BANGHAM, Paul Jerald, 1936-
SAMUEL PHELPS'S PRODUCTION OF RICHARD III: AN ANNOTATED PROMPT BOOK.
The Ohio State University, Ph.D., 1965
Speech-Theater

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SAMUEL PHELPS'S PRODUCTION OF RICHARD III:
AN ANNOTATED PROMPT BOOK

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

By
Paul Jerald Bangham, B. A., M. A.

The Ohio State University
1965

Approved by

Adviser
Department of Speech
PLEASE NOTE:
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Several of these pages have blurred and indistinct print.
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VITA

I, Paul Jerald Bangham, was born in Dayton, Ohio, January 12, 1936. I received my secondary-school education in the public schools of London, Ohio. I completed my Bachelor of Arts degree at Ohio State University in 1957 and my Master of Arts degree at the same school in 1959.

I accepted a position of Instructor of Speech and Dramatic Art at Morehead State College, Morehead, Kentucky, in 1961. I now hold the rank of Assistant Professor at Morehead and am Director of the Morehead State College Theatre.
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INTRODUCTION

While the English theatre of the early Victorian era could claim a large popular following, rarely in the history of mass entertainment did the term "vast wasteland" have greater significance. Melodrama, pantomime, extravaganza, and other dramatic forms which relied upon sensationalism and visual spectacle had driven the legitimate drama from the stage. The theatre seemed able to survive only by catering to the lowest possible tastes. England's rapidly rising lower classes seemed in full control of the theatre. While fashionable audiences still attended the opera and the ballet, the theatre was regarded as déclassé.

This created an artistically debilitating situation. In almost all great eras of theatrical activity, the audience has consisted of a mixture of the upper and lower classes. This mixture tends to insure that the theatre combine both literary and theatrical values. In the early nineteenth century, the division between the classes resulted in pallid, non-theatrical closet drama on one hand and worthless bombast and dumb-show on the other.
The low quality of dramatic writing not only drove discriminating audiences from the theatre, but also failed to provide a strong appeal to audiences of lower taste. Few plays had sufficient appeal to remain popular for any length of time. In order to attract audiences, managers had not only to resort to frequent changes of bill, but were forced to compose each individual bill of many varied attractions. The hardy nineteenth-century audiences were accustomed to see not only the main dramatic attraction, but also one or two farces, a concert, a ballet, a few comic songs, and perhaps an opera or a pantomime.

Since only rarely would a new play run for more than a few performances, the demand for new plays exceeded the supply. As a result, a major portion of each theatre's season was devoted to revivals. Due to the poor quality of the plays, the leading actor and the scene painter completely overshadowed the playwright. A theatre attracted its audience mainly by the personal appeal of its star or by the visual spectacle presented by its scenic department. No large theatre could hope to prosper without offering both attractions.

The great emphasis on the leading actor and on scenic display, along with the constant change of bill, led to a low level of acting in the supporting parts. Rehearsals were generally inadequate and overall production standards
usually seem to have been low. Even when worthwhile drama was presented through revivals, all of these factors combined to make most productions unsatisfactory.

Since managers could not offer quality to attract audiences, they substituted novelty. Child actors, horse and dog shows, water shows, pony races, and similar attractions reduced the stature of the theatre to that of a freak show. Rarely have the standards of the theatre fallen lower.

During the first part of the century, the patent theatres attempted to uphold the cause of the legitimate drama. Unfortunately, these theatres were totally dependent upon popular support. Covent Garden and Drury Lane, as remodelled near the end of the eighteenth century, were designed for mass audiences and the operating overhead of these theatres was so high that they could not be maintained without the patronage of a large audience.¹

Macready's management of both Covent Garden and Drury Lane marked the end of the regular production of legitimate drama at these theatres. When Macready assumed the management of Covent Garden in 1837 he was hailed as

¹Drury Lane, as rebuilt in 1794, had a capacity of over 3,500, while Covent Garden, as reconstructed after the fire of 1808, held over 3,000. George Rowell, The Victorian Theatre, A Survey (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 6.
the theatrical Messiah, the only person who could save the legitimate drama.\(^2\) The four years of Macready's management of the patent theatres were distinguished ones and later had great influence upon theatrical production. Despite this, Macready failed in his attempt to make the production of legitimate drama at the patent theatres a profitable venture. All hope of presenting the legitimate drama was then abandoned and Covent Garden was used afterwards almost exclusively for opera and Drury Lane for the production of melodrama.

Macready's failure had one beneficial effect; it resulted in the passage of the Theatrical Regulation Act of 1843. Until the passage of this act only Drury Lane and Covent Garden had the legal right to present legitimate drama.\(^3\) It was not until after the passage of this act that the manager of a minor theatre could openly dedicate his theatre to the production of legitimate drama.

Soon after the passage of the Theatrical Regulation Act, Samuel Phelps decided to take over the management of Sadler's Wells Theatre and make yet another attempt


\(^3\)Actually, by 1843, several other theatres had limited patent rights and many of the theatres which did not presented legitimate and near-legitimate drama. However, the situation was confused and the minor theatres were unfairly restricted.
to preserve the traditions of the legitimate drama. For eighteen years, this theatre, situated in an unfashionable London suburb, was to be the site of one of the most distinguished managerial careers of the nineteenth century.

While scholars have at last started to recognize Phelps's contributions to the development of the modern theatre, relatively few studies have been written about him and his work. Odell's classic work *Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving* was perhaps the first study to call attention to Phelps's Shakespearean revivals.4

Only one extensive study has been devoted entirely to Phelps, and it is concerned with giving an overview of his management of Sadler's Wells.5 While individual productions have been discussed in studies comparing them with other productions,6 and articles have been written

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which attempt to reconstruct various of Phelps's produc-
tions, no extensive studies have been written concern-
ing a single production.

The object of this study is to reconstruct one of
Phelps's productions as completely as possible. Back-
ground material will be provided concerning Phelps,
nineteenth-century staging practices, and the Sadler's
Wells personnel and physical plant in order to make the
reconstruction meaningful to a reader who is unfamiliar
with Phelps and his period. The study shall include a
reproduction of one of the prompt books for the production
in order that the reader may be able to study Phelps's
textual changes and staging notations.

The study has two major objectives. The first is
to give the reader as clear a picture as possible of what
one of Phelps's productions was like. The second
objective is to examine this reconstructed production in
order to see if the general statements which have been
made about Phelps's productions have validity.

Richard III has been selected as the production
to be examined. The production, first presented February 20,
1845, has great historical significance, for it was the

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7Articles dealing with aspects of Phelps's staging
include Albert B. Weiner, "Samuel Phelps' Staging of
(May, 1964), pp. 122-133, and Jerald Bangham, "Samuel
Phelps: Producer of Shakespeare at Sadler's Wells," The
OSU Theatre Collection Bulletin, No. 6 (Spring, 1959),
pp. 9-20.
first production of the play in nearly a century and a half which completely removed all of the additions made by Colley Cibber. It is also a production which is typical of Phelps's work. The production had sufficient scenic complexity to make it interesting without being so elaborate that it is not representative of the average Sadler's Wells production. Also, the prompt books for this production are perhaps the most detailed of Phelps's prompt scripts known to exist.

Prompt books are undoubtedly the single most important source of information which may be used in an attempt to reconstruct a production. A prompt book may contain blocking notations, scenic descriptions, textual alterations, lighting cues, and other evidence of great value in the reconstruction of a production.

There are two prompt scripts for Richard III which were used by Phelps at Sadler's Wells. The first of these, which is owned by the Folger Shakespeare Library, was used for Phelps's production of 1845. It is identified on the last page, "Marked under the direction of W. C. Williams T. R. Sadler's Wells, for S. Phelps Esq." Williams was Phelps's prompter and may be responsible for the ten pen and ink sketches of the play's settings.

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which are included in the prompt book. These drawings are important since pictorial information dealing with Phelps's productions is limited. In addition to the notes made for the 1845 production, the prompt book also contains alterations made for an 1849 revival of the play. This is the prompt book which is reproduced in this study.

The second prompt book, from the Shakespeare Memorial Library, Stratford-upon-Avon, was evidently prepared for the 1849 production. This script is also a useful source of information. Since the 1849 production was quite similar to the 1845 production, data not clear in the 1845 prompt book are at times clarified by reference to this book. Although the primary focus of the study is upon the 1845 production, any changes made for the 1849 production have been noted since these modifications may represent aspects of the 1845 production which evidently did not satisfy Phelps.

The method to be used in reconstructing the production is to present a complete photographic reproduction of Phelps's prompt book. This reproduction will be annotated and the significance of the technical notes, lighting cues, and blocking notations will be explained.

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The scenic sketches will also be examined. Conjectural explanations will be provided for those scenic effects not explained in the prompt notes. In addition to the objectives previously stated, it is hoped that this study will also be of value as a demonstration of the usefulness of prompt book analysis in determining evidence of staging practice.

Phelps's prompt book of *Richard III* is reproduced through the courtesy of the director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C. The other materials upon which this study has been based have come, for the most part, from the Ohio State University Theatre Collection's rich store of documents related to Phelps and Sadler's Wells Theatre. The collection includes reproductions of almost all the existing Phelps prompt books, microfilms of the Finsbury Public Libraries' extensive Sadler's Wells Collection, and many other assorted items related to the nineteenth-century theatre.
CHAPTER I

SAMUEL PHELPS

Samuel Phelps's accomplishments at Sadler's Wells entitle him to a major place among the leading theatrical figures of his age. Although he is now receiving belated recognition for his contributions, many surveys of the nineteenth-century theatre ignore him completely and he has yet to attain his deserved place in the ranks of those responsible for the modern theatre. There are several reasons for this neglect, but perhaps the most important is that the most significant portion of Phelps's career was devoted to the management of a suburban rather than a major theatre. Since he served a popular rather than a "society" audience, he did not receive the same attention that other important actor-managers did. Also responsible for his lack of publicity was Phelps's refusal to cultivate the press. In spite of (or perhaps because of) the fact that Phelps worked as a journalist before he became an actor, he did not place much value on the opinions of the press and rarely bothered even to read reviews of his own productions.¹ Phelps never sought

personal publicity and was interested only in satisfying his self-imposed standards, not those of others.

Phelps's personality also contributed to his relative obscurity. While his close friends spoke of his personal warmth and generosity, Phelps was not at ease among strangers and rarely attended social gatherings of any nature, preferring to remain at home with his family. Phelps was a devoted husband and father and his life was unmarked by scandal or notoriety. The general anonymity of Phelps's private life provides another reason for the fact that Phelps is not better known since, unfortunately, actors are much more likely to be remembered for their alcoholic capacity or amorous exploits than for the tranquility of their domestic lives.

The only detailed accounts of Phelps's career may be found in two books published not long after his death. The first book to be published was Memoirs of Samuel Phelps, by John Coleman, an actor-manager who was a friend of Phelps during the final years of his career. Coleman's book gives a casual, chatty account of Phelps's life and is written as a supposed transcription of conversations between Phelps and Coleman. Since the conversations would have had to have taken place at least ten years before the

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publication of the book, and since Coleman states that the book was written entirely from memory, the accuracy of many of the facts given in the book is questionable. Nevertheless, the book is quite readable and presents a vivid account of a nineteenth-century actor's life.

Shortly after the publication of Coleman's book, a second biography appeared. This was in the nature of an "official" biography, as the factual information was supplied by Phelps's nephew who had lived with Phelps for a major portion of his career. The editorial responsibility was assumed by a close family friend. This work presents a far more factual and detailed account of Phelps's career than Coleman's work. Instead of being rambling and conversational, this book presents carefully marshaled facts supported by extracts from reviews, reproductions of playbills, production lists, and copies of letters. The great amount of documentation and the overly reverent attitude of the authors toward their subject make this book much less readable than Coleman's. While the data presented by Phelps and Forbes-Robertson are of great value to the scholar, the personality of Phelps somehow becomes lost among the facts. Also this book, for the most part, ignores Phelps's activities prior to his London success. The following brief account of Phelps's life,

3Phelps and Forbes-Robertson.
compiled from these two books is intended to present the major incidents in the actor's career prior to his production of Richard III.

Samuel Phelps was born February 13, 1804, in the borough of Devonport. His father was a prosperous merchant, respected in the community. Soon after he had completed his education at Dr. Samuel Reece's classical school in Saltash, Phelps was left an orphan and went to live with his brother. For several months Phelps worked as a junior reader on a local newspaper while spending his evenings acting as an amateur in afterpieces at the Devonport theatre.  

Upon reaching the age of seventeen, Phelps decided to leave Devonport and travel to London. He soon obtained a position with the London Globe as a junior reader and spent five years working on the staff of the Globe and other London newspapers before committing himself to a career in the theatre. However, during his journalistic work, he did not abandon the theatre completely. Phelps and two of his co-workers, Douglas Jerrold and W. E. Love, were the principal members of an amateur theatrical company which gave performances in a small private theatre in

\[4^{\text{Ibid.}}, \text{p. } 32.\]
\[5^{\text{Ibid.}}, \text{p. } 33.\]
Rawstone Street, Islington. Phelps made his debut in the professional theatre in 1826 at the age of 22 when he was asked by a member of the company of the Olympic Theatre to perform on the actor's benefit night. Announced in the program as a gentleman amateur, Phelps performed Eustache de St. Pierre in *The Surrender of Calais*, and the Count de Valmont in *The Foundling of the Forest*. The success of this performance was so great that Phelps decided to abandon journalism and turn to the stage as a profession. In the same year, on August 11, Phelps was married to Sarah Cooper.

His next eleven years were spent in the provinces acting in the York circuit, in Scotland, and in various other provincial theatres. This apprenticeship was a difficult one as Phelps was often forced to wander from theatre to theatre, often on foot, in hope of finding an engagement. While these years in the provinces were filled with hardship and debt, the experience gained at this time was to prove of great value to Phelps in his later career. He had the opportunity to play practically all the important roles in the standard repertory and

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6 Jerrold later became a noted drama critic and playwright and Love a ventriloquist and performer of monodrama who occasionally appeared at Sadler's Wells during Phelps's management.

7 Phelps and Forbes-Robertson, pp. 34-35.
Phelps developed the ability to play a great range of characters. During one engagement, Phelps doubled as a scene-painter, while on another occasion he supported his family by painting miniature portraits. This artistic background was later to serve him well in his supervision of the scenic arrangements of Sadler's Wells. Between provincial engagements Phelps repeatedly traveled to London trying to obtain employment in the metropolitan theatres, but without success. Eventually however, Phelps became one of the outstanding provincial actors and his reputation spread even to London.

After years of trying to break into the London theatre, Phelps was suddenly approached by London's two leading theatrical managers, both offering him contracts. Since he did not think that the two theatres' seasons would overlap, Phelps accepted engagements both at the Haymarket with Webster and at Covent Garden with Macready. Webster, who had engaged Phelps first, was incensed by the fact that Phelps had also signed with Macready and threatened legal action. However, the dispute was finally

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8 Coleman, pp. 81-82. According to Coleman, Phelps was assisted by the stage manager's son, William Telbin. Telbin became one of the most outstanding scene-painters of the nineteenth century.

