ASPECTS OF STAGING
OF PLAYS OF THE GOTHIC REVIVAL IN ENGLAND

DISSERTATION

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

By

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INTRODUCTION

Theatrical scholars will probably agree that it is impossible to have a thorough understanding of the theatre of any given period unless the specific staging practices of that period are known in rather exact detail. Even though the body of knowledge about the physical aspects of the playhouses, the tastes of the audiences and the dramatic literature of any given period may be vast and comprehensive, the nature of the living theatre of that period still remains relatively obscure unless an exact knowledge of the staging practices is also available.

At present a great deal of information exists about the staging techniques employed during the period encompassed by the latter part of the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth century. Scholars have an extensive understanding of the physical playhouses and their stage equipment; for example, they have learned how flats, wings, and borders were set up and operated, and they have also determined the workings of stage traps and many visual and aural effects.
But the body of knowledge regarding the precise line of development of staging practices is not complete. It is generally held, for example, that many scenes during the period in question were played against shallow scenery, but thus far no detailed objective studies have been made to determine how many scenes were played in this fashion. It is also generally assumed that the staging of the period in question led to the staging practices employed for the presentation of the nineteenth-century melodramas, with their emphasis upon a kind of crude illusion of reality. But the chain of development is not precisely forged. Lacking is precise knowledge such as the extent to which furniture and other properties were used in the playing areas, the frequency or rarity of the use of set-pieces, and the degree to which the illusion was theatrical or real.

Possibly the most important reason why detailed information about staging practices is lacking lies in the type of theatrical research that has thus far been reported with regard to the period in question. The general principles of staging have been established by meticulous scholars who have applied themselves largely to studies of the physical aspects of theatres and who have, accordingly, confined themselves to the interpretations of theatrical remains. Without such studies and interpre-
tations no investigation of staging practices would be fruitful, of course, and their importance must not be minimized. But of themselves they lead to "specific" knowledge in a general sense; *i.e.*, they often answer the question, How? but rarely the question, How often? They reveal a staging technique, perhaps, but do not reveal how general or how limited was its use. In other words, studies limited to the physical characteristics of stages, no matter how valuable, cannot hope to provide exact and specific knowledge about staging. For this information it is necessary to link the findings of students of physical theatre to evidence drawn from other sources.

And what might these sources be? Perhaps the answer to this question is to be found by considering the sources of information in a later period. Much of the body of knowledge of the staging practices of the second half of the nineteenth century comes from the notations in the promptbooks of that period and from detailed printed instructions in the scripts. These promptbooks and scripts are often rich in information about the character of the scenery and about the location of the various elements of scenery on the stage. Some of them are also detailed with regard to the methods of carrying out certain stage tricks and theatrical effects. By linking the specific evidence
drawn from these valuable documents to the mine of information drawn from other types of research, it has been possible to reconstruct many aspects of late nineteenth-century staging with a considerable degree of exactitude.

Promptbooks and scripts of the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth century, however, have not thus far been subjected to sharp scrutiny to obtain whatever information they have to offer. The neglect of the source is understandable, for the promptbooks of the period in question are generally not nearly so profusely annotated as the promptbooks of the later periods, and scholars appear to be reluctant to undertake and report research over material that seems to yield extremely scanty results. Still, these documents remain as a source, and just as it would seem foolish to refuse to work a copper mine because it failed to yield gold, so it seems foolish to neglect a source of theatrical knowledge because it may not be so rich as similar sources in other periods. In any case, the promptbooks seem to be the logical place to go to find evidence that will lead to a more complete knowledge of staging practices. Small bits of knowledge are better than none, and, like small bits of money, may often eventually yield large returns.

The present study, therefore, was undertaken. It is an attempt to glean a better understanding of certain
aspects of English theatrical staging of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries through an analysis of a number of promptbooks and scripts of that period.

The Area of the Study

The Gothic genre.--Literary analysis has established a number of relationships in form and content between the melodramas that developed during the nineteenth century and the earlier romantic plays, often referred to as Gothic dramas, that made up the principal dramatic fare of the period. These plays were a part of the literary and architectural taste that became evident in England about the middle of the eighteenth century -- a taste which found its satisfactions in Gothic architecture, ruins, morbid fancies, wild, romantic tales and scenes, and atmospheres of the strange and supernatural. As time went on this taste diminished but by no means disappeared -- as is made evident by the favorite Victorian pastime of couples taking pleasurably melancholy outings to select appropriate plots of land for their tombs. In drama the taste diminished to a preference for the exciting and the eventful in place of the supernatural and the wild.

Since the exciting and eventful melodramas made elaborate use of the physical attributes of the theatres,
it was thought advisable to focus attention upon the staging of their immediate predecessors -- the Gothic plays. It was felt that perhaps the origins of some of the practices of the latter part of the nineteenth century might well be found in productions of these earlier plays that were the literary and theatrical ancestors of the melodramas.

The Specific Aims of the Study

The specific aims of the study were directed primarily toward unearthing exact items of information regarding certain aspects of scenery used in productions of plays of the Gothic genre. Secondary aims were concerned with certain stage effects, the frequency of their use, and like matters.

The primary aims were as follows:

1. To determine the nature of the scenery that was employed in the mounting and staging of Gothic dramas. This aim was twofold in nature: first, to establish the extent to which stock scenery was used as opposed to especially designed and constructed scenery; and, second, to determine the extent to which two-dimensional scenery was used as compared to the extent to which three-dimensional objects were used.
2. To determine where the various scenic elements were located on the stage in a number of given productions. This aim was incorporated into the study because it is only by reference to exact information regarding the depth of a large body of scenes that we can hope to learn the proportion of deep and shallow settings utilized in the staging of the period.

3. To determine the most frequent types of alternations of scenes -- whether from deep to shallow (upstage to downstage), moderate to shallow, deep to deep, or shallow to shallow. The intention here was to discover whether there was any convention, tradition, or working premise which governed the setting-up (and ultimately the writing) of scenes.

The secondary aims of the study were three in number:

1. To detect the types of stage effects that were employed, and to determine the frequency of their use.

2. To determine the extent to which the playwright's concept (as judged by his scenic descriptions) was actually realized upon the stage. This aim existed in order to find out what actually was accomplished on the stage rather than what the playwright hoped would be accomplished.

Too often, it is believed, students of theatre have based their conclusions regarding the nature of the scenery
and stage effects upon the playwright's descriptions, forgetful that production very often does not agree with the "requirements" of the script, and forgetful of the even more important fact that, since the plays were read with the same avidity as the novels, the descriptions may have been inserted to provide mood and atmosphere for the reader, and may not have had a great deal to do with what went on in actual production. Moreover, it seems more reliable to draw our conclusions from the evidence in the promptbooks than from contemporary statements of eyewitnesses. What is "real" and "marvelous" to one generation is by no means real or marvelous to another, and it seems wise to use the proverbial pinch of salt when accepting the reactions of eyewitnesses to the scenic décor.

3. To attempt to locate the relationships between the staging practices used for productions of Gothic plays and the productions of nineteenth-century melodramas.

The Form of the Study

The form of the study was determined principally by the type of materials that were used, by the limitations imposed by those materials and by the aims of the study itself.

Materials.—The materials for the major part of the study consisted of approximately fifty promptbooks of pro-
ductions of Gothic dramas. Of these, about one-half contained few or no markings in the hand of the prompter. In addition to these promptbooks, approximately twenty-five acting edition printed scripts of Gothic dramas were utilized. Other material consisted of about fifteen promptbooks and acting edition scripts of melodramas produced in the nineteenth century.

**Method.** Underlying the method of the study were two basic assumptions with regard to the reliability of the materials. These assumptions were as follows:

1. It was assumed that the notations made in the promptbooks by the prompters were accurate, and that they faithfully reflect those aspects of the productions with which they are concerned.

2. It was assumed in the case of a very few plays that the playwrights' descriptions were reliable as evidence regarding staging. This assumption was made only in those cases in which parts of the description were underlined by the prompter (signifying that these were used in the production) or where, by deleting a part of the description, the prompter indicated that the remainder was applicable.

Once these assumptions were established and applied, the promptbooks were carefully analyzed to extract either direct or indirect evidence regarding scenic elements.
Direct evidence was that specifically noted by the prompter, as, for example, a note reading: "Moonlight landscape--5th Grooves," which definitely indicates both the nature of the scenery and where it was placed on the stage.

Indirect evidence was that gleaned by the interpretation of the implications of directions not specifically concerned with scenery; for example, a prompter's note indicating that a character was to enter in the second entrance on stage right or left was taken as evidence that the backscene was upstage of that entrance position; if the notes indicated that a character was to be discovered seated in a chair, it was assumed that the preceding scene was placed downstage of the scene in question, otherwise a discovery would not have been possible (except, of course, in the opening scene of an act); or if a prompter's warning note placed an actor offstage at the second entrance to await his cue, and a later note read: "Enter through door," it was assumed that a door existed at that entry point.

When the analyses of the promptbooks were completed and the results interpreted, it became possible to synthesize the results in an effort to obtain a generalized picture of the nature of scenery most often used, the types of scenic alternations that were customary, and the depth of stage areas exposed to view.
During the analysis notes were also taken on the types of stage effects employed, the manner in which they were executed (if known), the number of occasions on which they were employed, and the extent to which they fulfilled the requirements of the script.

Reporting.--Since such a large body of material was involved in the analysis the method of reporting the research became something of a problem. It was decided, therefore, to report in detail the analyses of five of the promptbooks -- one of a production of a very early Gothic play, one of a very late Gothic play, and three of plays of varying degrees of Gothicism. The reports of the analyses of these productions constitute five of the major chapters of this study, and the report of the findings on various aspects of staging from the analyses of other productions were grouped within one chapter, but each individual analysis was not reported in detail. Finally, one chapter was devoted to a similar report linking the analyses of a number of melodramas to the findings regarding the productions of Gothic plays.

As an aid to the reader, one preliminary chapter was included. This chapter contains a discussion of the physical aspects of English stages during the period in question; it also includes definitions of terms used
throughout the text and attempts to present a general picture of English stages, staging devices and conventions as they existed when Gothic dramas was being produced in abundance.

Pictorial materials were included in the text wherever it was felt that their inclusion would significantly help to clarify the textual discussion. The majority of these are schematic plans showing the position of scenic elements on the stage in the various productions. Other pictorial materials are included in the Appendix.

The limitations of the study. Several limitations were imposed upon the study. These, evolving from the materials themselves and from the aims of the study, were as follows:

1. Interpretations were rather narrowly restricted to the evidence found in the promptbooks themselves. Occasionally an interpretation was based upon evidence drawn from other sources, but the intention was to confine the study largely to the principal materials which, of course, were the promptbooks and acting edition scripts.

2. The study, since it was concerned primarily with the scenery of the productions that were analyzed, dealt very little with matters of stage lighting, except in those few instances in which details of lighting revealed something about the scenery itself or about
the accomplishment of a stage trick or theatrical effect.

3. The study was concerned with no aspects of acting, except where stage positions of performers were indicative of the nature and placement of scenery or stage traps.

A Review of the Literature

The literature contemporary with the productions.--
The theatrical literature contemporary with the productions themselves is fairly extensive, but most of it exists in the form of anecdote and personal reminiscence. Of these sources, only those containing a substantial amount of information are mentioned here.

Probably the most valuable contemporary sources are the biographies written by playwright James Boaden who was a friend of the most outstanding performers and managers of his time. Boaden's works contain anecdotal material about such items as the design of scenery for a specific production, the means of accomplishing a stage effect or two, theatrical quarrels and jealousies, and

matters of a like nature. Most of what he wrote about staging had to do with productions with which the Kembles were concerned, either as actors or managers or both.

Similar to the work of Boaden is a volume by George Raymond. Raymond's information is probably quite reliable for the man himself was an actor and also served as prompter at Drury Lane Theatre during the period of Elliston's management there; he also saw service in the provincial theatres.

In the same category with the work of Boaden and Raymond are the various volumes of playwrights of the same family who were active in the theatre during part of the period with which this study is concerned.

Non-contemporary sources.—Later sources are principally from writers whose work is less anecdotal than the work of the authors mentioned above, and whose interest lay in the exposition of theatrical techniques
more than in the exploration of theatrical personalities. Of these writers, Percy Fitzgerald was the earliest, and


his work is extremely valuable. Although he wrote in the latter part of the nineteenth century, Fitzgerald appeared to be conversant with a number of practices that obtained in an earlier day -- in his youth, and even before. His work sheds much light on matters such as the use of liveried servants for the shifting of furniture on stage, the effect upon the audience of certain types of scenic elements and scene-shifting devices and the method of accomplishing a number of theatrical tricks and stage effects.

Of incalculable value, both directly as revealed in his own publications and indirectly as revealed in the publications of Richard Southern is the research of William J. Lawrence. Lawrence's dedication to exhaustive research


in matters theatrical and his almost passionate desire to know how shows were staged led to the accumulation of a
vast body of knowledge. Of this material, twelve notebooks representing forty years of work were placed at the disposal of Richard Southern who included the contents of


these volumes with his own excellent material in his publications. Mr. Southern's research is largely concentrated upon the physical aspects of theatres and stage scenery and machinery, and his works are especially rich in pictorial material of a highly informative value.

A fairly recent study by Don A. Watters is of considerable aid to those interested in the scene design of the period with which the present study deals. The work describes the characteristics of scenery under the influence of the trend toward the picturesque, and treats of some Gothic plays, but only incidentally as they relate to the author's thesis. Watters' study is especially illuminating with regard to certain scenic elements such as the diorama and other similar devices.
Literature concerning Gothic drama as a literary form.—Those interested in the study of Gothic drama from the literary point of view as well as the theatrical will find an excellent source in the work of Bertrand Evans.  

Bertrand Evans, Gothic Drama from Walpole to Shelley (Berkeley, California: The University of California Press, 1947), 257 pp.

