AN ANALYSIS OF CERTAIN ACTING EDITIONS AND PROMPTBOOKS OF PLAYS BY DION BOUICIAULT

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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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For more than thirty years in the nineteenth century, Dion Boucicault dominated the English and American theatres. His first play, London Assurance, was a decided success in 1841. His last successful play, The Shaughraun, was given in 1874, yet he continued to write and his plays were produced until he died in 1890. Few people today know who he is.

Few people today know much about nineteenth-century English drama because, in the opinion of many critics, "it is so bad, nobody can stand reading it." It is a period which histories of the theatre treat rather sketchily. However, people went to the theatres in England and the United States in those days, and Dion Boucicault made several fortunes writing, directing, and acting in those theatres.

If the plays were so bad, why did people go to see them? What were the plays like anyway? What was the accepted theatre practice in those days? If Dion Boucicault was a successful theatre man for so long, his plays, no doubt, were representative of the best the theatre at that time had to offer. What, then, would a careful study of his plays tell about the staging, directing, acting, and play writing methods of his part of the nineteenth century?

This dissertation records the result of such a study.
Findings were tabulated only on representative acting editions and promptbooks published and prepared during Boucicault's lifetime.

Scripts in the libraries at the Ohio State University and Indiana State Teachers College and microfilmed reprints of Boucicault acting editions and promptbooks in the Theatre Collection at Ohio State University made the study possible.

This paper will not concern itself with the work of other playwrights of the period or with biographical details about Boucicault. Townsend Walsh published a biography, The Career of Dion Boucicault, in 1915. The three dissertations I have read about Dion Boucicault were largely biographical in nature, and each, in its own way, has treated the plays Boucicault wrote, with their dates, theatres, and some criticism. It was not the purpose of those writers to analyze the Boucicault scripts to record what they reveal regarding theatre practice common at the time of their publication. This I shall attempt to do.

The dissertation will begin with a brief review of nineteenth-century theatre practice as general reference books relate it, but the main part of the work will present a picture of the theatre practice that the Boucicault scripts reveal concerning the staging, directing, acting, and writing of plays in that part of the nineteenth century in which Dion Boucicault was most active, in the theatres of England and the United States.
The following persons have helped greatly in the preparation of this dissertation, Dr. John H. McDowell, Dr. Charles J. McGaw, Dr. James R. Bash, Lois M. Jessup.

Gladys Rohrig

June, 1956
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CHAPTER I

THEATRE PRACTICE IN ENGLAND AND THE UNITED STATES DURING DION BOUCICAULT'S PROFESSIONAL YEARS (1840-1890), ACCORDING TO GENERAL REFERENCE BOOKS

For many years Dion Boucicault was conspicuous among contemporary dramatists in both England and the United States. The New York Times for October 5, 1858, listed eight plays billed for that evening. Four of them were Boucicault's. On page 13 of a promptbook prepared for his play The Colleen Bawn, part of an unsigned letter to the editor of Era is quoted in which the writer says twenty-one of Boucicault's plays were given in fifteen of England's principal cities "last week."¹

¹Dion Boucicault, The Colleen Bawn (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm P 13).

Boucicault wrote for contemporary audiences in the theatres of his own time. To understand the staging, directions, and business he wrote into his plays, some knowledge of nineteenth-century theatre practice is necessary.

STAGING PRACTICES

In considering the staging of English and American nineteenth-century plays, one must keep in mind the fact that there were a series of floors, called messanines, under
the stage. The stage floor itself had rows of apertures or slits called cuts or grooves. When they were not in use, these openings could be covered with sliders. The sliders were drawn off stage to the right and to the left when the open grooves were needed. The openings permitted flats or ground rows to be sent up at the proper time. These flats or flat wings were attached to understage machines called trolleys. There were at least two banks of wings in each set of grooves, and the trolleys to which they were attached were all connected and were controlled by men operating windlasses in the mezzanines. Thus, the two banks of wings could be interchanged instantaneously.

The open spaces between the sets of cuts or grooves were called bridges, and were movable platforms three feet wide that could be raised or lowered.

Down front on each side of the stage was a corner trap. In the center just behind the corner traps was a grave trap, six feet by three feet, called Hamlet's trap. To open a trap, a lever was released allowing the floor of the trap to drop. It could then be drawn under the stage floor, and the ghost or object needed was brought up on the stage. Counterweights and ropes controlled the traps, bridges, and trolley-guided scenery, allowing them to rise and fall as desired.

Sometimes stage hands, working on the stage floor,
slid wings or shutters\(^2\) in on stage in the grooves. The shutters were flats arranged and rigged in pairs to slide open and to close horizontally or vertically on scenes. They were often used to back up the set.

tops of the wings or flats (often sixteen feet tall or more) were held steady by overhead grooves corresponding to the floor grooves. Since actors might stumble over them, some theatres had movable floor grooves that could be removed when they were not needed.

The plan of a typical wooden English stage in Southern's *Changeable Scenery* shows that the width of the stage was divided into three areas, the two wing areas and the center section. All of them were grooved. He says the two side areas were fixed; the center was mobile. His floor plan of the center section shows five sets of grooves, each separated by a three-foot bridge cut. The first section of grooves had two cuts; the other four sections had three. A center division made it possible to raise or lower bridges or flats on the right or on the left half of the stage or on both sides simultaneously.\(^3\)


The succession of traps, sloat cuts, and bridge cuts was more or less the same in all theatres.\(^4\)

\(^4\)Ibid., pp. 318-319.
The purpose of all this traditional machinery lay in the convention of visible scene change, and the convention persisted in some theatres until 1900, although by 1888 grooves were almost entirely dispensed with. 5

5 Ibid., p. 381.

Another feature of this visible scene change was the furniture remover, long a convention in the English theatre. In 1613, an extract from the Belfast News-Letter says,

Two boys in livery are in constant attendance to bring in and remove chairs, tables, and other articles necessary to a change of scene. They are a genteel appendage seen in the London and Dublin theatres, and since there must be persons to execute this office . . . it is pleasing to see these well dressed boys, in lieu of . . . a ragged little being, whom we have formerly seen obtrude for the purpose. 6

6 Ibid.

The furniture remover was still at work in the provincial theatres in England in the early eighties. In 1881, Percy Fitzgerald complained because theatres did not use the front curtain to hide scene changes. Tables and chairs, drawn on the stage by a cord, he said, appeared to move by themselves. He said it would be so simple to let the curtain fall for a minute or two while the change was made. Charles Kean had used a velvet curtain to hide scene changes in his Henry VIII in 1855, but until the '80's it was the usual procedure for audiences to see a landscape ascend like a
blind with its bottom swinging as it went.  


In 1853, a criticism of scenery at the Princess Theatre under Charles Kean's management said Kean deserved great praise for his reforms, but, in general:

The mechanism of placing scenery on the stage, and the manner of lighting it are very inefficient as far as artistic illusion is concerned. The scenes are still in two slides and where they meet in the center is clearly seen a dividing line frequently marked with the finger prints of scene shifters.

8Southern, op. cit., p. 238.

The grooved floors and the machinery in the messa-
nines were used primarily for wing and drop sets, but box sets, or enclosed sets, became common during Boucicault's time.

An acting edition of Boucicault's West End, or The Irish Heiress published by French's Standard Drama with this special notation, "With original casts, costumes, and all the Stage Business as marked by Mr. J. B. Wright, Stage Manager of the Holiday Street Theatre, Baltimore," has the floor plan of a box set clearly printed on page three of the script, which gives the date of the Baltimore performance as 1860. Nicoll says built-up sets became fairly common after 1870. By 1875, the box set was so common it had replaced the wings and the back cloth in use since the Restoration.
In 1679, a critic rejoiced that the two sides of a room came all the way down to the proscenium. There were no gaps through which the people in boxes could see back stage. A box set became the ideal for an interior and a semicircular cyclorama with a covered ceiling was considered desirable for an exterior.9

9Nicoll, op. cit., p. 43.

Wing and drop (or cloth) scenes were also used with certain realistic set pieces. A set piece may be defined as any scenic unit within the setting that stands by itself upon the stage. It might represent a house, an entrance gate, a balcony, or it could be a rock or a fireplace.

In 1675, in a series of articles in The Furniture Gazette, Henry Lancaster discussed set pieces that represented cottages, bridges, water pieces, rocks, et cetera. He said that with set pieces you can have recourse to furniture, and it is also usual to employ real ivy or artificial flowers, trained up house fronts, covering ruins, or climbing the trunks of old trees; grass embankments are sometimes covered with green velvet. The projecting irregular outlines of boughs from trees are made from paper-mache, which being modeled to the required shape, is stuck on them and then painted to add to the effect. Roofs of houses are often built out; and in many other ways, readily enough suggested by the author’s descriptions in the play, ingenious tricks and dodges may be adopted to add to the general effect and reality of the mimic scenes.10

10Southern, op. cit., p. 260.
Southern says set pieces and a set scene were not used for a scene that changed before the audience's eyes.11

11Ibid., p. 271.

Most histories of the theatre deal with the actors who played in certain theatres, or the plays given there, or the appearance of the auditorium. There are relatively few accounts of the stages themselves and the equipment found there. However, it is possible to find some information about the history of, and, in a few cases, a description of specific theatres in which the plays of Dion Boucicault were given both in England and the United States. An account of the Haymarket Theatre in London and Niblo's Theatre in New York will be included here as typical of the English and American theatres in which Boucicault gave his plays.

The Haymarket Theatre used by Boucicault was opened in 1821 across the road from the opera house of the same name. It was managed by Benjamin Webster from 1837 to 1853 and under him became the most popular theatre in London. In 1843 the apron and proscenium doors were removed. Backs were put on the seats in the pit. Gas lights were installed.12

12George Clinton Dinsmore Odell, Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1920), VII, pp. 9-10.

Southern quotes The Theatrical Times of September 25, 1847, as saying of the Haymarket,
... the scenery is miserable ... the same side wings are used in representing a park, a tea garden, a mountain woods, a forest. The same street scene is used in every comedy needing a street scene.

The scenery does not come nearly up to the roof, but the space is full of wooden rack work, filthy drop scenes, sky, trees, curtains, ceilings, all tumbled together ... lately have not seen any competent scenery at this theatre.

The writer goes on to say that the same set of wings is used much too often, and that a mixture of sets is often used in the same scene. 13

13 Southern, op. cit., p. 325.

Even in 1893, Archer wrote that the scenery at the Haymarket was beautiful in design, but that it was not altogether happy in execution. He complained that it lacked solidity; there was too much flapping canvas; the flats did not always join. 14

14 Ibid., p. 387.

Vardac describes Niblo's Theatre in New York as it was rebuilt after the fire of May 6, 1872, from the plans of the architect, F. Smith, but he said, like theatres in other large cities, it was essentially the same as it had been at mid-century, depending on the conventional system of wings, grooves, bridges, traps, and flies, and retaining a twelve-foot apron and a sloped stage floor. He quoted the New York World for November 17, 1872, which describes the stage at
Niblo's thus:

The dimensions of the present stage are 75' in width, 62' in depth, 103' in height, from gridiron to sub-cellar . . . There are, properly speaking, seven grooves or entrances, all of which are utilised, though the scenery itself is only set to the fifth groove . . . It is particularly rich in traps. Of these contrivances, the ordinary theatrical average is five, but Niblo's boasts fifteen. There are also five working bridges connected with the stage. . . . The machinery of the stage floor is technically divided into thirty-two sections--cuts as they are called.

These dimensions were designed to control two-dimensional side wings, or cut-outs which, arranged in sequence at either side of the playing space, offered a perspective illusion. The rear of such a scene could be closed either by painted cloth drops and borders lowered from the flies or by wooden-framed canvas flats called shutters, run into the center from the sides. Drops or shutters down front were used as painted background for a forest while wings and properties were changed behind them. Such scenes, of course, were meant to give a perspective illusion through two dimensional pieces.

The stage floor in this system became an elaborate mechanism. On ordinary stages the traps were floored over, and before they could be used a portion of the floor of the stage had to be removed. Usually this was done by releasing a lever and letting a section of the floor drop into a groove and slide under the immovable parts at the side of the stage. The opening left in the stage was filled by the floor of the
ascending trap. The stage floor included cuts and narrow strips of floor made to slide horizontally right and left beneath the fixed portions at the sides. Windlasses on the mezzanine level below the stage controlled their movements. A flat was placed on a cut so it could be raised to the stage level.15


When Boucicault first came to the United States he was surprised to find the American theatres "superior in every respect to the theatres in England."16 Townsend Walsh says:

On October 2, 1862, a letter was published in the "Times," [London] over the signature of "Dion Bou­ cicault," advocating improvements in theatre building, and contrasting the working expenses, the dinginess, ill ventilation, and general discomfort of the London theatres of that time with the Winter Garden Theatre in New York, which Mr. Boucicault had held in 1859.17


17Ibid., v. 85.

A summary of staging practices in theatres in England and the United States in the nineteenth century as general reference books picture them would say that, although the architecture and equipment varied in different theatres, as is to be expected, most theatres were equipped with grooved
floors and machines that allowed for visible scene changes. When Niblo's Theatre was rebuilt in 1872 in New York, it depended on the conventional system of wings, grooves, bridges, traps, and flies. It even had a sloped stage floor. Scenery on these stages was meant to give a perspective illusion through two dimensional pieces.

However, on these same stages, set pieces were introduced, and the box set for interiors was in more or less general use by 1870. The trend had already started toward the use of real objects: real stairs, real doors, real carriages, real horses.

Theatres in the United States followed the English tradition in architecture, scenery, machinery, and production, but during the nineteenth century from a position of trailing behind the English in staging practices, at least some of the American theatres became superior to those in England.

ACTING AND DIRECTING PRACTICES

Just before Boucicault's time, London actors, especially the leading actors, customarily did little more at rehearsals than read or repeat the words of their parts, marking on them their entrances and exits and their respective places on the stage as settled by the stage manager. They would have been exposed to the sneers of the Green Room if they had made any display of passion or energy, according to William Macready as he recalled Covent Garden rehearsals.
under the management of Harris and the Kembles. He said much of Kemble's work was admirable, but that stage management in general was characterized by careless and insufficient rehearsals and individual freedom in the conception and acting of a part.

Macready and Madame Vestris did much to correct this malpractice. Macready insisted on rehearsing with feeling. When he became the only member of the Covent Garden Company who could draw houses and command interest, the others began to follow his example. By 1837 he was himself the manager, and Londoners could see a play carefully acted in all its parts. He especially emphasized the interrelation and harmony of all the roles. 18


In the United States, in 1835, just before Bouicault's time, the star system was at its height. Nagler describes the evils of this system as it was diagnosed by W. B. Woods. He said regular actors were no longer members of joint stock companies but were reduced to the roles of ministers to or servants for the principal performer. When the season opened, they were at the call of a rapid succession of stars. Nothing was arranged beforehand. Everyone and everything had to cater to the star. When he finally arrived, everything was done in impromptu fashion. Sometimes
he did not come until the afternoon of the show. Rehearsing then was impossible, so it was not tried. Resident actors had no chance to read a manuscript. During the show they would ask, "What is this play about?" Of course, on the first night there were nothing but blunders and delays; so the audience quit coming.

Under such a system long parts had to be given to those who could learn lines fast, not to actors suited to them. The purpose of the star was to exhibit himself. The scenery could not be good when the order of things was unknown. Finally, since the star received better pay, every actor who could get by with it soon billed himself as a star, and the young actor had no chance to develop himself gradually. All lesser parts had to be given to those who were wholly incapable so that all illusion was lost. The public finally got so it paid no attention to blurb advertisements and handbills. The system was destroying itself.¹⁹


The elder Wallack at Wallack's Lyceum Theatre in 1852 introduced reforms to eliminate the shortcomings of the star system. He believed in a well-disciplined stock company and ensemble acting. He paid the greatest attention to minute details in scenery and costumes. The same tactics were used by his son Lester and by Laura Keene who made her debut at Wallack's in 1852.
When Laura Keene was manager of the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia in 1869, she was described as being the absolute ruler at rehearsals. She was called "the Duchess." Intensive rehearsals under centralized authority were the secret of her finished productions. She learned it from Madame Vestris.  

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That rehearsals could be businesslike and well conducted is evidenced by a story told, in 1845, by Mrs. Mowatt, the author of Fashion. She slipped in to watch a rehearsal of her play at the Park Theatre. She wrote that she was pleased and a little awed (she was not a theatre woman). She said each actor held his part to which he often referred. He was very serious. There was no laughing at the situations in the play. There was no talking except about the business of rehearsing. Even the dances were practiced seriously, and she added, "The rehearsal lasted several hours."  

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BOUCICAULT'S IDEAS OF ACTING AND DIRECTING

Boucicault's first play, London Assurance, was given in 1841, at Covent Garden under the management of Charles Mathews and Madame Vestris, who was noted for her meticulous, inspired directing. In 1851, Boucicault was literary adviser and right-hand man for the fine actor-manager Charles Kean.
at the Princess Theatre. Many of Boucicault's plays were given at Wallack's. He worked with Laura Keene, gave plays at her theatre.

At rehearsals Boucicault himself was described as:

... an exacting martinet; his every word of direction was obeyed with childlike docility, alike by tyros and veterans. Among actors he contrived to create a vast number of enemies ... But they one and all acknowledged him to be a masterful stage manager. They carried out his instructions with enthusiasm and admiration—the admiration which everything intelligent has for the higher intelligence. Just two years before his death, Boucicault staged Hadden Chamber's play "Captain Swift" for A. M. Palmer at the Madison Square Theatre. There were unutterable lessons in the mere sight of the veteran, lively as a cricket, sharp as a needle, directing Maurice Barrymore, ... and the rest by the spell of his intellect. The result of this laborious drilling was that when the play was produced not a reproach could be heard as to the manner of the representation.22

22 Walsh, op. cit., pp. 179-80.

Joseph Jefferson testified to Boucicault's inventiveness on those bits of business which are often more effective on the stage than the most brilliant writing, and he adds this tribute to Boucicault's ability as a director:

An incident occurred during the first rehearsal of "Dot" that may be worth relating, as it bears upon a theory in acting that I have established for myself ever since it took place. ... During my rehearsal of the first scene, which I went through just as I intended acting it at night, I saw by his manner that he was disappointed with my rendering of the part, and I asked him what was the matter. He replied, ... "Why, you have acted your last scene first; if you begin in that solemn strain, you have nothing left for the end of the play." ...
am certainly indebted to him, through his advice, for whatever success I achieved in the part.\textsuperscript{23}

One of the biggest innovations Boucicault brought to English and American theatres started in 1861 when he began to send touring companies to different parts of these two countries instead of sending visiting stars to act in his plays. Previous to this year the stars were supported by local stock in the manner earlier described, when they visited a provincial theatre. He was interested in the success of his plays and he felt they certainly suffered under the star system. His experiment worked so well that the disintegration of local stock companies followed.\textsuperscript{24}

We know some of Boucicault's ideas of acting because, on July 29, 1882, he gave a lecture on "The Art of Acting." It was reported in Era and, in 1926, was published in a little book with an introduction by Otis Skinner. During this lecture Boucicault said acting is not just speaking. It means to perform, to be the part.\textsuperscript{25} An actor should study

\textsuperscript{23}Ibid., pp. 61-62.

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., pp. 178-79.

actors to do parts they are suited for. Nature knows best. 26

26 Ibid., p. 49.

He says every actor should be a good listener. If he is, he will get rid of stage fright which is the result of vanity, sickness, or a terrible egotism.

The subject of acting, Boucicault said, may be divided into voice and action. An actor should speak articulately. He should measure his breath, not let it fade out. He should pronounce all syllables. Boucicault did not agree with the idea that a tragedian had to use an artificial voice.

Boucicault defined gesture as action above the waist while carriage is the action of the body below the waist. A gesture should be distinct and deliberate; an actor should not use fidgety gestures. The gesture should slightly precede the word. 27 The full face is weak, while the profile gesture is strong. Byplay is a gesture used while another is speaking so the hearer can transmit the effect of the speech to the audience. A gesture should not be too short. It should seldom reach across the body.

Boucicault declared that the art of walking is to stride with the foot from one position to another. Actors should practice carrying things on their heads as the Arabs
do, as the Greeks do. On stage an actor should start walking with the off leg. He should kneel with the knee next to the audience.  

Boucicault's final advice to the actor was that whatever he does should be done with circumspection, without anxiety or hurry. He should be full of the character, but remember that vehemence is not passion. He said that deliberation without slowness, calmness without coldness, self-possession without overweening confidence gives grace to the comic actor, importance to the tragic actor.

Boucicault did considerable acting himself. William Winter comments that as an actor Boucicault was as cold as steel, but he knew the emotions by sight, and he mingled them as a chemist mingles his elements--usually with success.  

Winter tells us that much of Boucicault's acting was imitative, at first of Charles Mathews, later of Joseph Jefferson. His Shaughraun was in spirit and drift an Irish copy of Jefferson's Rip Van Winkle, an impersonation that Jefferson invented long before Boucicault remodeled the play, although Boucicault said he had both created Rip and fashioned Jefferson. His Daddy O'Dowd was an Irish copy of

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Frederick Robson's Sampson Burr in *The Porter's Knot*, according to Winter.\(^{30}\)

\(^{30}\)Ibid., p. 140.

In 1880, A. M. Palmer organized a dramatic school in connection with the Madison Square Theatre and asked Boucicault to take charge of it. Walsh tells this story of Boucicault:

"Always put your foot down as if to say, 'This spot is mine!'" was the advice Boucicault gave to the young men and women who sat under him at the Madison Square Theatre School of Acting. Then the old man would get up from his chair to suit the action to the word, and his presence, neither great nor imposing, would fill the stage as he measured its length. "The rest of the world may be for whom wills, but where I stand is mine."

Then he would sit down again in his chair, and every student knew he had seen a fine sight.\(^{31}\)

\(^{31}\)Walsh, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

If we were to summarize nineteenth-century acting and directing, we might say that the century began with acting suffering from poorly conducted and inadequate rehearsals, and from the star system. Opening nights were good nights to avoid, because they were so full of errors and fumbles. However, meticulous rehearsals were insisted on by such people as Madame Vestris and William Macready in England and the Wallacks and Laura Keene in the United States.

Ranting and artificiality were common among actors in
general, but again, there were actors who used restraint and who were praised for their finished performances. Here Charles and Mrs. Kean would have to be mentioned along with Charles Mathews, Madame Vestris, the Wallacks, Laura Keene, Joseph Jefferson, and others.

Theatres were managed by actor-managers. Directors were called stage managers. As the century progressed, back-stage discipline improved. The manager's word became law and ensemble acting became important.

Dion Boucicault who had been trained by the Mathews and Charles Kean, who worked with the Wallacks and Laura Keene, instituted the touring company instead of the touring star in an effort to insure the popularity of his own plays. Quick to adopt anything that made his plays better, he directed his actors and later taught his pupils to use a technique that would make the actors believable, the situation seem real.
CHAPTER II

THE BOUCICAULT SCRIPTS REVEAL NINETEENTH-CENTURY STAGING PRACTICE

This chapter will discuss information which the Boucicault plays give about scenery, changing sets, stage machinery, painting methods used in a routine way, and the unusual staging called for in the sensational scenes.