9 Ibid., p. 90.

10 Phelps and Forbes-Robertson, pp. 41-43.
resolved and Phelps opened at the Haymarket on August 28, 1837 in the role of Shylock. During his engagement he also played Hamlet, Othello, Richard III, and Sir Edward Mortimer. He left the Haymarket late in October for the start of the Covent Garden season.

According to his contract with Macready, Phelps was to open at Covent Garden in *Venice Preserved* playing opposite Macready, Phelps being given the choice of roles. *Othello* was then to be presented under the same arrangement. Phelps's debut was a great success. In fact, Phelps was so highly praised that Macready recognized Phelps as a dangerous rival and dropped out of the cast of *Venice Preserved* in order to avoid unfavorable comparison of his acting with that of Phelps. Macready then honoured his original agreement by playing Iago to Phelps's Othello, but the play was presented only three nights and Macready made sure that Phelps received no more important roles for the rest of the season.¹²

Phelps, understandably enough, rebelled at playing only the most minor roles and asked to be released from his contract. Macready would agree to this only if Phelps returned to the provinces and promised not to act in London and so Phelps decided that it was best to remain

¹¹Coleman, p. 290.

at Covent Garden. Although Phelps was at first quite bitter about his suppression by Macready, as time passed he realized that Macready could not reasonably be expected voluntarily to support a rival at the expense of his own career. As the conflict between the two men subsided, Phelps managed to obtain better parts. The two actors eventually formed a friendship based upon mutual respect and Phelps remained with Macready during his entire managerial career at both Covent Garden and Drury Lane. When Macready retired in 1851, he designated Phelps as his successor.

Phelps has often been termed a disciple of Macready and, while this term may be an exaggeration, the influence of Macready upon Phelps was undoubtedly of great significance. Phelps, in his management of Sadler's Wells, followed the same basic principles which Macready had instituted at Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Abraham Bassett, in his dissertation on Macready as an actor-manager, lists five major achievements of Macready's management: furthering the trend toward historical accuracy, emphasizing ensemble acting, emphasizing unity of production, stressing the importance of rehearsals, and making innovations in staging. Phelps was to be guided

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13Ibid., pp. 46-60.
15Abraham J. Bassett, pp. 413-414.
by all five of these principles during his management of Sadler's Wells.

Phelps's acting was also influenced by Macready. He was noted for his vocal control and for his ability to play an exceptionally wide range of characters. While he was praised for the regal dignity of his tragic heroes, he also excelled in such low comedy roles as Bottom. All of his characterizations were marked by a high degree of taste and understanding.

During the time that he was not acting with Macready, Phelps acted at the Haymarket, in the provinces, and at various minor theatres in London. Then, in 1843, two things happened which had a decisive influence on Phelps's career: Macready gave up the management of Drury Lane and the Theatrical Regulation Act was passed.

In August of the same year, Phelps appeared in a production of Othello presented at Sadler's Wells Theatre as a benefit for the survivors of Edward Elton, a colleague of Phelps's who had been lost at sea. Although the theatre was reputed to be on the verge of failure, the performance netted £70. Both Phelps and Thomas Greenwood, the

16 Coleman, p. 280.
17 Phelps and Forbes-Robertson, pp. 29-31.
18 Coleman, pp. 291-312.
19 Shirley S. Allen, p. 19.
manager of the theatre, evidently took notice of the popularity of Shakespeare at a theatre where dog and horse shows provided the usual fare.

In the spring of 1844 Greenwood gave up the lease of Sadler's Wells and the theatre was leased for a series of musical performances. However this arrangement was cancelled and Greenwood agreed to take over the theatre again, signing the lease on May 18, 1844. Greenwood did not want to continue his old and unprofitable system of management and therefore started looking for a noted actor who would agree to share the responsibilities of management. After several unsuccessful attempts to find someone, Greenwood approached Phelps and Mrs. Warner, the leading tragic actress of her day.

Both Phelps and Mrs. Warner had participated in the benefit performance of Othello and felt that Sadler's Wells had a potential audience for serious drama. They therefore decided to join in the management of the theatre. Phelps agreed to serve as stage manager, Greenwood was the acting manager, and Mrs. Warner's husband was appointed treasurer.

Less than nine days after the three had agreed to the management, the theatre opened on May 27 with a production of Macbeth. The playbill for this production, setting forth the objectives of the management, is shown

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20 Ibid., p. 18.
in Figure 1. Phelps and his colleagues promised to strive to present plays of high quality, performed by a talented company, at prices which all could afford.

*Macbeth* was presented for a week's run and was followed by a production of *Othello* the second week. These were followed by *The Stranger* on June 10, *The Jealous Wife* on June 13, *Werner* on June 17, *The Merchant of Venice* on June 24, and *The School for Scandal* on June 27. During the next month *Virginius*, *The Rivals*, and *Hamlet* were added to the repertory. While the critical response to the first few months of the management was generally favorable, the necessity of rushing a large number of plays into production with very little time for preparation would have kept the general artistic level of these productions far below that of later ones which were much more painstakingly prepared.

Later in the season there was time to prepare the productions more carefully. *King John*, presented on September 30, was Phelps's first really ambitious production. Rather than risk failure with an original production, Phelps chose to copy closely Macready's

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21 Phelps and Forbes-Robertson, pp. 67-68.

22 Ibid.

23 *Times* (London), October 2, 1844, p. 5.
Figure 1. A statement of the managerial policy of Sadler's Wells. From Macbeth playbill dated May 28, 1844. Finsbury Public Libraries' Sadler's Wells Collection. OSUTC Film No. 1462A.
outstanding production of 1842. Phelps had played Hubert in this production and had commissioned George Ellis, Macready's prompter, to prepare for him a copy of Macready's prompt book. Phelps used this copy, making no significant changes, in preparing his own prompt book for the production. This practice of prompt book copying seems to have been widespread; Charles Kean also made extensive use of Macready's prompt books and William Creswick, who acted at Sadler's Wells, had copies made of Phelps's prompt books.

It was not until February 20, 1845 that Phelps staged a Shakespearean production which was representative of the type of presentation for which Sadler's Wells was to become famed. With his production of Richard III, Phelps for the first time demonstrated that he was an outstanding Shakespearean director. Phelps was now on his

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24 An excellent description of this production is given by Charles H. Shattuck, William Charles Macready's King John (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1962).

25 Various copies of prompt books for King John are in the OSUTC. OSUTC Film Nos. P. 29, P. 1041, and P. 1603 are copies of Macready's prompt books. The originals of these films are in the Newberry Library, the Shakespeare Memorial Library, and the Folger Shakespeare Library. The copy of Macready's prompt book which Ellis made for Phelps is at Folger (OSUTC Film No. P. 1669) and Phelps's prompt book is at the Shakespeare Memorial Library (OSUTC Film No. P. 1041).
own without the guidance of a Macready production, for, while all of the Shakespearean plays presented by Phelps up to this time had been staged by Macready during the time that Phelps had acted with him, Macready had not presented Richard III during this time. While this early Phelps production by no means represented the ultimate accomplishment of his management, it did give clear indication of his directoral skill.
CHAPTER II

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE

A brief history of Sadler's Wells. Sadler's Wells Theatre has had perhaps the longest continuous history of any place of entertainment in the city of London. While it has been claimed that Sadler's Wells was a place of entertainment in the Elizabethan era, its documented history started in 1683 when workmen uncovered a well in the garden of Thomas Sadler. This well was fed by a spring which was alleged to have curative powers. Deciding to compete with the other spas in the vicinity, Sadler fenced his garden and built a wooden music house which was opened to the public on June 3, 1683.

After being used as a music house for many years, Sadler's Wells became notorious as a place of "great extravagance, luxury, idleness, and ill-fame" before

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Thomas Rosoman took over the management in 1746. In 1753 Rosoman presented regular theatrical performances at Sadler's Wells and in 1765 he pulled down the old music hall and, in the brief period of seven weeks, replaced it with a permanent building. This theatre, built at a cost of £4224, was opened April 8, 1765. While the interior of the building was altered many times, it seems likely that the exterior walls erected by Rosoman remained the same until the destruction of the building in the late 1920's. Even then, portions of the old walls were preserved and incorporated as part of the structure of the new theatre.

The first extensive alteration of the theatre took place in 1778 when the interior of the theatre was completely rebuilt. In 1801 the theatre was again extensively reconstructed and the auditorium was rebuilt in the semi-circular form which it was to retain during the rest of the nineteenth century.

In 1804, Charles Dibdin and the other owners of Sadler's Wells installed the tank under the stage which

5Mander and Mitchenson, p. 246.
6Ibid.
7Ibid., p. 248.
8Spinks, p. 420.
made Sadler's Wells famous for many years as the home of the aqua-drama.\textsuperscript{10} The auditorium was remodeled in 1819\textsuperscript{11} and again in 1822 when a race track was constructed which ran from the stage around the back of the pit and onto the stage again.\textsuperscript{12} The track was used for the pony race in Pierce Egan's play \textit{Tom and Jerry; or, Life in London}. In 1823 the stage was altered so that the entire stage floor could be lifted into the flies to uncover the tank.\textsuperscript{13} It seems probable that the size of the tank was reduced at this time.\textsuperscript{14}

The next extensive alteration of the theatre came in 1825, when both the auditorium and the stage were


\textsuperscript{11}Playbill for April 19, 1819 located in the Finsbury Public Libraries' Sadler's Wells Collection. This collection cited hereafter as Finsbury Playbills. OSUTC Film No. 1552B\textsuperscript{*}.

\textsuperscript{12}Jackson and Morrow, pp. 34-35.

\textsuperscript{13}Finsbury Playbills (June 2, 1823), OSUTC Film No. 1522B\textsuperscript{*}.

\textsuperscript{14}Pinks, p. 431, states that the tank was taken out in 1823. This is inconceivable, as playbills indicate that the tank was used extensively until 1825. However it is possible that major revisions were made in the tank at this time.
reconstructed. It may be stated with some certainty that the tank was removed at this time, as no more plays were advertised as making use of it. There are occasional references to "real water" in the theatre's playbills for many years, but in every case the water seems to have been used only for fountains.

The next alterations were made in 1836 and appear to have been confined to the auditorium. The theatre was re-decorated in 1838 and new stoves were installed. In 1841 the auditorium was reconstructed.

The next extensive alterations to the stage were undertaken in 1842. In order to accommodate Ducrow's Horses, the stage was rigged to "disappear" in order to reveal an arena for trick riding. Although there is no

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15 Finsbury Playbills (April 4, 1825), OSUTC Film No. 1522B.

16 "Real Water" is mentioned in playbills as late as 1841. Finsbury Playbills (August 23, 1841), OSUTC Film No. 1522B.

17 Pinks, p. 434. Also Finsbury Playbills (April 7, 1836), OSUTC Film No. 1522B.

18 Finsbury Playbills (January 1, 1838), OSUTC Film No. 1522B.

19 Finsbury Playbills (June 7, 1841 and June 21, 1841), OSUTC Film No. 1522B.

20 Finsbury Playbills (May 16, 1842), OSUTC Film No. 1522B.
indication of how this was accomplished, it is probable that the machinery used was similar to that used in 1823 to uncover the tank. Late in 1842, a playbill announced that extensive stage alterations were made necessary by the removal of the arena.21

Between 1842 and 1845 there appear to have been no extensive alterations in the Sadler's Wells Theatre. Phelps's later alterations of Sadler's Wells are outside the scope of this study, as they took place after the production of Richard III.

The frequent alterations of the theatre, plus the scarcity of information concerning the structure of the theatre make a detailed reconstruction impossible. However, it is possible to determine its basic specifications.

The auditorium of Sadler's Wells. Although it was redecorated and altered many times, the basic form of the Sadler's Wells auditorium apparently was not changed radically after 1801. Figure 2, the Pugin and Rowlandson print showing the tank in use, shows all of the important features of the auditorium: the large pit, the boxes, gallery, and dress circle, and the stage with its large apron, proscenium doors, and boxes. Figure 3, showing the race track, indicates that, although the upper proscenium boxes seem to have been taken out, no important

21Finsbury Playbills (August, 1842), OSUTC Film No. 1522B.
Figure 3. George Cruikshank's illustration of the interior of Sadler's Wells Theatre, from the song book for Tom and Jerry; or, Life in London (1822). Finsbury Public Libraries' Sadler's Wells Collection. OSUTC Film No. 1522.
changes were made in the basic features of the auditorium. Figure 4, a sketch made after Phelps had been in charge of the theatre for several years, again shows the same basic features shown in Figure 2.

In 1819, Wilkinson gave the dimensions of the auditorium: from box to box, 33 feet; orchestra, 36 feet by 6; and from the orchestra to the back of the pit, 47 feet. While the auditorium was remodelled many times between 1819 and 1845, the basic dimensions must have remained much the same since the exterior walls were not altered.

To accommodate the audience, the auditorium had a large pit and gallery, a dress circle, and public and private boxes. The total capacity of the house seems to have been slightly over 2,000, although some estimates placed it at about 3,000. The relatively large capacity of the house made it possible for Phelps to keep admission prices low and still take in enough income to be able to afford well mounted productions. Throughout his management, admission prices were boxes 2s, pit 1s, and gallery 6d.


23John Charles Morrow, "The Staging of Pantomime at Sadler's Wells Theatre 1828-1860" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1963), p. 53, quotes several sources which give the capacity as about 2,000. However, Phelps and Forbes-Robertson, p. 12, state that the theatre held 3,000.
This was about half the price charged by other London theatres at the time.\textsuperscript{24}

Although the large size of the auditorium was financially advantageous, it did, however, create a problem. The acoustics were poor in some portions of the house and, in order that all could hear, Phelps had to slow the pace of his productions.\textsuperscript{25}

\textbf{The stage of Sadler's Wells.} While it is possible, through pictorial information, to obtain a fairly clear picture of what the auditorium of Sadler's Wells was like, it is much more difficult to determine the nature of the stage. Although the theatre retained the same basic form for almost two hundred years, no ground plan or other detailed records of data concerning the stage are known to exist.

According to Wilkinson, the width of the theatre from side wall to side wall was 50 feet and the depth of the stage was 74 feet. He states that the proscenium height was 23 feet, and that the stage was 36 feet wide at the footlights and 33 feet wide from box to box.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{24} The Haymarket and Drury Lane charged from 5s to 1s while the prices at Covent Garden ranged from 7s to 1s. The smaller theatres charged about the same. Augustin Daly Playbill Collection, Huntington Library. OSUTC Film No. 975D\textsuperscript{a}.

\textsuperscript{25} Phelps and Forbes-Robertson, p. 13.

\textsuperscript{26} Wilkinson, p. 95.
It may be seen in Figure 5 that the proscenium arch was angled so that the distance from box to box would be greater than the proscenium opening. Since Figure 2 shows that the tank was as wide as the proscenium opening, and since the width of the tank is known to have been 24 feet, the proscenium width may be assumed to have been about 24 feet. While the proscenium was altered many times after the tank was taken out, it is unlikely that its width was greatly increased since the proscenium opening could not be over half the width of the back stage area if the shutter system were to be used.