This author was the first to treat Gothic drama in detail as a separate dramatic genre. His analyses of a number of Gothic plays are exhaustive, and the discussion of his theory that Gothic drama inspired the writing of Gothic novels is especially interesting to theatre people because of its implication that the descriptions in the novels (and the situations) paralleled, perhaps, what was visible to the eye on the stage. Mr. Evans' work also supplies a very convenient list of productions of plays containing Gothic elements.
CHAPTER I

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS
OF ENGLISH STAGING PRACTICE

The major physical characteristics of the English stage remained unchanged in any significant degree for a period of more than a hundred years before the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The stage floor was constructed of wood, built in a gentle slope or rake from front to back, pierced with a number of apertures, and equipped with certain items of standard machinery.

Standard Stage Machinery

The grooves. — Of primary importance among the standard items of machinery on English stages was that portion of the equipment which was called the grooves. The grooves were groups of channels running horizontally both on the stage floor and in the flies above it. These were used to guide and support the large pieces of scenery called flats and the smaller pieces of scenery called wings. Each set of grooves for flats contained about four individual channels (occasionally three or five), and each set of grooves for wings usually contained three channels.
Figure 1.—Typical Groove Plan of English Stages

Figure 1 shows a typical arrangement of grooves for flats and wings on the English stage floor. The downstage set (B) was referred to as "the first grooves," the next set (D) as "the second grooves," and so on through the remaining sets. Those parts of the grooves
on the floor that were in the acting area were removed when not in use, at least as early as 1792, and those parts of the grooves in the flies above the acting area were capable of being lifted up out of sight when they were not needed to support scenery.\(^1\) Figure 1 shows the wing grooves (A, C, E, and G) converging as they go upstage. Some stages, as that of the Theatre Royal at Plymouth (1811), were so arranged as to have the wing grooves directly upstage of one another, as shown in Figure 2.

The number of grooves differed in the various houses. For example, the Theatre Royal at Plymouth contained four sets of grooves,\(^2\) whereas Niblo's Gardens (an American theatre built, like all American theatres of the time, in imitation of English theatres) contained seven sets of grooves, of which only the first five were used for scenery.\(^3\) The evidence from promptbooks suggests


\(^2\)Ibid., Fig. 15.

\(^3\)Nicholas A. Vardas, *Stage to Screen* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1949), p. 2,
that stages of about 1800 contained approximately four sets of grooves, whereas stages built after mid-century contained six or seven. Until such time as theatrical staging involved the use of a great many set-pieces, deep stages were not necessary for most English productions. Indeed, the concept of shallowness and flatness in production held on long after deeper stages were actually necessary to accommodate the complex settings of melodrama. As late as 1871 we find the following comment with regard to stage dimensions:

The stage of a theatre should be wide and high; it is not necessary that it should be deep. . . [for] depths and distances may easily be imitated within comparatively shallow limits by skilful perspective and a gradual diminution in the proportion of the objects represented.  


Figure 1 (A, C, E, and G) shows the wing grooves on the floor of a typical theatre. These were labeled "first," "second," "third," etc., after the manner of labeling the flats. The intervals between the wings were labeled "first entrance," "second entrance," etc., through as many entrances as the sets of wings provided; for example, in play scripts the farthest downstage entrance on the right was referred to as "Right First Entrance," or, abbreviated, as "R. 1 E." The uppermost entrance was often referred to as "Right
Upper Entrance," or "R. U. E." Entrances on stage left were similarly styled as "Left Upper Entrance," "L. U. E.," etc.

In some theatres, like the Theatre Royal at Ipswich, the first grooves were placed rather far upstage of the proscenium curtain. In such cases extra sets of wings, called proscenium wings, intervened between the first wing grooves and the curtain line, as shown by Figure 2 (A). These proscenium wings, together with the other wings, served as partial masking pieces, but, because of the narrowness of the wings and the distance between one wing and the next wing upstage of it, complete masking was not achieved. To the modern theatre-goer, inadequate masking seems indefensible, but eighteenth and nineteenth-century audiences apparently were not so demanding in this regard. Indeed, Southern has concluded that masking was "held of little account."

Grooves were at one time used in the continental theatres; students of theatre will recall references to them in the works of Sabbattini, Furttenbach, and others. But they were supplanted in Europe (except possibly in
Holland) by the "continental" method which utilized carriages beneath the stage for supporting and shifting flat pieces of scenery.

Inigo Jones, in his mountings of masques, initiated the use of grooves in England for controlling the movement of scenery changes at least as early as 1635.\(^7\) His grooves for flats (or shutters or shuts, as they were originally styled) were continuous; i.e., they ran all the way across the stage floor. But the continuous groove gave way, some time after 1731, to grooves existing as two ends, with a space in the center between them.\(^8\) Figures 1 and 2 show this open space in each set of grooves for flats.

Figure 1 also shows that sixteen pairs of flats (four each in B, D, F, and H) could be mounted in the grooves of an average theatre at one time. Those in any given set, as for instance Figure 1 (B), nested together somewhat like cards in a deck of cards, so that sliding off the top "card" (the flats in the first channel) would reveal the second "card"; this being slid off, the third "card" or scene would be revealed, and so on.

\(^7\)Ibid., p. 54.

\(^8\)Ibid., p. 192.
With only three wing groove positions in each set, it is obvious that not nearly so many different wings could be used as flats unless they were changed during performance. The scarcity of wing grooves (basically three, serving sixteen sets of flats) did not, however, impose restrictions on staging, for the wings were not individualized as were the flats. A set of formal interior wings could be, and was, used with many different pairs of flats representing formal interiors. As a result, scenic stock contained far fewer wings than flats; for example, Covent Garden Theatre, early in the eighteenth century, carried forty-three back-scenes in its stock, but only nineteen sets of wings.  


Later in the century (and we may assume earlier as well) touring companies often carried only their flats with them, and relied upon the stock wings in the various provincial houses to complete their stage pictures.  


The grooves for flats and wings were employed as the basic method of scene shifting as follows. Before the beginning of the show, all of the backgrounds that were
composed of flats were placed in appropriate grooves on
the stage. It was necessary that all flats be in the proper
grooves before the rise of the curtain, for flats could not
be taken out and replaced by others during the course of a
performance in most theatres. 11 Those scenes that were

11 Southern, op. cit., p. 293.

required to close over preceding scenes were, of course,
generally placed in downstage positions, whereas the flats
associated with the long scenes and scenes embellished by
additional elements (such as set-pieces) were usually
placed in grooves farther upstage. Wings appropriate to
the various sets of flats were placed in the wing grooves,
the farthest downstage groove of each set of grooves
holding wings associated with the first scene, the second
groove probably holding the wings associated with the sec­
ond scene, and so on. Wings, being very narrow, were easy
to handle and could be withdrawn from the grooves to make
room for others in productions requiring more than three
sets of wings.

Later chapters show where flats and wings were
located for specific productions, as deduced from evidence
in the promptbooks. But in order to achieve a visualiza­
tion of the workings of flats and wings let us turn our
attention to Figure 3 which shows an arrangement of scenery
Figure 3.—Arrangement of Scenery for Three Scenes

for one act of a hypothetical production. Let us assume that the first scene is a long scene in terms of depth. Figure 3 (A) shows the probable location of the flats for the scene in the fourth grooves. Complementing these flats are appropriate wings (Fig. 3, A₁) placed in the first groove of each set of wing grooves. Note that while
this scene played, the flats of the second and third
scenes (Fig. 3, C and B) were withdrawn to the sides so
as not to mask the view of the flats (A) at the back.

At the end of the scene, the following action
occurred. Two stagehands, one on each side of the stage,
pushed on the flats (C) for the second scene. These came
into view along the line C\(^2\). While these flats were being
pushed on, two more stagehands pulled off the wings (A\(^1\))
of the first scene, thereby revealing the wings (C\(^1\)) of the
second scene. Obviously, the entire shift could be
accomplished in a matter of seconds.

During the playing of the second scene, certain
backstage activity occurred to ready the stage for the
third scene. Stagehands pushed on the flats (B) along
the line B\(^2\). Other stagehands drew off the wings (A\(^1\))
from the second grooves position. Then, at the conclusion
of the second scene (which, it will be remembered, was
playing while all of this activity occurred), the flats
at C and the wings at C\(^1\) were withdrawn to reveal the
third scene in its entirety (B and B\(^1\)).

The ease of these manipulations makes it clear
that the various scenes of the play could succeed one
another without any delay whatsoever as long as the scenery
was confined principally to flat elements as shown in
Figure 3. The system of scene-shifting also made it
possible for playwrights to include a number of different scenes in their dramas because these involved no tiresome waits for scene shifting. It was an ideal arrangement for the taste of the mid-eighteenth century audiences -- tastes which were succinctly expressed anonymously:

Even when the content of the play does not require it [scene changes] the imagination of the audience does; the eye is tired with the sameness even tho' it be proper.12


Apertures.--In addition to the grooves which aided in guiding the flat scenic elements on and off the stage horizontally and served to hold the flats and wings upright in position, English stages contained a number of apertures consisting of traps and other horizontal cuts in the floor.

Stage traps.--Although any portion of the stage floor could be taken up to form traps as needed, three types of apertures for permanent traps were standard in English stages. These were corner traps, grave traps and cauldron traps.

Figure 4 (A and B) shows the corner traps located downstage right and left, just above the curtain line.
Figure 4.---Plan of Standard Traps

Some theatres were equipped with more than two such traps. As the nineteenth century progressed and the staging of Gothic plays and melodramas necessitated more complex arrangements, more stage traps were often to be found in stage floors; Niblo's Gardens, for example, contained
The corner traps were small (usually of a size capable of admitting the passage of the body of one actor) and were mostly used for sudden appearances or disappearances, as of ghosts. They were capable of being covered in a variety of ways. One covering, known as the star trap, consisted of pie-like wedges of wood, hinged with strips of leather to a circular or square opening. Beneath the stage floor, directly under this covering, a platform (usually counterweighted) bearing an actor was located. When released, the trap ascended, and the rising actor's head raised the wedges of the "star." As soon as the ascension was completed, the actor stepped off the trap and the wedges fell shut. Figure 5 shows a representation of an actor standing on a trap making his ascent.

Figure 4 (c) shows an oblong trap known as the grave trap, a name derived from its use as Ophelia's grave in productions of Hamlet.

The square trap, Figure 4 (D), was known as the cauldron trap, principally because of its use in bringing up and lowering the witches' cauldron in presentations of Macbeth.
During the nineteenth century many ingenious specialized traps were devised which permitted the sudden manifestations of ghosts and vampires of which the Gothic plays (and later the melodramas) made so much use. Chief among these special traps was the "anglais" which was a trap composed of steel bands covered with
canvas through which an actor could hurl himself, after which the bands snapped back into place and the wall or floor containing the trap would again seem to be solid.14


Similar to this was the Vampire trap, invented for Planche's The Vampire in 1820.15 This trap was formed of two india-


rubber doors or leaves through which the actor passed, and which then closed rapidly behind him.16 Still another, invented about 1852 for Dion Boucicault's The Corsican Brothers, was named the Corsican trap, after the play. It consisted of a traveling trap in the floor through which a spectre or other figure rose as he glided across the stage.17 The trap was also referred to as the ghost glide. The simultaneous double trap (two small traps side by side) was used for rapid substitutions of one

16Fitzgerald, op. cit., p. 58.

17Ibid., p. 47.
actor for another, and revolving traps of various kinds were also developed. 18


Cuts.—In addition to the various stage traps, English stages contained a number of narrow "cuts" or openings running horizontally across the stage. When not in use, these cuts were closed on the surface of the stage floor by means of pieces of wood which could be slid off to reveal the openings. Under the stage floor, beneath the cuts, were vertical grooves with sliding tongues by means of which pieces of scenery could be guided up and into view, or down and out of view. In the Victorian era this vertical groove mechanism came to be known as the "slote" (or sloat), but early references to it call it simply a groove. For example, the Covent Garden inventory listing properties contained in the cellar mentions "...groove and wts to trees in Orpheus." 19 The pro-

19 Wyndham, op. cit., p. 513.

duction of Orpheus and Eurydice at Covent Garden Theatre contained an effect of trees rising from the earth. 20

20 Southern, Changeable Scenery, p. 199.
The "groove" mentioned above was the groove that guided these trees into position, and it was this mechanism that was developed in the nineteenth century as the slot.

As the foregoing suggests, the vertical groove was used to bring up or sink various types of flat scenery (ground rows, profiles, and flats) in visible scene-shifting. Entire pieces of scenery or parts of larger units could be handled by this device. When the bottom half of a flat scene was taken down and the top half was taken up into the flies, the action was described as a "rise and sink."

Types of Scenery

The various items of scenery used on the English stage were divided into two classes -- flat elements and set-pieces. The term "flat elements" as used here includes all items of scenery that are basically two-dimensional, i.e., those which have height and width but no depth (except that which may be painted on the surface through the principles of perspective). Eight variations of flat scenery were commonly used.

**Flats.**--The principal type of flat scenery was called "the flat," and it is the item from which the modern flat is descended (although the dimensions are
dissimilar). The flat was a large painted cloth (usually canvas) framed in for rigidity much as modern flats are framed. It was most often used in combination with another flat of equal size, the pair of them being sufficiently large to extend horizontally all the way across the visible part of the stage, and serving to terminate the scene.

The size of flats varied, of course, according to the dimensions of the stage for which they were constructed. Some that are still in existence date from about 1818 and their dimensions are 13 ft., 1½ in. wide; 10 ft., 2¼ in. high. But these dimensions are not to be taken as absolutely representative. Scenery created for one theatre sometimes could not readily be adapted for use in another because of unsuitability of size. Boaden commented on this when writing of the move of the Drury Lane company to the Opera House in the Haymarket in 1791:

... little could be done at the Opera House for the accommodation of the English drama; and the small flats of Drury Lane were lost under a roof so towering.

Certainly the flats designed by William Capon as the back-
scene for Joanna Baillie's De Monfort in 1799 were a good
deal larger than those referred to above, for the scene
itself was 56 feet wide and 37 feet high. 23

23 W. J. Lawrence, "The Pioneers of Modern English
Stage Mounting: William Capon," The Magazine of Art,
XVIII (1895), p. 291.