DEFINITIONS

The information was obtained from acting editions and promptbooks of Boucicault plays published and prepared during his lifetime. The following definitions will clarify the meaning of the terms "acting edition" and "promptbook" as used here.

An acting edition of a play is usually a printed copy of the script with the author's and stage manager's (if the play was produced before it was printed) directions accompanying the actors' lines. A prompt book is a copy of the acting edition whose interleaves (blank pages placed between the printed pages) contain, in the stage manager's or director's own handwriting, additional directions for a particular performance of a play.¹


Boucicault used the customary stage terminology of his day. The following summary of abbreviations and stage areas is listed in all his plays:

21
The actor is supposed to face the audience.


Routine Staging

The plays Boucicault wrote during the ten years that followed the successful production of *London Assurance* in 1841 really present no particular staging ideas. They seem to have been given with stock sets, painted with illusionistic realism. The scene change was often visible.

For instance, the scenes in *London Assurance* are interiors in two English homes of some elegance, and, in Act II, the setting shows the lawn outside one of these homes. The script simply says:

Act II, Scene I - The lawn before Oak Hall, a fine Elizabethan mansion, a drawing room is seen through large French windows at the back (L.H.) L. 2 [at the left in the position of the second groove]. Statues, wing and garden chairs about the stage.

George Becks, who made a promptbook for London Assurance for Wallack's Theatre in New York, on an interleaf opposite page 17, has a floor plan for this set in longhand. He shows a corner of the house as described above. Up stage from it a wall with a center gate goes from left to right. Behind it a wood drop or cloth closes the scene. Right stage, three wings and two groupings of flowers, a seat, L.C., and one, D.R., complete the floor plan. The setting is a wing and drop scene with set pieces.

West End or The Irish Heiress, 1842, has five acts and five different sets. An idea of the kind of set is given, but Boucicault does not go into detail to tell how to achieve the effect. For Act IV he says:

Act IV. The appointment. A Dining-room in Stanmore's House. Tormentor -- door practical, R.H. 1 E. with key in it. --Tormentor -- door, practical L.H. 1 E. to open on street. --Door, practical, R.H. 2 E, with key in it. --Door, practical, L.H. 2 E. --An interior room, with massive consol-table, chandeliers, and safe, is seen through large folding doors, C.4

\footnotemark[4]

The abbreviation H. is used although it is never listed in the abbreviations Boucicault says he will use in his plays. Scripts for other plays of the period say H. means "hand," so it is presumed "R.H. 2 E." means "Right Hand Second Entrance." Practical doors are mentioned several times. The doors have to be locked; they must be usable, and real
furniture is at least listed for rooms seen beyond the main set.

On page three of this script the floor plan of a box set is printed, definitely, with heavy, clear cut lines for Act I. It is the only one in the acting edition, so we do not know whether Act IV used a box set or not. The description makes the use of such a set a possibility, but, without a floor plan, we can not be sure.

The most interesting part of an acting edition for The Willow Copse, 5 1649, is a chart at the beginning of the script listing the fourteen scenes in the play, labeling each one in the manner of stock sets (woods, kitchen, "fancy," street, cellar), and explaining in what grooves each is to play. The chart seems to have been made out on a regular form, suggestive that the staging of The Willow Copse was purely routine. Here is a copy of the chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene Plot of Willow Copse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Woods</th>
<th>Landscape</th>
<th>in</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do.</td>
<td>Garden</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Set wall, L. 2 E., oblique, C.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Set Manor house, L. 3 E.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Set Summer House R. 4 E.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Act III**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Woods</th>
<th>Landscape</th>
<th>in</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do.</td>
<td>Distant country</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Set paling X gate open; C.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Act IV**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kitchen</th>
<th>Interior of Willow Farm</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Same as Scene 2nd, Act 1st</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Act V**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fancy</th>
<th>Three-door rich chamber</th>
<th>in</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Street</td>
<td>Street in London</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cellar</td>
<td>Low flash den in London, Stairs, L. 3 E.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street</td>
<td>Street in London</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fancy</td>
<td>Same as Scene 1st, Act 5th</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When this plot is studied in relation to the brief set descriptions before each scene in the script, the way this Boston theatre made its stock sets fit *The Willow*

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6The publisher's wording in announcing this particular edition of *The Willow* reads "Spencer's Boston Theatre. Boston: Wm V. Spencer, 128 Washington, Corner Water Street, 1855," so the script probably is the play as given in Boston, in 1855.

Copse is clearer. Just before Act I, Scene I, the script reads:

Exterior of a country inn on the outskirts of Fielding's Farm. Inn L.H. with a sign— "The Old Falcon." Cut wood, R. H.

So we know that the inn was made from the cottage flats. It
was on the L.; the wood wings were on the R. When the cot-
tage flats for the inn and the wood wings were removed from
the second grooves for Scene II, perhaps part of the farm
kitchen was already set up and all that remained to be done
was to run in the kitchen wings, or, if the set was a box
set, to add kitchen side walls. Thus one can reason through
the scene shifts for the whole play. The scenes tend to go
from a position down stage to a deeper set, up stage. While
a scene plays in a shallow set, another can be placed, at
least in part. That is possible until we come to the scenes
for Acts IV and Scene I of Act V. The first is a farm
kitchen, the second, a room in a fashionable London home.
One uses the kitchen set, the other uses the fancy set.
Each happens in the third grooves, that is, the scene is as
deep as the third groove position. In this play copy, the
curtain is mentioned at the end of each act, so the Act V,
Scene I set could be put up after the kitchen set was taken
down during an intermission.

Scenes II and IV of Act V are played down stage in the
first groove position. They are a London street scene and
the illusionistic painting on the drop or shutters would have
represented such a scene. Appropriate wings on the side
would have completed the idea. While the scene was going on
in the London street in Scene II, the low flash den could
have been set up in the third grooves for Scene III. Then
the street backing would have closed in at the end of
Scene III, and since Scene IV was played in the first grooves, it would have been possible to set up the fancy "three-door rich chamber" in the third grooves for the final scene in the play.

A check of the scene plots in Boucicault's plays shows that they were planned to function this way. Scenes were played down stage while other sets were made ready behind them.

As time went on and Boucicault felt more sure of himself, his plays gave more detailed directions for their staging. Reading them we are reminded that scenery in his day had to be painted by regular artists. For instance, a scene in *The Corsican Brothers*\(^7\) happens upon the stage of the Grand Opera House. A starred note describes the drop thus:

> The Drop Scene, painted to give the effect of the covered pit and front of the stage crowded with masqueraders, and the Boxes and Gallery occupied by a full and splendidly attired audience. The animation and reality with which the action of this Scene is supported is both excellent and novel; . . . .\(^8\)

\(^7\)Dion Boucicault, *The Corsican Brothers* (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm, P 204).

\(^8\)Ibid., p. 29.

Real actors playing against that back drop of painted people were accepted, because *The Corsican Brothers* was a popular play. So was *The Long Strike* with its famous scene in the telegraph office. This scene is a box set, probably
put up between acts. The telegraph office calls for real apparatus with circular counter and high stools for the operators who are working "as the curtain rises." Yet only the tormentor doors are used and the window is painted in the center of a flat. Notice the window directions:

... curtain painted on window to appear rolled up; letters on the window to read backward -- "Telegraph Office--Messages sent to all parts of the United Kingdoms."9


The real and the painted went hand in hand. The floor plan for Act I, Scene I of *After Dark* is for a railroad station in the fifth grooves. Up stage are "cabs with horses graduated in size, for spective [sic] effect, with lamps lit, heads of horses turned up stage."10


In *Formosa or The Railroad to Ruin*, the Act II, Scene I set calls for painted doors at the C. and L.C. on flats, but the R. and L. doors are to be practicable on both sides.11

11Dion Boucicault, *Formosa or The Railroad to Ruin* (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm 583).

Often the painting of a set piece or a property was continued on a painted drop or flat in the back. In Act III,
Scene I, the R. side of the set for *The Rapparee* is closed in with a stone wall, fifteen feet high. A similar wall is set at L. 1 E., but at L. 4 and 6 E. it is continued on the painting at the back.  

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Illusionistic painting of landscapes, drops, and flats is taken for granted. Act IV of *The O'Dowd* shows "a fish market and quay. A street in perspective."  

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directions for staging *The Pope of Rome* give a series of pictures of ancient Rome. The scenes call for a combination of illusionistic painting and set pieces. This play was first given at Niblo's Theatre, and both Dion and his wife, Agnes Robertson, who was a very fine actress in her own right, were in it, so the scenery may have been made especially for its opening.  

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UNUSUAL STAGING

Unusual staging characterised some of the plays written by Boucicault in the 1850's. In *The Willow Copse*, set waters crossed the stage where a suicide was attempted; in
The Queen of Spades, the interior of a salt mine was pictured with a cage that brought miners up and down; in The Corsican Brothers, a trap brought a dead twin's ghost up to place his hand on his brother's shoulder, and the wall opened to let the shocked brother see a tableau of the murder scene. In The Phantom, green light and mysterious music, atop a rocky, mountain peak, accompanied two horror scenes featuring the rebirth and final death of a vampire. In Pauvretille, an avalanche in the Swiss Alps fell with great realism and caused the main complication in the story. The Poor of New York and The Octofoon both featured fires in sensational scenes.

Boucicault became adept at using the equipment of the nineteenth-century stages. He used traps in such routine ways as for hiding a character in Used Up. He used them spectacularly in The Corsican Brothers. In fact, his use of the trap in this play made such an impression and became so well known that it was called the Corsican trap, just as the D.C. trap on English and American stages was known as Hamlet's trap or the grave trap. The only difference is that today we do not know exactly where the Corsican trap was or even whether it was a special trap prepared for this play or was one of the bridges in the center of the stage used in a particular way. Boucicault did not explain details.

15Dion Boucicault and Charles Mathews, Used Up (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm 7277), pp. 31-33.
He knew the effect could be accomplished on the stages of the day.

The trap is used in the first act. The incidents of the first act in Corsica and of the second act in Paris are supposed to occur at the same time. In Corsica, Fabien, one of the twin brothers, is writing a letter at his desk on the L. His mother is in the room.

... (He folds his letter and seals it, at the same time Louis dei Franchi appears, rising from R.C. without coat and waistcoat, as his brother is, but with a bloodstain upon his breast—he glides across stage—ascending gradually at the same time.

Louis (Laying his hand on Fabien's left shoulder, and heaving a sigh) Ah!

Fab. (Turning around) My brother!—dead!

Sav. Fabien—(Going over to him)—Who is dead? (Terrified at his emotion, she sinks on her knees by his side L.)

Louis. (With his finger on his lips and addressing Fabien) Silence!—look!

(He disappears—at the same moment the scene at the back opens, and discloses an open clearing in the Forest of Fontainbleau—at C. is Chateau Renaud, who is wiping his sword, and on the other Louis Dei Franchi, upon the ground, R.C., supported by a surgeon and his second, who are rendering him assistance—two other gentlemen in position R., realizing the group from the picture of "The Duel." 16

16 Dion Boucicault, The Corsican Brothers (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm P 204), p. 28.

On the interleaf, opposite page 28, in this promptbook, is written in longhand, "when picture is formed behind change scene without whisl [sic] (cut off) Then drop curtain
without Bell." That note in the prompter's hand tells several things. Scene changes were usually made on bell cues from the prompter at his desk D.L. This time they were not to wait for his cue. Just the minute the actors were in place for the duel scene tableau, the back walls (shutters) were to part and reveal the picture. Then the curtain was to end Act I.

An acting problem complicated the staging in this scene. It was the custom for one actor to play the double role of the identical twins. In this scene both brothers are on the stage at the same time. One even touches the shoulder of the other. It is suggested that with the use of a double or a dummy the scene could have been managed. The lights were dimmed in that time, and another actor could have exchanged places with Fabien at the desk. Fabien could have slipped through the wings, stage L., dashed to the first messanine, taken his place R.C. on the lowered bridge behind the desk, and, as it was raised, could have walked L. on it, so he would have been rising and gliding as the audience caught sight of him. When the bridge was level with the stage floor, he could have crossed to lay his hand on Fabien's (his double's) shoulder and have said, "Ah." Then he could have disappeared between the wings as he had before.

A dummy could have been the dead Louis in the duel tableau, or since the stage hands were to wait until the picture was formed to open the scene, perhaps Fabien dashed
behind the shutters before they opened and played the dead Louis himself.

There are evidences of the use of traps in other plays. In *Jessie Brown*, on a given cue, a portion of the floor gives way and falls in. We are certain a trap was used here because on an interleaf, opposite page 20, in a promptbook prepared for Wallack's Theatre, is this note, "Ring trap bell," then, "Trap opens."

Boucicault also used traps for suicides to jump into. In *After Dark*, Act I, Scene VI, canvas was down for water in the "4th, 5th, and 6th E.'s." The scene is Blackfriars temporary bridge. There is a view of the Thames and St. Paul's in the distance. It is night. A trap is open for Eliza's fall from a small platform reached from a larger one. The L. wings are painted to represent thick beams and trestle work. The R. wings represent a wall, a sail, with the mast of a barge R. 1 E. Here is a picture of a nineteenth-century set: wings and drops, illusionistic painting, set pieces and profile boats at anchor "in the 5th and 6th grooves," an open trap. When Eliza jumps, in her suicidal attempt, Old Tom gets into a profile boat in the moonlight.
and rows away to save her while a quick curtain ends the scene and the act. In The Shaughraun the villainous Duff jumps over a cliff to escape the mob which hates informers above all criminals. A trap is open to receive Duff. He jumps from a set rock piece. The trap area is masked by a rock row.19


Boucicault's plays had many short scenes that were supposed to flow into each other, scenario fashion.

The Colleen Bawn is a play with very short scenes. It was first given at Laura Keene's Theatre in New York. Here Boucicault delighted New Yorkers with his use of gauze waters. They may have been in ground rows. This theatre was fifty-two feet deep; the ceiling was fifty-one feet from the stage floor, so a full drop, twenty-five feet high, could be taken up out of sight.20 The play had much music in it.


Boucicault, his wife, Agnes Robertson, and Laura Keene were all in the play. In reading the play, the script seems choppy, perhaps because we do not have the background of music, we cannot see the moonlight shimmering through gauze waters, we cannot watch the good acting that is said to have accompanied its opening. The Colleen Bawn script is only
interesting today when we try to imagine how, in Laura
Keene's theatre, the action went from one scene to another,
movie fashion, with no waits between scenes.

A listing of the scenes for The Colleen Bawn follows.
The number of pages in each scene is noted and in the drown­
ing scene, cue lines have been added to indicate when the
effects occur. In the left margin has been indicated a pos­
sible way of handling some of the effects in this scene.

Act I, Sc. I. [7 pp.] (night) Tara
Cregin, the residence of Mrs.
Cregan on the banks of Kil­
larney.

Sc. II. [2 pp.] The gap of
Dunloe. (1st grooves) Hour
before sunrise.

Sc. III. [3 pp.] Interior of
Eily's cottage on Muckross
Head.

Act II, Sc. I. [1 p.] Gap of Dunloe;
Same as I, II. (1st grooves).

Sc. II. [4½ pp.] Room in
Mrs. Cregan's house.

Sc. III. [5 pp.] Exterior of
Eily's cottage.

Sc. IV. [2 pp.] The old Weir
Bridge. (1st grooves)

Sc. V. [½ p.] Exterior of
Myles' Hut (1st grooves)

[νings]
[Cloth or drop]
[Border]
[Ground rows]
[Set rock]
Qloat on wheels, pulled with cord.

(Splash L.)

[Boat on wheels, pulled with cord]

(hitched on wing, R.U.E.
...
... music.

(Dan and Eily appear in a boat from R. and work on to rock C. He makes her get out. Eily steps on to rock. Boat floats off slowly R.

[Speeches.] Music changes.)

Danny. Then you've lived long enough. Take your marriage lines wid ye to the bottom of the lake.

(He throws her from rock backwards into the water. L.C., with a cry; she reappears clinging to rock.

Eily. No! save me! Don't kill me! Don't Danny, I'll do anything--only let me live.

Danny. He wants ye dead. (Pushes her off.

Eily. Oh heaven! help me! Danny--Dan(Sinks

Danny (looking down)
I've done it--she's gone.

(Shot is fired, L.U.E.; he falls--rolls from the rock into the water R.C. Myles appears with gun, on rock L.U.E.

Myles. I hit one of them bastards that time. I could see well, though it was so dark. But there was something moving on that stone. (Swings across to R.U.E.) Devil a sign of him. Stop! (Looks down) What's this? It's a woman--there is something white there. (Figure
[Bridge sinks.]

Bridge sinks near rock R.U.E.; kneels down; tries to take the hand of figure.) Oh! that dress!—it's Eily. My own darlin' Eily.

[Bridge rises, sink, rises.]

Pulls off waistcoat—jumps off rock. Eily rises, R.; then Myles and Eily rise up. C.; he turns, and seizes rock, R.C.; Eily across left arm.


Sc. II. [2 pp.] Chamber in Castle Chute.


Sc. IV. [½ p.] Outside of Castle Chute (1st grooves)

Sc. V. [6 pp.] Ball room in Castle Chute


The Colleen Bawn depended in part on unusual staging to put it over as did some of the other plays mentioned. Such staging usually accompanied the sensational scene that came to be Boucicault's trade-mark. He often used water scenes, as has been said. He used multiple staging occasionally as a way of avoiding a scene change and for its novel effect.

The Poor of New York has five acts and eleven scenes. One scene happens at "No. 19½ Cross St.--Five Pts." George
Becks' promptbook for this scene has a floor plan of a box set showing two adjoining attic rooms, one neatly kept, the other "dilapidated." Another play, *Foul Play*, uses the same idea in a double set. The R. room is neatly arranged; the L. room is very "dilapidated." This time, a fireplace in the center of the partition wall is common to both rooms. The directions say "bricks are arranged to fall out." Act II, Scene II of *Elfie* has a good example of multiple staging. It represents the interior of an inn and shows the barroom, the passage and stairs, and two upper rooms in the third grooves. This staging permits Elfie to see a murder committed.

In a number of instances Boucicault staged fires and explosions as part of his sensational scenes. The scripts make them seem realistic. These scenes depend a great deal on lighting, but their staging makes them sensational, so they will be discussed here instead of under stage lighting.

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**Note:**


23 Dion Boucicault and Charles Reade, *Foul Play* (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm 579), Act III, Scene II.

24 Dion Boucicault, *Elfie* or *The Cherry Tree Inn* (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm 553).
The first Boucicault play to make a fire a sensation scene is *The Poor of New York* or *The Streets of New York*. The fire scene occurs in Act V, Scene II. Here is Boucicault's description of it:

**Sc. 2. Stage dark. Exterior of tenement house No. 19½ Cross St. Five Points. Shutters of all windows closed. A light is seen through the round holes of the shutters of upper windows—presently a flame rises—it is extinguished, then revives. The light seen to descend as the bearer of it passes down the staircase, the door opens cautiously etc. . . . The glow of fire is seen to spread from room to room . . . The house is gradually enveloped in fire, a cry outside is heard "Fi-er!" "Fi-er!" It is taken up by other voices more distant. The Tocsin sounds—other churches take up the alarm—bells of engines are heard. Enter a crowd of persons. Enter Badger with coat or hat—he tries the door—finds it fast; seizes a bar of iron and dashes in the ground floor window, the interior is seen in flames. Enter Dan.**

Dan (Seeing Badger climbing into the window)
Stop! Stop! (Badger leaps in and disappears. Shouts from the mob; Dan leaps in—another shout. Dan leaps out again black and burned, staggers forward and seems overcome by the heat and smoke. The shutters of the garret fall and discover Badger in the upper floor. Another cry from the crowd, a loud crash is heard, Badger disappears as if falling with the inside of the building. The shutters of the windows fall away and the inside of the house is seen, gutted by the fire; a cry of horror is uttered by the mob. Badger drags himself from the ruins and falls across the sill of the lower window. Dan and two of the mob run to help him forward but recoil before the heat; at length they succeed in rescuing his body—which lies C. . . . Dan kneels over Badger and extinguishes the fire which clings to parts of his clothes.

Boucicault's description is vivid, but the only thing we are told about the staging is that "Red Fire" was used.

Vardac says red fire was a chemical preparation
included in a stage manager's kit, but he does not tell how it was made. This formula for red fire was found in a French book:

Red Fire Without Lamp

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Parts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anhydrate of Nitrate</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potassium chlorate</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gum Lac</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamp black</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulphur</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Act IV of The Octoroon ends when the steamer Magnolia catches on fire and explodes. A promptbook prepared for this play gives some information about how this fire was managed. The scene plot says "set waters X stage and fore ground," in the second and third grooves. It is night and moonlight. Wood wings are used. The plot says:

Large practical steam boat X's stage. The boiler deck must be cut out with platform behind and gang way plank about two feet wide, down stage--The windows of the Cabin must be transparent and lit up. This steamer occupies the whole stage with bow off L. and backs off R 2. Boat tracks ready behind foreground R to X to RC. Then small profile steamer
to come on from R to C on fire—set wood pile Rhe [sic] with placard 2. --5.28

The scene plot was on inserted pages at the front of the book. These pages are not numbered.

Now this scene plot was prepared for the Winter Garden Theatre, the theatre Boucicault praised in a letter to the London Times in 1862, because it was so much better equipped than English theatres. The plot tells several things about the handling of the steamer in the fire scene. In the first place, the steamboat is large. Its bow extends off L. stage, its stern off R. The boiler deck is a cut out, but it has a platform behind it. The printed directions for the play says a hatch in the deck is opened; there is a glare of red, and M'Closky emerges from the aperture. So the platform would have to be wide enough for a trap opening. The deck hands who carried bales of cotton up the gangway had a plank two feet wide to walk on. Transparencies were used at the windows for lights to shine through. There was a track for the big steamer to move off on during the fire while a small profile steamer came on from the R., on fire. The property lists, also on inserted pages in the front of the book, give several more interesting details about the fire. They say:

... Red fire ready R.U.E.
... Small steamboat to fix each day for burning.

Then on an interleaf opposite page 43 is written:
The scene opened in moonlight, and usually moonlight was a blue green light. If this light was changed to a red glare from red fire (maybe, red media also), and, amid the clanging of bells and the running and shouting of people, the big boat was drawn off, and the burning little profile boat was drawn on, the effect could have been very exciting.

The Rapparee or The Treaty of Limerick has a fire for its sensation scene, in Act I, Scene V. In this acting edition floor plans and directions for staging the play are printed at the beginning of the play, but those for the fire scene are on page 4. After the set is described, we read these words:

This is a "fire Scene," therefore the flats are built up on iron plates, covered with rosin and spirits, set to be released from their catches at signals, the whole of L.E. 2 flat and the set along the 5th groove being to blaze [sig] and fall in ruins. The upper entrance has its traps open and red and blue fires ready; also rocket fire in mortars, to be fired upwards. Sounds of explosion ready, by detonating powder, gun cotton in mortars or large steel and iron rattles worked with men at the crack of the wheel; this imitates a series of reports from one mass of powder exploding the 2nd, etc. On fifth groove, flat
view of the ruined part of the castle as seen by firelight. D., a spiral staircase in a ruined turret, practicable.

Those directions occur at the beginning of the play book. During Act I, Scene V, when it is time for the fire, this is the way the script reads:

O'Malley rushes to L. and touches spring in L. 3 E. set, when picture falls forward, from its base, and discovers door and forms a bridge. O'Malley runs up it and off L. M'Nurragh is following him, when fire shoots up there and forces him to return to stage. Fire increases and wall begins to fall down.