Additional dimensions are given in an 1862 description of the theatre which states that the width of the stage from fly-rail to fly-rail was 23 feet, 9 inches. An 1878 description lists the depth of the stage as 62 feet. Morrow explains the variation from the 1819

27 Jackson and Morrow, p. 25.


29 Pinks, p. 436.

30 Bill of particulars for "Lease of the well-known Sadler's Wells Theatre, 1876," Finsbury Public Libraries' Sadlers Wells Clipping and Document Collection. This collection is cited hereafter as Finsbury clippings. OSUTC Film No. 1522C. This description also lists the width of the stage as 33 feet. Evidently dressing and storage rooms had been built along the sides of the stage which reduced its usable width. Probably, by 1878 the grooves were no longer used and the flies were used for changing scenery.
Figure 5. Grimaldi's Farewell Appearance, Sadler's Wells Theatre, 1828. Illustrations to the life of Grimaldi, by George Cruickshank, Huntington Library. OSUTC Film No. 503.
measurement by supposing that the earlier measurement included the forestage while the later one did not. While this conjecture can not be proven, it seems reasonable, particularly since all illustrations of the stage show a large apron.

The 1862 description gives us some idea of the theatre's stage equipment.

Over the stage, &c. are the upper and lower flies, carpenter's shop, and barrel loft; and conveniently disposed are the green room, painting room, music room, ladies' private dressing rooms, and general dressing rooms, and gentlemen's ditto ditto; Private and general wardrobe rooms, property rooms, cellarage, and other conveniences.

A conjectural reconstruction, based on the dimensions listed in the preceding paragraphs, is shown in Figure 6. This reconstruction will be used in the later chapters which attempt to analyze Phelps's staging.

It may be seen from the preceding discussion of the stage and auditorium of Sadler's Wells that the theatre was well suited to Phelps's purposes. The house was large enough to accommodate the size audience which Phelps needed to support his venture. The size of the stage was sufficient for the scenic requirements of Phelps's productions. How the stage was equipped will be discussed in the next chapter.

31Morrow, p. 48.
32Pinks, p. 436.
Figure 6. A conjectural plan of the stage of Sadler’s Wells Theatre. Drawn by P. Jerald Bangham.
CHAPTER III

THE STAGE MACHINERY AT SADLER'S WELLS

In order to visualize the scenic transitions in Richard III, one must know something about the stage machinery used at Sadler's Wells. This chapter provides a brief description of the various basic units of stage machinery used in the production of Richard III and a discussion of the stage lighting facilities of the theatre.

The majority of the scene changes at Sadler's Wells were executed by the means of wings, shutters, and borders, although drops were used at times. The shutters and wings moved laterally in grooves, while the borders and drops were suspended from the flies and moved vertically. Traps and bridges were used to transport actors and scenic units from beneath the stage up to the stage level. The stage was illuminated by oil lamps.

Wings, shutters, and grooves. Wings and shutters were canvas-covered frames upon which scenic effects could be painted. The main differences between them were size and function. The wings were approximately the same height
as the proscenium opening and were generally about five feet wide. Their function was to provide side masking.

Shutters were the same height as the wings, but each shutter was approximately half the width of the proscenium. Two shutters were pushed together to make up the back wall of the setting. Figure 7 shows a wing, marked A, and a pair of shutters, both marked B.

The wings and shutters were moved on and off stage guided by grooves suspended from the fly rail. Figure 7, a cross section view of a typical English stage, shows grooves supporting the wing and shutters. Figure 8 shows three detailed views of a single set of grooves. Part A shows a side view of both the grooves and the rigging used to suspend them from the fly rail. Part B of Figure 8 shows a top view of the same set of grooves, without the rigging and part C of the illustration shows an end view of the grooves. As may be seen in Figures 7 and 8A, the grooves were constructed in two parts and hinged. If shutters were to be placed in the grooves, the hinged portion was lowered to provide firm support for the large scenic units. If the narrower wings, which came only part way on stage, were used, the hinged portion of the grooves was raised out of the way. Figure 7 shows the stage right set of grooves lowered and the stage left grooves raised.

Perhaps the clearest idea of just how grooves worked may be obtained by examining a photograph of grooves in use.
Figure 7. A cross section of a typical English stage showing wings, shutters, and grooves. Clément Confant and Joseph de Filippi, Parallèle des principaux théâtres français, allemandes, et anglaises (Paris: A. Levy fils, 1860), Vol. II, Plate 27. OSUFC Film No. 120
Figure 8. (A) A side view of a set of grooves attached to fly rail. (B) A top view of the grooves. (C) An end view of the grooves. Clément Contant and Joseph de Filippi, Parallèle des principaux théâtres français, allemandes, et anglaises (Paris: A. Lévy, Fils, 1860), Vol. II, Plate 28.
Since Figure 9 is a photograph taken in a small American theatre built near the end of the nineteenth century, one should not expect the exact details of the machinery to be identical to the Sadler's Wells grooves. However, the basic features are identical and one can see how the unit worked.

The wings and shutters were pushed on and off stage by stagehands. Since at least one stagehand was needed to move each wing and shutter, the execution of the scene shift was coordinated by the prompter, who signaled the change by blowing a whistle. In the Richard III prompt book which is included in this study, the symbol "W", indicating "whistle" is ordinarily used to mark scene changes.

Morrow, in his study of pantomime at Sadler's Wells, has determined that the theatre had seven sets of grooves. Although the full stage depth was used at times, only the first few grooves were used most of the time and even when elaborate settings required greater stage depth, few scenes extended back farther than five grooves. The main reason for avoiding the upstage area was the problem of lighting of that section of the stage. Until gas lighting was installed in 1853, Sadler's Wells had only primitive lighting facilities and it would have been extremely difficult to illuminate the rear of the stage. Also, sight

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1John C. Morrow, pp. 48-50.
Figure 9. Wing and grooves. Town Hall theatre, Put-In-Bay, Ohio. Grooves lowered. Photograph by P. Jerald Bangham.
lines would have prevented much of the audience from seeing the upstage portions of the stage.

**Drops and borders.** Drops and borders were scenic units which were suspended from the flies. They consisted of wide pieces of canvas attached by their upper edge to wooden battens. They were generally weighted at the bottom to keep them stretched tight and at times they were fully framed.

Borders were usually as wide as the stage, but they were not very deep. They were suspended near the tops of the wings to serve as upper horizontal masking. At times the borders were painted to match the wings and shutters and were changed with them. At other times the borders were neutral and were not changed.²

Drops, which were usually called "cloths" in the nineteenth century, were the same width as borders, but they were usually at least as high as the proscenium. While drops served the same purpose as shutters, they were used in places where shutters could not be accommodated such as the extreme upstage and downstage positions, in front of or behind the grooves. The height of the shutters was fixed, determined by the height of the grooves. The

²Morrow, p. 148, indicates that neutral borders were generally used in the staging of pantomime at Sadler's Wells. It is likely that neutral borders were also used, at times, for the Shakespearean productions.
height of the drops was limited only by the height of the fly space. Therefore drops would be used whenever scenic height was important, as backing for exterior settings, for example. Also, since a drop consisted of one large piece of cloth rather than two sliding frames, drops proved much more satisfactory for scenic effects in which part of the backscene was cut away.

The drops and borders were suspended from ropes which were attached to drums, called "barrels," located in the barrel loft near the top of the stage house. In Figure 10 the drum is indicated by "A," while the large framed border suspended from it is "B." To raise and lower the drops and borders a control line was wrapped around the drum. The control line governed the rotation of the drum which took up or let out the ropes tied to the drop or border. In Figure 10 the control line is marked "C." In this drawing, the movement of the control line is regulated by a winch on the fly-loft. A side view of the drum and the border may be seen in Figure 11, although the control line and winch are not shown. Figure 11 shows that the drums were all connected to a long shaft. The drums could be locked to the shaft so that several drums would rotate together. In this way several borders could be raised or lowered at the same time. If the weight to be raised were great, a counterweighted line could also be wrapped around the drum to balance the weight suspended from the batten.
Figure 10. A typical English wooden stage (cross-section). (A) Drum. (B) Border. (C) Control line leading to winch. (D) and (D') Corner traps. (E) Grave trap.

This device is not shown in any of the illustrations.

While drops replaced shutters as backscenes near the end of the nineteenth century, at the time of the Richard III production the use of shutters still predominated. Drops were used in this production only when extra scenic height was needed for exterior scenes or when a portion of the backscene was cut away.

Traps and bridges. Traps and bridges were machines used to bring actors and scenery up from under the stage. The only important differences between the two were their size and placement. The typical English stage had a minimum of three traps: two small "corner" traps and the larger "grave" trap. These traps were located downstage of the first set of grooves. Figure 12 shows the location of the three traps on the ground plan of a typical English theatre. The corner traps are indicated by "D" and "D'", while the grave trap is indicated by "E". A front view of the same stage is shown in Figure 10 and a side view is shown in Figure 11. The trap locations are indicated by the same letters. The only difference in the construction of the two types of traps was that the corner traps were supported on two sides while the grave trap, because of its greater weight handling capacity, was supported on all four sides.3

3 Sachs, Engineering, LXI, p. 273.
Figure 12. A typical English wooden stage (plan at stage level). (D) and (D') Corner traps. (E) Grave trap. (F)-(I) Bridges. Edwin O. Sachs, "Modern Theatre Stages," Engineering, LXI (February 28, 1896), p. 272.
The bridges were similar in construction to the traps, but were much larger. They generally ran the full prosценium width and were several feet deep. They were capable of raising large groups of actors or major scenic units. In Figures 11 and 12 the bridges are indicated by letters "F" through "I."

Like the theatre shown in Figures 11 and 12, most theatres had one bridge for each set of grooves. However, Sadler’s Wells probably had fewer bridges, perhaps only one. The reason for this probability is that very little excavation was possible on the site of the Sadler’s Wells Theatre. As has been previously stated, the theatre owed its origin to the existence of mineral springs in the immediate vicinity of the building. Other springs were under the stage and any deep excavations would have been flooded. Because of this problem, the sub-stage area of Sadler’s Wells was necessarily quite shallow and the understage machinery therefore limited.

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5 According to Jackson and Morrow, pp. 25-26, Dibdin’s tank was three feet deep and was supported by walls two feet, four inches high, resting on the ground. As the stage was raised above the level of the pit, it seems likely that the stage cellar was level, or almost level, with the ground between 1804 and 1824. There is no evidence to indicate excavation after this date.
Figure 13 is a conjectural drawing showing the possible location of the grooves, traps, and bridge. The drawing is based upon the plan shown in Figure 6.

**Stage lighting at Sadler's Wells.** Although most of London's theatres had been using gas for years, the stage at Sadler's Wells at the time of *Richard III* was still illuminated by oil. Fredrick Fenton, Phelps's chief designer at Sadler's Wells, describes the lighting equipment in the following quotation.

... the lighting of Sadler's Wells was merely upright side-lights, about six lights to each entrance, which were placed on angular frames, and revolved to darken the stage; no lights above. When set pieces were used, a tray of oil lamps was placed between them, with coloured glasses for moonlight. For the footlights (or floats) there was a large pipe, with two vases, one at each end, with a supply of oil to charge the argand burners on the pipes; it was lowered out between the acts, to be trimmed as necessity required.

It may be seen from this description that the lighting facilities of the theatre were barely adequate. Unless set pieces were used, the only lights on the stage were the footlights and lights behind each set of wings. While additional illumination for the downstage portions of the stage would have been provided by light coming from the auditorium, since the house lights were not lowered during the performance at this time, visibility would have still been limited. Furthermore this system of lighting

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Figure 13. A conjectural plan showing the possible location of stage machinery at Sadler's Wells. (A) and (B) Corner traps. (C) Grave trap. (D) Bridge. (1)-(7) Grooves. Drawing by P. Jerald Bangham.
lacked flexibility since the only way to control the intensity of the lamps was to physically move them away from the stage. Therefore special lighting effects were very difficult to execute.

In conclusion, Sadler's Wells Theatre did not possess stage machinery and lighting equipment that was as complete or as modern as that in many London theatres. This inadequacy, however, did not seem to hamper the theatre's designers and technicians. Throughout Phelps's management, the scenery and the technical effects were constantly praised by the press, and this study of Richard III will indicate a relatively high degree of scenic and technical accomplishment.
CHAPTER IV

THE SADLER'S WELLS STAFF AND COMPANY

Obviously, a successful theatrical production involves the work of more than one man. While the limitations of this study preclude an extensive discussion of the entire personnel of Sadler's Wells, a brief survey of those people most directly responsible for the production may be informative.

**Thomas Longdon Greenwood (1806-1879).** Greenwood may have had little direct involvement with the production of *Richard III*. However, as acting manager of Sadler's Wells, the vital part he played in the direction of the theatre justifies his inclusion in this discussion.

Greenwood first became acting manager of the theatre during the 1840-1841 season. He therefore knew the theatre and its audience and would have been in a position to help Phelps become acclimated to his new undertaking. Greenwood handled the business affairs of the theatre and took charge of the staging of the afterpieces, many of

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which he wrote himself. He was also in complete control of the Christmas pantomimes which provided a major source of income for Sadler's Wells.

Greenwood's assumption of these duties left Phelps free to devote his time and energies to the production of legitimate drama. It should be noted that Phelps gave up the management of Sadler's Wells two years after Greenwood left the theatre in 1860.

Fredrick Gill Fenton (1817-1898). Fenton was head of the Sadler's Wells scenic department. He had first come to the theatre in 1839 and was to remain until 1856. According to Phelps's biographers, Fenton "was greatest, perhaps, at fine, bold, rugged scenery, mountainous and rocky, . . . as well as grand architectural scenery." Thanks to his experience with Sadler's Wells melodrama and pantomime in the years before Phelps came to the theatre, he was also an expert in the design of panoramas, dioramas,

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2Ibid., p. 28. Many of Greenwood's unpublished scripts are now in the collection of the Finsbury Public Libraries.

3For a discussion of Greenwood and his connection with Sadler's Wells pantomime, see Morrow, pp. 39-41.

4Finsbury Playbills, OSUTC Film Nos. 1522B*, 1462A*, and 1462B*.

5Phelps and Forbes-Robertson, p. 204.
and other types of elaborate special scenic effects.  

Phelps had great respect for Fenton's skill, and cooperated closely with him in planning his productions.  

Although Sadler's Wells did not present the plays of Shakespeare in the lavish, ostentatious style of Charles Kean, Fenton's artistry and his ability to present striking special effects, earned the theatre a reputation for scenic excellence.

Other members of the technical staff.  Fenton had several assistants, perhaps the most important being A. Finlay, who specialized in painting woods and glades.  