Flats could be framed so as to include practicable
(workable) doors, windows, fireplaces, and the like. They
could also be entirely solid throughout their surfaces,
with doors, windows, trees, pillars, etc., represented by
means of paint. They might also be painted to represent
neutral interior backgrounds without any particularly dis­t­
inguishing characteristics. In any event, the primary
purpose of the flats was twofold: to indicate the general
character of the locale and to serve as a backscene.

Cut flats.--The cut flat was a framed flat of the
same proportions as the flat. It was, however, pierced
with openings (other than ordinary doors and the like)
through which actors were often able to pass. For example,
a flat representing a grove of trees was often cut so that
the spaces between the individual trees were actually open,
cut-out spaces, through which actors could move. When a
pair of flats of this nature was used it became necessary,
of course, to provide another element of scenery upstage
of it to serve as the backscene.
Drops.--The drop was an unbroken area of painted canvas, similar in function to the flat, except that it was not framed and was lowered from above by rollers. Drops were painted in the same ways and to represent the same things as flats. A drop could not be used, however, when practicable doors and windows were needed because it was unframed and thus without rigidity to support moveable elements such as doors.

A special form of drop, the act drop, came into use in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. This item, identical in construction and manipulation with the drop described above, was placed behind the front curtain and was dropped at the end of each act in some, but by no means all, theatres. These act drops were often painted to represent formal drapery, and only rarely were they especially painted (as modern act-drops for musical comedies are painted) for specific shows. Act drops were sometimes called "blinds."

Wings.--Wings, like flats, were made of framed canvas and painted, but their purpose was to stand horizontally at the sides of the stage to serve as partial masking pieces and to complete the "surround" of the scenery. Hence they were much narrower than flats -- usually from three to four feet in width -- but in height the same as the flats with which they were used. The wings were painted repre-
sentationally, as were the flats, but were so generalized as to enable them to serve with many different pairs of flats.

Apparently it was the custom in many theatres to have certain standard wings ready in the wing groove positions at all times. The theatre at Ipswich kept four types of wings in readiness -- Palace Interior, Cottage Interior, Cave or Rock Wing, and Wood or Tree Wing. At Plymouth, three types were kept in readiness -- Palace, Tree and Chamber. These were ample for most productions.

Profile pieces. -- Profile pieces are flats or wings that have one or more edges in a form other than a straight line. To represent rocks in a scene where the rocks had to be seen but not used by the actors, a flat piece of scenery cut roughly along the edges to represent the irregularities or rock surfaces was often used.

Borders. -- Borders are strips of canvas, sometimes framed, that serve as the masking pieces at the tops of the stage settings. These pieces, occasionally arched in the center but more often straight across, were raised and lowered on lines from the flies and, when visible, were
so arranged as to have their lower edges in front of, and just below the tops of, the wings.

It is probable that theatres used stock borders of three kinds almost exclusively. These were arch borders, sky borders, and ceiling borders. Indeed, the theatre at Plymouth, which we may take as being somewhat representative of its period, was equipped to handle only the three sets of borders mentioned above. These corresponded in character to the stock wings mentioned above.

Ground-rows. — A ground-row is a flat piece of scenery similar to flats and wings except that it is low, and is often irregularly profiled at the top edge. Ground-rows serve to represent things such as low mountains in the distance, hedges, walls, and waves; they are also used to mask lighting instruments on the stage floor. In England, ground-rows were originally called "foot pieces" and were used possibly as early as 1640 (in a production of Salmacida Spolia).

Folding pieces. — Folding pieces are flat elements with different views painted on different faces. These are hinged together in such a way as to convert from one scene (or view) to the other instantly. Another type of
Folding piece consisted of a stairway folded accordion-like against a flat. When the flat was in place the stairway would unfold and become practicable.  

Figure 6 exemplifies a simple type of folding scenery.
The surfaces (A) represent one scene, and when the scenery is unfolded at C, the surfaces (B) are revealed to present a different picture. Figure 7 shows a variation of this type of scenery; this was used often in the staging of transformations of places into ruins, and to effect other similar changes. The surfaces A and A' might represent a handsome facade; when A is folded down along the line CD, a new surface (B and the back of A) might show the ruins of the facade. Figure 8 shows such a piece in readiness for its manipulation.

Figure 7.—Folding Scenery

Set-pieces.—The term "set-piece" as used about 1800 had a meaning slightly different from that which it has today. It referred, apparently, to any item of scenery (usually three-dimensional) that was free-standing within the acting area; thus, practicable rocks, free-standing doorways, cottage entrances, ships, or cavern mouths, if separate from the flats or wings, were considered to be set-pieces.
Flat scenes, set-scenes, and carpenters' scenes.

Flat scenes were those scenes that were composed of flats,
wings and borders (or other flat elements) only, whereas set scenes contained set-pieces or three-dimensional objects of scenery.

These [set scenes] are very elaborate. Instead of the whole picture being painted on the backcloth, the distance only is put in, the middle distance and foreground being composed of set-pieces, raking pieces and ground rows. . . . It requires great skill and experience to paint and arrange a set scene.27


Because of their complexity these scenes were "set" by stagehands who were usually masked from the audience's view in some way, either by closed flats or by the act drop.

Flat scenes that were played downstage (e.g. in the first grooves) in order to mask the setting-up of set-scenes were called carpenters' scenes because they gave the stage carpenters a chance to ready the set-scene placed farther upstage.

Scenic Conventions

Visible scene-shifting.—The convention of changing the scenery in plain sight of the audience was a long-lived one in England. The many grooves, providing space for many different backscenes, existed, of course, as a means of accomplishing rapid visible shifts. The
"clicking shutters" (flats) that so smoothly altered the scene before the audience's eyes were a part of conventional English staging practice from at least 1608 when they were used at Whitehall in Ben Jonson's *Hue and Cry after Cupid*. And most of the other staging devices, such as the apertures in the floor, also existed as means of providing visible scene changes.

Despite the fairly elaborate machinery designed to facilitate rapid and smooth shifts, human error sometimes led to awkwardness in the shifting and delay in the succession of scenes. Fitzgerald, without mentioning his source, wrote that,

> About 1760, an observer pointed out the want of propriety and order in the regulation of the scenes. "The scene-shifters often present us with dull clouds hanging in a lady's dressing-room, trees intermingled with the disunited portions of a portico, a vaulted roof unsupported. . . ." 28


And Planché, writing about a performance in 1818, commented that "every trick failed, not a scene could be induced to close or to open properly." 29

29 Planché, *op. cit.*, I, 35.
The very mechanics of scene shifting also created visual effects that were displeasing to some observers. Boaden expressed his dissatisfaction with the type of scenery employed:

... an objection will always remain to the abrupt junction of the borders with the tops of the scenes, the wings, and the scoring line, where the flats meet each other, the grooves in which they move, and other difficulties. ...

Stock scenery.—In the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth century plays were rarely mounted in entirely new scenery. Each theatre owned a supply of flats, wings and other pieces representing various types of interiors such as palaces, caverns and prisons and exteriors such as land and sea-scapes and battlements. These items of theatres' permanent supplies were called stock scenery.

Audiences apparently accepted the same backgrounds in many different plays as long as those backgrounds were appropriate. It was only when the mise en scène was dis-unified or scenery was old and worn that complaints were made.

Allusions to stock scenery are so numerous in writings of the period that a complete listing of them
would be tedious, but a few will suffice to point up the strength of the convention. Fitzgerald noted that scenery created by Stanfield and Roberts in 1822 for Drury Lane was still in good condition and being used in the 1880's - sixty years later. Boaden, in his discussion of the production of Morton's The Way to Get Married at Covent Garden Theatre in 1796, wrote that merely a scene or two had to be painted or altered (since so much stock scenery was available and suitable). And the same author registered dissatisfaction over the use of Drury Lane scenery at the Haymarket (c. 1792) as follows:

Nothing but a conflagration ever produces uniform scenery. The old, though too low for the increased size, is found too good and too plentiful to be thrown away, and its adaptation is always a very disjointed business.

The tendency of managers to rely upon stock scenery, even when this reliance forced them to refuse to produce notable new plays, is illustrated by Macready's
note to Bulwer in 1842:

I cannot attempt to produce Richelieu, until I have got such a surplus quantity of stock in the Theatre, as will enable me to do it justice in the decorative department without the very great cost its getting-up would now compel me to. When we have such a surplus of stock in the house as we can apply with little additional expense, I shall be too glad to have Richelieu in my list of acting plays.\textsuperscript{34}


So strong was the convention of utilizing stock scenery, and so long did it hold the English stage, that we find objections to it registered only when the stock was extremely limited or of poor quality. Writing of the gross inadequacies of the theatre at Buxton, a stage manager complained not about the use of stock scenery but only about the over-use of worn-out elements:

The theatre had only two scenes which, like Master Solomon's waistcoat, had been turned for many occasions, and from their state of near obliteration had arrived at such a point of utility as to pass for anything.\textsuperscript{35}


Scenery, then, although originally created, perhaps, for a specific production, was used again and again as appropriate, and theatres kept on hand a supply of stock
that would be capable of providing backgrounds for almost any production.

It is, however, an error to believe that stock scenery absolutely dominated all types of dramatic productions. Indeed, there is some evidence to suggest that it was the production of Gothic plays that tended to break the convention of stock scenery. Baker particularly stressed the attention given the non-classical pieces:

... during the so-called palmy days of the Kembles, while a few pairs of dingy "flats," and a collection of dingy dresses that had done service for a generation, were considered good enough for "Hamlet" and "Macbeth," the managers of the great theatres lavished large sums to illustrate such productions as "Timour the Tartar," the "Cataract of the Ganges," "Aladdin" -- not the burlesque, but a veritable, serious drama. 36

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Moreover, in writing of the productions of various other Gothic dramas, Boaden especially stressed the excellence and newness of the scenery for Pizarro (1799), The Italian Monk (1797), The Iron Chest (1796), and The Italian Nuptials (1801). 37 It was in shows of this genre, possibly, that scenery became important as a part of the
action. Boaden's comments in this regard are suggestive:

Perhaps, when the attention is once secured and the reason yielded, the passion for the marvelous has better remain ununchecked; and an interest selected from the olden time be entirely subjected to its gothic machinery. . . the pen of the dramatic poet must turn everything into shape. . . .

38Ibid., II, 97.

Here, in the words "gothic machinery" and "shape," lies a definite implication of an awareness of the possibilities of the use of scenery for dramatic effect, as opposed to its use merely as a surround or background.

Scenic Effects

Many tricks were known in the English theatres for the creation of spectacular and unusual scenic effects. Certain of these occur with such frequency in the Gothic dramas that it seems wise to discuss them here.

Ghosts and other apparitions.---A fairly frequent effect in Gothic plays was the appearance or disappearance of ghosts. James Boaden claimed to have laid the precedent for the staging of the appearance of spectres in his play Fontainville Forest (1794). 39 In this connection he wrote

39Ibid., II, 206.
as follows:

The great contrivance was, that the spectre should appear through a blueish-grey gauze, so as to remove the too corporeal effect of a 'live actor,' and convert the moving substance into a gliding essence.

\[40\text{Ibid., II, 117.}\]

That this was something of an innovation may be judged by the fact that Boaden's idea was so little understood as to be misinterpreted entirely by the actor playing the ghost. Boaden was outraged to find, in rehearsal, that the actor came on in traditional armor, with a great gauze thrown over him. But the playwright took charge of the matter immediately and rearranged the staging:

"...we soon found, across the portal of a scene, a proper place for the gauze." Then, to get rid of the "clumsy effect" of the traditional stage armor, he dressed another actor -- a very tall one -- in "dark blue grey stuff, made in the shape of armour, and sitting close to the person." This actor he placed upstage of the gauze, so that the ghost seemed to glide or float along.

\[41\text{Ibid., II, 119.}\]

Here, then, we see what is perhaps the first use of a method of staging spectral appearances or visions that has come down to our own day and that is commonly used in
scenes such as the Vision of Marguerite in Faust. Indeed, the effect caught on in its own time very quickly. According to Boaden it was imitated in The Castle Spectre in 1797, and thereafter it became almost a tradition to have a similar ghost in Gothic plays.42

42Baker, op. cit., p. 333.

The various stage traps, of course, played a part in effecting appearances and disappearances. Even much later, however, these effects were not always managed skillfully enough to maintain an illusion. Fitzgerald, writing of such devices, commented as follows:

...the fairy or demon goes down to the realms of bliss or misery through a square aperture [the trap] in the earth, cut with a geometrical precision [the star trap], to be closed, after his passage, by a sliding board attended by noise as of shifting the lid of a box.43

43Fitzgerald, The World Behind the Scenes, p. 3.

Flying machines, running in vertical grooves, were also used to create ghost effects. Once again it was James Boaden who contrived the ghost effect in his play The Bards of Cambria (1798) with the aid of the machinist Johnson:

By the parallel, I carried up my shade through the grand window of the cathedral, and some very admirably painted clouds devolved about the figure.44

44Boaden, John Philip Kemble, II, 219.
Fire and fire effects.--Frequent among the stage effects required both by Gothic plays and by later mid-nineteenth-century melodramas were fire scenes. These were sometimes painted, sometimes simulated with lycopodium,\textsuperscript{45} and sometimes real. Real fire was probably not greatly used until the nineteenth century. In this connection, Fitzgerald wrote in 1881:

So lately as thirty or forty years ago, a stage fire was symbolized rather than represented, some blazing cressets being waved to and fro inside the building that was being consumed. In truth, there was no desire to bring such an exhibition before the audience.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{45}A flammable powder derived from the mosses, much used in the manufacture of fireworks.

On occasion, however, some form of real fire was used. Red flares, burned in buckets, contributed mightily to the illusion. Also much use was made of "red fire."\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{46}Fitzgerald, The World Behind the Scenes, p. 52.