Ginck. I trink your verra goot healtl! (Explosions. Flat falls down, showing red and blue fires at back and left side) Dousand dunders. I shall be smoked like ein hereng. (Claps pistol to D.L. lock, fires it) They open door and muffling themselves in their cloaks, exeunt D.F. Fire at its height. Explosion very heavy. Grace in the arms of O'Malley is seen carried down by winding stairway, L.4 E.

Curtain

Boucicault talks as if it were common practice (in 1870, when this play opened at the Princess Theatre, in London) for flats to be built up of iron plates and covered with rosin and spirits so they would blase. Then, in the midst of a great deal of noise and red and blue fire, the set cliffs painted with dashing waves in the fifth groove probably were replaced with a flat giving a view of the ruined castle as seen by firelight. A spiral stairway was sent up (or let down) for O'Malley to descend carrying Grace, and the curtain closed to hide it all. Changes happened so quickly, no one in the audience could check on anything too closely. No doubt people thought they saw what they were
supposed to see.

One of Boucicault's best sensational effects was the avalanche scene for Pauvrette, mentioned previously. Three promptbooks for this play were checked. Of course, such an examination showed that theatre practice varied according to the group giving the play. All three books have the same printed directions for the avalanche. Two of them also have prompter's directions that give some idea of how the avalanche was managed in the theatres for which they were prepared.

The first promptbook was for a production at the Lyceum Theatre in San Francisco, November 17, 1856, 30 and contains only these printed directions:

1st avalanche. 2nd avalanche. The bridge is broken and hurled into the abyss - the paths have been filled with snow - and now an immense sheet rushing down from R. entirely buries the whole scene to height of 12 or 15 feet swallowing up the cabin and leaving above a clear level of snow - storm passes away - silence and peace return. Figure of Virgin unharmed. light before it still burns.

In a promptbook prepared for Niblo's Garden, October 4, 1858, these notes are found at the beginning of the play: "An avalanche to work. Traps R.H.C. open." A few pages later, at the beginning of the script, the following directions are inserted:

Wood crash ready. When bridge breaks, snow to
fall from carpenter's floor at 1st car bell. Blocks of ice to descend at 2nd car bell falling into C. trap and two striking bridge causing it to break . . . Thunder drum and wheel thunder Ready at prompt - Inside box . . . old fashioned matches on table.31


wind, wind wheel thunder. No. 1 Echo to song - Green Room No. 2 Paint Frames.32

32Ibid., p. 17.

. . . wind increases - the snow begins to fall. Ring car bell for snow to fall, and keep up wind and thunder. Back snow light. Ready to turn out foot lights when avalanche falls - Keep house lights down.33

33Ibid., p. 18.

. . . Large blocks of hardened snow and masses of rock fall, rolling into the abyss.

Then the printed directions quoted from the acting edition occur here. In longhand is written:

Ring car bell for blocks of snow to be thrown from the flies and carpenter's floor into C. trap - two pieces falling on bridge which breaks. Keep everything quiet when avalanche fallen. Stop snow, thunder, wind.34

34Ibid., p. 19.

Now, in the third promptbook prepared for Barnum's Museum in 1860, there is written in, on page 17, "Ladies for Echo R. . . . Crash thunder." The printed directions for the avalanche are retained as they are in the other two
promptbooks, but the prompter has listed this sequence of events:

- Slight crash wind
- Darken a little
- Stones in barrel
- Slight crash
- Railing of bridge
- Crash - Thunder
- Bridge falls - crash
- Stones in barrel - loud
- Work avalanche
- Clash - stones - thunder
- Pause. All quiet
- Moon shines out
- Stage dark
- Blue mediums on


Other sensational scenes that depended largely on staging were: running the train in, "The moment Tom and Chumley are clear," in *After Dark*; the descending tower in *Arrah-Na-Pogue*, and the scenes in which profile figures were the main characters. These last scenes, although they were parts of inferior plays, deserve some mention because of their novelty.

*Flying Scud* was given in 1866 in Holborn Theatre in London.36 The most exciting scene was the horse race enacted by cut-out horses and jockeys and cut-out cheering crowds. The promptbook does not tell how the effect was achieved. It
is over very quickly, and Nat, the old jockey who had ridden Flying Scud to victory, enters with the saddle and bridle on his arm. That is according to the printed script. In this promptbook is written in longhand, "Is mounted on Fl. Sc. & is on her way to the loughing room." So, again we have a mixture of the real and the unreal. Flying Scud was such a success that Boucicault had a boat race in Formosa with profile boats, profile figures for rowers, and a profile audience. The directions say:

. . . double track for steamboats and 2 race boats, supposed to be 45 feet long, with profile 8 rowers to work, which are worked across. . . . On the bridge, L. 2 d E., behind parapet, group of profile figures, men and women, miniature, to work to jump up and down as if to see the end of the race; these face R. . . .

Then, in Belle Lamar, in 1874, at Booth's Theatre came the sensation scene in the mountains when the audience saw a battle fought at a distance with profile soldiers.

A note for Act III, Scene I, says:

This scene must be so constructed as to admit of the mechanical contrivance required to exhibit the battle scene with which this act concludes.

However the promptbook for Belle Lamar gives no information about how to construct the effect.
This chapter might well end with some mention of the staging of *The Shaughraun*, mentioned before. The play has sixteen scenes of which six employ box sets. There are a number of scenes played in the first groove so other scenes could be built behind them, but one scene shifted in front of the audience, in a new way substituted for the ancient use of grooves. In Act II, Scene V, the lights darken, the music swells and then:

The scene moves -- pivots on a point at the back. The prison moves off and shows the exterior of the tower with Conn clinging to the walls, and Robert creeping through the orifice. The walls of the yard appear to occupy three-fourths of the stage.39

Robert's escape, in which we first see him digging in his cell, then crawling out of it on the other side, was the first sensation scene in the play. The second, featuring the suicide of the informer Duff, has already been mentioned.

As far as staging is concerned, Boucicault's plays always depended on nineteenth-century grooved floors, machines, and illusionistic, perspective painting. Boucicault learned to make use of the stage in unusual ways to add to the sensational scenes for which his plays were well known. He used set pieces and box sets, but the easily shifted wing and drop were continuously employed; thus the many scenes his plays had could be changed scenario fashion.

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CHAPTER III

STAGING PRACTICES USED IN ARRAH-NA-POGUE

Arrah-Na-Pogue, a play in three acts, will be discussed in its entirety in this chapter. The scripts for this play are clear in explaining how the staging was accomplished, and since Arrah-Na-Pogue is one of Boucicault's best plays, spending time on it is a rewarding experience. A synopsis of the story will be included in order to make the staging more readily understood. The comments on lighting and directing will anticipate later chapters, but the whole script cannot be discussed without them.

Arrah-Na-Pogue or The Wicklow Wedding was given at the old Theatre Royal, Hawkins Street, in Dublin, November 7, 1864. It was well mounted with new scenery by F. Lloyd, we are told. An excellent cast included John Brougham as O'Grady, Dion Boucicault as Shaun the Post, and Agnes Robertson as Arrah Meelish. The Dublin run ended December 17, 1864. It was given at the Princess Theatre, in London, March 22, 1865, with the same three in the cast. The play appeared in New York, July 10, 1865. It was translated into French and ran one hundred and forty nights in Paris.

THE STORY OF ARRAH-NA-POGUE

Arrah Meelish is called Arrah-Na-Pogue, Arrah of the kiss, because when her foster brother, Beamish McCoul, was
in prison, she rolled up a message and gave it to him in a kiss. As the play opens, McCoul has come to take Fanny Power, his fiancée to France with him. His estates have been confiscated because he is a leader of the rebels. Since he needs money, he waylays the government man who has collected his rents and takes the money. He gives the gold to his loyal followers and the notes to Arrah in whose house he has hidden.

On the night of her wedding to Shaun, Feeny, an informer, whose love Arrah has spurned, brings soldiers to arrest her and hunt McCoul. McCoul escapes. Since Fanny Power, his fiancée, does not know Arrah is McCoul's foster sister, she thinks Arrah is his mistress, when she learns he has been living at her house.

Shaun takes the blame for harboring McCoul; he is tried and is to be executed at dawn. Fanny and O'Grady rush to the house of the secretary of state to get a pardon for Beamish McCoul. If he is pardoned, Shaun's life will be spared. They get the pardon and hurry to try to get to the prison in time to save Shaun's life.

Meanwhile, Shaun, in prison, hears Arrah singing on the roof. He breaks the bars of his cell and climbs to the roof where Feeny is forcing his attentions upon Arrah. Shaun pushes him into the sea. A pardon arrives in time to save Shaun.
AN ACTING EDITION OF **ARRAH-NA-POGUE**

This edition¹ is one of DeWitt's Acting Plays,

¹Dion Boucicault, *Arrah-Na-Pogue* (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm 575).

No. 365, from the DeWitt Publishing Company. It contains the casts for the Theatre Royal at Dublin and the Princess theatre in London.

This acting edition of *Arrah-Na-Pogue*, on pages 2-10, lists more explanations for its staging than any other play studied for this paper. Prints of nine pages of staging aids are a part of this chapter. These prints include six floor plans and seven elevation drawings, and contain a description of the thirteen scenes in the play. Bits of information about the working of the famous descending tower scene are most revealing. Since this scene was not even in the play as it was given in Dublin, according to Townsend Walsh,² and the script was printed after the play was given at the Princess Theatre, it could be that the plans as shown are based on the performance at that theatre, although the script does not say so. Then, on page 8 begins a most detailed costume list that calls for Irish costumes of 1798 and contains make-up suggestions. Page 10 has a property list for the play and a copy of the stage directions.

Boucicault used for all his plays. These reprints with comments on them follow.

**A PROMPTBOOK FOR ARRAH-NA-POGUE**

In the front of this promptbook is written in longhand:

Property of D. Boucicault, Esq.
To be returned
Int to Hull
26 Febr 1874

At the bottom of page 1 is also printed in longhand, "London 1665 E M B" The book seems to have been used more than once.

An unusual feature of this promptbook is that many of the directions on the interleaves are printed. Counting two tableaux, there are forty-three grouping diagrams, most of them printed. In them little o's and initials or names are used for people. Some of these diagrams are on floor plans or parts of floor plans. There are three set elevations in longhand. The last one in the book shows Shaun on the table at his prison window.

The directions for handling the crowd scenes are quite complete. At the wedding, the stage is crowded, but everyone is carefully placed. Stairs, even tables and chairs are used for levels to make varied stage pictures. The crowd has directions telling when to whisper, when to murmur, and when to shout. A nice touch is given when the soldiers come with
the informer to arrest Arrah for harboring McCoul. At that point, all the girls turn their backs on Arrah!

As the villagers come in for the wedding, these printed directions on an interleaf tell them where to go:


2 Beggar 20, 3 children (Ballet) DRH
3 Beggar 20 (Supers) 2 RH, 1 LH
2 Lame men (Supers) R & LH
1 Blind man with dog (Super) LH
10 Male peasants (Supers) RH & LH
5 Female Ditto (Ballet)
Piper (Super) LH
9 Female Peasants (Ballet) R & L
2 Fiddlers (Supers) R & L
Outside car with Shaun, Arrah, & Priest
Oiny Regan, Lanty Lannigan, Moran and Peasants.

After Katy's dance, the men take away the table and board she had danced on. Business is well planned. If directions were followed and practiced, everything could go like clock work.

The script also makes plans for scene changes. The first scene closes in, and, at the end of the scene is written:

"change scene as they march and put all lights up full Green down." Opposite page 30, in longhand, is written, "music to take up curtain." Opposite pages 52-53 printed and longhand directions supplement those in the script for the transformation from the prison cell to the tower scene. They begin opposite page 52. There is a ready notation for
the stone, Arrah and the song, and this is added:

Front lights all down
1st bell to get ready at C trap.

At the top of the interleaf for page 53 in longhand is written "Ready Stone." Farther down the page, we read, "Ready throw down stone and paper." Then is printed:

Feeny
O'Brady, Pardon
Coffin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beamish</th>
<th>Fanny</th>
<th>Everybody</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2nd bell takes down table & chairs C trap
3rd & 4th bell to sink castle
5th bell to stop
6th & 7th bell sink continues
8th & 9th send up black sink 1st cut
1st grooves, and close up at sides
10th & 11th take down black sink and close all
the sliders when stage
clear at back

In longhand is written, "Drum up for Last Scene." Opposite page 54, again in longhand, is found, "When Shaun is off through window, clear stage. Change Scene."

Histories of the theatre sometimes relate that during a show the cuts in the grooves were closed when they were not needed again. Here the script reads, "close all the sliders when stage clear at back."

Then at the end of the play a diagram shows the distribution of characters "at Fall of Curtain."

Surely the transformation and sinking tower scene created a great sensation. Shaun climbs out of his tower cell window escaping, and presto, he is outside the cell climbing the tower. As he climbs, the tower sinks, so that
at the end, the turret is on the floor level, and there the final touching scene of the play occurs.

When we consider the action of the play into which this change fits, we catch a little more of the excitement. It goes like this. When Shaun is alone, Arrah throws down the chimney a note tied to a stone and sings again. Desperately he shakes the bars of his window. They come loose, and he throws them into the water below. He says, "The wall is old and full of cracks; the ivy grows again it. It is death maybe, but I'll die strivin' to rache my girl, and chate the gallows that's waitin' for me." He climbs through the window. Then the script reads:

The scene changes to the exterior of the same tower; the outside of the cell is seen and the window whereby he has escaped. Shaun is seen clinging to the face of the wall; he climbs the ivy, the tower sinks as he climbs; the guard room windows lighted within are seen descending and above them a rampart and sentry on guard. Chorus of soldiers inside guard room—as Shaun climbs past the window the ivy above his head gives way and a large mass falls carrying him with it, the leaves and matted branches covering him. His descent is checked by the roots of the ivy which hold fast. An alarm. The sentry advances—looks over the rampart into the abyss; the curtains of the guard room window are withdrawn; the Sergeant, with candle, and five soldiers, put out their heads. They decide tis just Arrah on the roof who has loosed some masonry and they go back in. Shaun sticks his head out and continues to climb. Scene still descends until it sinks to the platform.

The directions for lighting take control for granted. Gas light can be brightened or dimmed. The cues read "Battens up a little." "Lights down." "Flote up gradually."
Battens refer to lights above the set, flotes to lights in the footlight trough. In one place the printed direction reads: "Enter soldiers with Torches." In longhand the cue is, "Lights up. Flote gradually up." 

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6Ibid., p. 56.

**CRITICISM OF ARRAH-NA-POQUE**

Freedley and Reeves say:

Arrah-Na-Pogue (1864) . . . largely notable because of two of its characters, Col. Bagenal O'Grady, a fine type of Irishman (acted by John Broughman) and Shaun the Post (created by Boucicaut). 

---


A Chicago Tribune criticism of the play is not at all complimentary:

Sensation and Boucicault rule the day at the theatres (the Museum and McVickers) and the "legitimate" has for a while been sent to the shades, to wait the reaction which inevitably follows such attempts at realizing a perverted idea. Nevertheless the two miscalled Irish dramas (Peep-O'Day and Arrah-Na-Pogue) draw well. . . . We . . . know that these plays are popular with a certain class who choose to admire the Irishman as painted on the distorted retina of Boucicault, and love to view him displaying imaginary ventures and wading through a series of impossible incidents.

---

8Chicago Tribune, October 12, 1865.

This chapter has discussed one of Boucicault's
greatest successes. *Arrah-Na-Pogue* is an Irish play. It reveals the stage of the 1860's as a place of action where, by means of mobile scene shifts and machinery, wonderful feats were accomplished before the eyes of the audience.
DISCUSSION OF REPRINT 1

In the description of the floor plan for Act I, Scene I, in Reprint 1, on the following page, one can see that the phrase "in 4th grooves" means that the set occupies the stage back to and including the fourth grooves. The ground cloth is of canvas and is in two sections. The lighter colored canvas represents a road which runs from L. 2 E. over to R. 1 E. Limelight, used for moonlight, could be focused as our spots can today. It is to especially light L. 1 E. at the height of a man.

Notice, in the directions for Scene II, that a tree wing is put in the 1st cut of the 1st groove, so a previous set behind it can be removed during this scene. The cottage is not a set piece; it is painted on a flat, but its door is to be practicable.
CAST OF CHARACTERS AND SCENERY

Act I, Scenes I-III

REPRINT 1
DISCUSSION OF REPRINT 2

In Reprint 2, on the next page, the description of Act I, Scene IV says the wings in the 5th groove on both sides are to be removed to let a horse and cart enter L. and go off R.!

The barn on R. stage is to be three stories high, and some action happens in the loft. The first story is on a platform five feet above the stage floor, the second, six to eight feet above that. The loft is reached by a ladder. The borders hide the top of it, but a practicable window in it is to be seen and used. The proscenium opening would have to be high to allow people in the galleries to see. All the platforms on these levels are to be practicable. The intention is to make the barn look real with straw, hay, mealbags, posts and joists of real timber. Notice a fireplace D.R. is to have red fire in it. One of the doors in a 4th groove flat has to be wood, since it is taken off its hinges and a jig is danced on it. The borders and sinks are to be painted like beams and rafters. A real horse, hay, wooden door, sturdy platforms, etcetera, on Bouiccault's stage are used with illusionistic painted scenery.

It sounds as if Scene IV of Act II is to be played in front of a drop down front, the drop "to roll up curtain wise." Playing this scene down stage would make it possible to set up the court room scene in the 5th grooves for Scene V while it is going on.
ARRAH-NA-POGUE.

ACT IV — Landscape and interior of Farm in 6th groove. Afternoon.

Landscape on Flat.

---

Burn. | Open. | 0 Board.

| Stairs.

| Chair.

| Fireplace.

---

Table. | Chair.

---

Window.

---

Note IV.—Curved landscape (at foot of the stage) on a rocky lake coast; see roll up curtain to bean.

REPRINT 2

ARRAH-NA-POGUE, SCENERY

ACT I, SCENE IV — ACT II, SCENE IV
DISCUSSION OF REPRINT 3

In the floor plan for Scene V of Act II, the dotted line in the 5th groove represents the flat that is the rear wall. It might have been brought up in a sloat cut there. So, for that matter, could the eight feet high screen of wainscoting in the 4th groove.

It will be noticed that Act III, Scene I is to have ample curtains at the window. (Someone has to hide behind them!) A carpet is used in this scene.

For Scene III, the prison, the table and stool are placed on a D.R. trap which will sink them during the transformation scene that happens here.
ARRAH-NA-POGUE.

ACT II, SCENE V -- ACT III, SCENE III
DISCUSSION OF REPRINT 4

The elevations in Reprint 4 show in part how the change from the prison cell to the descending tower scene was masked and accomplished. In the 2nd groove, a large black frame or masking piece surrounded the inside castle wall with its tower.

The lower elevation shows Flat A which is to descend in the 3rd grooves. Flat A looks as big as a drop. The explanation of the steps, the ivy, and the paint job seems very clear. Platform C is two feet wide and is joined to A going down and to an equally wide flat B above it, but which is not shown in this elevation drawing.

Notice the lights are not to illuminate these flats clearly. The walls are to be in shadow with the light coming from the back.
ARRAH-NA-POGUE.

Open.

2nd Scene.

1st Scene.

Plat A. in 1st Scene to descend. A. A. A. Additions of a mass of dry to every practicable step, marked B. K. Scene is discovered halfway up, therefore must step on lower half of first. Darkness over cast the steps to hide them. Wall of old gray stone, money, etc. The top joint the platform, c. (two feet wide), which steps on the bottom of Plat B and helps to bring it down to continue descent. All the face in the audience is in shadow, the light being up at back. B, D, E, F, I. I. are arched windows.

REPRINT 4

ARRAH-NA-POGUE, EXPLANATION OF ACT III,
SCENE III SCENE CHANGE, STEP FIRST
Reprint 5 shows two positions of Flat B on its way down. Flat B is painted to represent the upper part of the castle tower and, as Flat A is sunk, Flat B or the top of the tower comes into the line of vision of the audience. It will be remembered that each groove had a set of cuts. Flat B is in the upper cut of the 3rd grooves. The L. side of Flat B shows an example of corner perspective and pictures the wall in a state of ruins.
ARRAH-NA-POGUE

REPRINT 5

ARRAH-NA-POGUE, EXPLANATION OF ACT III,
SCENE III SCENE CHANGE, STEP SECOND
DISCUSSION OF REPRINT 6

The elevations in Reprint 6 show a front and a side view of the stage when Flat B has been sent down. Notice that the tower has only occupied R. and C. stage. This side view of the black frame in the 2nd grooves is especially interesting.
ARRAH-NA-POGUE, EXPLANATION OF ACT III,
SCENE III SCENE CHANGES, STEP THIRD
DISCUSSION OF REPRINT 7

The elevation drawing in Reprint 7 shows the stage after the tower has descended. The description under it is most revealing. The back flat shows moonlight on a lake. Canvas water is brought from the base of that flat to the fifth groove to make the water look "spacious." Notice that the explanation says the L. side of the canvas water is transparent "as usual" because under it is to turn a moonbeam, glittering-suraced drum to show the play of the waves, and the line of light is to strike the water at a certain point. Overhead, the fourth, fifth and sixth borders and sinks are painted to look like sky; at the sides, the wings in those grooves are painted to look like sky and blue water. Wings in front of those grooves are to represent dark masonry, stonework, ruined stonework with an overhanging tree, et cetera. The L. 3 E. wing shows a wall with a practical door. The sinks or borders used with these wings usually represent sky. The open trap is lined on the U. stage side with dark blue hangings, on the D. stage side with a ground row, "a line of profile ruined wall, tapering from breast-high to stage level." Again, lime light is used for moonlight.

The costume list that starts in Reprint 7 will be discussed in the comments about Reprint 8.
Since Boucicault played the part of Shaun the Post during the Dublin and London performances of Arrah-Na-Pogue, and often when it was given elsewhere—the costume and make-up suggestions for this role are interesting. Shaun is to wear whiskers and a short curled, red or black wig. Reprint 10 is a picture of Boucicault in this role. His "whiskers" consist of a moustache. He is wearing a great coat with three capes and other items suggested in the list.

O'Grady and McCoul are to wear tie wigs, Feeny a black, close-crop wig. Notice that Feeny, the villain, is to be made up to look repulsive, unwashed, unshaved, with prominent face lines. The costume list also tells him how he is to act.

These acting editions and promptbooks have offered almost no information about make-up, so especially interesting are the make-up suggestions here. The Sergeant's face is to be weather-beaten, his nose red. The suggested carbuncle and warts would have made conversation for those in the audience with spy glasses. The Sergeant is a diamond in the rough, "very gruff in his manner, but is kind hearted really." His handkerchief is to be red.

Katy, who dances a jig on the barn door, smokes a pipe and wears a fancy calico dress over a red petticoat over a blue under-petticoat.
ARRAH-NA-POUGE.

In all countries. — Act III.: Same, dark great coat with black cape and wide collar, riding-hoods with spurs, dusty; hat, gauntlets and whip.