Other members of the scene painting staff included Morelli, Adams, and Fenton's brother Charles.  The properties were constructed by Mr. Harvy and the costumes were supervised by Miss Bailey and Mr. Fernie.  W. Cawdry was the machinist and Montgomery served as musical director.

One important fact about this group of people was that most of them had worked together at Sadler's Wells for several years prior to the Phelps era.  Miss Bailey

6Fenton made great use of these special effects in the more spectacular Shakespearean productions such as The Tempest, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Pericles.  

7Coleman, p. 218.  

8Phelps and Forbes-Robertson, p. 204.  

9Finsbury Playbills, OSUTC Film No. 1462A.
and Mr. Femie joined the staff of the theatre in 1837, Charles Fenton came with his brother in 1839, Morelli in 1840, Cawdry in 1841, Harvey in 1842, and Montgomery in 1843. The fact that Phelps could rely upon an experienced and well co-ordinated team to direct his technical arrangements must have been a great help to him, especially in the critical first year of his management.

Mary Amelia Warner (1804-1854). Mrs. Warner was both Phelps's leading lady and partner during the first two years of his management of Sadler's Wells. She was ranked by contemporary critics as one of the greatest actresses of her era and was thought to be especially outstanding in her portrayal of severe and majestic tragic heroines.

Phelps and Mrs. Warner had worked together extensively prior to their Sadler's Wells association. When Phelps made his London debut at the Haymarket in 1837 she had played Portia to his Shylock and both were four-year veterans of Macready's management of the two patent theatres.

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10 Finsbury Playbills, OSUTC Film No. 1522B.

11 Phelps and Forbes-Robertson, p. 25.

12 Ibid., p. 44. This was prior to her marriage when she was known as Miss Huddart.

13 Bassett, pp. 488-491.
Undoubtedly one of the factors which led Phelps to reject Cibber's alteration of Richard III was the fact that it offered no satisfactory role for his co-star. Margaret was a part ideally suited to Mrs. Warner's talents and the part proved to be one of her most outstanding roles.

**George Bennett** (1800-1879). Bennett was one of the most important members of the Sadler's Wells company throughout the first half of Phelps's management. He had also served four years with Macready and was, along with Marston, the only actor who Phelps allowed complete artistic freedom in the creation of characters.14

Bennett was judged best when playing "Rough and vigorous characters, with a tinge of poetic extravagance."15 Sir Toby Belch, Hubert (in King John), Henry VIII, and Pistol were among his most outstanding characterizations, and he was most noted for his interpretation of Calaban.16

In Richard III Bennett played the role of Buckingham.

**Henry Marston** (1804-1883). Marston, whose real name was Richard Henry Marsh, was a leading figure in the Sadler's Wells company throughout almost all of Phelps's

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14Phelps and Forbes-Robertson, p. 19.

15Unidentified clipping located in the Finsbury Public Libraries' Sadler's Wells Collection. OSUTOC Film No. 1477.

16Phelps and Forbes-Robertson, p. 21.
management. After acting with Macready's company for one year, Marston served as leading man and stage manager of the Sadler's Wells company in 1842.

Marston was a follower of the Kemble school of acting and was noted for his interpretation of Kemble's principal characters, although a vocal defect limited his effectiveness in leading roles. At Sadler's Wells, Iago was perhaps his most outstanding role for he played the part in almost every one of the ninety-nine presentations of *Othello* staged by Phelps.

Marston played Clarence in the 1845 production of *Richard III*, while his wife, also an important member of the company, played Elizabeth. In the 1849 production, Marston played Richmond, while his wife now acted the Duchess of York.

17 Finsbury Playbills, OSUTC Film Nos. 1462A* and 1462B*. Marston remained with Phelps until the end of the 1860-1861 season.

18 Finsbury Playbills, OSUTC Film No. 1522C*.

19 Phelps and Forbes-Robertson, p. 22.

20 Finsbury Playbills, OSUTC Film Nos. 1462A* and 1462B*.

21 Playbill for February 20, 1845 found in the British Museum's Collection of Sadler's Wells playbills. Cited hereafter as British Museum Playbills. OSUTC Film No. 1448*.

22 Finsbury Playbills (March 21, 1849), OSUTC Film No. 1462A*.
The rest of the cast of *Richard III* was made up, for the most part, of actors whose names are now relatively meaningless. However, the fame of Sadler's Wells during the Phelps era was not based on the abilities of a few "stars." Instead, the theatre was noted for the excellence of its overall ensemble.

Certainly some measure of credit is due to these now obscure actors who, with Phelps's expert guidance, assured Sadler's Wells's productions of general acting competence, even in minor roles.
CHAPTER V

THE TEXT OF RICHARD III

In 1700 Colley Cibber took it upon himself to "improve" Shakespeare's Richard III. While his drastically revised version was inferior to the original as literature, it had much to commend it to actor-managers. Cibber so altered the play that the emphasis of the drama was centered much more tightly on the character of Richard than was Shakespeare's play. Not only did this alteration suit the egos of actor-managers; it also reduced the number of good actors needed for the performance of the play. While the adaptation lacked subtlety, it had a crude and bombastic but definitely theatrical quality which made it popular with audiences.

Since 1700 there had been a few half-hearted attempts to return to the original Shakespearean text, but no producer had dared to reject Cibber entirely. Even Macready's one venture in this direction had been described as "merely another arrangement, and certainly inferior, in dramatic effect, to that of Cibber."

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1Times (London), March 13, 1821.
At last, in 1845, Phelps decided to break the tradition and reject Cibber entirely. He announced his intentions in a statement printed on the playbill of the production, which is shown in Figure 14.

In order to meet the spirit of the present age, so distinguished for illustrating and honoring the works of Shakespeare, and with at least an honest desire of testing his truthful excellence over all attempted improvements, this restoration is essayed, in lieu of the alteration, interpolation and complement of Colley Cibber, which has so long held possession of the Stage.²

Phelps discarded all of Cibber's lines, even the famous ones such as "Off with his head—so much for Buckingham"³ and "Conscience avant, Richard's himself again"⁴ which many modern producers still refuse to part with. However, Phelps did not present the play uncut, nor did he hesitate to make alterations of his own. Most critics accepted Phelps's cuts and additions and felt that he had made:

... such alterations only as were necessary either to reduce the play within acting length, or to obviate some otherwise insurmountable difficulty.⁵

² British Museum Playbills. OSUTC Film No. 1448#.


⁵ News of the World, quoted in Phelps and Forbes-Robertson, p. 75.
Figure 14. The playbill for Phelps's February 20, 1845 production of Richard III. From the British Museum Sadler's Wells playbill collection. OSUTC Film No. 1448*. 

Richard
The Third

in order to send the word of his coming to the Duke of York, and induce the
sent into the City to see the present appearance of Sir Richard and his
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The critic then continued, explaining what changes he felt were "necessary."

We refer to the second act. In lieu of two scenes with the Duchess of York and the children of Clarence in one place, and with the child of Edward in another, and a third scene with some citizens, the subject of their discourse is worked into a conference between Gloster, Buckingham, and Hastings, &c., after King Edward is carried out dying; when Gloster sounds his doubtful friends as to the probability of their assisting him in his attempt to obtain the crown. A scene after the retirement of Edward, and the reappearance of the Queen lamenting his death was necessary; and it is a matter of discussion whether the scene thus arranged has been conceived in a becoming spirit, and executed with due reverence to the great author. The whole of the language employed being adapted from other parts of the play may be urged in its favour. This is the only alteration of great importance; in other places compression only is observed, with occasionally the introduction of a few lines (Shakespeare's) to conclude an act or make a graceful exit.6

Not all critics, however, accepted Phelps's alterations, which were somewhat more extensive than the review quoted above might indicate. The Athenaeum reviewer, who appears to have been the most scholarly of the critics who commented upon the production, raised some objections.

The restoration to the stage . . . of Shakespeare's 'Richard the Third,' as distinguished from Cibber's, is an important step in the right direction . . . . We cannot report, that in the tragedy, now performed and restored, the beautiful and terrible repose of the original is altogether preserved; for there are passages

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6Ibid.
taken from 'Henry VI.,' and other brief soliloquies interpolated, for the purpose of supplementing what the poet thought sufficient as it stood; and this, by way of concession to modern audiences, supposed, as we have said, to require both stimulus and instruction. . . . Until the arrival, however, of a more enlightened period, credit is due to every theatrical management that volunteers its part toward the purification of the stage; and which, if it does abridge and interpolate, yet leaves the spirit and general outline of the drama such as it was conceived and executed by the mind that created it. But there can be no doubt, that the admission of anything from 'Henry VI.' into the tragedy of 'Richard III.,' must injuriously disturb the idea intended by Shakespeare in the latter. . . . Let the actor learn, that the poet knows as well when to be silent as when to speak; and thus acquire willingness to sacrifice the theatric to the dramatic.7

These two reviews indicate the direction of the major changes which Phelps made in the text of the play. However, one must turn to Phelps's prompt books in order to determine exactly what alterations were made. Phelps produced Richard III during three different seasons in the course of his tenure at Sadler's Wells. As noted before, the prompt books for the 1845 and 1849 productions have been preserved and the 1845 prompt book will be reproduced in the following chapters. No prompt book is known to exist for Phelps's third production of Richard III, near the end of his managerial career in 1861. Neither of the previous prompt books could have been used, since Phelps

7Athenaeum, March 1, 1845, p. 228.
returned, for this production, to the adaptation of Cibber rather than the text he had previously used.

While this study is concerned, for the most part, with Phelps's 1845 production, it may be useful to examine the textual arrangements of all three productions in order to see how and why Phelps altered the text for each production.

The 1845 production. In order to edit the play down to a reasonable running time, Phelps had to resort to extensive cutting. Of the 3,992 lines of the original, Phelps cut 1,842, omitting 46 per cent of the play's dialogue. Table 1 indicates the textual alterations which Phelps made for the 1845 production. The footnotes to the table indicate the changes which Phelps made in the order of the acts and scenes by cutting some scenes and by joining other scenes together.

In addition to cutting the play to reduce its length, Phelps also edited the text to make it morally acceptable to the audience. "God" was changed to "Heaven" or cut out entirely, no matter what the context, and such words as "womb," "loins," and "lust" were either eliminated entirely

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8 The line numbers used for line counts, and the act and scene divisions have been taken from Louis B. Wright and Virginia A. LaMar (eds.). Richard III (The Folger Library General Reader's Shakespeare, New York: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1960).
TABLE I

TEXTUAL ALTERATIONS MADE FOR THE 1845 PRODUCTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act and Scene</th>
<th>Original number of lines</th>
<th>Number of lines cut</th>
<th>Number of interpolated lines added</th>
<th>Total number of lines in altered text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-i</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>126</td>
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<tr>
<td>I-ii</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>208</td>
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<tr>
<td>I-iii</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>261</td>
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<tr>
<td>I-iva</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>189</td>
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<td>I total</td>
<td>1,177</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>784</td>
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<td>II-ib</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>160</td>
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<tr>
<td>II-ibc</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td>II-iii</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>II-iv</td>
<td>84</td>
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<td>II total</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>207</td>
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<td>III-i</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>169</td>
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<td>III-ii</td>
<td>138</td>
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<td>III-iii</td>
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<td>III-ivd</td>
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<td>III-v</td>
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<td>III total</td>
<td>900</td>
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<td>V total</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>223</td>
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<td>289</td>
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Total 3,992 1,842 136 2,286

aphelps’s II-i. bPhelps’s II-ii. cPhelps makes II-ii part of his II-ii. dPhelps’s III-iii. Ephelps’s III-iv. fPhelps’s III-v. gPhelps’s V-i. hPhelps makes V-iii part of his V-i. iPhelps’s V-iii. jPhelps’s V-iv.
or replaced with euphemisms. Even such seemingly innocuous phrases as "sweating lord" and "bloody king" were refined to "hasty lord" and "wicked king."  

Besides cutting words and phrases which might give offense, Phelps also tended to cut out passages of violent invective. For example, in the Anne-Richard scene, Act I, Scene ii, many of Anne's more heated imprecations were omitted. Also, in the same scene, Anne was not allowed to perform the unladylike action of spitting at Richard.

Phelps's revisions and excisions for the sake of morality are far more extensive than those made by Thomas Bowdler a few years later in his *Family Shakespeare* even though he claimed to oppose Bowdler's philosophy. Of course it must be kept in mind that Bowdler was concerned solely with improving the morality of Shakespeare's text, while Phelps had the additional problem of reducing the length of the play. It is often impossible to determine whether Phelps cut a passage because he feared it might give offense or simply because he wished to reduce the playing time of the scene.

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9 Halliday points out that such refinements were first introduced in the Restoration period. F. E. Halliday, *The Cult of Shakespeare* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1960), pp. 30-43.


11 Coleman, pp. 133-134.
While Phelps's cutting of the play is understandable in the light of the strict moral attitudes of his age and the practical necessities of stage production, his additions to the play are less defensible. As both of the previously quoted reviews noted, Phelps made several interpolations. Most of his additions used lines taken from other scenes of Richard III, but Phelps also followed Cibber's practice of taking lines from Henry VI, and he even, in a few instances, used lines which were not written by Shakespeare.

These interpolations will be pointed out and discussed as they occur in the prompt book. At this point it is sufficient to mention that ninety-four of the interpolated lines were taken from Richard III, fifteen from Henry VI, Part II, seventeen from Henry VI, Part III, and ten of the lines were non-Shakespearean.

An interpolation of 136 lines is insignificant compared to the 1,168 lines interpolated by Cibber.

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12For the purpose of this study, the author uses the term interpolation to mean a passage inserted into a scene where it did not originally belong. Slight alterations in the order of lines within scenes have not been counted as interpolations as they do not materially alter the basic structure of the play.

Still, Phelps's production was supposed to vindicate the pure Shakespearean text and yet Phelps's text was not entirely pure. This objection was made by the two critics whose reviews have been quoted. Even Phelps must have been dissatisfied with the alterations which he made in the text, for he revised it for his next revival of the play.

The 1849 production. Phelps's second production of Richard III began its run March 21, 1849. Upon this occasion Phelps used a somewhat longer and much purer text. He restored Act II, Scene iv, using it to start his third act, and restored lines in other parts of the play so that the text was about two hundred lines longer. In the prompt book which is reproduced in the following pages, many passages may be seen which have been crossed out for the 1845 production and have then been marked "in" for the 1849 production.

It may also be seen from the prompt book that almost all of the interpolations have been removed. The long interpolation at the end of Shakespeare's II-1 was reduced to a four line announcement of the King's death which was taken from Act II, Scene ii. Part of Act III, Scene v, was restored in slightly altered form and was added to the end of Act III, Scene iv [Phelps's III-iii]. Six non-Shakespearean lines were added to make the transition
between scenes iv and v of Act III and to give notice of Hasting's death. All other interpolations were removed. The Athenaeum made note of Phelps's changes.