\textsuperscript{47}A powder composed chiefly of Anhydride of Nitrate that, when ignited, shed a rich, red glow.

Olive Logan described a fire technique that was probably established much earlier than 1874 when it was in common use. The technique made use of large braziers set behind cut-out flats. These braziers contained
ignited lycopodium, and were re-fueled by stagehands who posed as frightened servants or others running through the building; in reality, of course, they were throwing more lycopodium into the braziers to maintain the fire effect. To heighten the illusion, the farthest upstage piece of scenery was composed of transparent cloth through which red light was shone.48

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Water effects.—Water effects, like fire effects, were widely used both in the Gothic dramas and in the melodramas which succeeded them. In the eighteenth century, these effects lacked the verisimilitude that the nineteenth century strove to bring to them. In 1823, an observer damned the theatrical water effects in these words:

The representation of waves on the stages of our theatres, are too obviously painted boards, either of stiff, formal undulations, cut out by the house carpenter, or imitated, as of late, by a vast volume of cloth, big as the main-sail of a first-rate ship of war, on which we behold a luckless fisherman rolling about like a stranded porpoise, or an unhappy wight tossed in a blanket... whilst the ladies and gentlemen in the boxes, covered with the dust of the waves, shut their eyes in self defense.49

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But when real water was used, it too was found to destroy illusion rather than maintain it. Charles Dibdin, Jr., used real water in 1808 at Sadlers Wells for *The White Witch* and sadly lamented: "...the Waterfall, which by daylight was really...magnificent, by lamp light was completely deficient, since it could not be distinguished."  

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The more customary method of representing water effects is revealed by Dibdin's reply to those who scoffed at him for advertising "real water" for his production:

...the term real, though it might appear superfluous to the critical, was absolutely a necessary specification; since the Public knew we could, in common with all Theatres, produce artificial water, and wrap up our rivers when not used, in tarpaulins, to keep our waters from the dry rot, and, therefore, it was requisite that they should be unequivocally informed that they would actually see Water, and not Wood, Canvas and Whalebone, painted.  

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51 Ibid., p. 99.

And, finally, another statement from Fitzgerald indicates the principal method of creating a "practical" sea:

...the old form, obtaining for more than a hundred years, has never varied. A painted cloth is spread out over the stage, and a number of men
and boys prone on their backs underneath, work feet and arms diligently. 52

Thus we see, from the testimony of Pyne, Dibdin and Fitzgerald, that the customary method of representing water effects was by means of painted elements.

After the introduction of gas lighting, about the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, waterfalls were represented by gauzes lighted from behind through perforated revolving metal cylinders. 53

Apparently verisimilitude was not demanded by audiences. If, for example, a character was fished out of the "water," the audience saw no incongruity in the fact that he was quite dry. In the season of 1804-1805, Madame St. Amand played a boat scene in which she was supposed to be overturned into the water. A young boy doubled for her in the actual (rather acrobatic) tip-over, and then she was "rescued" from the wings -- appearing in perfectly dry clothing, of course. The audience greatly approved the trick of doubling for the acrobatic part of the scene, and was in no way disturbed by Madame's dryness. 54


53 Ibid., p. 73.

54 Dibdin, op. cit., p. 66.
Other stage effects.—Many other effects, such as thunder, lightning, wind, etc., were known to stage artists. De Loutherbourg in the latter part of the eighteenth century invented one of the most "real" thunder and explosion effects, and his invention was very like the kettle drum that is often used in production today. The effect was gained by dressing a large skin into parchment and fastening this to a circular frame, to form a vast tambourine which was struck by a large sponge mounted on a whalebone spring.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{55}Pyne, op. cit., I, 296f.

Breaking bridges (hinged so as to fall apart), sinking boats (often profile pieces), and various types of transformations were all managed, although not always with verisimilitude. "How clumsy," wrote Fitzgerald, "is the average representation of 'a bridge breaking down,' where we can distinctly see the 'broken' portion working smoothly on a hinge!"\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{56}Fitzgerald, The World Behind the Scenes, p. 3.
English stages were built more or less alike, with raked wood floors pierced by apertures of various kinds. The principal pieces of equipment were the grooves which were used to guide and support flat scenery. Three types of traps were standard, but others were devised as needed.

Scenery was composed of flat, painted elements and set-pieces. Scenes made up entirely of flat elements are termed "flat scenes," and, when these were used to mask the preparation of elaborate set-scenes, they were styled "carpenters' scenes." Scenes using set-pieces were called "set-scenes." All scene shifting was done without lowering a curtain or drop, except at the ends of acts, and stock scenery was widely used.

Many stage effects were known to theatre artists of the time. Chief among these were fire and water scenes and spectral appearances. In the eighteenth century, many of the fire effects were painted or symbolized conventionally, but later on greater verisimilitude was desired. Water effects were mostly painted, even through the nineteenth century. Other effects, such as thunder, lightning, wind, sinkings, etc., were known and used.
CHAPTER II

ASPECTS OF STAGING
IN THE GREGIAN DAUGHTER

This chapter is concerned with certain aspects of staging in one of the earliest of the Gothic dramas — The Grecian Daughter by Arthur Murphy. The play was first produced at Drury Lane Theatre in 1772, but the promptbook¹ from which the following analysis was made was for a production which occurred about thirty years later.

Oddly enough, the chief interest of this play with regard to staging lies in the paucity of its requirements and the slenderness of the theatrical effects employed, for this production illustrates the beginnings of the Gothic trend and serves to show how very pallid were these beginnings when compared with the colorful achievements of later plays with which this study will deal. The contrast in staging between this production of The Grecian Daughter and the production of a later, typically Gothic, play such

as *Thalaba, the Destroyer* (which is rich in theatrical effects and staging devices) tends to illustrate the really remarkable accretion of details that productions of plays of the Gothic genre acquired as the genre itself developed. The early Gothic plays used stage scenery and machinery (such as set-pieces and stage traps) and theatrical effects (such as trick appearances and visual and aural effects) sparingly, whereas the later dramas of the same general character could not have been produced without extensive recourse to these devices.

The nature and placement of scenery.--The promptbook with which this analysis is concerned, unlike many other promptbooks of the period, is highly specific about where the various scenic elements were placed and of what they were composed; hence we shall not be long delayed here, as in some other chapters, with a detailed analysis of the promptbook to ascertain the nature of the scenery and the areas of the stage that it occupied.

**Act I.**--The first act of *The Grecian Daughter* was written and played as one scene only. Here we find a disinterestedness as to locale on the part of the author -- a disinterestedness that we rarely meet in the authors of later Gothic dramas. As written, the play simply begins, with no indication whatsoever about where the action is
supposed to be occurring. This lack of interest in locality is possibly evidence of an attitude to conceive of the scenery for early Gothic plays merely as backgrounds, or formal "surrounds" to the action. The lack of specificity on the part of the playwright suggests an indifference about what that formal background might be. That this indifference was shared by the prompter is indicated by his laconic note: "Antium = 5th G." To be sure, this note tells us that the major element of scenery was placed in the fifth grooves, but the brevity of the entry and its lack of detailed information suggest that "Antium" was merely stock scenery, used here mainly because something had to be used to cut off the scene at the back rather than because Antium was especially appropriate to the play. There is no lengthy description, as in the case of some later plays, as to the character of the place represented by the scenery. The inference is that the Elizabethan facade would have served equally as well.

The prompter's note in reference to grooves assures us that the scene was composed chiefly of flats.²

²Later in the century this would not necessarily be true since prompters then sometimes described the location of a drop by referring to the grooves near which it was hanging.
Figure 9 (A) shows the position of these flats in relation to all other flats used in the production.\footnote{Attention is invited to the fact that the first grooves are omitted from Figure 9 since they were never used in the production.} The wings accompanying the first scene are shown as A in all wing grooves.

**Act II, Scene 1.**—The playwright's description of the first scene of the second act lists typical Gothic requirements. Although the description is not nearly as detailed as descriptions in most later Gothic plays, it lists three elements often to be met in plays of this genre: romantic atmosphere, rocks, and cavern -- "A wild romantic Scene amidst overhanging Rocks; a Cavern on one Side." Here, again, the prompter noted where the scenery was located and of what it consisted: "Fisherman's Cave - 3rd back'd in 4th Moonlight, [i.e., Flats of a fisherman's cave are in the third grooves, and through the cave opening is visible the moonlight backing flats placed in the fourth grooves."

As in the preceding scene (and, indeed, in all later scenes) the prompter's note implies the use of stock scenery, or scenery that had been prepared originally for another production; in this case the scenery was probably painted for a show containing
fishermen -- plainly it was not prepared for The Grecian Daughter which has nothing whatever to do with fishing folk. The "moonlight" backing was probably composed of flats drawn from stock, also, since stock flats of moonlight landscapes and seascapes appear to have been fairly standard in all theatres.

The placement of the Cave flats can be seen in Figure 9, (C). The wings accompanying these flats are shown at $C^2$, and the moonlight backing is indicated as $C^1$.

Act II, Scene 2.--The final scene of the second act of The Grecian Daughter was described in the script as the "Inside of the Cavern." For this scene the prompter used "Pizarro's Cavern" in the second grooves (Fig. 9, F).

Here, the use of the word "Pizarro" makes it clear that scenery in stock from an earlier production was used as background.4 Somewhere in the scenery was a door, for

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4Pizarro was first produced in 1799.

we find a reference to a character opening the door of a cell. Also, the prompter noted a "Large Chain across door of Cell." Whether this door was in the right, left, or center of the flats cannot be determined, but its presence tells us that the backflats represented not the mouth of
Figure 9.—Isometric View of Flats and Wings for The Grecian Daughter
a cavern (which was presumably imagined to be near the proscenium arch) but the back of the cavern. Leading off from this interior was the cell door.

The prompter made no reference to the wings employed for this setting. It seems highly probable, however, that the wings that served as the side pieces for the cave interior of the preceding scene (Fig. 9, $C^2$) would have been used again in this scene of a cavern interior, since there is not much difference between a cavern and a cave.5

5Supra, p. 39.

During the course of the action of this scene, a couch was required; but this couch was not on the stage during the entire scene. Oddly enough, an actor simply stepped to the side and drew the couch onstage only at the moment it was needed; when it was no longer required another actor removed it -- a form of behavior very reminiscent of the property man in the staging of Chinese classical drama. Two pages before the start of the scene, the prompter noted "Couch ready P. S. [prompt-side or stage left] with Head to 0. P. [opposite-prompt or stage right]." Then, within the scene itself, the dialogue and the directions (both printed and noted by the prompter) show that the character drew the couch onstage when he needed it. And, finally, when the couch was no longer
needed, the prompter noted "Philotas removes Couch."

This final direction seems puzzling in view of the fact that the action occurred very shortly before the fall of the act drop. The couch could easily have been removed by stagehands during the act interval, and it seems hardly credible that the prompter would have failed to realize this fact and taken advantage of it. The only possible reason that suggests itself as to why the actor removed the couch is that it was placed on the stage apron, below the curtain line, and would not, therefore, have been concealed by the fall of the curtain. Even in this case, of course, it is difficult to understand why stagehands could not have removed it anyway, in sight of the audience after the curtain fell. In any event, the results of a close inspection of the wording of the directions strongly suggest that the couch was pulled on stage through the proscenium door on stage left, and was either pushed back through that door, or taken upstage, just before the end of the act. It is to be noted that the prompter placed it on "P. S." but he did not indicate any specific entrance, such as "U. E. P. S.," as he often did elsewhere throughout the script. "P. S.," therefore, probably meant the proscenium door on the prompt side. Again, when Arcas drew the couch onstage, he drew it from "P. S." with no further indication of the entry from which he drew it.
This rather highly conventional staging -- the placing of properties at the exact moment that they were needed, and then removing them promptly -- suggests that the idea of verisimilitude had not, even by 1799, affected staging practice greatly. This conclusion is further bolstered by the fact that the scene could very easily have been staged so as to have the couch in position at the opening of the scene. To achieve this, it would have been necessary merely to locate this scene upstage of the preceding scene. Figure 10, which shows the plan of all the backscenes of the production according to the prompter's notations, indicates that there was plenty of free space in the fourth and fifth grooves, above the flats for Act III, Scene 2 (Fig. 10, B) and above the flats for the first scene of the play (Fig. 10, A). There was nothing to prevent the prompter from placing this scene farther upstage, instead of downstage (Fig. 10, F) as he did. His failure to do so suggests a disinclination, as during the Restoration, to play too far upstage; as we might expect, Figures 9 and 10 show that most of the scenery for the production was placed relatively far downstage.\(^6\) These downstage

\(^6\)The failure to use the first grooves at all, as shown in Figure 10, appears to have no verifiable explanation. It is possible that this area was occupied by Act drops, but of course this is merely a supposition.
Figure 10.--Plan of all Flats in *The Grecian Daughter*
positions reaffirm the notion that the playing was done against the scenery far more than within it, and that the scenery was, therefore, merely a sort of background, and was not considered as contributing especially to the theatrical effect of the play. This is in strong contrast to the later Gothic pieces which used the scenery in the course of the action and which, indeed, could not have been staged without some practicable scenery.

Act III, Scene 1.--The intention of the playwright regarding the locale represented by the scenery for the first scene of the third act of The Grecian Daughter was not realized on the stage in this production. His scenic description reads: "Scene a Rampart near the Harbour"; but the prompter's note, "Ionic Palace 2nd G," tells us that the description was discounted, for an Ionic Palace does not seem to have much in common with a rampart. Figure 9 (E) shows the position of the back-scene, again obviously stock scenery, on the stage. Here wings with an architectural motif were probably employed in the positions shown in Figure 9 (B1).

Act III, Scene 2.--The scenery for the second scene of the third act (used again in the fourth and fifth acts) is alone in the production in containing a set-piece. The playwright described the locale as a "Temple, with a
Monument in the Middle," but once again the description was almost ignored in the actual staging, for we find that the scenery was composed of a "Doric Palace 4th G.," and a "Tomb opposite 3rd G," both of which seem to be stock pieces, simply put together in the desired relationship to provide the necessities of the background.