BRITISH MILITARY. — Act I., Scene 1st. In wig, black ribbons; blue coat with white lapels, white breeches, black hat, riding boots, a long peasant's gray coat with cape. — Act II., Scene 1st: Same as before, blue knee-ribbons, white hat with blue ribbons, the top of his boots turned down. — Act III., Scene 1st: Same as hat, with a white street coat, spurs on.

MAID DRYER. — Make up the face very repulsive, unwashed, two days' growth of black beard, lines of face marked prominently; black clove-crop wig. Suit of rusty black, battered high-crowned hat, wide white coat. Very erasing in his bearing, nervous, glancing to the side and downwards when speaking to any one.

MADE CONSPIRATOR. — Uniform of British officer, scarlet coat and waistcoat, gold-laced, white breeches, black riding-boots with spurs, red three-cornered hat, with gold lace, each, sword and belt.

SECRETARY OF STATE. — Handsome court-dress, dressing-gown ready for him to put on.

BERGANT. — Face made up weather-beaten, red nose, a carbuncle and wart here and there. Tucked-hat, edged with gold-lace, black stock; scarlet coat, faced with white, and bound with yellow, gold buttons, gold epaulets; sergeant's chevrons on right arm; white belt with gilt chape, bearing crown and number; white waistcoat and breeches; gauntlets buttoned all the way; sword and yellow corded tassels. Very gruff in his manner, but is kind hearted really. A red pocket handkerchief for Act III., Scene 3rd, for him.

WINTERBOTTOM (Valet). — Black suit. 3d entrance of his, half dressed, in his shirt sleeves; 4th entrance, coat on; 5th entrance, nightcap on.

PORTER. — Face made up weather-beaten, red nose, a carbuncle and wart here and there. Tucked-hat, edged with gold-lace, black stock; scarlet coat, faced with white, and bound with yellow, gold buttons, gold epaulets; sergeant's chevrons on right arm; white belt with gilt chape, bearing crown and number; white waistcoat and breeches; gauntlets buttoned all the way; sword and yellow corded tassels. Very gruff in his manner, but is kind hearted really. A red pocket handkerchief for Act III., Scene 3rd, for him.

CLERK OF COURT-MARTIAL. — Plain dark dress.

OFFICER. — Like Major.

SERGEANT. — Like BERGANT, crimson cloth coat, etc. Guns, belts for cartridge boxes, and holster sheath.

HEROES. — Like the BERGANTS, only ragged, crumpled, etc.

ARRAH MILITARY. — Act I., Scene 2nd: Calico gown, short, colored petticoat, white stockings, black shoes, bare arms, neckerchief. — Act II., Scene 3rd: Red petticoat, white dress over looped-up calico skirt; white bodice, white stockings, red cloak. Bright buckles to shoes, a flower in her hair; a few simple ornaments. — Act III., Scene 3rd: Blue cloak.

PANTHER POWER. — Act I.: Dark red riding-dress, trimmed with black velvet, black hat, light blue breeches, riding-gloves, whip. — Act II., Scene 2nd: Rich dress, white gloves, lace neck border, lace at wrists, jewels. — Act III., Scene 1st: Black lace mantle.

HATTY/Jig-dancer's part. — Old woman. Fancy calico dress over red petticoat, over blue under-petticoat, white cap, blue stockings, buckled shoe. Pipe to smoke.

PEASANT GIRL. — Like ARRAN.

*The original pantomime of this character in London (Mr. Dominick Murray) must be one of the foremost in the role.

REPRINT

ARRAH-NA-POUGE, COSTUMES
DISCUSSION OF REPRINT 9

The property list on this page appears to be made for a play staged realistically. Notice that a kettle full of potatoes is made to appear steaming hot by putting in it a "cloth soaked in boiling water . . . to make it smoke."

The note to the orchestra in which "appropriate music to the action throughout" is asked for lets us know that Boucicault appreciated the value of background music.
ARRAH-NA-POGUE.

PROPERTIES (See Scenery).

Act I., Scene Ist. — Roll of bank-notes, bag of coins to be opened and coins to come out; folded paper for Fancy; stick for Peasants; rhino-whip for Fancy; guz and bayonets, a lantern to burn for Solpliers. Scene 2d: Whip for Shamus; tub and milking-stool; two pails; bank-notes for Beamish. Scene 3d: Letter for O'Urahy; paper for Major. Scene 4th: Tables, benches, stools, barrel, up c.; three lighted candles; red fire in fireplace; key on the car; large kettle full of potatoes; a cloth soaked in boiling water to be put in it to make it smoke; bags for Beamish; paper for Katty and Others; folded paper (of Act I., Scene 1st); in pocket of coat worn by Beamish; fiddles for Fiddlers; pair of handcuffs. Act II., Scene 1st: Letter for O'Urahy. Scene 2d: Two lanterns, to burn, for Fancy and Sergeant; bayonet on Soldier's gun; long chain and pair of handcuffs attached, the chain to break; paper for Fancy. Scene 4th: Writing materials on table; drum, snare; papers and pencils for Officers; blue bag and paper for Fancy; quill and inkstand for Major. Act III., Scene 1st: Writing materials on table; red fire in fireplace; paper for Beamish; card on safety, Winterton's second entrance; whip for O'Urahy; note for Winterton's fourth entrance. Scene 3d: Bible for Pater; a strip of paper rolled round a stone, and outer end tucked in so as to be not easily unloosed. Scene Last: Two torches, lighted, for Soldiers; paper for Beamish and for O'Urahy.

Note to Leader of Orchestra. — Overture of Irish airs in medley. Appropriate music to the action throughout. General directions are given.

TIME OF PLAYING—THREE HOURS.

EXPLANATION OF THE STAGE DIRECTIONS.

The Actor is supposed to face the Audience.

REPRINT 9

ARRAH-NA-POGUE, PROPERTIES AND EXPLANATION OF STAGE DIRECTIONS.
CHAPTER IV

THE BOUCICAULT PLAY BOOKS GIVE INFORMATION CONCERNING OTHER STAGING PRACTICES

STAGE PROPERTIES

Boucicault probably had little to do with the staging of his first play, London Assurance but the properties in that play made stage history, and their usage was widely copied on both sides of the Atlantic.

As has been said, London Assurance was a successful play. English audiences liked it, but some of the critics did not. They tried to account for its popularity by saying it was successful because it had an outstanding cast and because it was "well mounted." Boucicault may have been amused at the latter criticism. At any rate it is included in an "Editorial Introduction" in a number of his scripts.

The Editorial Introduction, printed in an edition of London Assurance after the Convent Garden and Park Theatre productions of the play in 1841, says the play belongs to "the shabby genteel school of comedy." Its success was accounted for by the "unprecedented display of upholstery furniture" at both Convent Garden and the Park Theatre. The properties--chairs, curtains, and divans--were of unusual splendor. The Brussels carpet in the drawing-room scenes was novel. Londoners were impressed. Boucicault knew

77
that they were. He was quick to use and keep on using any theatrical device the public was interested in. So, in similar scenes, in many of his plays, the furnishings were equally luxurious.

All the Boucicault scripts call for real properties. Sometimes the realistic property was used in the same scene with books, or curtains, or bottles painted on a flat, but, when property lists were included in the play books, they read very like lists we would prepare for a realistic production today. The property list from *The Willow Copse* is:

1.


Act I


Scene II. Round table, two chairs; three-legged stool; large arm chair; cupboard, L.C., in it; [sic] dinner-set and white cloth; loaf of bread.

Act II

Pitchfork, two-pronged; printed hand bill; dark lantern; loaded pistol, sure fire; large judi-knife; box with will in it; three lighted candles, L.U.E. for servants; gun

Act III

Garden benches, R. and L.; barrel on truss, spigot in it; large jug, four pewter cups; apples and cake on table, L.C.; rustic chair.
Act IV

Same as 2nd Scene, 1st Act.

Act V

Rich furniture; two tables, R. and L.; four chairs; bell, books, pen, ink, paper, on table L.H. Gold watch and purse; candle on table, R. Jew-pedler's box; two large milk-pails, dipper in one; two slices of bread in a clean napkin; three stools; common table; drinking bar, cup, decanters, etc. Green spectacles and umbrella; door-mat; handcuffs.

Certain plays called for unusual properties, as might be expected. In Pauvrette, two property babies, 10 loaded muskets with bayonets, "sure fire for soldiers," and dust for all the characters were on the list.² The property requirements for The Octoroon include the small profile burning vessel and real fire for M'Gloskey's campfire which was burning on sheet iron.³

²Dion Boucicault, Pauvrette (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm F 253).

³Dion Boucicault, The Octoroon (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm, P 249).

Rather often the lists read, "Gun sure fire." Property guns did not always work. The list for The Colleen Bawn even included, "Reserve Ready" after its gun listing. George Becks' lists for this play were definite in the promptbook he made for it. For the cave or drowning scene, the rope suspended from the center was to be "strong enough
to swing a man." There was to be a paddle in the canoe, a "Mattress for jumps, etc. behind rock and water" \[sic\]. Actors who had to jump or fall into the water were to have a soft landing. There was to be a "Turn over or diving machine behind 3rd waters." The Act III property list said, "Keys in doors audience side--very particular."  

4Dion Boucicault, The Colleen Bawn (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm P 238).

Then for Foul Play, Act III, Scene IV, the script suggests, "Shelves of Books painted R. side on flat."  

5Dion Boucicault and Charles Reade, Foul Play (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm 552).

Elfie's Act I, Scene I, scenery suggestions include this direction:

On the back in 2 E., shelves, with bottles, jars, a counter, painted, R. on flat, shelves with alembas, crucibles, still worms, painted. Fireplace with grate. R. small carpet down. Ornaments painted on mantelshelf.  

6Dion Boucicault, Elfie, or The Cherry Tree Inn (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm 553).

The list indicates whether the property is to be painted on the flat or is to be the real thing. Unusual properties in Elfie include twenty life-sized wax figures.

Floor coverings and rugs are usually mentioned in either the scene plot or property lists. In John Moore's
promptbook for *The Irish Heiress* he wrote at the end of Act I on page 12, "Green cloth up" and, on the next page, "Comedy carpet." (There is no explanation of that term.) In Act I, the green cloth was down for a dressing room in the Earl of Glenmare's house. Act III happens in a garden. Moore wrote, "Put green cloth down." Perhaps it was a green carpet in one act and grass in the other. 7 In *The School for Scheming*, Moore called for a green drugget on the floor. His promptbook for *Led Astray* listed a garden cloth for Act I and a handsome carpet for Act II.

In the Boucicault plays the properties listed tend to be realistic, but they were sometimes painted on the scenery, so that in properties as well as scenery, the real and the painted were used at the same time.

STAGE LIGHTING

Boucicault's plays never explain how a theatre's lighting equipment worked or even what that equipment was. Even in his early plays, property lists and stage business mention candles, lanterns, chandeliers. Later plays speak of calcium light, lime light, and gas, but always in a routine way. Existing lighting conditions were taken for granted. The effect desired is mentioned, but not even the promptbooks tell how it was obtained.

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7Dion Boucicault, *The Irish Heiress* (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm P 32).
For instance, twice during *West End* or *The Irish Heiress* the directions call for a realistic lighting effect. On page 38, the script reads, "Blows out candles, on table in C. -- Lights down." On the next page, we read, "Stanmore opens C. doors, from the inside. -- the room is lighted by chandeliers at the back. -- Lights up." In *Caesar De Bazan* there is no mention of any control at all. Candles were used in Acts I and III. The "distant country" was discovered by moonlight, but we are not told how that effect was achieved.8

8Benjamin Webster and Dion Boucicault, *Caesar De Bazan* or *Love and Honor* (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm 644).

That was in 1844.

George Becks' promptbook of *The Phantom* was prepared in 1856. Up to that time light cues are seldom found, and they are not detailed in this play. There is no light plot, but there are more notations about lighting, and they read as if there was a method of controlling intensity. To make one effect more ghastly, a green medium was used. Scattered on the interleaves of Becks' promptbook the light cues read like this:

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Lights off before change. . . . Lights off before change. . . . Moon on slow.


In George Becks' promptbook for *Jessie Brown* the use of calcium is referred to once and red fire another time. Degrees of light and dark are mentioned so there was a way of controlling intensity. These cues with their pages will give an indication of all that is said about lighting in this play:

P. 7, "(night begins)"; p. 10, "Dark"; p. 11, "Calcium behind drap... Lights up at change"; p. 15, on the interleaf, "Ready at Light"; p. 17 "(He puts out the candle. Stage dark)... a flash of gun is seen from the distant city;" p. 18, "½ dark"; p. 20, "Stage dark on interlude. Enter Nana with light R. 2 E. Lights up a little as he enters and down at his exit;" p. 21 interleaf, "Lights up"; p. 27, "Begin sunrise"; p. 30 interleaf, "Red fire."


That is not much to say about lighting the play, but as has been said, lighting references in the plays examined up to 1856 have been very scarce.

In these scripts, usually, no mention of a light cue is found at the end of a scene. At the beginning of the
next scene, an entry on an interleaf for a promptbook may say, "Lights up." The way of working lights was evidently routine and taken for granted. Since lights were taken up at the beginning of a scene, they must have been taken down at the end of the one before.

In John Moore's promptbook for *The Colleen Bawn* his light cues (listed under properties) tell us that a set house had a transparency for a window, that something was used to represent a turf fire, and, in the drowning scene, a calcium light was to shine on Myles and Ely when they rose for the last time.

A piece of business used in *How She Loves Him* at Wallack's Theatre in 1865 lets us know that that theatre had electricity as well as gas. This is the direction:

The assistant raises the side of the bed clothes and introduces the wire. Sparks turn the electro arum and blue sparks flash and crackle.11


By 1868, the scripts were mentioning gas. In *Foul Play*, Act II, Scene IV, the direction in the acting edition is "Gas is down to further the night effect." Other light cues let us know that special areas could be lighted separately. The stage did not depend on general illumination alone. On page 13, we read, "Gas down L. & R. 1st and 2 E." In Act III, the cue is, "Gas down ½ turn." In Act IV the
script says, "Moonlight effect, revolving barrel C."\(^{12}\) (No

\(^{12}\)Boucicault and Keade, *Foul Play*, op. cit.

explanation of the revolving barrel is given.) An interesting light cue for Act II, Scene III of *Formosa* is:

Stage dark except moonlight, which must have a very powerful lime light behind the transparent disk face.\(^{13}\)

\(^{13}\)Dion Boucicault, *Formosa* or *The Railroad to Ruin* (O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm 583).

There is a definite explanation of a change from sunset to moonlight in *The Rapparee*, in Act II, Scene IV.\(^{14}\)

\(^{14}\)Dion Boucicault, *The Rapparee* or *The Treaty of Limerick* (O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm 550).

This play was given in the 1870's. Boucicault wrote in the script:

The effect of sunset light giving place to moonlight is simply managed by the real painting on the 6th groove flat being the clouds around the transparent moon, while it is covered by a gauze sinking scene, on which the clouds around the sun are shown. At first the limelight, above stage, R.U. corner, has a red glass before it, gradually faded off into the white of the glass; as the outer scene sinks, the red light fades and when the scene top has been sent down below the stage level, the white light is let on as usual.

The gauze sinking scene was sent down on a sloat cut, white and red glass color media were used, and dimmers were used to take down the light and bring it up again in a different color.
A practical fireplace in a Boucicault play means the fireplace "would turn fire." Such a one was used in The Shaughraun. Act II, Scene II of Elfie calls for a fireplace with a strong gas jet and red medium to give a fire effect.

Light cues in Boucicault's later scripts call for more precise control as this list from a promptbook of Belle Lamar for Act III will show. Belle Lamar was given in 1874.

Circle Lights well down - Chandelier out
1/4 Green float, 2 front borders out
Blue mediums 3/4/5--1/2 up The Border Lights
2 ground rows/Green/
Back of set pieces 3/4 up
Red calcium from over L 2 E
On Nip Laura LH
Lake off
when she rises and Goes C.15

15Dion Boucicault, Belle Lamar (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm P 237).

The term border lights is used, but floats for foots is retained. The list tells us that different units of lights could be dimmed separately.

The Boucicault scripts do not tell a great deal about stage lighting in the nineteenth century. However, although the early plays took the existing lighting for granted, later plays asked for some control of separate lighting units both in color and intensity.
MUSIC IN BOUCICAULT'S PLAYS

Boucicault's wife, Agnes Robertson, we are told had a lovely clear voice, and audiences liked to hear her sing. Into a number of plays Boucicault wrote songs for the roles that Agnes played. Sometimes, the words are not included in the script; the directions simply say the actress sings. The Young Actress is an adaptation of an earlier play that Boucicault prepared for Agnes, in 1853, when they were first married. In it Agnes, as the theatre manager's daughter, sings nine songs. The names of four of the songs are given. Some of the words are written in, but at other times the play does not even give the title of the song.

The Fox and the Goose is a comic operetta in one act. The script does not include the music for its eight songs, but the words are given, and they do follow the story. If the actors were to move while they sang, the play does not say so. In fact, this operetta tells us nothing about the behavior of singers on the nineteenth-century stage. How-

ever, in the ordinary Boucicault play the song seems to be part of the actor's business. He sings while he works, or

16 Dion Boucicault, The Young Actress or The Manager's Daughter (New York: Samuel French, 18--)。

17 Benjamin Webster and Dion Boucicault, The Fox and the Goose or The Widow's Husband (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm 643).
someone asks him to sing, and he does.

For a party or for background music, the musicians sometimes play from the mezzanine. In his promptbook for The Irish Heiress, John Moore has a ready sign that says, "See Band Ready under the stage." The promptbook that was prepared for Pauvrette at Niblo's Garden reads "Stop music under the stage," on page 30.

A critic commented on the low "tremolos"[sic] of the violins that heightened the ghostly terror of the apparition scene in The Corsican Brothers.18 Music is very important in Jessie Brown or The Relief of Lucknow.19 Agnes Robertson was the original Jessie and she sang several songs, but there are thirty-seven music cues in the promptbook that George Becks prepared for Wallack's Theatre. There is military music, "music to take party off," and other background music. These cues do not include the seven times the drums are heard or the seven cues for the bagpipes.20

20 One cue for the bagpipes reads on page 28, "Ready Bagpipes in Green room."

There were forty music cues for the production of
Pauvrette at Niblo's Garden in 1858. Again, Agnes, as Pauvrette, sang a number of songs, but many of the music cues are for background music.

There is a nice example of background music at the end of Act I of The Octoroon. The villainous M'Closky says:

> Then if I sink every dollar I'm worth in her purchase, I'll own that Octoroon (Stands with his hand extended towards the house, and tableau).

The curtain was to be a fast one. The prompter wrote, "Ring quick drop," and he added this note:

> Tremulo ppp all this speech -- Increase at end till drop.

In The Colleen Bawn, Myles and Eily (Dion Boucicault and Agnes Robertson, in the original production) both sing solos. Background music is definitely used. The opening description for Scene I says, "music -- seven bars before curtain." On page 6, we read, "music through dialogue till Ann Chute is off." Scene V of Act II is only one speech long. The scene ends when Myles exits singing. The direction says "music till Myles begins to speak next scene."

The next scene is the cave scene. Myles enters singing, has a speech, and exits. Another cue is given for background music. Eily and Dan row in. Just before Dan pushes Eily
into the water, the cue reads, "music changes." 22

22Dion Boucicault, The Colleen Bawn, op. cit., p. 28.

The amount of music a play had varied according to the production and the prompter. An acting edition of The Colleen Bawn, published after the original performances at Laura Keene's Theatre, in 1860, calls for thirty-two music cues. John Moore's promptbook has thirty-six cues for music, and George Becks' script has sixty-nine.

The prompt script for Led Astray that was prepared by John Moore has this note in longhand, "Music ad lib with this scene." 23 Two pages later Moore writes, "Mathilde plays piano, the air played by orchestra in Act I."


In Belle Lamar, the promptbook prepared for Booth's Theatre indicates that a piano furnished background music for the play.

In the Boucicault plays examined, music is naturally part of the script. Actors sang as they climbed a mountain or worked. They sang because they were asked to do so. Background music was more or less taken for granted as part of the show.
COSTUMES IN BOUCICAULT'S PLAYS

One can know how the actors who played in Boucicault's plays dressed for their roles because he often gives an idea of the costumes the cast should wear when he lists the cast. When the play's action is contemporary to the time of writing, the script gives an idea of the usual dress of the period. In Boucicault's infrequent historical play, we learn what the nineteenth-century idea was concerning the period's costume.

A copy of A Lover by Proxy lists the cast, tells what the actor should wear, and tells who played the role in a London performance of the play. Notice:

Dion Boucicault, A Lover by Proxy (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm 633).

Dramatis Personae & Costume

Harry Lawless. Blue Trousers, white waistcoat and drab coat. A drab coat and black hat to dirty -- Mr. Webster

Mr. Bromley. Dark blue coat, gilt buttons, puce-colored serge great coat, and old hat to dirty, black breeches -- Mr. Tilbury

Peter Blushington. A dressing gown, a white night cap and a modern suit -- Mr. Haine

Squib. White breeches, top boots, striped waist coat, dark mixture frock coat, scarlet cuffs and collar trimmed with silver -- Mr. Clark.

Nibbs. Green frock coat, white cord breeches and striped waist coat -- Mr. Widdicombe

A Servant -- Brown livery coat, flowered waistcoat,
black breeches --Mr. Bishop

Miss Penelope Pride --rose colored silk dress
- - - Miss W. Clifford
Kate Bromley, white silk dress --Miss Charles
Harriet --white muslin dress --Miss C. Connor
Maid, coloured gown, apron, etc. --Miss Gordon

Both the young girls are to wear white, it will be noticed. Women's names are listed last.

Caesar De Basan is a story of intrigue in high circles in the Spanish court. The costumes listed in the actor's edition are colorful and go in detail to an extent unusual in a Boucicault play. Here is the listing of the cast and costumes from the front of the script:

Charles, King of Spain. A rich brown Spanish dress, trimmed with gold lace, slashed with black satin, silk stockings with gold clocks, black shoes, large Spanish hat, with black feathers, red ditto, point lace, collar and cuffs -- Mr. Howe

Don Caesar de Basan. First dress, old blue trunks, leather doublet, brown velvet sleeves, old drab hat, with old feathers, large buff and red striped cloak, torn point lace collar and cuffs, old silk stockings and shoes. Second Dress--a rich emerald green velvet Spanish dress, slashed with white satin, jacket of white satin, cloak of white satin, turned back, embroidered . . ., white hat, white feathers, white silk stockings, shoes with gold and satin rosette and dress trimmed with satin of the same. Third dress -- Blue cloth doublet and breeches, blue silk stocking, jacket looped with black velvet, black velvet hat, blue feathers point lace collar and cuffs, sword, black boots -- Mr. Webster

Don Jerome De Santarem. Amber jacket, purple velvet cloak, trunks richly trimmed with bows of crimson satin ribbon, drab hat, with one blue
feather, russet boots, point lace cuffs and collar  
-- Mr. Worrell

Marquis De Montepompas. Scarlet cloth shape,  
blue velvet cloak, richly trimmed with gold lace,  
bows of blue ribbon, russet boots, white gauntlets,  
black velvet hat, feather, lace cuffs and collar  
-- Mr. Wilkinson

Lazarillo. First Dress -- Green cloth doublet,  
orange cloth sleeves and breeches, braided with  
black, loops and plated buttons; green stockings,  
russet shoes, black hat. Second Dress -- Violet  
velvet tab'd jacket, full breeches, looped with  
scarlet ribbon; scarlet silk undersleeves, scarlet  
silk stockings, black shoes, rosettes  
-- Miss Woolgar

Gomes. A plain drab shape, black velvet cloak,  
trimmed with crimson and black, crimson stockings,  
russet boots, and black hat -- Mr. Thomas

Peires. Red doublet, blue trunk, red stockings,  
russet shoes, trimmed with blue and gold lace  
-- Mr. Buller

Arguebusiers. First Six -- Purple shapes, slashed  
with crimson and yellow trimming, real armour, curasses,  
tassets, gorgets, helmets, and russet boots.  
Second Six -- Blue tunics, yellow sleeves, yellow  
trimming, russet boots. Captain to each party --  
same color, trimmed with gold, curasses, etc., etc.