On Wednesday, Shakespeare's 'Richard the Third' as in part restored to the original text was reproduced . . . . Our readers will doubtless recollect that in this version there are many omissions--some of them expedient. There were formerly also additions--passages from 'Henry VI.,' which mutilated and virtually destroyed for stage purposes the work from which they had been taken. Those interpolations are now almost entirely withdrawn.14

The 1861 production. Since Phelps used Cibber's Richard III instead of Shakespeare's, and since there is no record of an extant prompt book, this production will not be discussed in detail. However it seems necessary to give some explanation for the reason why Phelps, near the end of a managerial career dedicated to the restoration of original Shakespearean texts, should abandon Shakespeare for Cibber. The reason seems to have been the weakness of the Sadler's Wells company in 1861. Throughout his management of Sadler's Wells, Phelps discovered and trained young actors only to have them leave his theatre for higher paying positions in the larger metropolitan theatres. Near the end of his management, Phelps appears to have had a particularly difficult time maintaining a company and

14Athenaeum, March 24, 1849, p. 308.
suffered from a severe shortage of good actresses. According to his nephew, Phelps was dissuaded from using the Shakespearean text because of the lack of an actress who had the ability to play Queen Margaret.\textsuperscript{15}

Despite his regression in returning to Cibber's text, for his final production, Phelps pointed the way to other producers by having the courage to discard Cibber in his two earlier productions. While it took many years for the adaptation to vanish from the stage, Phelps must be credited with being the first producer to dare to go against tradition and champion the original Shakespearean text.

CHAPTER VI

RICHARD III ACT ONE

Prompt book markings. The objective of this and the four following chapters is to present the prompt book for Richard III, together with sufficient commentary to give the reader as clear a picture as possible of how the production of Richard III was staged. It may be useful to make some general remarks about the prompt book before starting a scene by scene discussion of the production.

Various production notes are written in the front of the prompt book. Reproduction 3 shows the handwritten cast list for the 1845 production. The additional names written in another hand indicate cast changes for the 1849 production. Also in the front of the prompt book is a list of the various property letters and documents needed for the production. This is shown in Reproduction 4.

The list of character names written on the interleaf shown in Reproduction 5 served to remind the prompter that the actors playing those characters should be ready to enter. Other warning lists for the first scene may be seen in Reproductions 7 and 8. Reproduction 6 shows a blocking
REMARKS

to first, to third, and to third, I.D. and I.O.

The table of

KING RICHARD III.

Shakespeare Library, OSUTC Film No. P. 1585.


diagram indicating the arrangement of actors following Clarence's entrance. Such diagrams are of great value since they permit us to visualize the pictorial arrangement of the actors.

Mention should be made of the system used for notation of stage movement. Some of the abbreviations such as "X" for cross and "C" for center are the same as are used today. Upstage still is used to indicate the part of the stage farthest from the audience and downstage the part closest. Some of the blocking notations are no longer used, however, and require explanation. While "R" and "L" are used at times in the prompt notes to indicate right and left, always from the actor's point of view, "OP" and "PS" are used more frequently. The prompter stood just offstage on the stage left side of the stage. Therefore "PS" stood for prompt side or stage left, while "OP" stood for opposite prompt or stage right.

The final type of blocking notation which should be explained is "entrance." Actors often entered from the side of the stage between two sets of wings. The area downstage of the first set of wings was known as the first entrance, the area downstage of the second set of wings the second entrance, and so on. Therefore the abbreviation "Richd. in OP 1st.E X US PS" indicates that Richard was to enter downstage of the first set of wings on the right side of the stage and cross diagonally left, away from the audience.
Keeping this basic information in mind, we may now move to a scene by scene discussion of the staging of the play. Let us try to imagine what the spectator seated in the pit must have seen and heard. The audience was probably unusually excited since they knew that the play that they were about to see would be quite different from the Richard III to which they were accustomed. The overture to Boildieu's La Dame Blanche gave notice that the production was about to commence and, at the conclusion of the music, the curtain rose to disclose the first scene.

Scene One. The first scene opens with Richard's famous soliloquy, "Now is the winter of our discontent," a speech reduced by Cibber to a few lines, and concludes with Richard's plotting against his brother, the Duke of Clarence. The setting was a "picturesque" view of Cheap-side. The shutters upon which the scenery was painted were placed downstage in the first grooves according to the note shown in Reproduction 5. At the conclusion of the


2The act and scene divisions used in this and the following chapters dealing with Phelps's staging relate to Phelps's acts and scenes for the 1845 production and do not always correspond with Shakespeare's acts and scenes. Table 1 indicates the relationship between Shakespeare's and Phelps's divisions.

scene, the prompter blew his whistle, signalling the stage hands to draw the shutters of the first scene off stage and reveal the setting of Scene Two.

**Scene Two.** The second scene shows the funeral procession of King Henry and contains the well known scene of Richard's wooing of Lady Anne, whose husband Richard has murdered. The shutters parted to reveal an attractive setting representing the exterior of St. Paul's Cathedral. This setting is shown in a sketch which may be seen in Figure 15 and Reproduction 12. The design is typical of its age in showing a detailed view of the architecture of the past. However, the execution of the setting was less typical since an attempt was made to give the setting a three-dimensional quality.

The note in the upper left hand corner of the sketch of the setting shown in Reproduction 12 states, "This 1/2 flat coming under Groves [grooves] forms the 3rd OPening 2 Ditto out." The "1/2 Flat" was one of a pair of shutters. "2[nd] Ditto [1/2 flat] out," indicates that the other shutter was not used. The shutter was placed in the "OP," or stage right, third set of grooves and was painted to represent the front of the church. The rest of the church was painted on the backscene which was either a pair of shutters or a drop. The backscene was probably placed in

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Figure 15. Sketch of the setting for Act I, Scene ii, of Phelps's Richard III. Folger Shakespeare Library. OSUTC Film No. P. 1680.

Figure 16. Conjectural ground plan showing probable scenic arrangement of Act I, Scene ii, of Phelps's Richard III. Drawing by P. Jerald Bangham.
the fourth grooves or, if a drop were used, just upstage of the fourth grooves. Since there is no mention of a set piece in the prompt notes, the structure shown on the stage left side of the sketch was probably painted on one of the downstage stage left wings. A conjectural reconstruction of the scenic arrangement is shown in Figure 16.

Although it is used upon several occasions in this production, the use of the "1/2 flat" does not appear to have been common practice in Shakespearean production at this time. This scenic device was used to break the monotonous symmetry of the usual wing and shutter setting and to give the setting a greater illusion of mass and solidity.

Along with the setting, there are other interesting aspects of the staging of this scene. As may be seen from the listing shown in Reproduction 11, the funeral procession was a large one. At its head were two gentlemen at arms carrying halberds. The second rank was made up of two more gentlemen at arms, similarly armed. Then came the king at arms with a wand, followed by two heralds bearing trumpets. Next came the bier, carried by six nobles dressed in red cloaks hemmed with ermine and bearing crape draped halberds. Following the bier were two pursuivants with torches and two priests, also bearing torches. At the end of the procession were four more nobles with halberds. It should be noted that the prompt notes carefully specify the exact
ordering of the procession and the rank of every person in it. This indicates that the procession was carefully organized rather than being the more customary "mob scene" in which a nondescript and motley crowd of "extras" was allowed to roam at will over the stage.

The procession provided a touch of pageantry and spectacle. Otherwise, according to the prompt notes, the blocking of the scene appears to have been quite static. Except for entrances and exits, there seems to have been almost no movement. For example, in the Anne-Richard confrontation, the stage direction shown in Reproduction 18 is the only cross indicated in the entire scene.

After Richard's soliloquy, "Was ever woman in this humor wooed?" shutters were moved on stage in the second grooves to end the scene.

Scene Three. The third scene is a long one, including Richard's encounter with Queen Elizabeth, Margaret's curses, and the planning of Clarence's murder. As indicated in Reproduction 23, the setting represented a room in the palace. The shutters were placed in the second grooves and a pair of folding doors were part of the stage right shutters. Shutters were evidently also moved onstage in the third grooves to provide backing for the doors.

This scene appears to have been less static than the previous two, although much of the movement was simply the


KING RICHARD III.

Act I, Scene 1.

Scene I. London. The Palace.

Enter King Richard, the Duke of Gloucester, and a Messenger.

Rich. Let him shout, that help to send him there; for he was there for that place, thus early. Down, down, and then sink for my place, but till.

Mes. You, my place also, if you will have me come in.


Mes. Your Highness.

Rich. Is not inside the chamber where late Lord Hastings was killed? I too till your grace?

Mes. I hope so.

Rich. I have seen your Grace, and I say, very merry.

Mes. To leave the house, and the close on that side.

Rich. I had made it a duty to come over. Is not in the corner of the chamber near?

Mes. Of these Portmanteau, Harry, and Norfolk, As I behold in this corner.

Rich. These were the ears, and not being cold, and to have been long in that ear of yours. Your bounty, which do bear no life in your great house. And, I think you, and I tell thee, hastened. These ears should be sent: that bounty from the close.

Mes. Those ears could no sooner that bounty's

Rich. You should not redeem in it; I stand by,

Mes. Do all the world is covered by the sun,

Rich. In by them; it is my way, my life.


KING RICHARD III.

I'll have her,—that I will keep her long.

Why? I, that kill'd her husband, and his father,

To take her in her heart's extreme gave her:

With whom in her desire, more to her eyes,

To see, whereof she looked to me,

With God, her succourer, and those two men, And not to be in my soul to be a waste

But the plain dairies, and damask'd beds,

And yet to win her,—all the world is nothing!

But she forgave clearly that heer prowess,

Edward, her lord, whom I, since three months since

A warning and a lasting good lesson—

Vengeance and judgment would in both accomplish

The slander of her name omits nothing.

And will she pass them yet and not,

The heavens and the earth to be convulsed,

Thence from the bloody ground to be wash'd clean, And all the daisies of the land be verdant

Oh, no, whose not only Edward's stone?

Oh, no, that both, and no unhappier than

If she but see her prince in any kind:

Upon my life, she finds, although I cannot

My brother, a brother to himself,

To undo all to whom she is wise;

Since I am eft in terror with myself.

result of many entrances and exits. The blocking notations are too vague to give any exact indication of movement patterns.

The scene was concluded with an interpolated soliloquy of fifteen lines, made up of excerpts from various of Richard's speeches taken from *Henry VI, Part III*. This soliloquy was used as a curtain speech, for Phelps chose to end his first act at this point. While such an interpolation was contrary to Phelps's stated policy, it must be remembered that the tradition of ending each act with a curtain speech was a time-honored one in the middle of the nineteenth century. The speech, shown in Reproduction 37, was cut from the 1849 production.

At the end of the scene, the prompter rang a bell which signaled the fall of the act curtain. The orchestra, also alerted by a bell signal from the prompter, played the entr'acte music. The curtain signal, "Ring down Act I," may be seen in Reproduction 37 and the music warning, "R.M.B." [Ring Music Bell] in Reproduction 36.


King Richard III.

Hark, fair-looking men, and thy mother's courtesies.
Love to thy letter, God save me your prince.
Q. Mar. Fear shame, or you have lost a name.
Bk. Were you well nigh you would be taugh your duty.
Q. Mar. To serve me well you all should do me duty.
Thou art to be your Queen.
Q. Mar. Serve me well, and look thou remember that they.
Dwr. Alas, no care with her, she is berefted.
Q. Mar. Pense, master device, you are out of time;
Your fine new stamped by master is now current.
O, this your young nobility should judge.
When were to be by, not to be out of time;
They that stand high, had many times to.shake
And, if they fall, they stand;
Q. Mar. Good counsel, every—burn it, burn it,
O. It becomes you, my lord, to speak so short.
O. Ay, and with much reason, but I was born to speak,
Our very bodies in the wind:
And falling with the wind, the storms the sea
Q. Mar. And turn to use to do—yea, so shall
Whose bright en-dow; the stars to thy courses
Shall in exact courses light up.


CHAPTER VII

RICHARD III ACT TWO

Scene One. The second act opened with a striking visual effect. As the curtain rose, the setting shown in Figure 17 was revealed, the menacing arches and deep shadows of the room in the tower establishing the proper mood for the murder of Clarence.

The setting was made more effective by the use of a dioramic effect. A ground plan of the setting may be seen in Figure 18. The plan indicates that the stage right shutter in the second set of grooves held an archway and that a dioramic effect of a torch was painted on the shutters. In order to make the effect work, the torch and its surrounding halo of light was painted on the flat with dye or translucent paint. Then the flat was back-painted with opaque paint over all of its surfact except where the torch and the torchlight were painted. When a light was placed behind the shutter it would shine through the translucent

According to Wickman, "Diorama is used in reference to luminous, transparent, or special effects which were employed in panoramic exhibitions." Of course no panorama was involved in this instance, but the basic principle is the same. Richard Carl Wickman, "An Evaluation of the Employment of Panoramic Scenery in the Nineteenth-Century Theatre." Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1961.
Figure 17. Prompt book sketch of the setting for Act III, Scene 1, of Phelps's Richard III. Folger Shakespeare Library, OSUTC Film No. P. 1680, following p. 38.

Figure 18. Prompt book ground plan of the scenic arrangement for Act II, Scene 1, of Phelps's Richard III. Folger Shakespeare Library. OSUTC Film No. P. 1680, p. 38.
portion of the flat and the torch would appear to glow and to cast its light upon the wall. The arch was backed by shutters placed upstage, in the third grooves.

As indicated in the stage directions shown in Reproduction 38, the torchlight effect was enhanced by the dimming of the stage lights to three-quarters. This was done by turning the light stands at the sides so that they cast most of their light off-stage and, probably, by lowering the footlights part-way under the stage so that their light would be obscured.

To move from a discussion of the setting to an examination of how the murder scene was staged, it may be seen from Reproductions 42 to 48 that alterations had been made from the original Shakespearean staging. At the conclusion of the "dream" scene, Clarence, instead of going to sleep on stage, is helped off stage by Brackenbury. The murderers then enter, show Brackenbury their warrant, and dismiss him. The murder then takes place off stage and almost all of the dialogue between Clarence and the murderers is cut. This toning down of the violence of the scene by moving it off stage and cutting out Clarence's pleas for mercy seems to have been a concession to the audience's evident desire for decorum.

After the murder of Clarence, the sound of a body being dragged along the ground is heard. Reproduction 47
King Richard III

To Clarence, in the nobler part of his noble;
May own your honors by my name, if you would know me.

Yet, sir, we are not yet certain to partake,
This business of the world, which makes us so.

We go to war with you, and not our sugars.

This night, when sleep to business, when time has
my name.

The sun, my lord, how about your business,

This night, as you know, not to read another age.

Think of the world, and not the sugar.

Who fears of you, and not the sugar.

That, as we are accustomed to hear,

I don't know another age to read,

I am sure, my lord, how about your business.

To send your honors by my name, if you would know me.

Yet, sir, we are not yet certain to partake,

This business of the world, which makes us so.

We go to war with you, and not our sugars.

This night, when sleep to business, when time has
my name.

The sun, my lord, how about your business,

This night, as you know, not to read another age.

Think of the world, and not the sugar.

Who fears of you, and not the sugar.