That the tomb was a practicable set-piece is made evident by its position opposite the third grooves (not in the third grooves) and by the fact that it contained a practicable door through which characters entered into it. It was located on stage left as we are able to deduce from the stage direction for Evander who, when entering from the Monument, "comes forw'd PS."

Figure 9 (B) shows the location of the flats representing the Doric Palace. Once again the architectural wings (Fig. 9, B1) would have been appropriate, except at the third wing groove position on the left, where the Tomb was set.

Act IV, Scene 1.—The first scene of the fourth act, like the first scene of the play (and, indeed, like two other scenes) was not described by the playwright — a fact that might again suggest his lack of interest in the nature of the locale. And, as we might expect, a background was supplied from stock scenery; it was not even a new back-
ground for this production, since it had been used as the background for Act III, Scene 1, and was to be used again later in the production. For this scene, the prompter simply wrote: "Ionic as before," (Fig. 9, K).

Act IV, Scene 2.—The last scene of Act IV of The Grecian Daughter returns to the locale used in the last scene of the preceding act, and for this occasion the prompter noted: "Doric as before," (Fig. 9, B).

Act V, Scenes 1 and 3.—The first and third scenes of the last act of the production presented once again the Ionic Palace and the Doric Palace. As in the case of the opening scene of the two preceding acts, no description whatever was given by the playwright of the locale intended to be represented.

Act V, Scene 2.—The second scene of Act V was described by the playwright as "the Citadel," but the scenery used in the production does not appear to have been even so individualized as that. The prompter merely noted, "Greece 2nd G," and we may gather from this brief notation that the flats were probably stock pieces with a view of a "Grecian" landscape. It seems doubtful, since just the one word "Greece" was used that a citadel of any sort was represented on the flats. The wings, of course, could have been exterior
wings used for the first scene of the play. These wings are shown as A¹ in Figure 9.

**Wings and borders.**—Wings and borders were not specifically mentioned in the promptbook, but it seems fairly obvious that they must have been stock pieces since all of the flats with which they were associated appear to have been stock scenery.

A review of the scenes makes it at once evident that only three sets of wings and borders would have been required for the production:

1. For "Antium" and "Greece"—Exterior wings, (Fig. 9, A¹) and Sky borders.

2. For "Fisherman's Cave" and "Cavern"—Rock wings (Fig. 9, C²) with rocky cavern borders.

3. For "Ionic Palace" and "Doric Palace"—Palace wings (Fig. 9, B¹) and interior ceiling borders.

**Special effects.**—This production employed no special effects whatsoever. Beyond the prompter's notations at the beginnings of all scenes to bring the lamps up, there are no indications of any special lighting, either to help in realizing the time of day or to help in supplying mood and atmosphere. Effects of thunder and lightning, which abound in later plays, were not employed here, nor were any "blue fire" effects used in the Tomb scenes. In short, theatrical trappings with which later Gothic plays were
decked out were entirely missing from this production. The point here, of course, is that this early Gothic drama was not written so as to make full use of the resources of the theatre, whereas its successors gradually exploited these resources.

**Depths of scenes and types of alternation.**--A summary of the preceding analysis reveals that of the ten scenes in *The Grecian Daughter* exactly one-half were placed relatively far downstage (second grooves); four of the remaining five scenes were placed moderately far upstage (fourth grooves), and the fifth was placed deep (fifth grooves).

With regard to the way in which the scenes were alternated at scene shift we find that five of the nine shifts were deep-to-shallow alternations, or the reverse. One was deep-to-deep, one moderate-to-shallow, and two shallow-to-shallow.

**Conclusions.**--The foregoing analysis of the promptbook for *The Grecian Daughter* has led to the following conclusions regarding certain aspects of the staging used for the production:

1. The indication of specific localities was generally non-important.
2. All of the scenery employed in the production was stock scenery.

3. All of the scenes but one were made up entirely of flats, wings, and borders; one scene added a set-piece.

4. Only one piece of furniture was used during the entire production, and that was brought on by an actor only when it was specifically required by the action; it was not onstage when it was not actually being used.

5. There was no spectacle; there were no special effects.

6. One-half of the total number of scenes were placed in downstage grooves.

7. More than one-half of all scene shifts involved deep-to-shallow alternations.
CHAPTER III

ASPECTS OF STAGING

IN THE CASTLE SPECTRE

This chapter is concerned with certain aspects of staging of a production of *The Castle Spectre*, a Gothic drama by Matthew Gregory (Monk) Lewis. The play was originally produced at Drury Lane Theatre in 1798, and was thereafter frequently revived in the theatres royal in London and in provincial houses as well.

The promptbook consulted for this analysis was


used for productions at Covent Garden Theatre in 1825, 1839, and 1840, and probably in other years as well. It contains two handwritings, one in ink and one in pencil. According to a note at the beginning of the script, the penned notations are the earlier, and it is these notations that were used for the following analysis. An interpretation of notes in the promptbook makes it evident that
the pencil notations were made after 1837. These notes, therefore, reflect productions of the play that occurred after the heyday of the revival of Gothicism.

The original production of The Castle Spectre occurred twenty-six years after the initial production of The Grecian Daughter, the play with which the preceding chapter was concerned. The productions (of both plays) with which this study deals were later productions, but were also separated by a span of about twenty-five years. The script of The Castle Spectre, therefore, is an example of the growth of Gothicism in playwriting in the twenty-five year period after The Grecian Daughter made its first appearance, and the promptbook of The Castle Spectre is an example of the advances in staging of Gothic dramas, also in a twenty-five year period after the production of The Grecian Daughter. As one might expect, The Castle Spectre made greater use of the facilities of the stage than its predecessor; but, in comparison with later plays and productions, the use was still slight as the following analysis will show.

The nature and placement of scenery. -- The Castle Spectre was played in thirteen scenes, of which the location of seven were specifically noted by the prompter. The stage positions of the scenery for most of the re-
mainling six can be located with a fair degree of accuracy by deductions made from stage directions and other notations in the promptbook.

**Act I, Scene 1.**—The opening scene of the play was characterized by the playwright simply as "A Grove." Here, as in several scenes of *The Grecian Daughter*, the lack of detail in the scenic description leads one to conclude that stock scenery was employed. Certainly groves and other types of landscapes were standard items of scenery in all of the playhouses.

The prompter noted that the backdrop was placed in the second grooves, and further noted the existence of a practicable gate in the second entrance on stage left. Figure 11 (L) shows the position of the Grove with reference to all the other flat elements used in this production.

The addition of a gate to the scenic décor may indicate a growing necessity for the amplification of detail on the stage. The gate was not specifically required by the action, and it seems, therefore, to have been added for no reason other than dressing the stage. When we consider, however, the fact that this production was a revival of an older, less detailed play than those being written at the time of this revival, we find it
easy to see why the prompter exceeded the playwright's requirements. Lewis' play, *Adelgitha,*\(^2\) was produced

\[2\text{Adelgitha is discussed in detail in Chapter V.}\]

originally at about the same time as this revival, and it made considerable use of set-pieces of various kinds, as did other contemporary productions. This being the case, it was probably felt that a scene utilizing merely a stock Grove with no additional elements would make a poor showing, especially as an opening scene, and it was necessary, therefore, to add detail even though this detail was not demanded by the action.

Except for the gate, the side pieces were probably stock tree wings located as shown in Figure 11 (O and T) in the first and second wing grooves.

*Act I, Scene 2.*--Figure 11 (Q) shows the placement of the flats for the second scene of *The Castle Spectre.* Their position in the first grooves was noted at the opening of the scene by the prompter. Like the first scene, it seems likely that this scene was composed of stock scenery, for the description is merely: "The Castle Hall." Figure 11 (T) shows the logical location of the wings used with these flats; since the first wing groove of each set of wing grooves was occupied with the tree wings of the preceding scene, the second groove would
Figure 11.—Schematic Plan of Flats and Wings in the Staging of *The Castle Spectre*
have been the logical position for interior wings. If the flats were of stock scenery, as they almost certainly were, it is probable that the wings, too, were stock interior wings.

As played in this production, this scene closed Act I, but revisions in the promptbook show that in later years it was used as a carpenters' scene to mask the setting-up of the fairly elaborate scenery for Act II, Scene 1, which was played as the third scene of the first act, with no intervening act break or curtain.

Later in the production this scenery was used three more times, and in Act IV, Scene 1, it was shown to have had doors in the middle of the flats.

**Act II, Scene 1.**--The first scene of the second act of *The Castle Spectre* was a good deal more complex than either of the scenes of the preceding act. It was described in the script as follows: "The Armoury.--Suits of Armour are arranged on both Sides upon Pedestals, with the Names of their Possessors written under each."

There is no indication in the script as to the precise location of the various elements of which the setting was comprised, but some other information throws light upon the nature of the décor. That the backscene was composed of flats (rather than a drop) is evident
from the prompter's note to the effect that entrances were made from or through folding doors in the middle of the backscene. Since an unframed drop could not possibly contain such doors, flats would have had to be used. The armor was practicable and stood upon practicable pedestals. It could not have been merely painted on the wings because the action required the character Percy to put on one of the suits of armor and stand on a pedestal in it -- a piece of business he could not have performed if flat elements had been used.

Here, then, we find a scene which incorporates within it the furnishings (armor and pedestals) needed in the action. This is in contrast, it will be remembered, to the scenery of The Grecian Daughter which did not incorporate into the stage picture a sofa needed by the action. Here, too, we find a scene made up of considerably more than flat, painted elements. The backscene, of course, was flat, and was probably stock scenery; but the actual locale seems to have been indicated more by what stood within the stage setting--the furnishings of armor and the pedestals--than by the backscene itself. As we shall see, this was also true of later plays.

Unfortunately, there are no prompter's notes or stage directions which serve to place the location of the backscene. It may be argued, however, that it had to be at least as far upstage as the second grooves in order
to allow space for the pedestals with armor. Moreover, if more than two suits of armor were shown (as seems likely, since the production was at Covent Garden Theatre and therefore probably not niggardly) the backscene would probably have had to be in the third grooves in order to allow space for two or more suits of armor below it on each side of the stage. That the backscene was in the fourth grooves seems doubtful because the flats of no other scenes were located that far upstage, as we shall see, and five of the thirteen scenes were played below the first set of grooves, or very far downstage. These facts appear to indicate that the production was played for the most part in shallow scenery, and therefore the scenery in question was probably relatively shallow, too, located as shown in Figure 11 (B) in the first cut of the third set of grooves.

Act II, Scene 2.—The second scene of the second act of The Castle Spectre employed the same scenery as the second scene of Act I and was, therefore, located in the first grooves (Fig. 11, Q). Here, however, the scene was obviously conceived as a carpenters' scene, for it was followed by a stage setting using furniture and a practicable window.
Act II, Scene 5.--The last scene of the second act, like the Armoury scene, required the use of furnishings, and again these were incorporated as a part of the scenic décor rather than being brought into it only when required, as in The Grecian Daughter.

The scene is described as follows: "A Spacious Chamber: On one Side is a Couch; on the other a Table which is placed under an arched and lofty Window." The prompter's note, "3rd G," tells us that the scenery was placed in the third grooves. Figure 11 (D) shows these flats in the second out of the third grooves, immediately upstage of the flats representing the Armoury scene.

By underlining most of the scenic directions, the prompter indicated that the couch, table, and arched window were included in the décor; indeed, they had to be included for, unlike the gate in the opening scene, they were essential to the progress of the action of the play. Moreover, the prompter's warning cues for actors and his notations regarding their points of entry show that there was a door in the middle of the backscene.

The prompter did not note the specific sides of the stage on which the various elements were placed; nor do the stage directions give much information about their location. There are, however, three slight pieces of evidence which, taken together for their incremental
effect, help us to locate the positions of the various elements. The first piece of evidence rests upon the tendency of occidentals (because of reading habits) to move their eyes from their left to their right when viewing objects. This tendency would seem to indicate that stage settings are described as visualized from stage right to stage left. Therefore the first item, "On one Side is a Couch," tends to place the couch at the right; the second, "on the other a Table which is placed under an arched and lofty Window," tends to place the table and window on stage left. The second piece of evidence supports these conclusions. This evidence is based upon the language of Act III, Scene 3, which used the same construction: "On one Side," etc. In the latter case, however, there are also prompter's notes referring to the position of the various items, and we find that the first item that was described was, indeed, located on stage right and the second on stage left. The identical situation occurred in the last scene; here again the first usage of "On one Side" referred to stage right and the second to stage left. And, finally, the third piece of evidence comes from another production of the same play. This production, done in 1838,

shows the window as being located on stage left. Since all three pieces of evidence point to the same conclusions, it seems safe to assume that the backscene, placed in the third grooves, contained a high, arched window in the stage left half of the flat (in addition to the middle door). Under this window was the table, and on the opposite side of the stage was the couch.

In Figure 11 (G, N, and S) we see a representation of the positions of the interior wings used previously for The Castle-Hall and The Armoury. In view of what is known about the repeated use of wings in theatres, it seems likely that these items were used again in this scene and, indeed, in all of the other interior scenes save the last, which was a dungeon. If so, no shifting of wings was necessary for four consecutive scenes--this scene, and the three preceding it.

Act III, Scene 1.--The opening scene of the third act of The Castle Spectre was one of the production's few scenes in which the backscene was placed relatively far upstage. It was also one of the few scenes which made any real use of the special effect devices of the theatre.

The scene was described as "A View of the River Conway, with a Fisherman's Hut.--Sun-set." During the scene
"boat appears with Percy, Motley, and soldiers disguised as fishermen. . . ."

Figure 12 (A) shows the location of the Fisherman's Hut. Upstage of this, on the opposite side, was the point of entry of the boat (Fig. 12, B). These positions were noted by the prompter as "R. 2. E." for the Hut and "L. U. E." for the boat.  

4It was assumed, here, that the upper entries were the same as the third entries on each side, since the script nowhere indicated a third entry as such, but went directly from "second" to "upper."