Maritana. First Dress -- Amber petticoat, trimmed  
with scarlet; scarlet overdress, open in front;  
scarlet body. Neapolitan apron and cap. Second  
Dress -- white satin, with blue flowers, blue body,  
trimmed with black lace. Third Dress -- Black velvet  
tunic open in front; trimmed with silver; under-dress  
of blue satin, frill of lace, blond veil, head-dress  
of flowers and pearls, with cornet -- Madame Celeste

Marchioness. Scarlet tunic dress over white  
satin, trimmed with gold and black lace, black  
velvet head-dress trimmed with scarlet ribbon and  
lace ... Miss Brookes

Chorus. Carnival dresses. Spanish ladies  
Dresses.
Ballet. First scene -- Blue petticoats, white bodice trimmed with scarlet and gold, headdress of scarlet and blue ribbon and nets. Second scene -- White petticoats, trimmed with amber and silver, amber satin bodies.

Certainly the costumes described are colorful: scarlet, blue, and white, amber satins and velvets with feathers, bows, and laces. Don Caesar in his second dress must have been gorgeously arrayed in his emerald-green velvet with white satin jacket and cloak, white feathers on a white hat, white silk hose and shoes with gold and satin rosettes! Of course the king was not portrayed as an admirable character, but his one costume in brown, black, and gold (and one red feather) could not compare with Don Caesar's outfits. (Benjamin Webster, co-author and star actor, played the role of Don Caesar.) Russet shoes and russet boots were very much in evidence. The military groups arrayed in vivid colors, real armour, and russet boots could have dressed a colorful stage.

We are given glimpses of what is considered fashionable in masculine dress in 1847, in The School for Scheming:

Enter Claude L. door -- (he is dressed in the height of fashion, a lace ruffled cravat, white waistcoat, light whiskers moustaches and hair. A crush hat on his head, silk stockings and shoes.26


A few pages later:
Fip. -- How shall I tell her that I have not got my sitting down trowsers on -- very awkward situation -- weally . . . (He opens his coat and displays an embroidered waistcoat).

Boucicault's version of The Corsican Brothers was given in 1852. His costume list at the opening of the script says the dress is that of 1841. As we might expect, the list does not go into detail about a costume that was still contemporary for Londoners in 1852 (The play opened at the Princess Theatre), but for Fabien's Corsican dress in Act I and Emilie's Spanish costume these special notations are given:

Fabien -- First -- Bouna dark velvet jacket trimmed with white metal buttons; and breeches (supported by a single broad brace) reaching to the knee; buff boots or leggings; silk sash; conical hat, with feather. Second -- Black suit and cloak.

Emilie -- Spanish dress of black satin, high comb, fan, and mantilla.27

27Dion Boucicault, The Corsican Brothers (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm P 204).

A main character in Formosa or The Railroad to Ruin is Paris's best-known madame. Her parents are good, honest English people who know nothing of their daughter's way of life. Boucicault plans her costumes carefully. Jenny, posing as the sweet girl her parents think she is, has "hair plain, plain, neat dress, black silk apron." As Formosa, these are her costume suggestions:

Act II, Scene 3d: Splendid yellow satin, low-
necked, long train robe, with scarlet trimming and scarlet opera-cloak; yellow hair, chignon and flowing tresses behind; pearl ornaments, very profuse.

Act III, Scene 2d: Green house dress, richly covered with very cheap lace; jewels; same hair; black opera cloak ready L., for exit.

Then, as the repentant Jenny, at the end of the play, she is to wear "plain dress, mantle, hair as in first scene, plain, bonnet." Dress can picture a way of life.

---

28 Boucicault, Formosa, op. cit.

In Elizabethan times, a change of costume was considered enough of a disguise to fool the other characters in a play. Boucicault used the same idea in The Young Actress, a play he adapted from The Manager's Daughter as a starring vehicle for Agnes Hobertson. As the nine-year-old daughter of the manager, she impersonates five different characters. Each time she changes costume, and her father never knows who she is. He plans to hire all five characters.

Several times Boucicault tries to make helpful suggestions about costuming his plays. In After Dark he includes a note that reads:

For Policeman -- see London Illustrated News -- The helmet to be worn, not the city Police Hat.

---

29 Dion Boucicault, After Dark (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm 552).

Then he suggests that Duquesne in The Rapparee be dressed
like Athos in *The Three Guardsmen*.

The costume lists in Boucicault's plays were written to give helpful suggestions to the actors and producing groups giving his plays. Today, they give us a picture of the way actors in Boucicault's day dressed on the stage and of the clothes they thought suitable for contemporary and historical garb.

**MAKE-UP SUGGESTIONS IN BOUCICAULT SCRIPTS**

It is regrettable that we know so little about make-up practices in the nineteenth century. We are told that actors did little with make-up except to wear wigs and change costume, and that is just about all the information the Boucicault plays give about stage make up. Any make-up suggestion the plays contain is tucked away in the costume list, and seldom concerns anything but ideas for wigs and whiskers for men.

For instance, Renaud, the villain who kills Louis in a duel, in *The Corsican Brothers*, is to wear a short beard and moustache. His costume suggestions say so.

In *Foul Play*, Robert and Helen are marooned on a desert island for months. To show the passage of time these make-up suggestions are given Robert. In Act II, Scene I, the hair on his face and head should be long. In Scene III, they should be longer. In Act IV, after their return to
civilization, his beard and hair should be trimmed. In the same play other make-up suggestions are made. Arthur is the villain. He had the boat scuttled to hide a theft. He is to have light hair and a moustache. In Act II, he is to be pale. In Act IV, the "color on face to come off and leave it very pale." Here, some kind of foundation paint is indicated. Joe Wylie is a sailor who carried out Arthur's wicked plans. He wears a red wig and beard. He is disguised in Act III, so he wears a long black wig and beard and over his dress, a high hat and very long skirted dark coat. In Act IV he is wearing his own red wig and beard.

There are three men between the ages of fifty and fifty-five in *Foul Play*. They all wear white hair. One has a moustache; another has side whiskers and wears his glasses on a black ribbon; the third wears spectacles with his white wig.

The detective in *Foul Play* is close shaven. He wears a short-haired black wig that is a little bald on top.

For a group of outcasts in *After Dark* this make-up suggestion is given:

Hair short crop, with three inch long side lock flattened down on the side of the temple or slightly curled at the point.

For *Formosa* the suggestions are interesting. The hero
is to have his hair roughly curled. Henry Irving played the part of the villain when this play was first given. For his role, these suggestions are found: "long black moustache, hair rather long and scraggly down on forehead; eyebrows shaped to indicate determination." The coach of the Oxford eight is to wear a "short crop wig, bald in front, smooth face; made up broad-shoulders, inclined to stoutness." Bob Saunders, the vagabond, is to have rather long black hair with a lock hanging down in front of each ear. He is to have a low-browed appearance, and in the second scene he is to have a black eye.

In The Rapparee the men are to wear long curled wigs. A note for Roderick O'Mallory says moustache and slight chin beard "a la Richelieu." Ginchel, a Dutchman who speaks very broken English, is to be made up rather stout. He is to have a long full flaxen wig and a "beard of the similar."

The most definite make-up suggestions found in any of these plays are for a few of the characters in Elfie. During the attempted murder of Elfie's father, Deepcar, the murderer, wears a wax false face and uniform like Bob Evans. In the play, Sadlove is to have a wig with short hair. He is to wear small scrubby side whiskers high upon the cheek. Otherwise he is to be shaven but "with his upper lip rough and bluish as if badly shaven." Dr. Aircastle, a country
doctor, who thinks he has discovered how to make precious jewels out of stone, should wear spectacles and should be untidy. His hair should be rough and his whiskers uncombed. His forehead should be wrinkled and his eyes should have crow's feet around them. Elfie should have an uncared for appearance. Her hair should be fair, straggly, wild.

If we had to depend on Boucicault's plays for our knowledge of nineteenth-century make up, we might say actors could change their complexion tone with a base. They had materials to make wrinkles, to color black eyes, and to make a man's lip look unshaven. They depended on wigs and hair arrangement along with costumes to change appearance. Men wore beards, moustaches, and side whiskers.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

The miscellaneous information to be discussed here has to do with the business end of play production. Boucicault's play scripts themselves do not give many facts regarding this important phase of theatre.

Thinking of 1956 prices for play books makes us view with a degree of envy this notice from the publishers of Old Heads and Young Hearts.32 "Plays sent by mail, and postage paid, on receipt of 12½¢ each, in money or stamps. Ten plays sent by express for one dollar."

32Dion Boucicault, Old Heads and Young Hearts (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm P 205).
A play bill which prompter John Moore included in his promptbook for the above play announces that the curtain rises at eight and quotes these prices: "Orchestra, $1.50; Balcony, $1.50; Dress Circle, $1.00; Family Circle, 50¢; Boxes $15.00 and $8.00."

Theatre seats were not always reserved. An advertisement for Pauvrette, at Niblo's Theatre, in the New York Times for October 4, 1858, announces that tickets for the play are fifty cents, that there are no reserved seats, that doors will open at seven, that the play will commence at eight, that Pauvrette is a new drama written expressly for Miss Agnes Robertson with new music, new scenery (by Isherwood and Fredericks), new costumes.

Boucicault is said to have written much of his own publicity, and it sounds very like the kind of advertising we read for "super, colossal" moving pictures. Hence the following lines from Grimaldi are rather amusing. Grimaldi

33Dion Boucicault, Grimaldi or The Life of an Actress (New York: Samuel French, n.d.), p. 11.

and Violet, whom he has taught to be an actress, are looking at her publicity notices:

Violet. Mlle. Violet -- Oh! What big letters too -- as big as Julia's --

Grim. Twice more big, it impose de publique, dey have grand respect for all de big letters -- dere is no talent dat is talent if it shall not be in big letters . . . but dere is very little talent dat is as big as its letters
A handbill pasted in George Becks' promptbook for

The Long Strike has publicity notices that read:


This beautiful drama is now presented, with a great cast, believed to be equal, and in several respects superior to its presentation at the Lyceum Theatre, London where it has proved

The Great Dramatic Event of the Season.

Novelty value in differences in garb between English and American workers is made use of:

... It seems singular to an American audience to see the Manchester factory girls and factory men scuffling about in wooden clogs and clad in homely garb -- so different from the substantial and comfortable manner in which our working people appear.

Then of course the famous telegraph scene is made much of:

The Famous Telegraph Scene, with its rattling machines, bustling operators, and busy look of every day life, seems a difficult thing to attach to any gleam of romance. Yet the audience hangs as breathlessly over the noise of the machines, as the wires bring from far away the news that the critical witness is obtained and his presence likely to be received, with as much interest as though each individual was personally anxious for the wrongfully accused.

Chapters II, III, and IV have recorded the results of examining Dion Boucicault's play scripts, both acting edition and promptscripts, to see what they reveal about staging practices in his day. Chapter II explains that his plays made use of stock sets found in the theatres. During an act, stage machinery enabled the numerous scenes to be shifted quickly in the visible scene changes to which nineteenth-
century audiences were accustomed. Between acts set pieces and box sets were built and the whole staging planned so a scene could be played down front in a shallow set while a harder set was put up behind it. Boucicault developed sensational scenes that depended on stage machinery, to make his plays popular. *Arrah-Na-Pogue* (discussed in Chapter III) with its vertical treadmill is one of his best plays and contains one of his best sensational scenes.

This chapter has discussed other staging practices which Boucicault's plays reveal. Real properties were often featured and were used in the same set with properties that were painted on the scenery. The scripts do not explain much about stage lighting, but they take current practices for granted, and the plays Boucicault wrote after 1856 definitely tell us the lights could be controlled in intensity and color. Boucicault used singing as part of an actor's role, and he depended on background music to enhance key scenes. The costumes his casts needed were realistic, often colorful. Wigs were used to complete the costume and to change the appearance of the actors. Make up was employed, but the scripts tell us little about its use.

The tables that conclude this chapter tabulate staging data for typical Boucicault acting editions and prompt-books.

Tallies were made on thirty acting editions. These plays had many sets. There was only one one-set show in the
list, and it was a one-act operetta, twenty pages long. Thirteen of the plays used stock sets in routine ways. Seventeen had unusual staging to support one or more sensational scene. Some of the plays do not even mention a curtain or a scene ending. The last line of a scene is given and then the script reads Scene II. But after 1660, mention of scene transitions were made rather consistently. Most of the plays examined contain music and sound cues. Beginning with 1858 lighting cues became more common.

Chronologically, the earliest promptbook tallied was The School for Scheming prepared for an 1847 production, and the latest was The Shaughraun, prepared for an 1885 performance. As might be expected there are more cues for curtain, music, lights, and sound in the promptbooks. The promptbooks varied in research value. Some of them gave little more information than an acting edition. Those that contained floor plans of sets offered a more precise picture of the staging intended.
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CHAPTER V

THE BOUCICAULT SCRIPTS GIVE AN IDEA OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY DIRECTING METHODS AND ACTING TECHNIQUES

DIRECTING METHODS

As has been said, when an acting edition of a nineteenth-century play was printed, it was based on a prompter's copy of the play as it was given at some theatre. Most of the books do not say who the prompter was, but a usual notation is, "Printed from the Prompter's Copy with Cast, Costume, Scenic Arrangement, Entrances and Exits and Relative positions of Dramatis Personae."

The acting editions of both London Assurance and The Irish Heiress are based on Covent Garden performances of the play. Charles Mathews and Madame Vestris managed the theatre. There are many directions for speaking lines in both scripts. Either Boucicault wrote them in, originally, or the directions of Mathews and Vestris were incorporated into the texts. At any rate, a tally records one hundred forty-two directions for speaking lines in London Assurance and one hundred thirty-seven in The Irish Heiress, the former given in 1841, the latter in 1842. Both are five-act plays. Boucicault's next successful five-act play, Old Heads and Young Hearts, was given at another theatre, in 1844, without
the help of Mathews and Vestris. One hundred eighty-two
directions for speaking lines are found in it. Boucicault
plays always include directions that tell the actors how to
say their lines. In *The O'Dowd* we read:

All. (gently) Hear! hear!

Mul. I repeat it! -- (fiercely)-- and I
challenge dispute.¹

¹Dion Boucicault, *The O'Dowd* (London and New York:
Samuel French), p. 5.

These directions include asides as "aside and astonished."
Asides had long been the rule in English theatres and Bouci­
cault uses them. More asides were tallied for *London Assur­
ance* (ninety-one) than for any other of his plays that were
checked, but he always uses some. *The Shaughraun* (1875) has
thirty-two.

The acting edition for *The Irish Heiress*² has six

²Dion Boucicault, *The Irish Heiress* (London and New
York: Samuel French).

grouping diagrams that show the actors arranged in a
straight line thus:

Scattered through a promptbook of *London Assurance*, prepared
for Wallack's Theatre, in 1884, are forty-three grouping
diagrams. When this book shows the position of four, five,
or seven characters, they are placed in semicircular

arrangement. Other promptbooks contain diagrams showing a more casual arrangement than either a straight line or a semicircle.

All the Boucicault scripts examined contain many directions for actions. The promptbooks usually have more directions than the acting editions because they have the printed directions and those worked out for a particular performance. The acting edition for *London Assurance* (1841) has two hundred and twelve directions for actions; a promptbook made for this play in 1884 has four hundred twenty-nine. These directions often contain a placement notation that tells what part of the stage the actor is to occupy. Here are samples:

Danny appears at window, R in flat crosses L -- *(The Colleen Bawn, 1860)*

(Saluting her on the brow) -- *(The Corsican Brothers, 1852)*

... as they exit, M'Closky rises from behind rock R, and looks after them -- *(The Octoroon, 1859)*

Often the direction tells the actor how to do his action, as:

Father Dolan, after a passionate struggle with himself turns from Molineux, and buries his face in his hands.

(Turns coldly and with stiff manner)
- *(The Shaughraun 1885)*
In reading the script for *A Lover by Proxy* one is impressed by Boucicault's effort to make the play move quickly. Today, we would call this play a farce, of the "slap stick" variety. In fact, action is so important in it that if one omits the actors' lines and reads only the directions, he gets a good idea of the story of the play and a better idea of its picturization than he would by reading the play. This is only a one-act play, yet there are one hundred thirty-two directions for physical movement and eleven more for interpretive movement.

Below, all the stage directions for Scene I are copied with no lines at all:

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4Dion Boucicault, *A Lover by Proxy* (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm 633).

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Scene I. -- Chambers in the Temple -- room is in great confusion -- chairs are overturned -- the supper table with its cloth is awry, strewn with the remains of the previous night's repast -- ruins of lobsters, fowls, empty bottles of champagne, etc. Law books -- a law almanach, against the walls.

(page 5)

Enter Nibbs S.E.L. door, with a tray containing breakfast

Nibbs (looking around) ... (Lays the breakfast, puts chairs in their places, and the fragments of lobsters on the tray (bell rings)

Blush (Putting his head out of his bed room door, in flat C. with his night cap on)

  '(Blush takes his head in)

Squib is heard to whistle "Jolly Nose," without L.
A knock heard at door L.)

Squi. (popping his head in S.E.L. door. Sings "Jolly Nose." Enters

Nib. (opening cabinet against L.H. flat and drawing out a decanter, brings down two glasses, a liquer glass, and a large one

Squ. . . . (pouring out a glassful . . .
(drinks) . . . (smacking his lips)

Enter Blushington C

Nibbs . . . (Hides decanter and glass behind him, then backs up to cabinet and replaces them)

Squ. (jumping up) . . . (Hiding his glass in his pocket)
. . . (A loud knock heard
. . . (Another loud knock heard
. . . (A louder knock
. . . (A very loud knock
. . . (Exit

(He is going out with the books and the tray when Harry Lawless rushes in, knocks him down, jumps over him to Blush --)

Enter Squib, who helps Nibbs to pick up the things

Squ. (to Nibbs
Law . . . (Nibbs rushes out)

Law . . . (Spars)

Enter Nibbs, with the urn, very fearfully

. . . (Sees Nibbs and leaps over chair at him -- Nibbs puts down the urn and rushes off)

(Squibs puts it on very briskly . . .
(Squib lays it) . . . (Squib throws it to him.
Lawless catches it) . . . (Squib catches them -- to Blus -- )

Blu (with astonishment) . . . (He throws his gloves at Squib, who catches them in the
hat, salutes and exit)

(They sit)

Blu (aside) . . .
Law (reads) . . .
(Lays down the post)

(Yawning)
Blu (Eagerly) . . .

(Blu runs to the bell, (k.) rings it violently and pulls it down -- runs to the other, and rings it till Nibbs is on)

Law . . . (runs to the window R) . . .
(Enter Nibbs very slowly -- Squib rushes in, vaults over him and salutes)

Blu (Shaking Nibbs) . . .
(Blushing, taking a pillow from the sofa L. -- Nibbs runs out, Blu -- swings the pillow round at him. Mr. Bromley enters, it hits him on the head.)

Law . . . (Grosses to C. -- aside
Blu (Aside) . . .

Blu (Aside) . . .
Law (Aside) . . .
. . .

There are six other asides on page eleven

Blu (aside and kicking at him)

(indignantly)

(Squib brings down a salver with two glasses)
. . . (Exit Nibbs)

(Squib takes out the large wine glass which he had put in his pocket, wipes it with his coat tail, fills it and gives it to Blushing)

Enter Nibbs

. . .

Law . . . (Runs after Nibbs to the door, throwing part of a glass of wine at him)

(Exit)
(aloud)

Four more asides follow on page twelve

(Squib opens the door)

(Exit -- follows them out,)

A Lover by Proxy is a slight play but it gives an interesting picture of the amount of action 1842 audiences were used to watching in their comediettas, or burlettas, or farces. (All three classifications are used.)

Other Boucicault comedies have directions for business or action similar to that in A Lover by Proxy. In Alma Mater, Flick is a young student's "man." In one scene,

5Dion Boucicault, Alma Mater, or A Cure for Coquettes (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm 636).

Flick enters with hats. He is instantly smothered with a heap of caps and gowns thrown at him and he exits with them. In another place, the mayor and a spurious count try to shake hands with Sir Samuel. He pockets both his hands. They miss them and shake hands with each other.

In Old Heads and Young Hearts, Rural is an elderly minister whose well-meaning fumbling causes many complications. John Moore's promptbook of the play records this action: "Rural dragged up st. by Lytt. is compelled to step over the ottoman." Several pages later the prompter writes, "Lytt. jumps up with dog. X L. back to C puts him down, sits
on him, tries to put into his pocket."^6

^Dion Boucicault, Old Heads and Young Hearts (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm P 205).

Boucicault gives two of his actors, in The Irish Heiress, the following interpretive action:

... -- Stanmore and Daventry discovered at table, in front, over their wine, taking it very easy, with their legs reposing on chairs, from which the ladies are supposed to have just withdrawn.7


Winter says that Boucicault's supreme talent lay in his ability to make "a story tell itself in action rather than words."^8 After reading the directions for actions in many Boucicault plays, we begin to see what Winter means.

Notice that the last scene of Act I in The Vampire is a combination of stage scenery, lighting, and interpretative action or pantomime:

Scene V. -- The Peaks of Snowdon, -- no vegetation whatever is visible, but a sinister, tender, bluish light gives a desolate character to the scene -- on a ledge of rock, ... Lord Clavering is discovered, with the body of Alan Raby in his arms. -- music -- He lays down the body on the ledge of rock and then descends a winding goat track.

(A pause. The moonlight is seen to tip the
mountain side; it arrives at the ledge, and bathes
the body of Alan Haby in a bright white light. --
After a moment his chest begins to heave, and his
limbs to quiver, he raises his arm to his heart,
and then, revived completely, rises to his full
height.

Alan (addressing the moon) Fountain of my life!
Once more thy rays restore me. Death! -- I defy
thee!

End of Act I

9Dion Boucicault, The Vampire or The Phantom
(Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm P 256),

Most of the promptbooks examined divide the plays
into actions with warning notations or ready signs for both
actors and staging. For example, John Moore's promptbook
for Old Heads and Young Hearts divides the script into
twenty-three actions. He has forty-seven warning notations.
These ready notices are interesting. One time he says "mind
Postman's knock directly," then "mind knock." Opposite
page 54, he says, "Mind laugh," and three pages later, "Mind
noise of carriage." Moore uses arrows to indicate crosses.
Opposite page 15, he has written, "Rural's catch word all
through 'My goodness gracious'."

