stage and removed the wing and groove system, and adopted the
"free plantation" method of scene shifting which allowed Irving the flexibility to place scenery wherever he wanted. These early productions were not noted for displays of scenery because they were not spectacular settings as were many of Irving's later productions. The basic elements were present in these first productions for development into Irving's more lavish settings such as seen in his 1888 *Macbeth*. What was missing in these early productions was the financial resources.

Irving's use of lighting was an extremely important aspect of his productions. He took great care in integrating his lighting effects with the production. And, it was with lighting that he helped to create the total atmosphere of his productions. In these early productions, Irving used gas lighting which fit his purpose so well he retained gas lighting throughout his years at the Lyceum. The style of lighting was representational in that with his lighting he attempted to indicate the time of day and place of action. If the scene took place at night he always provided a source of illumination on stage such as a lamp or torch. Irving's lighting for the Ghost scenes in *Hamlet* and the approach of dawn at the end of Act I, scene v illustrated Irving's artistic use of lighting in creating the emotional tone of the scenes.
When Irving made scene changes he lowered the lights on stage so the scene change would be made on a dark stage. There was no indication that Irving masked his major scene changes by lowering a curtain as was his practice in later years. There was no indication of how the house lights were set during these early productions. Later, of course, Irving lowered the house lights during the performances of each production.

The Cast

If the single most noticeable change in Irving's early productions were to be selected, it would be without question the improvement in the quality of the Lyceum company. The reviews of the production before Irving assumed the role of manager in 1878 time and time again dismissed with usually a single sentence the work of the supporting cast. This is especially true of Richard the Third in which Irving's highly effective interpretation of the Duke of Gloucester magnified the difference in quality between the principal actor and the rest of the cast. This discrepancy was noticed by Irving because one of his first actions as the new manager in 1878 was to engage Ellen Terry and other more talented actors for his company.
Suggestions for Further Research

In Irving's development as a director the pivotal production seems to be his Romeo and Juliet which he produced in 1882. Ellen Terry referred to Romeo and Juliet as "the first of Henry Irving's great Shakespearean productions. Hamlet and Othello had been mounted with care, but . . . they were not true reflections of Irving as producer."¹ George C. D. Odell referred to Irving's Romeo and Juliet as the "first typical Irvingesque production."² An examination of the promptbook of Romeo and Juliet and related documents in light of Irving's earlier Shakespearean productions described in this study might demonstrate precisely what it was that made Irving's productions "Irvingesque." Also, since the production of Romeo and Juliet opened just seven months after the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen's company performed an eight week engagement at the Drury Lane, some light might be shed


²George C. D. Odell, Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving, vol. 2, p.
on the question of the influence of the Meiningen players on Irving, especially if the inquiry were related to Meiningen's Shakespearean productions in London—*Julius Caesar*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Winter's Tale*.

The changes in Irving's acting texts of *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Richard the Third* and his mounting of these plays as noted in his first four years of Shakespearean productions indicates Irving's initial development in his directorial techniques. In some respects, he was already an accomplished director, in other areas he had room for improvement. It is clear, however, that his productions from 1874 to 1878 were not of the quality that G. B. Shaw later called "Lyceum Shakespeare," and for which Irving is remembered today. Irving's later development as a director was extremely important to the success of the Lyceum productions. As Macgowan and Melnitz indicate, when knighthood was bestowed upon Irving, it was probably given for his directorial efforts as much as it was for his acting achievements.³

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