The position of the boat would force the backscene, the River Conway, fairly far upstage if clearance was to be allowed between the two elements. Since this backscene represented an exterior and contained no practicable openings, it was probably a drop, and thus would not necessarily have depended for its position on the locations of the various grooves. It may have hung at any point between the boat and the back wall of the stage itself.

5After drops came into use they were mostly used for exterior scenes. Richard Southern, Changeable Scenery (London: Faber and Faber, Limited, 1952), p. 175.
for the Grove (Act I, Scene 1). These, having been slid off stage at the conclusion of the first scene, would merely have had to be slid back on again in their same wing groove positions.

Since the boat moved on to the stage, we may assume that a ground-row of rocks was used below it,
as shown in Figure 12 (C), to mask its base and the machinery for its manipulation.

That the boat and the hut were practicable pieces is evident from the fact that entrances by performers were made from both; during the course of the action, Allen and Isdric entered from the hut and, as noted above, Percy and a number of others entered from the boat. Once the boat was on, it apparently stayed on the stage for the duration of the scene.

There are no directions in the promptbook for lighting, but the playwright's description of the scene as occurring at sunset leads us to conjecture that it was played in dim light, probably to mask the mechanical manipulation of the boat. At any rate, the tendency to cut down on the amount of light on stage when special tricks were being performed has been noted elsewhere in promptbooks of Gothic plays.

**Act III, Scene 2.**—The scenery for the second scene of Act III was once again The Castle-Hall in the first grooves. As in Act II, Scene 2, this scene served as a carpenters' scene to mask the removal of the preceding scene (the River Conway).

**Act III, Scene 3.**—The last scene of the third act of *The Castle Spectre* makes use of a typical Gothic
device—a secret door. Here, as in Dion Boucicault's melodrama, The Rapparee (1870), the secret door was disguised as a portrait hanging on the wall. In the latter play, however, the door was used in connection with a conflagration scene to make a grand, spectacular effect; the production of The Castle Spectre did not exploit the painting, except as a secret door. The scene was much more fully described than many others.

The Cedar-room, with folding doors in the middle, and a large antique bed; on one side is the Portrait of a Lady, on the other that of a Warrior armed. Both are at full length. --After a pause the Female Portrait slides back, and Father Philip, after looking in, advances cautiously.

The prompter, by underlining most of the elements of the description, indicated that all items were used. He noted, also, that the "picture" or secret door was in the stage right flat. There is also a note to the effect that the left door was unlocked, and it would seem that this note referred to the proscenium door on the left, since no doors were mentioned in the scenery except the middle folding doors. Moreover, it would seem that these folding doors were purely decorative and were possibly not practicable at all; at any rate, they were never used by any of the actors. Except for Father Philip's entry through the picture in the right flat, all entrances were made through the left door.
Since there are no references to any other entrance positions, it seems logical to suppose that the scene was rather shallow. It could not have been in the first grooves because the preceding scene was located there, and there would not have been adequate space to accommodate the antique bed (which had to be between the Castle-Hall flats and the Cedar-room flats) if both sets of flats were run in the same set of grooves. It seems likely, therefore, that the latter flats were run in the second grooves, as shown in Figure 11 (K).

The interior wings already used for The Castle-Hall, The Armoury, and The Spacious Chamber were probably pressed into service for this scene also. These would have remained in position from the preceding scene.

Act IV, Scene 1.—The first scene of the fourth act took place in The Castle-Hall, the scenery of which was located in the first grooves. As before, this scenery served as the background for a carpenters' scene; while it was in position, the bed and flats from the preceding scene were removed, and the "spectre" scenery was set in place.

Act IV, Scene 2.—The second scene of the fourth act is the first ghost scene in The Castle Spectre, and,
as produced, was a little more spectacular than the scenes using the secret door and the boat.

At the opening of the scene, the locale was described simply as "ANGELA'S Apartment." The playwright's further notations indicated that Angela was to be discovered by an open window through which the moon was visible. As produced, however, it is extremely doubtful that the open window and the moon were used, for the prompter did not underline these details as he meticulously did elsewhere in the script; his failure to do so here suggests that the elements were not used. It is probable that Angela's Apartment (which had to be drawn off very rapidly during the playing of the scene) was made up of stock flats. The moon effect would have involved the use of special lighting instruments placed upstage of the flats, and these instruments probably could not have been removed rapidly enough to allow for the opening up of the rear of the scene for the spectre's appearance.

A note referring to "L. 2. E." implies that the apartment flats had to be above this entry point, probably in the second grooves as shown in Figure 11 (J). A later note indicates that there were practicable doors in the center of the backdrop. Again it seems likely that the interior wings (Fig. 11, N and S), already standing in
position from the three preceding scenes were used as the side pieces for this scene.

A later production of this play added to the


stage decorations of this scene rather extensively, possibly because it was felt that the flatness of this part of the scene contrasted too greatly with the spectral appearance to which it is prefatory. Whatever the reason, the later production used chairs, tables, and lamps, and there was stage business connected with all of these.

The production with which we are dealing, however, dispensed with elaboration and led into the appearance of the ghost without the support of properties. The description of this appearance, as written by the playwright, is extremely full:

The folding-doors unclose, and the oratory is seen illuminated. In its centre stands a tall female figure, her white and flowing garments spotted with blood; her veil is thrown back and discovers a pale and melancholy countenance; her eyes are lifted upwards, her arms extended towards heaven, and a large wound appears upon her bosom. Angela sinks upon her knees, with her eyes riveted upon the figure, which for some moments remains motionless. At length the Spectre advances slowly, to a soft and plaintive strain; she stops opposite to Reginald's picture, and gazes upon it in silence. She then turns, approaches Angela, seems to invoke a blessing upon her, points to the picture, and retires to the Oratory. The music ceases. Angela rises with a wild look, and follows the Vision, extending her arms...
Following this action there was one line of dialogue, which was deleted from this production, and then the scene concluded as follows:

The Spectre waves her hand, as bidding her farewell [sic]. Instantly the organ's swell is heard; a full chorus of female voices chant "Jubilatet!" a blaze of light flashes through the Oratory, and the folding doors close with a loud noise.

With reference to the way in which this description was realized on the stage in this production there are several notes in the hand of the prompter. One, at the beginning of the sequence, reads: "Doors Open, and Flats off."

This note indicates an interesting technique of enlarging space. Apparently the middle doors opened and then, immediately, the flats of which they were a part were drawn off to the sides, thus conventionally making the "doors" the width and height of the entire backscene. At the conclusion, the scene was not returned to normalcy by returning the flats and shutting the doors (as seems to be required by the descriptive passage) for we find a second note: "Drop down Quick." Once the flats were drawn off, then, they remained off, and the dropping of the curtain took the place of the closing doors.

That the sound and light effects described in the script were realized to some extent upon the stage is evident from the prompter's note which reads: "Chorus. Music ready R. U. E. Ready at Bell, Guitar...Lamps."
The bell was used to simulate the tolling of a clock (to which Angela referred during the scene) and it is assumed that the guitar may have been used for the "soft and plaintive strain" that accompanied the first appearance of the ghost. The Chorus, obviously, was required for the singing of "Jubilate." What specific effect was achieved with the lamps, however, cannot be determined from the script. From the original notes about the visible moon, however, we may judge that the scene was probably played in rather dim light at the opening, thus heightening the dramatic appearance of the spectre.

The staging of this scene does not seem to have followed the technique that Boaden claimed to have originated and further claimed to have been copied in the original production of *The Castle Spectre.* 7 Here there

7*Supra*, p. 52.

is no mention of a gauze being used, and the appearance itself, rather than being slow and stately as described by Boaden, seems to have been made with a fair degree of rapidity; the doors opened and the spectre was immediately visible, whereas Boaden's statement implied that his ghost became visible slowly through a gauze.
Act V, Scene 1.—The first scene of the final act was described in the script as a "View of Conway Castle by Moon-Light." The prompter did not specifically note the location, but we may conclude that it was in the third grooves (Fig. 11, C) since there is a stage direction for a group of actors to go off stage "L. U. E." As noted above, the lack of any intervening entrance between the second and upper entrances on each side leads us to conclude that the upper entrances were the third entrances, just below the third grooves.

Since this was an exterior scene it seems highly probable that the tree wings already used for the Grove and the River were used in this scene also.

Act V, Scene 2.—The second to the last scene of the play was described as a "Vaulted Chamber," and the brevity and non-specificity of the description suggests at once, as elsewhere, that stock scenery was employed. Figure 11 (F) shows the location of these flats as noted by the hand of the prompter. The first grooves were again utilized. Like the third scene of the third act, this scene required the use of a secret door, and this door was described by the prompter as being "Pannel [gio] L. in flat." Interior wings would again have been employed (Fig. 11, S).
The scene obviously served as a carpenters' scene to mask the preparation of the set-scene which followed it.

Act V, Scene 3.—The last scene of The Castle Spectre seems to have been the most complex, as far as scenery was concerned, of all the scenes in the play. Lewis' requirements for the stage setting were extremely specific:

A gloomy subterranean Dungeon, wide and lofty; the upper part of it has in several places fallen in, and left large Chasms. On one Side are various passages leading to other Caverns; on the other is an Iron Door with steps leading to it, and a Wicket in the Middle. . . . A Bed of Straw. A Lamp, a small Basket, and a Pitcher. . . . The stage nearly dark.

This descriptive passage implies fairly elaborate treatment of a set-scene containing pieces for cavern openings, steps, and also furnishings. A number of references in the prompter's hand to "L. U. E." and "R. U. U." lead us to conclude that the scene terminated relatively far upstage, and was placed very probably in the third grooves, as shown by Figure 11 (B).

This scene differs from all the other scenes in that it required wings different from the tree wings and interior wings used elsewhere. Rock or stone wings would have been required for this scene, and their location would have been as shown in Figure 11 (F, H, and R).
During the action of the scene the spectre once again appeared. Since the prompter's warning note placed the actor (or actress) in the second entrance on the right to await his cue, we may assume that the entry was made from that position. In other words, stage traps were not utilized for the appearance, nor was a vision effect employed. As later performed, according to the pencilled notes inserted into the script after 1837, a stage trap was probably used for this appearance—the notes read: "Ring below [for trap]" at the point in the scene where the ghost was to appear.

The author's requirement, "the stage nearly dark," was heeded, for the lamps were brought up later in the scene according to a note which reads: "Servants enter with torches and the Stage becomes light." Here again is evidence that an "effect" scene was played in relatively dim light.

 Depths of scenes and types of alternations.--The foregoing analysis has revealed that eight of the thirteen scenes of The Castle Spectre were placed rather far downstage (first or second grooves). Four were placed moderately (third grooves), and one was placed relatively deep (fourth grooves). These figures indicate, of course, a decided preference in this production for shallow settings.
With regard to the alternation of scenes, we find that one-half of the scene shifts alternated moderate placements with shallow placements. Of the remaining six, four were shallow-to-shallow, one was deep-to-moderate, and one was deep-to-shallow. The Castle Spectre, therefore, shows a marked contrast to the production of The Grecian Daughter which alternated more than one-half of all scenes from deep-to-shallow.

Conclusions:--The analysis of the promptbook for The Castle Spectre has led to the following conclusions:

1. Most of the scenes employed stock flats; all of the scenes employed stock wings. When set-pieces were used they, rather than the flats, identified the locale.
2. Space was conventionally expanded.
3. Stage traps were not used for spectacle, and effects were staged in dim light.
4. Some of the playwright's requirements were not realized upon the stage.
5. The majority of scenes were shallow.
6. The same wings stood in position for a number of consecutive scenes.
7. One-half of the scene shifts alternated scenery from moderate-to-shallow placements.
CHAPTER IV

ASPECTS OF STAGING

IN BERTRAM

This chapter is concerned with the analysis of certain aspects of the staging used in a production of the Gothic drama, *Bertram*.\(^1\) This play, originally licensed as *The Castle of St. Aldobrand*, was presented at Drury Lane Theatre in May, 1816, under the title *Bertram*.

The nature and placement of scenery.—In some respects, the prompter's notations in the *Bertram* script are not so full with regard to the nature and placement of scenery as were the notations in promptbooks discussed in previous chapters. He indicated the positions of practicable doors and windows when these were required by the action, and indicated by means of interleaf notes those scenes in which items of furniture or other properties were used. In several places, by
deleting items listed in the scenic directions, the
prompter apparently made a negative indication that these
items were not used in the production as it was realized
upon the stage.

The scenic requirements for Bertram are many; the
play is written in fifteen scenes, requiring eleven dif­
ferent scenic treatments. These are not especially un­
usual, however, and the various items that are required
were of stock nature (with one exception which, curiously
enough, was cut by the prompter).²

²Infra, p. 106.

Despite the stock nature of the scenery, consider­
able skill was needed to arrange the various items so
that the scenes could follow one after another without
any hesitancy or pauses in the action. A close analysis
of the sequence of scenes and of the property requirements
in several of them allows one to determine almost pre­
cisely where the various scenic elements were placed. As
the following discussion will show, it was possible, ex­
cept in the instance of one scene, to present the play
without the necessity of using liveried servants to place
furniture in the sight of the audience, despite the fact
that four of the scenes required furnishings. In other
words, a skillful arrangement of the scenery, linked with
judicious cutting by the prompter, precluded the necessity of servants except in one inescapable case.

Act I, Scene 1.—The language with which the scenic background for the first scene of the play is described is made up of stock phrases, as one soon realizes after perusing a number of the scripts of Gothic dramas. The typical Gothic ingredients are here: "Night, a Gallery in a Convent, a large Gothic window in the extremity, through which lightning is seen flashing. Two Monks enter in terror." To this description the prompter added a notation indicating that there was a Gothic door on stage right and a door on stage left in the positions shown by Figure 13, B and C, respectively.