Some of the promptbooks include newspaper articles
about the play and handbills advertising it. Naturally,
these books vary. Sedley Brown's promptbook for The Corsican
Brothers, given at the Princess Theatre, in London, shows that
in this production few changes were made from the printed
script. His longhand notes only make these additions to the printed directions: one placement notation, one direction for speaking lines, three for actions, one for interpreted action. There are no grouping diagrams, no floor plans. Sixty-five of Boucicault's directions are crossed out, along with one hundred forty-nine of his lines, and only three new lines are added. The prompter's recording of three ways the avalanche scene was handled in three different theatres has been commented on in Chapter II.

George Becks made the promptbook for the Wallack's Theatre performance of Jessie Brown. As the play was worked out in rehearsal, it was changed to suit the cast, stage, and director. Twenty-six printed directions are crossed out; fifty-four words or lines are deleted; twenty-three new speeches are added. Ten music cues are written in.

Most of the added directorial notes for Jessie Brown have to do with the visual presentation of the play, as the figures that follow suggest. Forty-five placement notations were written in, as were sixty-two directions for actions, and thirty-three directions for interpreted actions.

Only one reference to the use of the curtain is in this promptbook. This cue reads, "i slow Drop." In

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Becks' promptbook for The Poor of New York, he has written
six references to the use of a curtain. The acting edition has only three references to sound; Becks' promptbook contains eleven sound cues ranging from knocks, to bells, to crashes, to engines. Instead of the six music cues in the acting edition, the promptbook lists fifteen. Becks has sketched in nineteen placement diagrams and three floor plans. His promptbook emphasizes the audio-visual side of directing.

John Moore and George Becks prepared a number of promptbooks for Boucicault plays. In Chapter II, we considered several differences in staging *The Colleen Bawn* indicated in the promptbooks prepared for that play by these two men. Becks wrote more music cues than Moore. Moore added twenty-five speeches, Becks only one. Moore sketched ten grouping diagrams, Becks five. Really, the two promptbooks are not radically different. Both books record the play as prepared for New York audiences in the same general period, and the indicated theatre practice varies little.

The Boucicault scripts contain many directions for interpreting lines (including the aside), many placement notations, and they are extremely full of directions for actions. Boucicault meant his plays to tell their stories through actions. He told his actors how to do what he directed. That the plays of the period are full of action is further substantiated by the fact that the promptbooks, prepared for these same plays, contain even more of these
directions. Grouping diagrams in the promptbooks suggest that those who directed the plays wanted them to be pictorially interesting.

**ACTING TECHNIQUES**

Acting and directing are so closely associated that to consider one without the other is difficult. The discussion on Directing Methods has already suggested that the nineteenth-century stage was a place of movement for actors. The scripts gave them many things to do, much business, much action. Nineteenth-century directing made an actor take an audience into his confidence in the aside that people expected in their theatres.

Phases of acting that were not considered under Directing Methods will be discussed now. Bits of business in Boucicault's plays reveal customs different from those of today. In *Foul Play*, an office worker wears a quill pen behind his ear. In the same play Wylie wipes his forehead with a handkerchief he carries in his hat.\[^{11}\]


Occasionally, an actor is directed to turn his back on the audience during a speech. In the first scene in *The Long Strike*, the workers are receiving their pitiful dole from a "Gentleman from London." He is an unimportant character. His directions read "Gentleman from London (Taking
stage L. of C., back to audience, reading list.)" Since we are to watch the workers, his placement and position seem good. In *The O'Dowd*, Muldoon says one of his speeches, "(crossing to C., back to the audience)."12 In *Reprint 11*


on the next page, Captain Molyneux and Clair Ffolliott, in *The Shaughraun*, both are turned up stage away from the audience.

The Boucicault plays give us an idea of the role of women in the nineteenth-century theatre. Most of the characters in the scripts are men, yet women had important parts in many of them. Agnes Robertson, Boucicault's wife, had title roles in such plays as *The Young Actress*, *Jessie Brown*, *Pauvrette*, *The Octoroon*, *The Colleen Bawn*, and *Arrah-Na-Pogue*. In *Caesar De Bazan*, the listing of the cast at the Adelphi Theatre, in London, indicates that "Miss Woolgar" played the role of Lazarillo, Maritana's brother. In the front of the script an etching by Mandella from a drawing "taken during representation" is found. The etching shows a public square in Madrid and pictures Lazarillo with clasped hands, begging Don Caesar to save him.13 (The pose rather

13Benjamin Webster and Dion Boucicault, *Caesar De Bazan*, or *Love and Honour* (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm 644).
Harry J. Montague as Captain Malvur and Ada Dyne as Claire Follini in "The Shaughraun."

REPRINT 11*

looks like an actress's idea of a boy's plea for help.)

Andy Blake, a play in which a young boy is the main character, was written by Boucicault so Agnes Robertson could play the role of Andy.¹⁴ In The Flying Scud, there was a chorus of jockeys, all played by women, and the audience enjoyed them. (The play ran two hundred nights in London.)¹⁵

Notes and cast listings indicate that there was considerable type casting in Boucicault's plays. In an acting edition for Old Heads and Young Hearts, a note concerning the role of Tom Coke reads:

The language of Tom Coke is written in a broad dialect, to distinguish the character, but should be acted with an accent only; and in Provincial Theatres, should not be given to the gentleman performing Yorkshiremen, but to the eccentric comedian.¹⁶

The note indicates that two stock characters were Yorkshiremen and eccentric comedians and that certain actors were expected to play such parts.

Cast listings in these scripts often have explanatory

¹⁴Dion Boucicault, Andy Blake or The Irish Diamond (New York: Samuel French).


labels after the roles like these for Foul Play:

- Sir Edward Rolleston (Char., old man)
- Old Wardlaw (Old Man)
- Robert Penfold (Leading)
- Arthur Wardlaw (Leading Juvenile Comedy)
- Michael Penfold (Old Man)
- Joe Wylie (Low Comedy)
- Burtenshaw (Utility)
- Hawkins (Character Comedy)
- Atkins (Utility)
- Messenger (Utility)
- Helen Rolleston (Leading Comedy)
- Nancy House (Chambermaid)

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17 Boucicault, Foul Play, op. cit.

This note regarding the role of Elfie in the play of that name explains what type actress should have the part:

Elfie is a character part requiring the qualities of comedy and chambermaid. In London Mrs. Bourcicault[ sic ] has assumed it.18

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18 Dion Boucicault, Elfie or The Cherry Tree Inn (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm 553).

In the listing of the cast for Elfie, a blind sailor is called "a heavy"; a photographer, "light comedy"; Rose Aircastle, a "Walking Lady"; the landlady of a London Lodginghouse, "Old Woman."

Boucicault's best known plays are melodramas. Exaggerated acting and nineteenth-century melodrama go together in many people's thinking. Reprint 12, on the next page, pictures the villainous Kinchela berating Father Dolan, and his pose is exaggerated enough to fit the description of melodramatic acting mentioned above. Yet, in the same pic-
REPRINT 12*  

A VILLAIN BERATES FATHER DOLAN  

ture, one may notice the relaxed, natural pose of the priest. Reprint 13, that follows, shows a picture of Dion Boucicault as Conn in *The Shaughraun*. He looks as if he could be the likable, easy-going vagabond Conn is supposed to be. There is nothing exaggerated in his pose.

The play scripts themselves cannot tell us the kind of acting that was actually done in Boucicault’s plays, but many of the play books contain an "Editorial Introduction" which is a reprint of criticisms the play received. Some of the reprinted criticisms are derogatory; others are complimentary. Quite consistently in these criticisms the acting that is praised is performed by players who use restraint and are natural in their acting. For instance, the writer of the Editorial Introduction in *Old Heads and Young Hearts* considers the acting of "Mr. W. R. Blake" as Jesse Rural, the old clergyman, "true to nature." He adds:

> Mr. Blake’s embodiment of Jesse Rural may be classed among the finest histrionic efforts now extant upon the stage. It is, indeed, one of those truthful pieces of acting, in which the artist is almost identified with the character he represents.19

19*Dion Boucicault, Old Heads and Young Hearts* (London and New York: Samuel French), the acting edition.

A criticism posted in John Moore’s promptbook for *The Colleen Bawn* makes these comments on the acting in the play:

> Miss Agnes Robertson played, the part of the Colleen Bawn with nicety, and looked the peasant-girl to perfection. Mme Ponisi . . . was almost good as Mrs. Cregan but in the last act over did the melo-
REPRINT 13*

dramatic business . . . Mr. Boucicault as Myles was acceptable, but not unctuous.

whoever this critic was, he did not like exaggerated acting; he did like actors to seem the part, and the fact that he finds fault with the work of only one member of the cast might suggest that the others used a natural, unexaggerated style of acting.  


A handbill in George Becks' promptbook for *The Long Strike* quotes Wilkes in *Spirit of the Times* who says the acting of "Mr. J. H. Stoddart" as Moneypenney in that play was "refreshingly natural."  


The term "refreshingly natural" may be significant, however. To imagine natural acting accompanying some of the lines in these plays is difficult. Here are some examples:

... O'Mallery, what hidden purpose lurks beneath your words? Your eyes avoid me, and your smile of love but poorly masks your look of cold despair.

*The Rapparee*, page 24.

Jenny, the little English country girl who became a French madame says in an aside:

Oh! what might I not have been if I were
not what I have made of myself? [sic]

Formosa, page 42.

... Officer, I am Richard Knatchbull, escaped convict. There is 500 £ reward offered for my capture... Take it, it is yours, on one condition; that you expend half of it in sending out that cowardly cur there.

Pointer. I will do my best, sir. Now, Mr. Morris, come along.

Mor. (dragged up C) Oh, where are we going to?

Tom. You are going to the end of that crooked lane, where the guilty find their steps barred by the gates of justice (music

After Dark, Act IV.

Doing business like the following would call for restraint:

(She rises, clasps her head between her hands, then siezes Mathilda's arm.)

Led Astray, page 45.

We know that both Boucicault and Agnes Robertson were praised for their fine sensitive acting. Henry Irving, Joseph Jefferson, Charles Kean, Charles Mathews, Madame Vestris, and other fine actors of the period acted in Boucicault's plays. One may safely say fine acting was done in his plays, but one might just as safely say that the scripts themselves would make it easy for unskilled players to use an exaggerated style of acting.

A summary of acting techniques revealed in Boucicault's plays would have to mention the fact that the characters are directed to do many actions, that, although there
are more men than women in the casts, some of the women's roles are very important, that type casting was used, and that at least some of the acting of the period was valued for its restraint and naturalness.

The following tables of directing and acting data from Boucicault scripts serve as a final summation of nineteenth-century directing and acting concepts perceptible in his plays. Typical scripts are listed. The placement notations, grouping diagrams, and interpretive action figures definitely show Boucicault's concern with picturization. He wanted his stage to be balanced, his pictures to be right. The figures in the charts show there was movement in his plays. Figures showing directions for actions top all the others. George Becks' promptbook for The Shaughraun, Boucicault's last successful play, contain five hundred and fifty-five action-directions for the Wallack's Theatre production of the play.
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CHAPTER VI

HIS SCRIPTS REVEAL BOUCICAULT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Much that has been written in this paper so far has indirectly discussed Boucicault, the playwright, because Boucicault wrote the plays that have been examined. Now we will consider what his plays reveal about his playwriting.

BOUCICAULT'S PLAYS FALL INTO FOUR GROUPS

As a whole, Boucicault's plays seem to fall into four groups: the plays that were influenced by his intimate knowledge of Restoration comedy, his adaptations from the French out of which grew his "sensation scene," his sensational melodrama founded on events of great public interest, and his Irish plays. The groups are not mutually exclusive. His Irish plays are sensational melodramas, but they are in a group by themselves. Each of these divisions will be discussed in turn.

Plays influenced by Restoration comedy. When Boucicault first offered Charles Mathews, the manager of Covent Garden Theatre, his one-act play, A Lover by Proxy, Mathews refused to take it because he had many short plays like it. He told Boucicault if he had a five-act comedy with a similar story he would buy it. Boucicault wrote London Assurance from A Lover by Proxy, and his career in the theatre was started.
London Assurance and most of the plays he wrote for the next ten years show that Boucicault was greatly influenced by Restoration comedy although in this period he adapted several plays from the French too. Of the Boucicault plays written in the 1840's (on which detailed notes were taken for this paper), the characters are for the most part society people "on the make." Marriage for money is desired. If it can be accomplished with love, that is fine. Used Up had a dramatic fight that might be considered a forerunner of the sensation scene Boucicault came to include in every play. In this play and in The School for Scheming rakish characters come to realize that simple human virtues are best, in fact, the only ones that bring real happiness. These two plays may anticipate the sentimental melodrama that was his trademark later.

In West End or The Irish Heiress, the following lines sound as if they might be out of a Restoration comedy of manners. Sir William Daventry is talking to his wife:

Dav. But, my dear Kate, will you listen to reason?

Lady D. No!

Dav. I'm hungry! I'm starving!

L.D. Order lunch.

Dav. A water-biscuit and a calf's foot jelly!

L.D. You Cagh! What brought you to town?

D. You did.
L.D. Yes, but I never brought your boorish
habits. I wonder you don't know better than be
hungry at such an hour!

D. I beg pardon. I sinned innocently. I wasn't
aware that fashion had repealed the laws of nature.

L.D. There are some other matters in which you
require reform.

D. Always delighted, my love, to --

L.D. There! there! that's it.

D. What, my soul?

L.D. For heaven's sake, let me entreat you not
to "my love" and "my soul" me about the town. 'Tis
never done.

D. What, is connubial affection contraband, and
sized at Hyde Park Corner, as an illegal import?

L.D. Yes. Oh! now I think of it never ask me to
dance, as you did last night (Eying him through her
glass) 'Pon my life, you're an original. Ha! ha!
but, apropos, allow me to abuse your toilette.
Who's your operator? (kises)

D. My valet, Bob. Old Bob has dressed me these
I don't know how many years.

L.D. Well, discharge him.

D. No, damn me if I do! not for all the fashion
in the world!

L.D. Well, take another peruquior, and don't
swear; it's coarse!

D. Bob will do.

L.D. Bob! How often have I told you to call the
servants by their surnames?

D. 'Pon my life, I didn't know they ever had any.

L.D. Euston is his name. Your hair is worse than
a cornfield, after a hurricane; and look at your
crat, -- for all the world like a fancy halter; and
your clothes -- horrible! vile!
D. Good gracious! -- dear me! -- am I indecently clad?

L.D. Worse, if possible. Your coat looks as if it had been cut out with a knife and fork, and thrown on with a shovel, and you've not a bad figure, when "bien mis." Your trousers shamefully sculptured; -- altogether, such a vulgar redundancy of cloth, that -- ha! ha! -- it really becomes a matter of curious speculation in what corner of that mis-shapen mass -- ha! ha! that chaos! -- the body of Sir Wm. Daventry may be concealed.¹


Again at the close of the play, in the manner of the Restoration drama, the script ends with a little sermonette. The tangled web is straightened out and Sir William moralizes thus:

... Ladies be wise, and content to know that there is one realm bequeathed to you by Nature where you have ever held sole sway; 'tis Home -- a simple word, unknown in any language but our own. Ah! May we never lose it. -- 'Tis your title -- deed to our affections; for amidst the toil of trade, the labors of state, ay, and amidst the very lives of dissipation, the heart-strings are still held by the patient, loving watcher who sits by her husband's fireside.

The story of A Lover by Proxy, produced in 1642 at the Haymarket Theatre, is much ado about nothing, as could be judged from reading the directions for actions from it in the last chapter. The two young lawyers who are the main characters have "men" who are descendants of the rascally servants or slaves of another day and who have much to do with the "ado" in the plot.

Wanted a widow is a slapstick comedy full of action.
harry is so far in debt that one of his creditors, having caught up with him at last, ties a rope around Harry's ankle, so he can not escape again and the creditor even hides under a table while Harry proposes to a wealthy widow. The plot depends on the chase, jerking the rope, eavesdropping, the misdirected letters. It ends well and the last speech in the play is a request to the audience to please go bail for Harry so he won't have to spend the night in jail. He is to marry a wealthy widow, but women can not go bail for anyone.2

2Dion Boucicault and Charles Seymoure, Wanted a Widow, with Immediate Possession (London and New York: Samuel French).

The dialogue in these early comedies tries to be witty, brittle, in the manner of the Restoration plays. Here are examples from Alma Mater:

Sir Samuel. Then -- I detest the dust.

Lilly. On, I love it -- It looks like mud in high spirits.

Alma Mater says college boys live like this:

Vent. Bring me the fourth volume of Epictetus

Fli. Yes Sir. (Flick brings down a bottle of Claret [Parenthesis not closed, sic])

Pli. . . . Flick

Fli. Sir!

Pli. Plutarch's lives.

Fli. Yes Sir. (brings down a box of cigars
Pav. I think I can cast a light upon that subject

Pl. Flick, bring me my Homer.

Fli. You have it there, Sir.

Pl. So I have (takes from beside his chair a long meerschaum pipe.

in Alma Mater wilafire's troubles and debts are just about too much for him. He says:

Wil. Plaint, this is my very last appearance here.

Pl. Age, but lovers and actors have a great many last appearances. 3

3Dion Boucicault, Alma Mater or A Cure for Coquettes (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm 636).

A Lover by Proxy, London Assurance, The Irish Heiress, and Alma Mater are typical of the comedies Boucicault wrote during the first period of his career as a playwright. Next came the years when he learned to rewrite French plays for English audiences. Watson comments that during most of the 1850's Boucicault was busy naturalizing French art. 4


His adaptations from the French. In Boucicault's first ten years of playwriting he only had two outstanding successes, London Assurance and Old Heads and Young Hearts. Townsend Walsh says that after Old Heads and Young Hearts Boucicault "obeyed the siren voices and went the road of the
successful showman:

Up to this time Boucicault had been painstaking; he had aspired; he had done his best to reconcile the irreconcilable. He had tried to wear two crowns; he had tried to play the double role of a literary artist and a popular purveyor to the theatre. It was an impossible task. Boucicault had until then busied himself with literary form, now he saw that the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong unless the swift and strong are crafty enough to draw the right weapons, and forthwith he became a popular playwright and a Philistine.

So Boucicault flung conscience and literary ambition overboard in order to become possessed of money and success. From the very first he showed a remarkable facility for appreciating what was best in others; he ceased to be a creator, and was content to develop and improve the latent possibilities in the works of native bunglers and foreign adepts.

... "I am an emperor," he said, "and take what I think best for Art, whether it be a story from a book, a play from the French, an actor from a rival company." Boucicault not only said it -- he did it. He possessed an Aladdin's lamp, and he had only to rub it for a play to spring into being.5


During the 1850's, Boucicault wrote a number of starring vehicles to feature his young wife, Agnes Robertson. One of them was altered from an old piece called The Manager's Daughter by "Mr Ed. Lancaster." Boucicault called his play The Young Actress. The papers referred to it as a protean piece, and it is simply a device to offer an actress a chance to give a series of readings and songs. Agnes is supposed to have been so good in it that the manager of the Boston
Museum netted twenty thousand dollars on her eight weeks' appearance at his theatre. Most of *The Young Actress* happens in the interior of a theatre at rehearsal time. The carpenter is at work on a flat that represents a house with a practical door and window. Actors and actresses are lounging about the stage. The script says the comedian is "a solemn looking personage," while the tragedian is a "comic squab personage with a red nose."  

Dion Boucicault, *The Manager's Daughter or The Young Actress* (New York: Samuel French).

*Andy Blake or The Irish Diamond* is a comedy in two acts adapted from the French and was written so Agnes could play the role of a young boy.


*Grimaldi or The Life of an Actress* was written for Agnes also, only in it, Boucicault himself played the part of Grimaldi and did it very well, the critics said. This play gave Boucicault a chance to defend the acting profession as an old and honored way of life, and, therefore, it is of special interest to us now. The story of Grimaldi goes like this:

Grimaldi befriends and trains a little street singer,
Violet, who loves Lord Shafton. At Grimaldi's earnest pleading, Shafton agrees to go to the Crimea, so he won't be tempted to rob Violet of her innocence. The villain, Maltravers, is determined to have Violet; so on the night of her debut, at a benefit for Grimaldi, he kidnaps her. Grimaldi, Wopshot (a devoted, dog-like character), and Lord Shafton rescue her in the nick of time. Lord Shafton marries her. Later, his mother, the Countess, is reconciled when Grimaldi reveals himself to be the Italian duke who once loved her. He has adopted Violet. Everything turns out very well. Violet is such a success as an actress that the queen lets her entertain her children.

The most interesting scene in the play for the purposes of this paper is the one in the Green Room because it gives glimpses of the behavior of theatre folk in action during a play. Boucicault says it is the Green Room of the Nottingham Theatre. A door in a flat shows the stage as seen from the right side. There is a file of playbills, call lists, et cetera. There are theatrical portraits on the wall. On the night of Grimaldi's benefit we see Mrs. Hopkins, in a ballet dress, practicing steps before the looking glass. Hopkins walks up and down, studying aloud from a part. He is dressed as a Roman. There are groups of ballet girls. The call boy appears to warn all the performers of coming entrances:

Call Boy (putting his head in at the door.)
First music! Everybody for the next piece! (Disappears)

Hop. Where is Wopsnot? He begins the piece.

Enter Wopshot, as First Citizen, in a comic Roman dress.

Wop. Here I am.

Hop. How is the house?

Call Boy (appearing at door.) Everybody down to begin (Disappears).

Call Boy (Appearing -- reads from list) Mr. Hopkins -- Mr. Wopshot, you are called, please. Disappears.

In Grimaldi, Boucicault defends the standing of actors. The play is from *La Vie d'une comedienne* by Anicet Bourgeois and Theo Barrière which is supposed to be founded on events in the life of the famous actress, Rachel. Boucicault did not like it when society people looked down on theatre people or patronized actors. He makes it clear in these lines:

Countess. My son loved you. I do respect even the vices of my race, but I desire to detach you from his mind. I will therefore give you ten thousand pounds, if you will consent at once to marry some person in your own profession.

Violet. There is no person, madame, in my profession, who would consent to marry a nobleman's mistress for the price of her infamy.

Vio. No! despise me! Crush me if you will! You are Arthur's mother -- but the profession I have been taught to love and respect, when you trample upon that, you insult my father, and you pollute the daily bread God has given me!

Count. You forget, Duke, that we are dealing
with actors, people whose sentiments are manufactured for them, and whose characters are fictitious.

Julia. No, madam, you are dealing with those in whose hearts there has ever been more true nobility than in your own titled caste. We have our jealousies, our hates; but when we hear our noble profession insulted, we cast aside all petty rivalry, and heart to heart we repel the aggression with derision and contempt (Crosses to Violet. [sic])

Sel. Bravo! but now that Violet will be a countess, I suppose she will leave the stage.

Count. That is indispensable.

Grim. No, I say no. Oh, mi lor Duke, say one word dat she shall not quit de stage. My good friends, will no one spik! (To the audience) Ah, oui! you! You shall forbid her to go; is it because dat she is now noble, dat she shall spurn de profession by which she arise? non; you shall tell her dat you also can confer nobility. You gave the crown to Shakespeare, to Byron, and to Rachel; and dere is one glory in de titles you give, and dat is -- they are immortal!

Vio. Am I to quit the stage? What do you say -- Forbid with a smile, and I'll obey.