That, as we are accustomed to hear,

I don't know another age to read,

Reproduction 42. Phelps's Richard III. Folger Shakespeare Library, OSUTC Film No. F. 1680.

Reproduction 43. Phelps's Richard III. Folger Shakespeare Library, OSUTC Film No. F. 1680.
KING RICHARD III.

1. Mer. Remember our record, when the dead's
2. Mer. Come, be thou; I had too much the record.
3. Mer. What's thy name now?

Wert-when-borne-there-constant-bone

Mer. What, if it came into this again?

Mer. I'll not meddle with it. It is a dangerous thing; it makes a man as busy, a man as sad, as if he had any care upon him.

R. Mer. O merriest devil! and take a cup of

Mer. Soft, it be written.

Mer. Greet. I'll never answer with him.

Mer. Soft, I've met thee, ho! give me a cup of

Mer. I'm not, be wise enough, my lord.

Mer. Shall, what we do?

Mer. O, it is beast-like.

Mer. My voice is terrible, but thy looks are

Mer. Thou, how darest, and

Mer. How darest thou use me?

Mer. Thou art the? but I know, why lookest thou not?

Mer. Thy master.

Mer. To, to, to.


Reproduction 44. Phelps's Richard III. Folger Shakespeare Library, OSUTC Film No. P. 1680.

Reproduction 47. Phelps's Richard III. Folger Shakespeare Library, OSUTC Film No. P. 1680.
KING RICHARD III.

1. M. I would have done, that I had met his
 honors.

Take thou this, and tell him what I say:

But I expect one that doth follow me.

I mean, to do me now, in them present.

Well, I'll go to the other to some help.

And when I have my mind, I will away.

For this will not, and then I must not say.

[Exeunt.]

indicates that the sound was produced by dragging a heavy sack of shavings. The murderers then re-enter, talk briefly, and again go out. The lights were then raised and the shutters were pushed on for the next scene.

Scene Two. This scene, in which Clarence's death is announced to King Edward, is set in a room in the palace. The shutters were placed in the second grooves, downstage of the shutters, in the same set of grooves used for the previous scene. These shutters were probably the same ones used in Act I, Scene iii, since folding doors were again part of the stage right shutter. These doors could not have been used immediately in front of a solid shutter in the same set of grooves, but the archway cut in the shutter for the previous scene provided access to the doors. Shutters were again placed in the third grooves to provide backing for the door.

Reproduction 49 shows a rough sketch of this setting, a list of the actors' order of entrance, and a blocking diagram showing the arrangement of the actors after they had entered. The blocking diagram shows that the principal actors were placed downstage in a semicircle, while the less important actors stood behind them. While a semicircle is an uninteresting composition because it lacks a definite center of interest and is therefore avoided by modern directors, its very lack of strong focus allows a group of actors
to share the audience's attention and to play a scene with only a limited amount of movement. Phelps did manage, nevertheless, to give some variety to the stage picture by placing the various groups of extras upstage of the semicircle and by grouping them in small clusters.

After the King's exit, Phelps added an interpolated scene which was used primarily to provide exposition which would have been otherwise omitted because of Phelps's cuts. This sixty-nine line addition may be seen in Reproductions 55 to 57. It is the longest and the most objectionable of Phelps's additions. While, with the exception of four non-Shakespearean lines, all of the added lines were taken from Richard III, they were culled from five different scenes and Richard was given lines originally written for Clarence, Buckingham, the Duchess of York, and the First, Second, and Third Citizens. While the interpolation does provide the needed exposition, while allowing the action of the play to move ahead at a rapid rate, the fact remains that the addition is an awkward one. For the 1849 production, the interpolation was cut down to a four line announcement of the King's death. This speech may be seen in Reproduction 54.

After the interpolation, Queen Elizabeth enters lamenting the King's death. By the use of the interpolation, Phelps was able to add Shakespeare's Act II, Scene ii,
KING RICHARD III.

'Tis true, a king may dream on, so may a man.

I did not know that England slumbered.

When, when my soul is void for so much,

More than the letter that he who is mightier

Loved me, my God, and my soul's beauty.

I would subject all spirits and compassions—

Thou dost consume thy kingdom.

Tis true, a brother Clarence to your grace.

Why, madam, believe we this of you?

Who knew not, and be in a world present?

Who knew we, that the gentle Duke is dead?

You do him injury, to swear his name.

Why, madam, is he dead? who knows

To take my brother, our grace, to our

To be a flouted in its royal presence.

Who know not, that the gentle Duke is dead?

Look I so fair, that I am not in the real

And know not, be in a world present?

And yet my soul hath not a bitter death.

Who told me, when we were both by the

Drown from all but death, how he did lap me

And doth not love me, as your grace?

And yet my soul hath not a bitter death.

Who told me, to the field at Tewkesbury,

And was a king a gentle Duke, and not a king?

Who told me, where we had lay in the field,

Even in his garments, and did give himself.


rather drastically reduced in length, to the end of the preceding scene and to, thereby, avoid a scene change.

The scene ended with a two line non-Shakespearean interpolation which was used as a curtain line since Phelps cut the two final scenes of the second act. This interpolation, which was cut from the 1849 production, may be seen in Reproduction 61.
CHAPTER VIII

RICHARD III  ACT III

Scene One [1849 production]. Although Phelps cut Shakespeare's Act II, Scene iv, from his 1845 production, he restored it for his 1849 revival. Instead of using the scene to end his second act, he placed it at the start of the third. This change was evidently made because Phelps wished to give Richard the second act curtain line. The hand-written text of this scene may be seen in Reproductions 62 and 63.

The scene was set in a chamber in the palace and the shutters were placed in the first grooves. The prompt notes contain no other information of significance.

Scene One [1845 production]. The opening scene of the 1845 production, which shows the young Prince of Wales's entry into London, is of interest both for its scenic arrangement and for its use of pageantry. The scene description, shown in Reproduction 64, indicates that the setting was a "set scene." This term indicates that the setting included practical, three-dimensional scenic units as well as the conventional wings and shutters and, therefore, could not be shifted by the usual means.

The setting for the scene, which may be seen in Reproduction 62, when viewed as a flat, two-dimensional picture appears to be a conventional Gothic street scene, typical of the age's emphasis on scenery which showed historically accurate architecture. However, the execution of the setting was unique. Among the unconventional aspects of the setting was the use, again, of the "1/2 flat" or single shutter which was used, this time, to represent the city gates. The shutter, as may be seen in Figure 19, was placed downstage left, probably in the first grooves. The blocking notations seem to indicate that the procession entered through practical gates set in the shutter, although it is possible that the gates were merely painted.

A second unusual feature of the setting was that, although the stage right scenery consisted of standard wings placed in grooves, the stage left scenery was made up of one continuous wall of flats, set at an angle, like one wall of a box set. This type of scenic arrangement helped to provide a much more convincing illusion, but it would have been much more difficult to shift.

The setting appears to have been quite deep. The plan shows five sets of stage right wings, but no backscene. The shutters or drop would have had to have been placed upstage of the fifth grooves, probably in or near the sixth.
Figure 19. Prompt book ground plan of the setting for Act III, Scene 1, of Richard III. Folger Shakespeare Library. OSUTC Film No. F. 1630.

Figure 20. Conjectural ground plan, drawn to scale, of the setting for Act III, Scene 1, of Richard III. Drawing by P. Jerald Bangham.
Figure 20 is based on the plan shown in Figure 19, but it is drawn to scale in an attempt to show the full depth of the setting.

The bridge stage center was a practical, three-dimensional scenic unit. The bridge must have been a large and sturdy structure since large groups of actors stood on it and crossed over it. This scenic unit enabled Phelps to add variety to his stage composition by raising the actors at the back of the stage and it also provided a strong entrance for Richard and his followers at the start of the scene.

This is the first of four settings in the production which include rivers or streams. There is no indication in any of the prompt notes as to what method was used to produce this effect. However, it is likely that a ground row, painted to represent a river bank, was used.\(^1\)

While the staging of most scenes of the 1849 production appears to have been identical to that of the 1845 production, some changes were made. One of these changes involved the setting for this scene. Figure 21 shows a ground plan taken from the Stratford prompt book. It may be seen that raked flats, rather than wings, were now used

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\(^1\)Percy Fitzgerald, *The World Behind the Scenes* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1881), p. 71 indicates that this was standard practice.

on both sides of the stage. There is no indication of city gates on this plan, and, as no mention is made of them in the prompt notes for the 1849 production, it is likely that they were not used.

The setting was not the only interesting aspect of the staging, for Phelps used processions to add a great deal of spectacle to the scene. Before the setting was revealed, the mood of the scene was set by the sound of distant march music. The curtain was then raised to reveal the bridge, lined with soldiers, and Phelps as Richard marched on stage accompanied by his court. These stage directions may be seen in Reproduction 64.

A few lines after Richard's entrance, a trumpet fanfare announced the entrance of a second procession, that of the Lord Mayor. The staging directions shown in Reproduction 65 indicates that the Mayor also was accompanied by a large and colorful entourage including citizens, flag-bearers, and aldermen.

The Mayor's entrance raised the number of actors on stage to forty-seven. The groups with their colorful costumes and banners must have added an impressive bit of pageantry to the production.

The blocking too was somewhat altered for the 1849 production. Although the differences do not appear to be particularly significant, a comparison of Figures 19 and 22
shows that the arrangement of actors at the opening of the scene was not quite the same as that used in 1845. A more important change was made in the staging of the Lord Mayor's procession.

For the 1845 production, Phelps followed Shakespeare's stage directions which indicate that the Mayor enters, speaks one line, and then exits. However, in 1849, the Mayor's entrance is delayed until after Hastings' first entrance and exit. When the Mayor does enter, he and his retinue then remain on stage until the exit of the court, near the end of the scene, thereby permitting a more impressive exit procession.

In the 1845 production, a scene was interpolated at the end of the first scene. The first part of the addition was made up of twenty-six lines taken from Richard III, Act III, Scene v, and served to join the two Richard-Buckingham plotting scenes. After Buckingham's exit, Richard then had a fifteen line soliloquy made up of lines taken from Henry VI, Part II and originally spoken by Richard's father, the Duke of York. This interpolation, deleted from the 1849 production, may be seen in Reproduction 72.

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3Ibid., p. 66.
KING RICHARD III.


Reproduction 68. Phelps's Richard III. Folger Shakespeare Library, OSUTC Film No. P. 1680.


Scene Two. In the second scene, in which Hastings brings about his own downfall by telling Catesby of his determination to keep Richard from the throne, the shutters were pushed on stage in the first grooves. The shutters were painted to represent Hastings' house and a door, supposedly leading into the house, was a part of the stage right shutter.\(^4\) The stage lights were lowered to half for the start of the scene, and were gradually raised as the scene progressed.

Scene Three. In this scene, set in a room in the Tower, Hastings is denounced by Richard and sentenced to death. The stark Gothic setting for the scene is shown in Reproduction 76. The shutters were placed in the second grooves and the actors were discovered seated around a large table which is not shown in the sketch, but which is indicated in the blocking diagram shown in Reproduction 78.

For the 1849 production the acting area was enlarged by placing the shutters in the third grooves.\(^5\) However, the rest of the staging was unaltered.

In the 1845 production, the scene ended on the page shown in Reproduction 82. The dialogue included in Reproductions 83 and 84 was restored for the 1849 production.

\(^4\)The Folger prompt book does not indicate which of the shutters had a door, but the Stratford book, p. 68, states that the shutter was in the stage right shutter.


Then were, the here armed, arms, arms two men.

[Reproduction 76. Phelps's Richard III. Folger Shakespeare Library, OSUTC Film No. P. 1680.]

KING RICHARD III.

SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY, OSUTC Film No. P. 1680.


KING RICHARD III.

SCENE II.

king Richard, with horse and men. 

Richard. here is the indenture of the good lord Henry, which is a set bond duly engrossed, 

This may be readily made out in York. And mark how well the rough paper is pretty. 

Shakespeare Library, OSUTC Film No. P. 1680.

KING RICHARD III.

SCENE II.

Here is the indenture of the good lord Henry, which is a set bond duly engrossed, 

This may be readily made out in York. And mark how well the rough paper is pretty. 

Shakespeare Library, OSUTC Film No. P. 1680.
Scene Four. In this very short scene a scrivener enters, commenting on the injustice of Hastings' sentence. The scene used the same setting as Act III, Scene ii; Hastings' house, placed in the first grooves. The staging instructions for the scene are shown in Reproduction 85.

Scene Five. In the fifth scene the Lord Mayor comes to Baynard's Castle to ask Richard to become King and Richard, with a show of reluctance, accepts. A sketch of the Castle, with the river and Gothic houses in the background, is shown in Figure 23. This was another "set scene," the set unit being, in this case, the large staircase and landing leading up to the door of the Castle. The prompt notes do not include a plan of the scenic arrangement, so a conjectural plan is shown in Figure 24. The setting must have been fairly deep since the prompt notes indicate that actors entered downstage of the third set of grooves. Probably the ground row representing the river bank was placed upstage of the third grooves while the drop or shutters of the backscene were placed in or near the fourth grooves.

Phelps' staging of the Lord Mayor's entrance is of greater interest than the scenic arrangement. The Mayor's arrival is heralded by soft trumpet calls which increase in volume as the Mayor draws near. Then, just after Richard dashes up the steps of the Castle to fetch his prayer-book,
Figure 23. Prompt book sketch of the setting for Act III, Scene vi, of Phelps's Richard III. Folger Shakespeare Library. OSUTC Film No. P.1680.

Figure 24. Conjectural ground plan of the scenic arrangement for Act III, Scene v, of Phelps's Richard III. Drawing by P. Jerald Bangham.
the Mayor and his retinue arrive on the river by barge. This particular method of staging the Mayor's arrival seems to have originated with Phelps and was not based on tradition. The staging directions for the scene are shown in Reproduction 88.

The barge was undoubtedly built on a wheeled platform. The ground row of the river bank would have kept the audience from seeing the wheels.

In the 1845 production, the act ended with a four line interpolation, half non-Shakespearean and half from Henry VI, Part III. The interpolation was not used in the 1849 production.

KING RICHARD III.

Took pom the beauty of Richard's children!

And, I do not, with his counsellor, with holy Lucy,

KING RICHARD III.

And, I do not, with his counsellor, with holy Lucy,
KING RICHARD III.

But nothing spoke to warrant from himself;
When he had done, some followers of mine arose,
At lower end of the hall, half up their eyes,
And some were wiser yet; that sure was shrewd!
And then I took the oversight of them free;
Then, guards around, and friends, guest 1;
The central group, and gallery chair,
As you have seen, and near him is Richard:
And in the hall, to-morrow, and since then.

Oh, such misleaders, trade they were, Would they not speak?
Well the mayor here, and his brothers, came to
And the mayor here, I mean some time;
Be not you two with, but by mighty men;
And back you not a proper-hand to your house,

Shakespeare Library, OSUTC Film No. P. 1680.

KING RICHARD III.

KING RICHARD III.


King Richard III.