Since these notes placed doors on each side as shown in the Figure, and since, throughout the scene, there were no references to any other doors (except the proscenium doors), we may assume that no further scenic elements of a practicable nature were used above them (or between them and the backscene). If this is the case, it seems logical that the backscene representing the Gallery was located in the second grooves position, just above the doors as shown in Figure 13 (A). Moreover, since the requirement of a Gallery is rather general in plays of this nature, we are probably safe in assuming that the
flats terminating the scene were drawn from stock, as were most of the flats in the plays already analyzed.

This conclusion that the flats were stock pieces is not entirely subjective, for it is reinforced by reference to two items: first, the scenic description and, second, the deletion of certain lines of the script. To
develop a line of thought from these two items of information, let us examine the implication of the scenic description in so far as it indicates what the playwright desired; then let us examine the deleted lines to see how the deletion altered the scene as described.

In his description, Maturin asked for a large Gothic window through which lightning was seen to be flashing. The existence of this see-through window, pierced in the flats, is questionable. Elsewhere in the script the prompter specifically noted the presence of practicable elements, but notes of this kind do not appear in this connection. Moreover, a see-through window would have necessitated a backing of some sort. What the playwright intended this backing to be seems to be established by two lines of dialogue:

1st Monk: "Thinks't thou these rock-based turrets will abide?"

2d Monk: "Thinks't thou they will not topple. . . . ."

Here the monks are questioning each other with alarm about the possibility of dire consequences of the storm. The first monk refers to "these rock-based turrets". A conclusion is that the backing of the window was intended to represent the towers and the turrets of the Convent. The lines, however, were deleted so that there was no reference in the scene to turrets.
The implication of the cut is that no turrets were visible. This conclusion, based upon the lack of a prompter's specific note about the location of the window and also upon the significance of the cut lines, is that no turrets were visible because there was no window; and there was no window because stock flats of a Gallery were used, and these flats were solid, and not pierced with practicable, see-through windows.

Conclusions: Act I, Scene 1.--3 A summary of the conclusions regarding the nature and placement of scenery of Act I, Scene 1, of Bertram follows:

1. It was composed primarily of a pair of stock flats (Fig. 13, A) running in the second grooves, representing a Gallery.

2. Two practicable doors were used (Fig. 13, B and C).

3. Certain elaborations of scenery implied by the scenic description were not realized in the production.
Act I, Scene 2.--The second scene of the first act of Bertram is capable of interpretation in two ways with regard to the nature and placement of scenery. The first interpretation, which was rejected for reasons noted below, is based upon the elaborate scenic descriptions printed in the script. The second, which appears to be the more acceptable, rests upon what might be termed negative elements. This second interpretation is based upon what the prompter did not write, upon the length of the scene itself, and upon the requirements of the scene that follows it.

The scenic description as printed in the script reads as follows:

The Rocks.—The Sea.—A Storm.—The Convent illuminated in the back ground.—The Bell tolls at intervals.—A groupe [sic] of Monks on the rocks with torches.—A Vessel in distress in the Offing. Enter the Prior and Monks below.

If this description were realized upon the stage, we would expect to find an elaborate scenic treatment, with the Convent on the backscene and ground-rows of rocks pushed up, perhaps, through outs in the stage floor, and with a number of monks discovered amidst high rocks. Somewhere, too, a vessel would be represented as sinking. Since the direction for entry reads, "Enter the Prior and Monks below," we would assume that there would have had to be elevated portions of rocks (set-pieces) on which other
monks were discovered; otherwise there would be no point in the use of the word "below." Finally, we would expect that the scene would be deep, or a long scene, placed, since it involves so much detail, far upstage of the preceding scene which was shallow.

A close examination of the script, however, discloses several significant amendments and alterations to the scene in the hand of the prompter. We note at once that all references to the sinking vessel were deleted. Moreover, the direction for the entrance of the Prior and Monks was altered to delete the word "below."

In addition to these changes, we find that the entire scene occupies but one page of the script; it opens on page 5 and closes on page 6. We note, too, that the following scene is the same as the preceding scene (the Gallery). And, finally, we discover at the end of the scene that the prompter has underlined the phrase, "The Scene shuts."

Now, in view of the foregoing pieces of information, let us try to determine whether this scene was actually played as the elaborate, spectacular, deep scene that the script itself seems to indicate. First, the omission of the sinking vessel tells us that the scene was not so spectacular as would at first appear; moreover, the cutting of this effect might imply that there was not enough stage
space for it. Second, the excision of the word "below" implies that there was no "below" from which to make an entry; in other words, there was no practicable elevation above the floor of the stage. Third, the very brevity of the scene would seem, in the interests of good stage management, to preclude a lavish expenditure of money for a spectacular scene. Fourth, the omission of any references to entrances other than the proscenium doors tends to make us suspect that no other entry positions existed, which would be impossible in a deep scene of this nature. And, fifth, the fact that "The Scene Shuts," (i.e., the Gallery shut over the Storm scene) forces us to conclude that the Gallery scenery was placed downstage of the Storm scenery.

On the basis of the foregoing, the interpretation of the scene as an elaborate, deep, set-scene of a spectacular nature is rejected. Now, then, let us try to indicate what it actually was. First, the lack of practicable pieces (rocks) reveals that it was composed entirely of flat elements. Second, it was relatively far downstage, since no entrance positions were indicated in the wings. Third, it was placed behind, or upstage of, the Gallery, or in the second groove of the second set of grooves, as shown in Figure 14 (A).
Conclusions: Act I, Scene 2.—The analysis of the second scene of Bertram has led to the following conclusions regarding its staging:

1. The scene was composed entirely of a pair of flats which were run in the second groove of the second set of grooves (Fig. 14, A).
2. The scenery was not spectacular in nature.
3. The scenery, and therefore the production, did not realize the playwright's intention.
4. Incongruous though it may seem, the practicable doors (Fig. 14, B) from the preceding scene, and also required for the following scene, appear to have been plainly visible during the Storm scene, although they were not used.

Act I, Scene 3.—The third scene of the first act of Bertram is described as "The Gallery," and the prompter has written in the words "as before," so we may assume that the analysis of the first scene also stands for this scene.

Act I, Scene 4.—The fourth scene of Act I of Bertram is extremely brief (two pages) and seems to exist primarily as a carpenters' scene for the purpose of removing the set-pieces (the doors) from the preceding scene and the setting-up of the furnishings that, as we
shall see, were required in the scene immediately following.

Maturin described the scene simply as "A Hall in the Castle of Aldobrand,"—an appellation very similar to the one that occurred with frequency in The Castle Spectre. The prompter's references to entrances and exits were limited to the proscenium doors. No furniture was required, and the implication of the simple scenic description is that the stage setting was drawn from stock.

Since the next scene involved the placing of furniture, we are impelled toward the conclusion that the scene under analysis, in order to mask the placement of furniture, was placed downstage of the locality of the succeeding scene. Moreover, since, as we shall discover, this succeeding scene was placed in the second grooves, we may conclude that the Hall in the Castle of St. Aldobrand was forced into the first grooves position as shown in Figure 15 (D). Accompanying it, probably, were stock wings matching, or blending with, the stock flats; any interior wings would have served, standing in position as shown in Figure 15 (A).

**Conclusions: Act I, Scene 4.**—The analysis of the fourth scene of Bertram reveals the following:

1. It was a carpenters' scene.
Figure 14.--Plan of Scenic Elements in
*Bertram*, Act I, Scene 2

2. It was a flat scene, running in the first
grooves (Fig. 15, D), with accompanying wings (Fig.
15, A).

3. It was drawn from stock.
Act I, Scene 5.--The final scene of the first act of Bertram is, like several of the other scenes, described in terms that immediately suggest stock scenery—"A Gothic Apartment." There is a stage direction to the effect that Imogine was discovered seated at a table, and this direction was reinforced by the prompter's interleaf note that the scene contained "Table--Chairs--Candles--Books etc."

The space required for this furniture indicates that the scene had to be placed farther upstage than the first grooves where the preceding scene was located. That it was not played quite far upstage, however, is suggested by the fact that there are no references during the flow of the action to the use of any entries other than the proscenium doors. Moreover, when Imogine arose, she was not given a direction to "advance" as was the case in other scenes in which similar actions occurred.

The scene, therefore, was placed upstage of the first grooves, but probably not farther upstage than the second grooves, because no entries were used. Since, as is shown in Figure 15 (E and F), both the first and second grooves of the second set of grooves were already occupied by flats, it is probable that the Gothic Apartment (Fig. 15, G) was run in the third groove of the second set of grooves. The wings accompanying these flats
could very easily have been the Hall wings used for the preceding scene (Fig. 15, A and B).

Conclusions: Act I, Scene 5.—A summary of the conclusions regarding the last scene of the first act of Bertram follows:

1. It was composed of stock flats running in the second grooves (Fig. 15, G).

2. Wings were probably retained from the preceding scene.

3. Practicable furniture was employed and was onstage throughout the scene; its placement was masked.

Act II, Scene 1.—As in the case of several of the scenes already discussed, the playwright's description of Act II, Scene 1, is so terse as to suggest, once more, the use of stock scenery. Here the scene was characterized briefly as "An Apartment in the Convent." The prompter indicated the presence of a couch on stage right, with a character discovered sleeping on it, and a later scene direction required this character to start suddenly from this couch. Except for these notes, however, nothing further is indicated about the scene directly, but we may draw several inferences that will aid in determining the nature and placement of scenery.
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---Proscenium Arch---

**Figure 15.--Schematic Plan of all Flats and Wings in Bertram**
Since a couch was required, we may be sure that the backscene would not have been farther downstage than the second set of grooves, because it seems likely that the prompter would have wished, at the close of the scene, to draw flats over the scene in order to mask the removal of the couch rather than to remove it in plain sight of the audience and thus interrupt unnecessarily the flow of the action. Had the cut-off or backscene been located in the first grooves, this method of removing the couch would have been impossible because there would have been no grooves below the couch in which to run the flats needed to mask its removal.

Moreover, since the scene is rather short (a little over five pages) and does not require any entrances in the scenery itself, we may conclude that it was not an elaborate scene in depth. This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that the characters were not, as in other scenes, directed to advance to the front of the stage during the course of the action, which probably would have occurred if the scene had opened in depth. It is very likely, therefore, that the flats terminating the scene were run in the second grooves, and, as a glance at Figure 15 (H) will confirm, they would have had to be run in the fourth groove of the second set of grooves, since the other three were already filled with flats from
preceding scenes. The interior Hall wings already in position from the two preceding scenes would have been adequate as the side pieces for this setting.

Conclusions: Act II, Scene 1.--The analysis of the first scene of the second act of Bertram has gleaned the following information:

1. It was composed of stock flats of an Apartment (Fig. 15, H) running in the fourth groove of the second set of grooves.

2. A couch was placed on stage right, but was neither placed nor removed in the sight of the audience.

3. Wings were probably retained from the preceding scenes.

Act II, Scene 2.--The second scene of the second act of Bertram is played in the same locality as that required by Act I, Scene 4, and the analysis of the latter scene serves to place it as shown in Figure 15 (D).

Act II, Scene 3.--The final scene of the second act of Bertram offers but little in the way of direct evidence. Maturin described it as follows: "Moonlight; a terrassed [sic] rampart of the Castle; a part of the latter is seen, the rest concealed by woods." After this description comes the stage direction: "Imagine . . . gazes at the Moon. . . . and then advances slowly."
This second direction reveals two things about the scenery. First, there was a moon visible for Imogine to gaze upon and to address. That this moon was painted rather than effected through lighting seems evident because of the lack of any note regarding a moonlight effect. Second, since Imogine was directed to advance, we may deduct that the scene terminated relatively far upstage, and that Imogine advanced downstage in order to be seen and heard more clearly. The question arises, then, as to how far upstage the backscene was located. To answer this, let us examine the extent to which the upstage sets of grooves were already occupied with scenery for this production. As will be demonstrated later in the analysis, all of the grooves of the fourth set of grooves were filled with scenery to be used later in the play (Fig. 15, Fourth Grooves). Therefore, the moonlit Terraced Rampart could not have been located in the fourth grooves. The second set of grooves, too, was already filled with scenery from preceding scenes (Fig. 15, Second Grooves). We notice, however, that the third set of grooves had not yet been used, and so it is logical to believe that this scene (Fig. 15, J) was placed in that set.

Since there are no references to practicable units, and since the action of the scene required none,
we may conclude that furnishings and set-pieces were excluded from this scene, and therefore that it was composed of flat elements.

Finally, since there is a reference to "woods" in the scenic description, it may be conjectured that moonlight wood wings, such as those listed in Saxe Wyndham's account of the Covent Garden inventory, were used to complement the moonlit terraced rampart in the backscene. If so, these wings were located in the second wing groove in each entry position that was visible, since the other two wing grooves of each set were already occupied. Figure 15 (B, B¹, B² and B³) shows the position of the Moonlight Wings.

Conclusions: Act II, Scene 3.—The analysis of the promptbook for Bertram, Act II, Scene 3, has led to the following conclusions:

1. It was composed entirely of flat elements.
2. The flats comprising the backscene were located in the third grooves (Fig. 15, J).
3. Wings in the second groove of each wing position in each visible entry point (first and second entrances both right and left), as shown in Figure 15 (B, B¹ and B²).
Act III, Scene 1.—The opening scene of the third act of Bertram is extremely brief (approximately two and one-half pages) and is characterized merely as "A Wood." A prompter's indication, "U. E. P. S [upper entrance, stage left]," may be taken to indicate that three entry positions were available on each side; otherwise the prompter would not have used the term "upper entrance." If this is so, the scene (Fig. 15, L) almost obviously drawn from stock, was terminated in the fourth grooves position, or, in other words, in the position immediately above the third entry.

If tree wings were used in association with this scene, and it may be assumed that they were, they would have been located in the third groove of each wing position as shown in Figure 15 (C, C1, C2 and C3).