The end

9Dion Boucicault, Grimaldi or The Life of an Actress (New York: Samuel French), p. 35.

All through the first part of the play, Julia is jealous of Violet's rise. She hopes Violet's debut will be a failure, but when the aristocracy criticises the profession, she rises to its defense and crosses over to Violet's side.

Freedley and Keeves say Boucicault was the first outstanding playwright in America to deal with the attitude of
society toward women who have gone on the stage.10

Grimaldi gives an interesting look back stage during a play and gives Boucicault a chance to stand up for the acting profession. His own wife was a most successful actress. He himself was acquiring an enviable reputation as an actor-playwright. He had good reason to want outsiders to respect the members of his profession, so he tried to do something about it in this play.

In the 1850's, Boucicault learned the value of unusual staging, and we see the "sensation scene" emerging in such adaptations as The Willow Copse, The Queen of Spades, The Corsican Brothers, and The Vampire.

The story of The Willow Copse will give an idea of the sentimental, sensational dramas Boucicault was learning to write because the public would come to see them.11

Sir Richard Vaughan's conduct so displeased his father that a month before the father's death he cut Richard off with a shilling, leaving his money to Luke Fielding, an old friend and tenant. Only two men witnessed this will. One is dead; the other, Dick Hulks, means to steal the will until it is enforced. Hulks plans to marry Luke's daughter.
Rose and then announce the will.

Months ago, when he promised to marry her, Rose "trusted Richard with all—all—my life and honor." Now she can scarcely endure her father’s confidence and love because she thinks she has disgraced the family name. When Richard leaves her because he thinks he is harassed by wretches from his past, Rose attempts suicide in The Willow Copse.

Lucy Vanguard prevents the suicide and when Richard comes back, Rose insists he see Lucy safely home because it is after midnight. They get there in time to stumble on Hulks and his buddies in the act of robbing the house. Lucy is compromised by being found in the pavilion with Richard. Her fiancé breaks off the engagement, but Rose heroically confesses her sin and Lucy's innocence. Luke loses his mind at the disgrace and wanders away, followed by Meg, a faithful servant. Richard elopes with Rose.

Four years later, in Act V, Rose and Richard think they are on the trail of Luke in the hands of Hulks and his men. By chance, Luke comes to Rose's house to beg for food. They are reconciled and the criminals are caught. Luke recovers his senses; the money is safely in the family because Rose and Richard are happily married and Luke is living with them.

The Corsican Brothers was given at the Princess Theatre in London in 1852 with Charles Kean playing the dual role of the twin brothers. It was very popular. Watson
In 1852, the Boucicault of sensation, sentimentality, and intense realism evolved.  

His sensational melodrama based on topics of current interest. The Boucicaults, Dion and Agnes Robertson, had come to the United States in 1853. Pauvrette, The Pope of Home, The Poor of New York, Jessie Brown, and The Octoroon were all premiered in New York. They are sentimental dramas in which sensational scenes are important. The last three of these plays represent a departure in Boucicault's writing. They deal with current events of great popular interest at the moment. The Poor of New York had to do with the panic of 1857; Jessie Brown, an original play by Boucicault, was based on the heroism of Lucknow during a Sepoy rebellion; and The Octoroon was an unbiased presentation of the slavery question fast coming to a head in the United States.

The Poor of New York, also called The Streets of New York, a local melodrama of crime, poverty, and riches was produced at Wallack's Theatre, December 7, 1857. Lester Wallack played the role of Tom Badger. The idea for the play is based on Les Pauvres de Paris.

Quinn says The Poor of New York is not a great play.
but it illustrates a sense of theatrical values which Boucicault possessed beyond any of his contemporaries. The play follows Les Pauvres de Paris fairly closely in the first three acts, but the fire scene is Boucicault's creation. It never failed to appeal to an audience. The local atmosphere is his also, and he omits some of the moral and sentimental reflections so common in French melodrama. The story could be adapted to other localities "for virtuous and deserving poverty can find (on the stage) eternal sympathy." 14


Jessie Brown or The Relief of Lucknow was founded on an episode in the Indian Rebellion. Lucknow was relieved by General Havelock, September 25, 1857. Jessie Brown began its career at Wallack's on February 22, 1858. So detested was the name of Nana Sahib, the Sepoy leader, no one could be found to play the part. Dion Boucicault, the author of the play, did it himself. 15 The play is a drama in three acts.

15 Ibid., p. 371.

At Wallack's, Agnes Robertson played the part of Jessie Brown, Lester Wallack that of Randal McGregor, and A. H. Davenport, the role of Geordie McGregor. It ran from February 22 to April 5.
The scene of *Jessie Brown* or *The Relief of Lucknow* is at Lucknow, in the province of Oude in India, in the summer of 1857. The story follows.

In Act I a group of women and children are rescued and taken to Lucknow where a few British soldiers are holding out against thousands of natives. Two of the women are Amy Campbell with whom Nana Sahib, the leader of the rebellion, is in love, and Jessie Brown, a Scotch girl who is the idol of the regiment.

In Act II, Geordie, one of the two McGregor brothers, both officers, has been captured. Jessie comes to the prison to nurse him, and she is made prisoner. Nana Sahib tries to force Geordie to urge his brother to surrender. Jessie gives Geordie strength not to do it. Finally Geordie and Jessie are rescued.

Three months later, some British soldiers, women, and children are in one of the forts commanding Lucknow. They have repulsed the last Sepoy attack they think they can, and they are ready to shoot the women and children to protect them from the natives, when Jessie wakes from a delirium and tells them she hears the bagpipes of the Campbells coming to the rescue. The relief forces get there in the nick of time.16

At the end of the play, in a note from the author, Boucicault tells how he was moved to write the play, and, incidentally, he pays a fine tribute to his wife's acting ability. He says:

Note from the author. -- The powerful incident with which this drama concludes, incited me to construct the domestic fiction contained in the first and second acts. Its dramatic value I had seen tested by Mr. Everett, on an audience at the Academy of Music, rendered breathless and hysterical by the sweet power of his pathetic description. Yet the task of dramatising the subject might have been abandoned had I not possessed, in my own wife, a representative for the character of Jessie Brown, singularly adapted to its realization. Her Scottish blood warmed to the subject; her Scottish dialect, and her power of delineating Highland character, assured me that the central figure of my dramatic group would be faithfully rendered. I hope that in the treatment of this pretty subject, the reader may find I have not injured the beautiful sentiment of the original tale.

D. B. (Bourcicault)\[sic\]

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The script also includes excerpts from a letter from one of the women rescued in which she describes Jessie's hearing the bagpipes before the others and their utter joy when they realized relief had come.

The Octo"roon or Life in Louisiana is a drama in four or five acts (according to the version of the play being discussed), first presented at the Winter Garden Theatre in New York, December 6, 1859, a few days after John Brown's death. The story is based on Mayme Reid's The Quadroon. Joseph Jefferson was Scudder at the Winter Garden opening,
Agnes Hobertson was Zoe, and Boucicault was Wahnotee, an Indian friend of a slave boy.

The story of *The Octoroon* goes like this: George Peyton, just back from a ten-year stay in Paris, is heir to Terrebonne, one of the finest estates in Louisiana. Two overseers, Jacob M'Closky and Salem Scudder, have brought the plantation to bankruptcy, the former through knavery, the latter through inventions meant to improve the place. Peyton's uncle from whom he inherited the estate, had an illegitimate daughter, a beautiful octoroon, whom Mrs. Peyton brought up "as her own daughter." George knows Zoe is illegitimate but not that she is an octoroon. He falls in love with her. M'Closky and Scudder are also in love with her.

The one hope of saving the estate lies in a letter expected from London bringing news from a firm that owes $50,000 to Mrs. Peyton's husband. The firm is at last in a position to pay off its debts. Mrs. Peyton sends Paul, a slave boy, and his inseparable Indian companion, Wahnotee, to get the letter.

When M'Closky learns Zoe will have nothing to do with him, he steals the papers that prove she is not a slave and kills Paul to steal the letter from London. At the time of the murder, Paul was getting his picture taken by Wahnotee with Scudder's camera. The picture was to be a time exposure. Wahnotee was gone at the precise moment of the murder. He
thinks the camera killed Paul, so he smashes it.

Zoe tells George the law will never allow them to marry since she is an octoroon.

Mrs. Peyton does not get help from London, so the estate has to be sold. It is bought by a wealthy girl who loves George. Out of devotion to the family, the slaves try to make a good appearance during the auction, so they will bring in as much money as possible. M'Closky pays $25,000 for Zoe.

Paul is believed dead, killed by Wahnotee, because the Indian has not been seen since Paul's disappearance. While a steamship, The Magnolia, is being loaded, Wahnotee appears. M'Closky rouses the mob to kill him. The smashed camera is brought in. The camera, one of Scudder's inventions, has an automatic developer, and a picture in it shows M'Closky murdering Paul. The letter from London is found on M'Closky, who is taken prisoner, saved from lynching, put on the ship, breaks loose, and sets fire to some spilled turpentine. The ship catches afire, but Wahnotee kills M'Closky. George Peyton carries Zoe off the ship. It blows up, and with that grand tableau the play ends. That is, this version of the play ends so.²

²Dion Boucicault, The Octoroon (New York: Samuel French).

Another version of the play has Zoe take poison and
die. A third variation, popular in England, adds a fifth act in which George kills M'Closky after an exciting canoe chase. He rescues Zoe, and they go to another country that does not frown on mixed marriages, and there they are married.

The Octoroon certainly has an accumulation of sensational effects: the auction scene in which Zoe goes to the villain, the murder with a tomahawk, the camera device, the fire and explosion scene, and, when the play was given with five acts, Zoe's death, or, in England, Zoe's rescue. All the curtain lines are strong.

Criticism which The Octoroon received throws light on what people expected of their plays in this part of the nineteenth century and on the way Boucicault worked to give his audiences what they wanted. The next few pages will discuss this criticism.

The Octoroon did not play in London until 1861 when it opened at the Adelphi, November 16, 1861. The gossip column for The Athenaeum for November 23 reads:

Mr. Boucicault's new drama, The Octoroon, narrowly escaped failure for a singular cause,—namely the death, instead of the triumph of the heroine. . . . But the English do not like to see their heroines sacrificed.19

gave Boucicault's play a most complimentary write-up. It said, in part:

The Octoroon is the first of a series of plays which have been tried and proved by Mr. Boucicault in America, as remarkably effective with that mixed class of audience which require in a drama an exciting story, with a scene or two calculated to cause a thrilling sensation . . . by an actual occurrence passing before the senses . . . and to give a shock not always pleasant to the frame . . . Mr. Boucicault has reduced the means of producing such an effect to an art; and by calling in the scene painter and machinist to his aid, has augmented the effect in a manifold manner. . . . This is the sensation scene;

. . . For the rest, the beauty of the scenery, and the general completeness of the accessories, will secure it, a prolonged success, if the steamer on fire does not, some night, prove more "sensational" than originally intended.20

20 Ibid., p. 694.

A later edition of The Athenaeum has this interesting information and an excellent definition of the popular sensation—melodrama:

On Monday, Mr. Boucicault supplied a happy ending to his drama of The Octoroon. In America the death of the heroine met with no objection . . . but was received with approbation . . . on moral grounds. In England the moral proved worthless. The drama, being of the sensational sort, proceeded on the principle of exciting a sense of danger, with the tacit understanding that there was to be a deliverance from it.21

21 Ibid., p. 809.

The Athenaeum goes on to tell about the added fifth act in which after an exciting chase in a canoe Peyton kills
McClosky, rescues Zoe, and takes her to another land where the laws permit their marriage, and the article relates that the English audience was pleased.

Quinn says that in *The Octoroon*, Boucicault shows his keen sense of the dramatic possibilities of an American theme. He shows his realization of dramatic values in changing the title to *The Octoroon*, for Zoe's situation is more tragic because she has less Negro blood than did the heroine of Mayme Reid's *The Quadroon*.22

Greedley and Reeves praise the play this way:

> The validity of the characters compensated for the melodramatic action, and the brilliance of the cast . . . made the performance so much more thrilling to the audience.23

By way of summarizing what has been said so far in this chapter we might say that Boucicault began writing sophisticated comedies in the manner of the Restoration dramatists, but he only had two plays that attained success in this early period: *London Assurance* and *Old Heads and Young Hearts*. To make easy money, Boucicault started adapting French plays for English audiences. He became very proficient in doing so and adapted not only French plays but rewrote older English plays and stories. Out of this
practice grew his sensation—melodrama which was most successful when it was founded on events of great public interest as in The Poor of New York, Jessie Brown, and The Octoroon.

His Irish plays. There was left to evolve his Irish plays that may be his chief claim to fame, if we are to believe William Winter and Arthur Hornblow. Winter says:

His rightful fame is that of an author of romantic Irish plays and an actor of romantic, eccentric Irish parts.²⁴


Hornblow agrees that Boucicault's fame rests chiefly on his romantic Irish plays.²⁵


Four of these Irish plays deserve special mention:
The Colleen Bawn, Arrah-Na-Pogue, The O'Dowd, and The Shaughraun.

The first of Boucicault's Irish dramas, The Colleen Bawn, was hurriedly written. Structurally it is the weakest of the four, but it was a tremendously successful play in its own time. The Colleen Bawn is an adaptation of Gerald Griffin's novel The Collegians. It opened at Laura Keene's Theatre in New York City, March 29, 1860. It was first given

Boucicault played the role of Myles-na-Coppaleen, Agnes Robertson, that of Lily, and Laura Keene the part of Ann Chute.

The evolution of the story found in Boucicault's The Colleen Bawn is as interesting as the story itself.

Gerald Griffin's novel The Collegians is based on the following facts. Lily O'Conner was the daughter of a rope-maker of Garryowen, a suburb of Limerick. She was secretly married to a wealthy man named Scanlow who tired of her because he wanted to marry Miss Chute of Castle Chute. Scanlon hired his servant, Stephen Sullivan, to kill her. When the servant balked, he brutally drowned her himself. He was hanged for his crime in 1820.

Griffin makes Cregan (Scanlon) less revolting; he was a weak man, loving Lily but ashamed of her, sincerely devoted to Ann who loves him. He tells his servant Danny to take Lily to America. Instead, Danny kills her. When Lily's body is found, Cregan Hardress is arrested, but Danny betrays himself and is transported. 27

27 Quinn, op. cit., pp. 377-78.
William Winter says that Griffin's novel was tedious, but from it Boucicault

extracted a thread of fresh and pure dramatic action and characters he suffused with humor, pathos, and romantic interest.28

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28 Winter, op. cit., p. 130.

The following synopsis of Boucicault's version of the story was found in a clipping pasted in John Moore's prompt-book of the play. No source for the clipping is given, but it shows how Boucicault further softened the story, and is interesting because the wording of the synopsis is one which Boucicault's audiences would have read. This is the clipping synopsis:

Mrs. Cregan, the incumbent of an impoverished estate, endeavors to restore the glories by marrying her son Hardress Cregan with the heiress Ann Chute. The match seems desirable to everyone safe the gentleman, and to him it presents difficulties, owing to the slight circumstance that he has previously wedded a beautiful peasant girl, Eily O'Connor. A decrepit attendant who is aware of this fact and laments that the glory of an old family should pass away for anything so low, proffers his advice. It is to the effect that Eily should be put aside. Hardress rejects the proposition with indignation and Danny (the attendant referred to) retires discomfitted, but still trustful of the future, saying that if his master will not speak the word, he need only send his glove in token that Eily is to be spirited off.

In the next act, Mrs. Cregan becomes acquainted with her son's misalliance. Danny in comforting her says the matter may yet be compromised, if she will but give him her son's glove. Without knowing the consequence of this act the mother does. The pirate of the act is of course Danny's attempt to murder Eily by drowning. In the third act Hardress is
accused of the deed, but as Kily, who has been saved, comes in to testify to his innocence, the piece of course ends happily. 29

29 Dion Bouicault, The Colleen Bawn (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm P 13).

Among the clippings pasted into John Moore's prompt-book for The Colleen Bawn is this defense of Bouicault:

Surely there is something more than criticism in the bitterness with which this gentleman's popularity and success are spoken of in many journals. . . . Whenever the public crowd the theatre to witness the performance of his dramas they are ridiculed for their want of taste and judgment; but when the same public happen to disregard one of his works their verdict is eagerly quoted to his disadvantage. I do not desire to place Mr. Bouicault in any eminent position amongst the British Dramatists, but amongst the small fry which now supply the London stage, he is beyond all question facile princeps.

Another criticism pasted in Mr. Moore's promptbook points out both the strengths and weaknesses of The Colleen Bawn. The critic speaking of the play's reception at Laura Keene's Theatre writes of the enthusiasm of the audience:

. . . The applause was vehement and of that quick responsive kind that speaks so distinctly of sustained interest and animation. All the artists were called out and Mr. Bouicault at the end, made a neat [sic] little speech with just a touch of the blarney in it to prove that the performance was as satisfactory with the author as with the public.

The same critic goes on to mention the long waits between some of the scenes and remarks that:

The plot too—cheap and worn out at the best—is pushed forward in the most primitive of ways—namely by the eavesdropping of all the principal characters, and the wrong delivery of important letters. . . . These few critical objections are as
nothing compared with the many excellencies of the play itself...30

Ibid., other clippings.

Concerning the London run of The Colleen Bawn the Athenaeum said after the play had been in performance almost a year:

The Colleen Bawn was reproduced at the Adelphi on Monday with the old cast and the old effects; Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault were warmly received by the audience which was as numerous as ever.31

31The Athenaeum, op. cit., No. 1770, September 28, 1861.

But by November either the reporter was very tired of The Colleen Bawn or the cast had greatly deteriorated, for this was the final comment on the run:

The Colleen Bawn was performed for the last time last night, after a run of nearly 300 representations. The drollest feature of the drama was the variety of brogues and dialects, or attempts at them, intended to pass for brogues, employed by the actors...some of whom seemed heartily weary of their parts—of which we may say there is not a good one in the piece, safe that acted by Mr. Boucicault himself.

And then this paragraph was added that sounds vaguely like comments written today about Broadway shows that have longer runs than they deserve:

Some persons are puzzled at the fact that very poor pieces, from tragedy to burlesque, have very long runs...One reason for this is that the audiences are not as they used to be, almost exclusively London but mostly successions of visitors
to London, who take what they can get, and depart with indifference.32

32Ibid., No. 1776, November 9, 1861.

Arrah-Na-Pogue (c. 1865), Boucicault's second Irish play, mentioned before, was discussed in Chapter III. It was original with Boucicault.

Quinn says of The O'Dowd, the third successful Irish play on our list, that Boucicault made an action play out of a French expository one.33 In the French play the son's heroism is simply told about. In The O'Dowd it is enacted on the stage.34 There is a storm at sea. A ship is in danger. No one knows the safe "passage" but the O'Dowd and his son. Mike, the son, goes to save the ship. His father, whose mind had given way because of a disgrace threatening his son, is restored under the stress of emotion. These lines will show how Boucicault caught the excitement of the rescue scene and pictured it on the stage:

O'Dowd. Where am I? Have I been asleep?

Kitty. Yes, Daddy, that's all, a long sleep.
(More people enter and go up to back)

Bridget. Yes, dear, a long sleep wid a bad chrane
in it. But now, you're your own man again!

Kitty. Yes! Yes! Let him see the water, let him hear the blast; the sight of the danger will give him heart.

The crowd push off the fish-carts, and pull down the tented shed. The stormy sea and a vessel's topsails are seen by flashes of the lightning - wind - storm - fountains of spray are thrown from time to time over backpieces on to stage.

Dan. (at back) The pilot boat is gone!

Muldoon. (running up to back) Gone from her moorings. See, yonder she sails - a man on board of her, he is steering for the Prairie Belle.

Rose. May Heaven bless him, and protect him.
(exit L.H.U.E. - shouts)

The mob rush up and climb the wall.

O'Dowd. That boat carries a dead man, no one but Mike and me could find the way through the Devil's jawbone on such a night, and in such a gale.

Muldoon. (looking off) How close he holds her to the rocks! What is he doing there?

Barney. (at back) Now he is abreast of the jaws.

O'Dowd. If he only knew the secret, if he knew how them jaws do open, but he will pass the channel. What does he do?

Barney. He ports his helm.

O'Dowd. (rising) What? What?

Muldoon. He is running the boat into the breakers - He is mad! (Kitty runs up to the back)

O'Dowd. No, no, he is right! That's the blue channel, the secret - the secret road, he knows it. (much agitated) Who is the man that knows the road, who is he that takes my place?

Muldoon. He is within hail of the ship.

O'Dowd. Oh, if I was there! Quick, let go your
bow anchors, out wid your axes. What are they doing now?

Muldoon. They have slipped their bow cables, up goes the jib.

O'Dowd. She pays off. Her head swings. Let all go now. The tide will take her. (topsails of ship seen to cross L. to R.)

Muldoon. Mat. Barney. All's gone! Hurrah, she will be saved. (distant cheers)

O'Dowd. (staggers forward) My God! 'tis he - 'tis Mike is there - none but himself could know - could do that work. 'Tis he - it is my son!

Of course, it is Mike who rescued the ship. He has been gone to America retrieving the family fortune, so everything ends happily. Boucicault played the role of the O'Dowd and critics said it was one of his best parts.

The Shaughraun is founded on an incident in County Slige during the Fenian insurrection in 1866, but the story is Boucicault's own. It was given at Wallack's Theatre, November 14, 1874. Hornblow says it was an enormous success and broke the record up to that time as a money maker.35

35Hornblow, op. cit., p. 195.

The story of The Shaughraun begins when Robert, an Irish political prisoner has escaped from a prison camp in Australia with the help of Conn, the Shaughraun, a likable, lovable "n'er-do-well." He doesn't know he was betrayed to the English in the first place by Kinchela who had been one of his guardians. Robert has a sister Claire. Kinchela now
has Robert and Claire's estate in his own possession. Kinchela wants to marry Claire, but she cannot tolerate him.

When Robert gets home to see Claire and his sweetheart, an informer, Harry Duff, betrays him to the English. The English Captain Molinex would rather not have anything to do with capturing Irish rebels, especially since he has fallen in love with Claire. However, Kinchela and Duff engineer Robert's arrest, and he is put in prison. When the queen pardons all political prisoners Kinchela and Duff help Robert escape from prison, so he won't be a prisoner to be pardoned. Conn, who "on his own" had been helping Robert escape, is shot. He pretends to be dead, and, at his own wake, he learns where the mobsters who help Kinchela are hiding. By this time they have Claire and Robert's sweetheart as hostages. Conn arouses a mob to go after the gang. Kinchela is arrested. Duff jumps over the cliff to escape the mob. Robert learns he is pardoned and three couples will marry: Robert and his sweetheart, Claire and Captain Molineux, and Conn and Moya who keeps house for Father Dolan.36

36Dion Boucicault, The Shaughraun (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm P 225).

Quinn calls The Shaughraun the climax of Boucicault's artistic efforts. He says the suspense in the play is good, but its character drawing gives it permanent value. The
Irish gentlefolk are well drawn. So are the parish priest and the informer—two influences that have been the hope and despair of the Irish for centuries. Of Conn, Quinn writes:

Conn is a generous, hearty, irresponsible, not too sober wanderer, ever ready to help others but with little eye for his own concerns. . . . He is the guiding spirit of the play . . . meeting craft with shrewdness and shamming death at his own wake to secure the secrets of the enemy.37


This discussion about Boucicault, the playwright, has dealt largely with the plays that helped make him successful and that represent the best that Boucicault did. He wrote other plays, too numerous to deal with in this paper, but a few of them will be mentioned here.