From the corruption of our time.

But fear not, mighty lord, thine power shall low.

O, make them pry, give them a trial soon.

I, cannot, nor I will not yield to you.

If thou refuse the lead, the rest I will do.

At well we know your tender love of heart,

Yet know, what you accept our wish or no,

To hear the burden, we'll stand, or no,

But if thou refuse, or do not stop our thing,

Thou must not yield to me, nor I.

Now, in this measure, hear we know you—

Come, citizens, we will stand to see.

To hear the lead, what we must have or no.

Thou must nor yield to me, nor I.

And, in this measure, hear we know you—

Come, citizens, we will stand to see.

Thou must nor yield to me, nor I.
KING RICHARD III.

Oh. Here when you please, since you will have it so.

And, To-morrow, then we will meet and hear you;

And we, most joyfully, will go in your way.

Come, let us to our holy work again.

Farewell, good cousin;—served, gentle friends.

And then, farewell. Throughhand the whole

The course of time;

Served, wherefore, and beautiful spices,

Flying before it, before the content;

But quickly to itself.

Visit change of ways.

CHAPTER IX

RICHARD III ACT FOUR

Scene One. In the opening scene, set before the Tower walls, Queen Elizabeth is informed that her sons have been imprisoned by Richard. It may be seen from the crude sketch, taken from the Stratford prompt book, shown in Figure 25, and from the ground plan, shown in Reproduction 97, that shutters, with a gateway, were placed in the second grooves. A second set of shutters, placed in the third grooves, was used as backing for the gate.

The gates were practical and when Brackenbury entered through them they opened to reveal four guards stationed inside the tower. A sketch showing the arrangement of actors following Brackenbury's entrance is shown in Figure 26.

Scene Two. In the second scene Richard plans the murder of the little Princes. The scene was set in a rather foreboding hall of state in the Palace. The sketch of this scene may be seen in Reproduction 101 and the staging directions for the scene are shown in Reproduction 102.
Figure 25. Rough sketch of setting for Act IV, Scene i, of Richard III. Shakespeare Memorial Library, Stratford-upon-Avon. OSUTC Film No. P. 1060, p. 92.

Figure 26. Blocking sketch for Act IV, Scene i, of Richard III. Folger Shakespeare Library. OSUTC Film No. P. 1680.
ACT I. SCENE I.

Beneath the Tower, 12th of April.

KING RICHARD III.

RECTOR. What news so near the Tower?—

KING RICHARD III. God give you grace both,
A happy and a joyful time of day! 

R. You hear what's done—

KING RICHARD III. To gratulate the great prince there.

R. This shall ease you: hence, we'll enter all in order:

KING RICHARD III. And, as good grace, here the lieutenant commend
Manner, custom, antiquity, authority,
Here both the prince, and my young son of York!

Reproduction 100. Phelps's Richard III. Folger Shakespeare Library, OSUTC Film No. P. 1680.

This setting represents yet another break from the traditional wing and shutter setting. While it is true that only wings and shutters were used for this setting, two sets of back shutters were used in order to provide a more interesting scenic background. Shutters were pushed part of the way on stage in the fourth grooves to flank the throne, and a second set of shutters was used to provide a backing for the throne. The stage was further decorated with banners which were probably suspended from poles attached to the backs of the wings.

**Scene Three.** In this short scene Tyrrel informs Richard that the Princes are dead and Richard then receives the less welcome news that rebellion has broken out. The staging direction shown in Reproduction 108 indicates only, "Change of Scene." However, the Stratford prompt book states that the setting was the Tower and that the shutters were placed in the first grooves.

**Scene Four.** The fourth scene is fairly long even after Phelps's extensive cuts. The scene opens with the lamenting of Margaret, Queen Elizabeth, and the Duchess of York. Richard then enters with his troops and informs Elizabeth that he wishes to marry her daughter. Messengers then enter bringing first news of further rebellion and then word of Buckingham's defeat and capture.

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Again a "set scene" was utilized, involving a rather complex scenic arrangement. The setting is described in Reproduction 110 and a sketch is shown in Reproduction 111 and Figure 27. The Folger prompt book does not include a ground plan of the setting but a ground plan from the Stratford prompt book may be seen in Figure 28.

The setting again utilized Gothic architecture, showing the walls of the palace. The major scenic unit was the low archway stage left. This was a three-dimensional unit sturdy enough to permit a troop of soldiers to march over it and descend the stairs, masked by the "dwarf wall," which led off stage right. The archway had to be high enough to permit actors to walk under it.

Other scenic units included the stage left towers, which were evidently painted on wings, and the large scenic unit stage right. This piece of scenery, marked "Raking Archway" in the plan, was evidently a shutter which was pushed part of the way on stage, another use of the "1/2 flat." It is not clear why it was termed a "raking" archway, since the plan indicates that it was not set at an angle and the sketch does not show its painted "raking" in forced perspective.

The back-scene was, in this case, a drop rather than shutters. It is quite possible that drops were used as backings for all the exterior scenes since, as has been
Figure 27. Prompt book sketch of the setting for Act IV, Scene iv, of Richard III. Folger Shakespeare Library. OSUTC Film No. P. 1680.

Figure 28. Prompt book ground plan of setting for Act IV, Scene iv, of Richard III. Shakespeare Memorial Library, Stratford-upon-Avon. OSUTC Film No. P. 1060, p. 104.
explained earlier, this would have given the scenery additional height.

Phelps made use of the archway set piece in an interesting manner. As indicated in the staging directions shown in Reproduction 116, Richard enters through the arch with his troops and crosses stage right while, at the same time, another group of soldiers pass over the arch, come down the steps, and march off stage. The simultaneous movement of the two bodies of soldiers must have presented a striking visual effect.

The act was concluded by an interpolated non-Shakespearean couplet which may be seen in Reproduction 132. This was cut from the 1849 production.

To receive thee the more, being what thou art,
Then didst thou not there; and that was not
What the true proportion of my name was.
Now the proud neck that bore and brought my yoke
From which none here 1 step my world yoke, and
And bear the burden of my name since.
These English ways shall make me end in foreign
And watch my hour to weary mine enemies.

Forbid to show the sight, and let the day
Before be happier with a living way;

Think not they were not there; then they were, and
And be, that new done; bears can be.

Tf"fd my heart within the last-cause were;
Avoiding the well that was too late in me.

Why should confess to fall of words;

Why should express so many winters;

The anger of mine enemies?

The anger of mine enemies?

The anger of mine enemies?

The anger of mine enemies?

The anger of mine enemies?

The anger of mine enemies?

The anger of mine enemies?

The anger of mine enemies?

The anger of mine enemies?

The anger of mine enemies?

The anger of mine enemies?

The anger of mine enemies?

The anger of mine enemies?


Reproduction 120. Phelps's Richard III. Folger Shakespeare Library, OSUTC Film No. F. 1680.
Reproduction 121. Phelps's Richard III. Folger Shakespeare Library, OSUTC Film No. P. 1580.

If thou hast a doubt, I'll speak to thee by signs.
The very, the king the brother made.
Had not been bolder, why my brother slain?
If then he's dead it's with none but him.
The word, the king, the brother made.
Had not been bolder, why my brother slain?
If then he's dead it's with none but him.

The imperial soul, looking on thy head,
Had given the tender symbol of my reign.
And both the princes had been breaking here,
Which soon, two tender chicks do die.
 Thy brother (thou mak'st a play for honour.
Who come there ever to me?)

By the time to come
Q. Ed. That thou hast wronged so to the time of
For I myself have many times to work
Methoughts, the time came, wrong'd by thee.
The children thou, whom graces thou hast angel's,

Jtine's pipe,
The purest hue, whose children thou hast angel's,
Old boney plant, to which my soul,
Whose son by time to come, for then thou hast

K. Rich. As I stood at marriage, and expect
No more I in my language amend

Of bitter marl exposed where treading


CHAPTER X

RICHARD III  ACT FIVE

The staging of the final act involved elaborate scenic effects including two "set scenes" of Bosworth Field. The note shown in Reproduction 134 indicates the amount of preparation which had to take place during the interval. The second scene had to be pre-set, the actors had to be in their places, the Ghosts had to go under the stage and get on the trap, and the musicians had to come up, out of the pit, and be ready to strike up the march music.

Scene One. In the opening scene of the act, Richmond is seen marching with his troops toward Bosworth Field. The sketch for the setting may be seen in Reproduction 133. It appears to be a typical nineteenth-century exterior set. The staging instructions, shown in Reproduction 134, call for "Forest Cloth Screen, backed by Forest Cloth." The Stratford prompt book helps to clarify the terminology by calling the "Cloth Screen" by its more common name, "Cut Drop." A cut drop was a drop with the center cut out so that it served the same purpose as a pair of wings with a border. The cut drop was most often used for forest scenes.

1Stratford prompt book, p. 125.

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KING RICHARD III.


since it could be irregularly cut to represent the profile of tree branches. The drop shown in Reproduction 133 was cut in this manner. The cut drop, painted with trees, was suspended near the first grooves, while the "Forest Cloth," with the castle painted on it, was suspended near the second grooves.

As indicated by the stage directions and blocking diagram shown in Reproduction 134, Oxford, Blunt, Herbert, and Richmond enter from behind the cut drop with their soldiers. The leaders cross downstage for their short scene while the troops remain upstage of the cut drop.

**Scene Two.** In the second scene both leaders are shown preparing for battle and Richard is haunted by the ghosts of his victims. The stage lights were lowered to three-quarters and the drops of the previous scene were raised to disclose the setting of Bosworth Field. A sketch of the setting is shown in Figure 29 and a plan of the setting in Figure 30.

The staging notes, which may be seen in Reproduction 135, provide a description of the setting.

[Bosworth Field] Occupying the Entire Stage, a grove of Trees C stage at back with rising Trap and Platform for the Ghosts to rise. Gauzes to descend.

The "trap" mentioned in the prompt notes was undoubtedly a bridge. Stage terminology was flexible in the nineteenth century and any raising machine was likely to be
Figure 29. Prompt book sketch of the setting for Act V, Scene ii, of Richard III. Folger Shakespeare Library. OSUTC Film No. P. 1680.

Figure 30. Prompt book plan for the setting for Act V, Scene ii, of Richard III. Folger Shakespeare Library. OSUTC Film No. P. 1680.
called a trap or a slot. However, a machine in an upstage position capable of raising several actors would be, using current terminology, a bridge.

The bridge could have raised actors only up to stage level. Therefore a platform was placed on the bridge in order to give the actors additional height so that they would appear to float in the air.

The double grove of trees evidently consisted of two sets of flats representing tree trunks and foliage. One set of flats was placed upstage of the bridge while the other set was placed downstage of it.

Transparent gauzes were lowered in front of the ghosts to give them an unearthly and indistinct quality. Probably several thicknesses of gauzes were used, kept in constant motion, in order to give the effect of swirling mists.

A stage direction shown in Reproduction 136 indicates that "A painted river divides the stage." This was evidently a painted ground cloth which was laid on the stage floor. It is possible that ground rows were also used.

The construction of the setting is not the only interesting aspect of the scene. As the stage directions shown in Reproductions 135 and 136 related, after Richard and his followers enter, Richard's tent is pitched in full view of the audience. A sketch of the tent may be seen in Reproduction 137. The objects at each side of the tent are cressets holding torches.
After a few lines, Richard and his followers exit, and Richmond enters with his army and his tent is also pitched, so that the two enemy camps are simultaneously shown. The change of scene, indicated by the note in Reproduction 137, was evidently an addition for the 1849 production, for the reviews of the 1845 production indicate that there was no scene change at this point.

As the scene continued, Richmond and his followers retire into their tent. The lights start to dim and Richard re-enters and confers with his followers. Then, as Richard retires, Richmond is seen in his tent. At this point there is a three line interpolation, taken from Act IV, Scene v, announcing the Queen's desire for Richmond to marry her daughter. This addition, which is shown in Reproduction 140, was deleted from the 1849 production.

As Richmond made his exit, the gauzes descended and the ghosts rose. The staging instructions for the ghost scene may be seen in Reproductions 141, 142, and 144. After the ghost scene, the lights were raised and the sound of martial music set the mood for the approaching battle.

The reviewer of *News of the World* provides a graphic description of the entire scene.

Instead of the continual changing of scene and running about of parties, . . . we are carried to Bosworth Field, where the tent is literally set up in the presence of the audience. On the other side of the brook that divided the contending armies Richmond's tent
KING RICHARD III.

Here, most gracious liege. Norfolk, we must have being. Here present ye! We must end glass and tales, as being past. Up with my ears! Here will I be right.

[Enter K. Itici.]

But where, most gracious liege?—Well, all's one for that. When last did you suffer the number of the nation?—For, it's an even thousand in their utmost power.

Why, we cannot know that answer. Besides, the king's name is a tower of strength. Which they upon the adverse faction want.—Up with the tent.—Loose, whole greatness; let us survey the strength of the ground. Call the water men of naval direction.—Let's, with no discipline, make no delay; but, busy in motion, in this seen.

[Enter H. u u.]

Call for some men of wood direction:—Let's want to discipline, make no delay; for, lord, to-morrow is a day of duty. [Exit H. u u.]

Shakespeare Library, OSUTC Film No. P. 1680.


The Ghost. Have mercy on thy soul, Richard, and that of the rest of the house of York. 

Richard. Why dost thou trouble me with these prophecies? I am already prepared to give up my life. 

The Ghost. To save thy soul from perdition, think upon the battle thick as rain, and fall, Richard, deep in sleep, and wake in joy. 

Richard. O, to the battle thick as rain, and fall, Richard, deep in sleep, and wake in joy. 


Richard. To save thy life, and let me see God's face, and good angels, fight at Richard's side. 


Richard. O, to the battle thick as rain, and fall, Richard, deep in sleep, and wake in joy. 

The Ghost. Let me see God's face, and good angels, fight at Richard's side. 

Richard. To save thy soul from perdition, think upon the battle thick as rain, and fall, Richard, deep in sleep, and wake in joy. 

The Ghost. To save thy soul from perdition, think upon the battle thick as rain, and fall, Richard, deep in sleep, and wake in joy.
is then raised, and the constant movement of leaders of the two forces, the variety of costumes and banners, and the earnestness of every actor employed, constitute a picture of remarkable perfection. Night having closed in with a kind of dioramic effect, two cressets are planted at the entrance of Richard's tent which throw a faint light over the forepart of the scene: whilst in the background the ghosts of Clarence, Lady Anne, the Princes, and Buckingham are advanced between the two tents by some ingenious process, but so far only as to be dimly visible to the audience; this partial obscurity, and the deep stillness which is preserved on stage, just allow the imagination to play without over-excit ing it; and the effect is extremely good. The dawn of morning is accompanied with the distant hum of preparation, then the faint roll of drums is heard mingling with the bugle call, and increasing with the impatience of the troops.2

The "dioramic effect" mentioned in the review may have been produced by backlighting the backscene in the same manner as the setting for Act II, Scene I. However, since no such effect is indicated in the prompt notes, this is unlikely. Merchant points out that the term "dioramic" degenerated into a cliche which could be applied to anything which seemed realistic and states that the "dioramic effect" was probably accomplished by simply dimming the lights.3

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2News of the World, quoted in Phelps and Forbes-Robertson, pp. 74-75.