At first reading, Formosa seemed to be just another play. The plot is not moving. The characters are puppets who are made to do this and that at given times. Yet because of the profile boat race (mentioned in Chapter II), which was its sensational scene, and because the critics labeled it immoral (Jennie was a Parisian prostitute), Formosa was a successful play.38 (Formosa shows, by the way, that right wins every time. Drink, gambling and bad women are the railroad to ruin.)

38Dion Boucicault, Formosa, or The Railroad to Ruin (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm 583).

The suggestions for staging The Rapparee are inter-
eating. The hints about how the fire scene was managed made it a rich find for the chapter on staging methods, but the story is trite. It is a romantic drama. O'Mallery is called the tragic lead, Grace is the feminine tragic lead, and after agonizing situations, intrigue, and counter intrigue, they are restored to each other's arms.39


Led Astray, an adaptation from the French, concerns a neglected young wife. A criticism pasted in the promptbook talks about the stupid first act and calls the play a comedy of the worst French type, "not well enough done to be enticing."40

40Dion Boucicault, Led Astray (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm P 155).

The first four acts of The Octoroon mentioned earlier in this chapter have strong curtain lines. Although it is extremely melodramatic in places, one easily sees why audiences liked it in the late 1850's and early 1860's, but the fifth act (not always given, as has been said) seems hurriedly written and appears to have been "tacked on" the play. The other acts have one scene to an act. This one has four very short scenes which should play continuously like a moving picture scenario.
Boucicault wrote a number of plays with very short scenes that should flow into each other with quick changes for effective staging. Such a one is The Flying Scud with nineteen scenes, thirteen different sets. This play also has an example of the excellent descriptions Boucicault wrote in his plays for handling crowds. Act II, Scene VI happens at Epsom Downs race course and these directions are given:

Crowds of persons, such as frequent races. Thimble Riggers, Negro minstrels, vendors of Race Cards and Dolls, Vans, Tents, Drags, Castermongers' carts, etc. Woodbie and Julie in a Phaeton. Negro minstrel song is going on. Enter a gypsy, who tells Julia's fortune, while two cockneys are taken in by the Thimble Rigger. Enter Policemen. The Thimble Riggers decamp. This scene should maintain several natural episodes in pantomime during the dialogue.41

41Dion Boucicault, The Flying Scud (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm P 239).

One only needs to read a number of Boucicault scripts to be aware of the fact that he visualized his plays through action.

BOUCICAULT SCRIPTS DISPLAY AN AWARENESS OF ALL PHASES OF THEATRE

Boucicault was so involved in the theatres of his day that his writing has an awareness for all phases of theatre. Boucicault was an actor; he directed plays; he helped build several theatres; he managed a few theatres; he wrote plays. He wanted his plays to succeed with the audiences he had in
the available theatres. He wanted to make money out of his plays.

Andy Blake, 1856, was one of the earliest of his plays to bear this notice "in conformity with the new copyright act for the protection of Dramatic Authors." In 1856 Boucicault was instrumental in securing the passage of the first copyright law in the United States,\textsuperscript{42} and as a result, as a playwright, he stood a better chance of making money on his plays than he had before.

People would come to see his plays if they were well acted. Into his plays he wrote hundreds of directions telling actors what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. He wanted people to have something to watch, so he not only wrote in directions for actions but directions for sensational scenes like gliding ghosts, attempted suicides, suicides, attempted murders, murders, attempted seduction, fires, explosions, battles, an avalanche, escapes from prisons, trials, an auction of slaves, a body tied to a railroad track with the train coming (After Dark), a puffing hole (The Rapparee), a rescue at sea, a boat race, a horse race, a human ladder, \textit{et cetera}. After Boucicault realized their drawing power, he was apt to write in several sensational scenes into one play.

In order that his plays might be better acted, Bou-
cicault strove to do away with the visiting star system in vogue when he became active in the theatre. Instead of a visiting star, he sent touring companies on the road to act his plays as was explained in Chapter I.  

\[43\] See page 16.

In order that he might safely continue to present sensational fire scenes, he insisted that theatrical scenery be fireproofed, and he showed other managers how to do flame-proofing.  

\[44\] Walsh, op. cit., p. 186.

Occasionally, Boucicault, the helpful, the reassuring playwright, shows through in his plays. He wanted them to be produced. He told how they were to be done and then says in substance, "It is not hard. Don't worry." For instance, in After Dark, Act III, Scene III, when the back drop is to show tunnels with lines of rails curving into those actually placed on stage, and the painting on the flat is to represent them running off into the distance, he has this note of instruction:

See London Illustrated News or Times for shape of English locomotives and cars. Those used are to be heavy enough to keep the rail, car in profile with lights within and profile passenger faces at windows; red fire under locomotive at fire pan. Red light in front, red lantern at last car. No works required. See the wheels run very freely. The moment Tom and Chumley are clear, run the train across; decline rails
to L. at wing, then give it an uprise abruptly to check it in a few yards; curtain will fall quick and will not rise.45

45 Dion Boucicault, *After Dark* (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm 552).

In *Formosa*, he suggests in a similar note that to create greater local interest this be done:

In the United States, for the season 1869-70 it will be at the manager's discretion to make this race, not one between Oxford and Cambridge Sights but one between Oxford and Harvard Fours.46

46 Dion Boucicault, *Formosa*, op. cit.

A multiple set in *Elfie* showing a bar, a passage and stairs, and two upper rooms can be simplified and the wait between scenes shortened. Boucicault writes in this note:

The time is two hours and fifteen minutes. The fifteen minutes can be saved by having Scene II, Act II set without the upper story; the stairs leading off 2 E.

In the same play, in the property list, Boucicault writes, "fiddle to play if Joe Chirrup is a violinist, otherwise a dummy."47

47 Dion Boucicault, *Elfie or The Cherry Tree Inn* (Columbus: O.S.U. Theatre Collection, microfilm 553).

When Act II, Scene VIII of *The Shaughraun*, which represents the ruins of St. Bridget's Abbey on a full stage, calls for: five ruins wings, a horizon wing, a tower piece,
and ruined columns, Boucicault adds a reassuring note:

In case no special borders are painted, use cut woods in 1, 2, 3 (grooves), arched sky in 4 & 5 (grooves). 48

Boucicault, The Shaughraun, op. cit.

Boucicault even writes a curtain call suggestion in the script for Foul Play:

If curtain is called up, Helen is in Roeleston's arms, still fainted, in boat, Robert kneeling L.C., looking at her, sailors in boat about to shove her off to R. 49

Dion Boucicault and Charles Reade, Foul Play (Chicago: The Dramatic Publishing Company), Act II, Scene IV.

If a group looking for a play hesitated to give Led Astray because it contained a duel and they did not know how to do a duel, Boucicault could not be blamed. Into the lines and directions for the scene he has written explicit directions for a duel as can be seen here:

Enter O'Hara, carrying pistol-case under his coat, followed by De Lesparre and a Second. . . .

Rod . . . (Takes off his coat and throws it down . . .

(During the above, Mount Gosline and Gentleman are loading pistols, 1 wd. L.H.)

O'H. I'm delighted to afford you instruction, young gentlemen. We set our men, if you please, at twenty-four paces apart. At the signal, they will advance to these limits. (Places two swords on the ground.) As they approach, they will fire when they like. The one that fires first stops at the spot when he delivers his shot. The other may then walk up and pot him if he can.
(Mount Gosline hands the pistol to Rodolph. O'Hara hands his pistol to De Lesparre.

(Rodolfn offers his hand silently to Hector, and with Mount Gosline disappears off R.H. 3 E. O'Hara goes off with De Lesparre L.H. 1 E. A pause

Re-enter Mount Gosline (R.U.E.) and O'Hara L. 1 E. A pause.

O'Hara. Will you give the signal to let them loose?

Hec. No! (Turns his back.

O'H. Are you ready, Gentlemen? Go!

(A pause. Lesparre appears L., walking toward the limit. As he arrives there, Rodolph appears R., his pistol raised slightly and pointed upward. De Lesparre takes deliberate aim and fires. Rodolph staggers back; his pistol falls; his arm falls down inert.

O'H. Aha! (Springing forward.

Hec. Rodolph. (Advancing

Rod. Stand back; 'tis nothing. (He picks up the pistol with his left hand, and advances to De Lesparre, placing the muzzle near his heart. They face each other. After hesitating a moment.) I give you your life.50


Boucicault said, "Plays are not written; they are rewritten." When Arrah-Na-Pogue opened in Dublin, November 7, 1864, it lacked the famous descending tower scene it had on March 22, 1865 when it was given at the Princess Theatre in London. The play had been entirely rewritten.51 We have

51Walsh, op. cit., p. 103.
already discussed the three versions of *The Octoroon*. The *Poor of New York* was sometimes called *The Streets of New York*. In London, it was called *The Streets of London*. Wherever he went he localized the script. In Liverpool, it became *The Poor of Liverpool*.

Boucicault called a play by whatever name suited the occasion and his desire at the time. Grimaldi was also known as *The Life of an Actress*, as *Violet*, as *This Evening*; Andy Blake at different times was called *The Irish Diamond*, *The Dublin Boy*, *The Irish Boy*. Other names for *The O'Dowd* are *Daddy O'Dowd*, *Turn About Is Fair Play*, *Suil-A-mor*.

Hornblow says Boucicault in all wrote over four hundred plays and adaptations. Daniel Frohman says,

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52Hornblow, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

Boucicault was "the author of over three hundred plays many of which were adaptations." Since his plays have two, three, four or more names each, and since they were called by various names at different times and places, it is possible that he wrote no more than half as many plays as the authors quoted say he did.

Boucicault was a practical man of the theatre. He was not a literary man working alone, far removed from the
scene of his audiences. He wrote in the midst of theatre activity; he rewrote at night after rehearsals, or en route to the next city where he or his cast was to perform. His plays expected much from the machinery and equipment of the theatres in which they played, but as far as Boucicault was concerned nineteenth-century stages, with their grooved floors, traps, and machines were there to be used, and his plays concocted feats of magic for them to perform in his sensation-scenes. The crowds that saw his plays, the several fortunes he made in the theatre, attest to his showmanship in writing plays.

Hence, regarding Boucicault the playwright, a consideration of the succession of plays he wrote leads to these conclusions. Boucicault started out writing comedies in the manner of the Restoration plays he knew. He found he could make more money adapting French plays to English audiences, especially when they were full of action and when he added sensation scenes (or saw that the sensational scenes they already had were well developed). Accordingly, he became adept at writing sensational melodramas that were even more popular when they dealt with current events of great public interest. His Irish romantic melodramas belong in a class by themselves and probably represent his best writing.
Boucicault could build suspense; he handled crowd scenes well and used them to add to the excitement of his sensation-scene. His plays were full of action, and people came to see them because they were exciting to watch.
CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

This paper began with a premise upon which histories of the theatre in England and the United States agree. Dion Boucicault was the outstanding playwright from 1841 to 1874 in both countries. Boucicault’s plays are typical of his times and are representative of the best the period had to offer.

The problem. The problem was to learn what a careful study of typical Boucicault plays would reveal about the staging, directing, acting, and playwriting methods of his era.

The procedure. The procedure was first to find out what the general reference books for the period told about staging, acting, and directing practice in the nineteenth century. Then, examples of (1) Boucicault’s comedies, based on his intimate knowledge of Restoration drama, (2) his adaptations from French and English authors, (3) his sensational melodramas based on current events of great public interest, and (4) his Irish, sensational, romantic melodramas were studied, and, where it was practicable, the findings were tabulated.

The findings. General reference books dealing with
Boucicault's period treat it rather sketchily, but they say that most theatres were equipped with grooved floors and machines that allowed for visible scene changes. Scenery was painted on these stages to give a perspective illusion through two dimensional pieces. However, on these same stages, set pieces were introduced, and box sets for interiors were in more or less general use by 1870. From realism painted in perspective, the stage was being set, and the trend already was started toward the use of real properties.

Theatres in the United States followed the English tradition in architecture, scenery, machinery, and production, but, in the later nineteenth century, at least some of the American theatres were superior to those in England.

In both countries, the nineteenth century began with acting suffering from poorly conducted and inadequate rehearsals and from the star system, but meticulous rehearsals were used with good results by such people as Madame Vestris, William Macready, the Wallacks, and Laura Keene. Ranting and artificiality were common, but there were actors who used restraint.

Theatres were managed by actor-managers. Directors were called stage-managers. As the century advanced, ensemble acting became important. Boucicault instituted the touring stock company.

As far as staging is concerned, Boucicault's plays always depended on nineteenth-century grooved floors, machines
and illusionistic, perspective painting. From the begin-
ning, he used set pieces and box sets, but the easily shifted
wing and drop were continuously employed in his plays. With
them the many scenes his scripts called for could be changed
quickly, scenario-fashion. Boucicault learned to make use
of the stage in unusual ways in building the sensational
scenes for which his plays were well known.

The Boucicault scripts show that water scenes were a
combination of painted background, lights, and canvas or
gauze waters on the stage floor. Fire scenes were safely
used in his plays by a combination of red, blue, and white
fires (chemical compounds), steam for smoke, red and blue
media for lights, and real fire that blazed for a moment
over the spirits and rosin painted on protective iron plates
covering the flats. The illusion was increased in the fire
scenes by using the grooves to take down the walls of a set
to the mezzanines and to send up in their place scenes that
had been painted to look like fire ruins. An avalanche
scene was a combination of falling snow (probably from a
snow cradle), chunks of scenic rocks and ice thrown from the
flies into open traps, painted snow walls brought down from
the flies, dim lights, and appropriate sound effects.

For the Boucicault plays, boats were pulled in on
tracks and/or rollers. Real telegraph equipment was used.
The scripts called for double rooms and multiple settings
for their novelty value and in order to eliminate a scene
change. Profile boats, profile horses, and profile people and trains were used with noise, music, and excitement for sensation-scenes. In Arrah-Na-Pogue, a tower painted on strongly supported flats was let down from the flies into the mezzanines below the stage for a descending tower, so that the audiences could see Shaun climb up the wall, in the climactic scene in the play.

Studying these scripts makes clear how the nineteenth-century stage could show surprising effects and feats of magic.

The plays list stage properties and costumes, so one gets a picture of stage dressing and the clothes worn by the actors of the period. Properties were for the most part realistic, but the scripts direct that some properties be painted on the flats. Costume lists gave instructions for wigs and whiskers for men, and in a few cases, suggestions for complexion-tones and aging or altering the face with make up.

Until the late 1850's, the scripts gave little attention to stage lighting beyond saying, "It is dark," or, "Room is brilliantly lighted." Prevailing lighting practices were taken for granted. Calcium light is referred to in a prompt-book for The Colleen Bawn, and by 1860, light cues, taking gas light up and down in intensity, are found in Arrah-Na-Pogue and other scripts. Fireplaces in Boucicault's plays are practical in the sense they could carry away gas fumes
from "strong gas jets" placed in them. Real fire on a steel plate was used for a campfire in *The Octoroon*.

In the Boucicault scripts, sons' lines and business, and music was used for background and mood effect.

As far as directing is concerned, the placement notations, grouping diagrams, and interpretive action listings in the charts definitely show Boucicault's concern for picturization. He wanted his stage to be balanced, his pictures to be right. The figures in the tabulation charts show there was movement in the plays. Figures showing directions for actions top all the others. George Becks' promptbook for *The Shaughraun*, Boucicault's last successful play, contains five hundred and fifty-five acting directions for the Wallack's Theatre performance of the play.

Women did not have numerous roles in nineteenth-century plays, but they had important parts in the plays of Boucicault's period. Sometimes, they played the parts of young boys, and, in *The Flying Scud*, a chorus of women jockeys was a novelty number that pleased.

Type casting seems to have been used. Actors were very active in their roles; they were given much business. Since the lines were often melodramatic, there was exaggerated acting, as might be expected, but the acting that was praised was performed by players who used restraint and naturalness in their playing.
The conclusion. Obviously, Boucicault's plays were written by a theatre man. He knew all phases of his work; he was a practical man of the theatre. Since, for many years, people came to see his plays, and since he made several fortunes in the theatre, we know his plays were liked. These facts attest to the showmanship he exhibited in writing. Since Boucicault's plays and all other plays of his period lack genuine literary value, one may conclude that he was a showman instead of a dramatist, and that nineteenth-century audiences were willing to pay for the shows he and his co-authors gave them.
A BRIEF SKETCH OF BOUCICAUT'S LIFE

According to Townsend Walsh, Dionysius Lardner Boucicault was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1820 or 1822. He attended London University and a collegiate school in Bredford. Then he was apprenticed to Dionysius Lardner, a civil engineer, but a year later he gave up all thoughts of engineering to do some acting in theatres outside London.

In 1841, his London Assurance was given at the Covent Garden Theatre in London. From then on he was definitely a part of the professional theatre in London and later in the United States.

From 1844 to 1848 Boucicault lived in Paris where he married, but his wife died shortly after the marriage. On his return to London, he became literary adviser and general helper to Charles Kean, who was manager of the Princess Theatre.

In 1853, he married Kean's ward, Agnes Robertson, and they came to the United States. Boucicault never stopped writing plays, in many of which Agnes had stellar roles. Later Boucicault acted in his own plays, and he and Agnes appeared in various parts of the United States in the plays he wrote. He took *The Colleen Bawn* to England in 1861 and stayed there until after the American Civil War.

He was back in the United States in 1873. The
Shaughraun was given in 1874 and was his most successful effort.

Agnes and Dion Boucicault had six children, four of whom acted in Boucicault's plays. A divorce was granted Agnes in 1888 and Boucicault married a young actress, Louise Thorndyke. His later plays were not successful, but he kept on writing, acting, directing. In 1888, "A. M. Palmer" made Boucicault director of a school of acting connected with The Madison Square Theatre.

Boucicault died in 1890.¹

AN ALPHABETICAL LISTING OF BOUCICAUT PLAYS

L'abbaye de Castro
Advertising for a Wife or Winning a Husband
After Dark: A Tale of London Life
Alma Mater or A Cure for Coquettes
The Amadan or Omedaum
Andy Blake or The Irish Diamond or The Dublin Boy or The Irish Boy
Antony and Cleopatra
Apollo in New York
Arrah-Na-Pogue or The Wicklow Wedding
Azazel
Babel and Bi Jou or The Lost Regalia
(Written with J. R. Planche)
The Bastile
Belle Lamar or Fin Maccoul
Belphegor
Betsy Baker
Blue Belle
Bob Nettles or To Parents and Guardians
Boucicault in California
A Bridal Tour or Marriage
Caesar De Bazan or Don Caesar De Bazan or Love and Honor (Written with Benjamin Webster)
The Cat Changed into a Woman
The Chameleon
Chamouni III
A Child's History of Ireland or The Story of Ireland
Clarissa Harlow or The History of a Young Lady
The Colleen Bawn or The Brides of Garryowen
Confidence
Contempt of Court
The Corsican Brothers or The Vendetta
Curiosities of Literature or Woman
Culshla Ma Chree
Cupid in a Convent
The Devil's in It
Devotion
Dot
Dreams or My Lady Clara
(Written with T. W. Robertson)
Drink

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Louis XI, King of France
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Love in a Maze
Love in a Sack
The Luck of Roaring Camp
The Maid with the Milking Pail or Milly
Man of Honor
Margery or The Rough Diamond
Masks and Faces
A Match for a King
Mimi
Miss Agnes Robertson at Home
Mora or The Golden Fetters
Mother and Son
My Little Girl
Night and Morning or Kerry
Norah's Vows or Norah
Nothing In It
The Octoroon or Life in Louisiana
The O'Dowd or Life in Galway or
Daddy O'Dowd or Suil-a-Mor or
Turn About Is Fair Play
O'Flannigan and the Fairies
The Old Guard or Napoleon's Old Guard
Old Heads and Young Hearts
The Old School
Omoo or The Sea of Ice
Omg
The Parish Clerk
Pauline or Spell-Bound
Pauvrette or Snowflower or
The Shepherdess of the Alps
Phryne or The Romance of a Young Wife
Pierre the Foundling
The Poor of New York or The Streets of
New York or The Poor of Liverpool or
The Poor of the London Streets or
The Streets of London (Written with
Seymour, Goodrich, and Warden)
The Pope of Rome or Sixtus V or
The Broken Vow
Presumptive Evidence or Mercy Dodd
The Prima Donna
The Queen of Spades or
The Gambler's Secret
Rachel Is Coming
A Radical Cure
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<td>1874</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Shaugraun</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1859</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smike</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>1845</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Soldier of Fortune or The Irish Settler (Written with Benjamin Webster)</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>1886</td>
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<td>The Spae Wife</td>
<td>London</td>
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<td>The State VS Pawkns</td>
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<td>A Struggle for Life or A Struggle for Life and Death</td>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>1850</td>
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<td>The Swiss Cottage</td>
<td>Mobile</td>
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<td>The Tale of a Coat or The Poor Relation or April Weather</td>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>1890</td>
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<td>There's Nothing in It</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1860</td>
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<td>The Trial of Effie Deans or The Heart of Midlothian or Jean Deans or Effie Deans or Jeanie Deans</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1866</td>
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<td>The Two Lives of Mary Leigh or Hunted Down</td>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>1854</td>
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<td>'Twould Puzzle a Conjurer</td>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>1854</td>
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<td>Una</td>
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<td>Up the Flue or What's in the Wind? or Felo De Se or Who Did It?</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>1846</td>
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<td>Used Up or Bored to Death (Written with Charles Mathews)</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>1844</td>
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<td>The Vampire or The Phantom</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>1852</td>
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<td>Vanity Fair or Proud of Their Vices or Vain of Their Vices</td>
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<td>Venice Preserved</td>
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<td>Vice Versa</td>
<td>Springfield</td>
<td>1883</td>
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<td>Victor and Hortense or The Pride of Paul Lafarge or Self-Made</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>1843</td>
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<td>Wanted a Widow with Immediate Possession (Written with Charles Seymour)</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1857</td>
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<td>The Water Cure or The Wonderful Water Cure</td>
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<td>A Wild Goose or The Scamp or The Wild Goose Chase (Written with J. L. Wallack)</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>1867</td>
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<td>The Willow Copse</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>1849</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Young Actress or The Manager's Daughter</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1856</td>
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D. PERIODICALS

I, Gladys May Rohrig, was born March 3, 1903. I received my elementary and secondary education in Brazil, Indiana, graduated from De Pauw University (Greencastle, Indiana) with an A.B. degree in 1930, from Northwestern University (Evanston, Illinois) with an A.M. degree in 1941.

I taught in the Van Buren Township High School and Brazil High School. In Brazil, I taught Speech and Dramatics and was chairman of the Dramatics Department. For two summers (1946 and 1947), I was director of the Brazil Summer Theatre. In 1947, I was made Assistant Professor of Speech at Indiana State Teachers College, where I have served as technical director for the productions of Childrens Theatre and Sycamore Players and have directed one of the college plays each year.

During the year 1954-1955, while in residence at Ohio State University, where I was working to complete the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, I was one of the research assistants for the O.S.U. Theatre Collection.