3Merchant, p. 107.
...
KING RICHARD III.

Act 1, Sc 2.

K. Rich. These be deaths or slavery, too, by the Duke.

Hark! Not I. my lord.

K. Rich. There be deaths or slavery, too, by the Duke.

Hark! We go.

The sun will not be seen to-day:
The sky darkens and bear upon our arms,

James..

Not dark yet? Why, what is due to me,

More than the Duke? for the self-same reason.

This forens of me, look onately upon the sky.

Grow martial.

For Assa, ass, my lords, the day will not be

The sun.

With ever, call, 

The sun.

Come, here.

Bid him to bring his powers.

I will lead forth my men in the plain.

God with us.

As the sword and the shield.

This found I on the tent.

A thing described by the enemy.—

Go, gentlemen, every man unto his charge.

Remember when you are to cope withal.

A man of Burgundy, and how he must do.

And who leads them, but a paltry fellow.

Let's whip these stragglers o'er the plain again.

Let's whip these stragglers again.


Scene Three. This is a very short scene, set on the outskirts of the battlefield. A drop, described in the prompt book notes as a "Front Wood Cloth," fell downstage of the first grooves to mask the change to the final scene. The staging notations for the scene may be seen in Reproductions 152 and 153.

Scene Four. In the concluding scene, Richard is killed by Richmond. The setting and action of the scene are described in notes shown in Reproductions 152 and 154.

Another part of the field, with various groups of bodies slain. Profile pieces of Horses and Men, Arms, Spears, battle axes &c. Large Bridge at back. Enter Richard and Richmond X fighting and fight off OP and then re-enter fighting—Richard extremely weak who falls. Enter down the bridge at back the two forces struggling. Richard's party worsted who ground their arms. Everybody on. Stanley bearing a crown on a cushion. Drums, Trumpets, & Shouts kept up until Richard falls.

The "profile pieces," which were painted two-dimensional cut-outs, may be seen in the sketch of the setting shown in Reproduction 152. It is difficult to determine from the sketch where the bridge was located, but it was evidently placed upstage center. The prompt notes provide no indication of which grooves were used, but it is evident that the setting was fairly deep.

The prompt notes also contain a second, more detailed, description of the final battle which may be seen in Reproduction 153. It is possible that this may date from the
If we be enemies, with pious fear
And not as friends beseem, we enemies shall become;
Nor shall my sword, nor thy spear take
The place that is above the law's command.
Let the false round be flown,
And let the true round remain.

Fight, gentlemen of England! Fight, and oppose!
Dare, resist, dare your states or the land;
Open your most holy heart, and ride on blood!


Reproduction 153. Phelps's Richard III. Folger
Shakespeare Library, OSUTC Film No. P. 1630.

Reproduction 154. Phelps's Richard III. Folger
Shakespeare Library, OSUTC Film No. P. 1680.
1849 production, rather than Phelps's first production since the handwriting differs from that of most of the 1845 prompt notes.

12 Men on bridge fight down & 8 fight down off PSUE. 4 off OPUE. Men on horses with opponents fight off R & L UE. 4 behind PS set piece fight off PS. 2 men with Standard struggle off OP. The Character Lords fight off OP and again X to PS. Richard and Richmond fight X from OP2E to PS1E Troops fight off PS and after pause again X to OP. At Richard's fall all on from their place of exit.

The description is accompanied by a blocking diagram. It should be noted that, according to the diagram, the horses were kept well up stage. Although real horses had frequently galloped across the Sadler's Wells stage prior to Phelps's management, the horses used in Richard III were evidently not real, but were probably dummies fastened to the actors' waists. The use of real horses on stage posed many problems and, if Phelps had taken the trouble to secure real horses, the fact certainly would have been advertised in the playbill. While there is no record of Phelps using dummy horses at Sadler's Wells, it is known that he used dummy soldiers attached to actors so that each actor would appear to be three soldiers.

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4The problems of using real horses are outlined by Fitzgerald, pp. 78-79.

5Coleman, p. 217.
The final battle between Richard and Richmond is shown in a tinsel print in Figure 31. While the tents in the background belong in the second scene rather than in the fourth, they so closely resemble the tent shown in Reproduction 137 that it is safe to assume that the print was based on sketches made in the theatre. Therefore, the print should also give a fairly accurate indication of the costumes.

The curtain fell on the tableau shown in Reproduction 149. The note at the end of the book indicates that the total playing time of the performance was two hours and fifty minutes.
Figure 31. Tinsel print of the final battle in Richard III. Published by A. Park. Finsbury Public Libraries' Sadler's Wells Collection. OSUTC Film No. 1476.
CHAPTER XI

AN EVALUATION OF PHELPS'S RICHARD III

Contemporary reactions to the production. The Times, the News of the World, the Illustrated London News, and the Athenaeum carried reviews of the production. All of the reviews were basically favorable, but they showed varying degrees of enthusiasm.

Phelps's restoration of Shakespeare's text naturally attracted a major part of the critics' attention. The reviewers agreed upon the superiority of Shakespeare's play to the adaptation by Cibber, although the Times doubted if actors would approve of the change. Portions of the two most extensive discussions of the text have been quoted in Chapter V.

The scenery was commended by all of the reviewers. While the Times critic rather condescendingly qualified his praise with the phrase, "considering the capabilities of the house," he termed the scenery admirable and stated that most of the effects were totally different from those in previous productions. He singled out for special

1 Times (London), February 24, 1845, p. 6.
2 Ibid.
praise the scene of the arrival of the Mayor at Baynard's Castle and the staging of the final act.

The critic of the Illustrated London News also cited Baynard's Castle and the final act as the two scenic highlights of the production. The critic also remarked about the high quality of the costumes and the properties.

The most detailed commentary on the scenery was provided by the critic of the News of the World. His description of the staging of the second scene of the final act has been quoted in the previous chapter. He also praised the opening scene of the play, the various views of the Palace and Tower architecture, and the Baynard's Castle scene.

While his major interest was the text, the critic of the Athenaeum stated that, "the appointments are good; the scenery is picturesque and ingenious; the costumes various and correct."

In addition to voicing their approval of the scenic effects, all of the critics were favorably impressed by the acting. The most enthusiastic praise was accorded Mrs. Warner's Queen Margaret. According to the Times, "She entered with the aspect less of a human enemy than of some

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3 Illustrated London News, March 1, 1845, p. 142.
5 Athenaeum, March 1, 1845, p. 228.
supernatural being." All of the critics agreed that the role was ideally suited to her talents.

Phelps's acting was also well received, and the critics agreed that his characterization was both valid and unique. According to the News of the World:

Mr. Phelps's conception of the part of Gloster is in accordance with the text,—he does not make the King's brother a coarse and brawling assassin, shouting his thoughts at street corners, and throwing himself into galvanistic fits when under more than ordinary excitement. He embodies the subtle, bold, designing villain, whose triumphs are won as much by artifice as by fraud.7

The Times also noted the lack of the customary bombast in Phelps's performance. Instead of a frantic rage, Phelps's Richard was marked by, "a quiet, well-sustained enjoyment of evil, though without the bitterness of sarcasm."8 The Athenaeum critic concurred that Phelps provided, "instead of the conventional stage-Richard, a novel conception distinguished by ease, quietness and a sort of jovial abandon."9

6Times (London), February 24, 1845, p. 6.
8Times (London), February 24, 1845, p. 6.
9Athenaeum, March 1, 1845, p. 228.
The *Illustrated London News* added a note of qualification to its praise.

Mr. Phelps' acting, as Richard, was careful and judicious, played in the same unaffected and level style, so characteristic of this gentleman's performance, which, if it never reaches a very high standard, at the same time always avoids even mediocrity. He is, in every respect, a "safe" actor; and as such, a valuable one.10

Perhaps it should be mentioned in Phelps's defense that he did not act well on opening nights and always tended to give a much more restrained performance then than later in the run.11 It is possible that if the critic had not seen Phelps only on opening nights he would have felt that the actor was somewhat less "safe" and somewhat more exciting.

In addition to the praise bestowed upon Phelps and Mrs. Warner, the supporting cast too was complimented by the critics. Ward's King Edward, John Webster's Richmond, Marston's Clarence, and Bennett's Buckingham received critical acclaim. The only adverse criticism of any actor came from the *Illustrated London News* which thought that Miss Mordaunt's Lady Anne "lacked energy."12 However the *News of the World* was highly impressed by her performance and the *Times* also praised her.

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10*Illustrated London News*, March 1, 1845, p. 142.


Several of the writers remarked about the unity and evenness of the production. According to the *News of the World*:

The acting is good throughout, extraordinary pains having evidently been taken to impress upon actors of even the smallest parts the necessity for careful action: by such means an even tone and character were secured.\(^{13}\)

All but one of the critics made special comment concerning the exceptionally enthusiastic audience reaction to the production. The *Illustrated London News* published a follow-up review a month later noting the extraordinary success of the play.\(^{14}\) The production was given twenty-four times and, even though it was introduced quite late in the season, it was the second most popular play, after *Hamlet*, produced during Phelps's first year of management.

**The historical significance of the production.**
Obviously the single most important aspect of the production was the restoration of Shakespeare's text. While, as the prompt book shows, Phelps did make extensive cuts, it must be kept in mind that, with the exception of *Hamlet*, *Richard III* is Shakespeare's longest play, and it is almost always cut for production. Phelps's additions, unlike Cibber's, were not extensive enough to alter significantly the basic structure of the play.

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\(^{13}\) *News of the World*, quoted by Phelps and Forbes-Robertson, p. 75.

While Phelps’s production did not lead to the immediate banishment of Cibber’s alteration, it did prove the stage-worthiness of Shakespeare’s play and set an example for other producers to follow. The success of this production evidently encouraged Phelps to attempt the restoration of other Shakespearean plays and undoubtedly started into motion the chain of events which led Phelps to produce all of Shakespeare’s plays except Henry VI, Titus Andronicus, Troilus and Cressida, and Richard II during the eighteen years of his Sadler’s Wells management.

The text was not the only interesting aspect of the production. Pictorially the scenery was attractive but not particularly unusual. It followed the general scenic practice in most Shakespearean productions of depicting historically accurate views of period architecture.15 However, the construction of the scenery differed from the then current staging practice.

According to James Laver:

"... we can sum up the development of scene-painting in the first half of the nineteenth century by saying that gradually the backcloth absorbed the side wings and finally swallowed the whole stage picture."16

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15Merchant, p. 91.

Merchant supports this view that scenery in the mid-nineteenth century served primarily as a flat, painted background for stage action.\textsuperscript{17} However, the prompt notes for \textit{Richard III} indicate that over half of the settings for Phelps's production employed additional scenic units in an attempt to avoid the two-dimensional quality of the standard wing and shutter or wing and drop set. Settings such as the St. Paul's scene in the first act and the scene before the city gates in the second act made use of the "1/2 flat." Set pieces were used in several scenes and included the staircase used for the Baynard's Castle scene and the bridge units used in several acts. The prompt notes also give evidence of the use of extra sets of shutters, archways, and other scenic units which were used to avoid the flatness of painted scenery. Conventional flat scenery was most often used in the downstage position to cover the setting up of more elaborate scenery behind it.

In addition to giving a three-dimensional quality to the setting, the various scenic units, particularly the set pieces, permitted Phelps to obtain variety of stage movement. The use of stair units, bridges, and elevated platforms allowed the actors to move vertically as well as horizontally. Such units are described in the prompt notes for Act III, Scene 1, Act IV, Scene iv, and Act V, Scene iv.

\textsuperscript{17}Merchant, p. 97.
While the scenery was an important part of the production, it was not allowed to become obtrusive. According to one of the critics, "the stage arrangements are wisely kept subordinate to the play itself." Although Phelps's productions were to become noted for their scenic beauty, they were also noted for their taste and moderation, and the fact that the scenery never seemed to distract attention from the play.

The existing evidence does not permit a detailed discussion of the costumes. The reviews of the production state that the costumes were attractive and historically accurate. The one tinsel print which shows actors in costume gives further support for the assumption that the costumes were of the correct period.

The prompt notes contain sufficient blocking notations to permit some observations concerning the stage composition and movement. As previously mentioned, many of the scenes appear to have been, by modern standards, rather static. While the scenes probably contained more movement than the prompt notes indicate, it is probable that far less movement was used than would be used today. The explanation for this is simple. With the frequent change of bill which was customary in the nineteenth century, an actor would play in scores

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of plays, pantomimes, farces, and afterpieces in a single season. Under these conditions, any attempt at complex blocking would have led to chaos, as actors could not be expected to remember the complicated blocking of many different productions.

In order to provide visual interest without a great deal of intricate movement, Phelps made use of elaborate tableaus and processions. The lists and diagrams in the prompt book giving instructions for the Lord Mayor's entrances, the battle scene, and the other scenes involving many actors indicate that these scenes were carefully planned. It has been noted that platforms and set pieces were used to provide variety and to heighten the effectiveness of the composition.

The critical commentary indicates that the actors in the processions and battle scenes were carefully rehearsed. Sadler's Wells was noted for the high over-all competency of its company. Although Phelps used only a small fraction of the extras used at some of the other theatres, his supernumeraries were well trained and were used to the best advantage.19

19 Phelps and Forbes-Robertson, p. 204, mention that Phelps never used more than 70 supers. He seems rarely to have used more than 40. While even 40 supers appear, today, to be a fairly large number, Odell, Vol. II, p. 316, points out that Irving used up to 550 people in one production.
In the first chapter it was stated that Phelps followed the basic principles which Macready instituted during his management of the patent theatres. Macready's five major achievements were furthering the trend toward historical accuracy, emphasizing ensemble acting, emphasizing unity of production, stressing the importance of rehearsals, and making innovations in staging.

The reviews quoted praised Phelps for the historical accuracy of the settings and costumes for Richard III and for the fact that the minor parts were as well played as the leads. The "even tone and character" of the production was mentioned. While the scenery was complimented, it was pointed out that it did not distract from the unity of the production.

While there is no direct proof, specifically linked with this production, that Phelps stressed the importance of rehearsals, the unity of the production, the ensemble acting, and the effectiveness of the crowd and battle scenes would have been impossible without adequate rehearsals. Phelps's innovations in staging, by the use of various scenic units, has already been pointed out. The conclusion may therefore be drawn that Phelps did follow the principles of Shakespearean production instituted by Macready.

The technique of prompt book analysis utilized in this study has provided a clear picture of Phelps's Richard III.
It indicates that Phelps was a capable actor, a careful director who paid close attention to both the acting and the scenic effects of his production, and a pioneer in the restoration of Shakespeare's plays with an approximation of their original texts. This production illustrates that Phelps's career as a manager at Sadler's Wells made a distinct contribution to the theatre of the nineteenth century.
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