Conclusions: Act III, Scene 1.—A summary of the conclusions regarding Act III, Scene 1, of Bertram follows:

1. It was composed of stock flats, running in the fourth grooves (Fig. 15, L).

2. Stock tree wings (Fig. 15, C, C1, C2 and C3) were in the third groove of each wing position.

Act III, Scene 2.—The location of the scenery for the second scene of Act III is the same as the location in Act II, Scene 1 (Fig. 15, H).
This scene differs from other scenes in the play, however, in that the action could not have commenced immediately upon the close of the preceding scene. A prompter's note shows that a table, two chairs, some books, an hour-glass, and a lamp were required and used in the scene. Before the scene began, these properties would have had to be placed on stage in full view of the audience. The necessity for this visible placing of properties becomes evident when we note that the preceding scene (the Wood, Fig. 15, L) was placed upstage of the scene in question (Fig. 15, H). Since this was so, it would have been impossible to place furniture during the playing of the Wood scene, and it became necessary to pause after it in order to get the needed properties on the stage before the beginning of the next scene.

**Act IV, Scene 1.**—The opening scene of the fourth act of *Bertram* is described in the script as "A dark night under the Castle Walls." A stage direction almost immediately following this description reveals that Bertram is directed to look up at a window in which a light suddenly appears, and a prompter's note placed this window in the upper entrance on stage left. The note reads: "Torch ready at Window U. E. P. S." The position of this window makes it obvious that the flats representing the Castle Walls were in the fourth grooves position.
(Fig. 15, M); since the first groove of this groove set was already occupied, the flats were probably run in the second groove of the set.

Since the scene was an exterior at night, it is probable that the Moonlight wings (Fig. 15, B, B^1, B^2 and B^3) already in position were again employed. It is possible, however, that wings of battlements or representative of other areas near the fortress may have been used, but this does not seem likely in view of what is known about the extreme adaptability of wings.

**Conclusions: Act IV, Scene 1.** The analysis of the promptbook for the first scene of the fourth act of Bertram has led to the following conclusions:

1. It was composed of flats running in the fourth grooves (Fig. 15, M).

2. A practicable, see-through window wing (Gothic) was located in the upper entrance on stage left.

**Act IV, Scene 2.** The description and opening stage directions of the second scene of Act IV, Imogene's Apartment, refer to a table with a lamp, both of which were deleted by the prompter. The reason for this deletion is clear. Figure 15 shows that this scene (K) had to be placed downstage of the preceding Castle Walls scene (M). This being the case, the properties intended by the play-
wright for Imogine's Apartment would have had to be placed on stage in full view of the audience, thus holding up the flow of the action. Moreover, an examination of the action shows that these properties were not really essential to the scene. Thus, being unnecessary, they were cut in the interest of the free flow of action from one scene to another.

Imogine could not be "discovered" as the playwright's description stated for the same reason that prompted the deletion of the furniture. It is manifestly impossible to discover anybody or anything in a scene that is set downstage of the preceding scene when no curtain is used as a masking device. In this particular case, Imogine's direction was altered by the prompter to read: "Enters 2. E. P. S. [second entrance, stage left]."

The direction quoted above about Imogine's entrance makes it possible for us to place the location of the scenery precisely. It had to be in either the third or fourth grooves, since a second entry position existed. It could not, however, have been placed in the fourth grooves position, since all of these grooves were already occupied with flats. It had, therefore, to be placed in the third grooves position, as shown in Figure 15 (K). This degree of depth was appropriate despite the fact that the setting was supposed to represent a private
apartment, because the action involved a large group of bandits who had to be given stage space on which to stand and move and, as the script put it, to "fill up the back" at the end.

Two references to entrances through a middle door -- both in the prompter's handwriting -- reveal that the back flats (Fig. 15, K) were pierced with a practicable door. Except for these references, we are told nothing of the character of these flats. The brevity of the scenic description, however, suggests once again the use of stock scenery. With these flats, it is reasonable to suppose that the Hall wings (Fig. 15, A, A\textsuperscript{1} and A\textsuperscript{2}), already in position, served as the side pieces.

Conclusions: Act IV, Scene 2.--The analysis of the contents of the final scene of the fourth act of Bertram has led to the following conclusions:

1. The backscene was composed of flats, probably stock, pierced with a practicable door in the center and running in the third grooves (Fig. 15, K).

2. The wings were probably the Hall wings in the downstage groove of each set of visible wing groove entrances (Fig. 15, A, A\textsuperscript{1} and A\textsuperscript{2}).

3. Properties were eliminated and the "discovery" deleted because the location of the scenery made the first impractical and the second impossible.
Act V, Scene 1.—The first scene of the fifth act of Bertram takes place in a Chapel with a "shrine splendidly illuminated and decorated."

The only directions which tend to place the location of the backscene are three references, in the prompter's hand, to a second entrance on the prompt-side. These would seem to indicate that the backscene ran in the third grooves. We must reject that conclusion, however, in the light of information we can gain from an examination of the two scenes which follow.

The scene immediately following this one is a carpenters' scene located in the first grooves. The obvious reason for the existence of the location of this scene is to mask the preparation of the rather elaborate set-scene which concluded the show. The final scene, as we shall see, was clearly located in the fourth grooves.

Now, then, if the Chapel were in the third grooves, there would have been no reason for the intervening carpenters' scene, since the Chapel flats would have masked the setting-up of the various pieces used in the last scene. We may conclude, therefore, that the Chapel was not placed in the third grooves, but in the fourth, as shown in Figure 15 (N).

The wings to accompany this Chapel scene pose something of a problem. Two possibilities existed: first,
to use the Hall wings already in the wing grooves or, second, to withdraw the Tree wings and replace them with other wings suitable for a Chapel setting. The first possibility seems to be the more reasonable, since the Hall wings were probably not very highly individualized anyway, and could serve as the side-pieces for many different interior scenes.

Whether the flats of this scene were stock pieces or were especially constructed or painted is difficult to determine. The scenic description here is somewhat fuller than most of the other descriptions in the play, which might hint at especially painted scenery in this case. The requirements, however, are very little different from those of other Gothic dramas. Religious environments, together with Tombs, Caverns, Dark Woods, and Castle Towers abound in plays of the period; indeed, these types of settings are a part of the Gothicism of the plays. This very abundance makes it seem likely that scenery representing the type of environment required here would certainly have been on hand in any of the Theatres Royal of London, and probably in the provincial houses as well.

**Conclusions: Act V, Scene 1.**—A summary of the conclusions regarding Act V, Scene 1, of *Bertram* follows:

1. It was composed of flats, probably stock,
running in the fourth set of grooves (Fig. 15, N).

2. The accompanying wings were most probably the same Hall wings used in many other scenes of the production.

Act V, Scene 2.--The second scene of the last act is precisely the same location as the scenes of Act I, Scene 4, and Act II, Scene 2 (Fig. 15, D).

Act V, Scene 3.--The final scene of Bertram takes place in a dark Wood. The wood is augmented by a Cavern and some rocks. The Cavern, which the prompter noted as being on stage right, was a practicable pieces, capable of being entered by several characters at once. On page 85, Imogine was borne into the Cavern and, according to the prompter’s note, "Every Body" followed. Everybody in this case was composed of five other characters, so that we may conclude that the piece representing the Cavern was reasonably large.

The rocks mentioned above were apparently practicable also, and, according to the scenic description, were located over the Cavern. Moreover, these practicable rocks led down to the stage floor itself, since we find a prompter’s note referring to a Monk who entered "down Rocks O. P."
The printed portion of the script shows that the playwright intended the Cavern to be in the backscene, but the prompter amended this with his note placing it on stage right. This alteration seems to imply that the flats, as used in production, were solid all the way across, and were not pierced with the Cavern. We may suspect, then, that these flats were stock Dark Woods flats. Their placement we are able to determine from the prompter’s note that Imogene was discovered "reclining against 3rd Wing O. P." This note, establishing a third entry position, makes it clear that the Dark Woods flats were in the fourth grooves, as shown in Figure 16 (0).

The scene is supposed to occur at night, so we would gather that the Moonlight wings, already in position as shown in Figure 15, were used in all the wing positions not occupied by the Cavern.

Conclusions: Act V, Scene 3.—An analysis of the last scene of the promptbook for a production of Bertram has led to the following conclusions:

1. It was a set-scene.

2. It was terminated by stock flats of a Dark Wood (Fig. 15, 0) running in the fourth grooves.

3. The set-pieces were a Cavern (stage right) and practicable rocks running from above the Cavern to the floor.
4. Moonlight wings were in all wing positions not occupied by the Cavern.

**Depths of scenes and types of alternations.**—The foregoing analysis has revealed that the scenery for nine of the fifteen scenes in *Bertram* was placed in downstage grooves. Of the six remaining scenes, the scenery for two was placed moderately, and the scenery for four was placed relatively far upstage (fourth grooves). Like the figures for *The Castle Spectre*, these figures indicate a decided preference for placing scenery in the downstage grooves.

With regard to the depth of alternation between scenes *Bertram* differs a little from the characteristics shown by the plays previously discussed. Six of the fourteen scene shifts resulted in alternations from shallow-to-shallow. Four were deep-to-shallow; three were deep-to-moderate; one was moderate-to-shallow; and, like *The Castle Spectre*, none were deep-to-deep.

**General conclusions.**—The analysis of the production of *Bertram* has led to the following conclusions regarding its staging practices:

1. Stock scenery was used almost entirely and probably exclusively.

2. A disinclination to place furniture and properties in view of the audience existed.
3. Spectacular effects "required" by the playwright were not realized in the production.

4. Practicable doors remained upon the stage during a scene in which there was no requirement for them, and, indeed, in which they were improper for the locality represented.

5. Three sets of stock wings, used repeatedly, were adequate for the presentation of the play.

6. More than one-half of the total number of settings were shallow.

7. Almost one-half of all scene shifts resulted in alternations from shallow settings to shallow settings.
CHAPTER V

ASPECTS OF STAGING

IN ADELGITHA

This chapter is concerned with an analysis of certain aspects of the staging of the Gothic drama, Adelgitha,\(^1\) as it was performed at Covent Garden Theatre in 1818; the analysis is based upon the promptbook used for that production.

The nature and placement of scenery.—Fortunately, the prompter for this production of Adelgitha was extremely meticulous in recording the off-stage positions of characters in preparation for their entrances, and the play script itself is very clear with regard to the sequence of scenes. Moreover, the physical action of the play is quite clear, either through the playwright's descriptions or through prompter's notations.

It is possible, therefore, through a careful synthesis of the facts gleaned from this promptbook to
determine precisely where most of the various scenic elements were placed upon the stage, and the nature of each.

Act I, Scene 1.--The first scene of Adelgitha is especially interesting because it involved the use of set-pieces to a much greater extent than any scenes in the productions discussed in previous chapters. Here we find much more than the simple flat, wing, and border sets that we have encountered for the most part thus far.

The first bit of evidence about the scenery comes from the playwright's description as that description was modified by the prompter's notes. The scene was described as follows:

The Scene represents a Grove, with a Chapel and Shrine of St. Hilda. In the latter Lamps are burning, and the Doors are closed. In the background is a Convent, situated on a Rock.--The Sun is rising.--CLAUDIA is discovered leaning against a Pillar of the Shrine.

The prompter underlined the words, "Shrine of St. Hilda," and made the notation, "2d E L," which we may take as meaning that this portion of the stage scenery was placed in the second entrance on the prompt side--or stage left, as shown in Figure 16 (B). Moreover, the prompter underlined the words, "Convent, situated on a Rock," and has inserted the notation, "U. E. R.," which we may take as meaning that this part of the scenic
As the scene progresses, we are able to gather a good deal more information about these scenic elements. First, with regard to the Shrine, we learn that the
doors were practicable. It is not necessary to depend upon Lewis' rather ambiguous description, "the Doors are closed," for this fact, for it is clearly stated in the

2The doors could be so described even though they were merely represented by means of paint on solid flats, and not practicable.

script that the doors were used. In referring to them, Michael (one of the characters in the play) says: "And hark! the organ speaks the matins o'er, The doors unclose [italics mine] . . . ." In the italicized phrase we find a specific reference to practicable doors. Moreover, this passage is followed by a stage direction which reads: "The doors of the Shrine open."

Next, with regard to the Shrine of St. Hilda, we may deduce that this particular element of scenery must have been unusually large, even massive, and that it contained exceptionally large doors. This deduction is based upon two pieces of information drawn from the promptbook -- the first from the playwright's description and the second from a prompter's note. The playwright's description, after the sentence--"The doors of the Shrine open,"--is as follows: "ADELGITHA is discovered (in mourning) Kneeling at an altar: IMMA, CLAUDIA, the ABBESS and NUNS surround her." The prompter's note regarding the persons involved in this discovery reads
as follows: "L. 2. /ne. Adelgitha, Abbess, Imma, Claudia, 8 nuns." This note makes it clear that twelve persons were arranged around the altar which was disclosed when the doors of the Shrine were opened. It seems logical to assume, then, that the doors which were opened to reveal this picture would have had to be exceptionally large in order to exhibit so many characters clearly to an audience. No matter how tight the grouping, the mere physical presence of twelve persons and an altar would have precluded smallness of the opening through which the tableau was viewed. Moreover, the large size of the piece is further indicated by the fact that the Shrine, in addition to having large doors, contained windows through which the lighted lamps were seen.

A hasty conclusion with regard to the doors and windows of the Shrine might be that the effect was achieved simply by placing the tableau upstage of the flats, and then withdrawing the flats to show another scene beyond them, as was done for the spectre scene in _The Castle Spectre_. This theory is untenable, however, and must be rejected, since we have at least two notes regarding the position of the Shrine. These notes, already mentioned above, are the initial reference to the position of the Shrine and the reference to the offstage positions of the actresses involved in the tableau. We cannot
escape the fact that this tableau was **downstage** of the backscene, and on the left side of the stage, rather than in the center. Also we must admit that the particular scenic element involved must have been extremely large -- certainly too large to have occupied one wing position only.

How, then, is it possible to reconcile two seemingly disparate elements? How could a scenic element capable of opening to reveal a tableau of twelve persons seemingly be squeezed into the limited space of one groove position in the wings? In order to answer this question it is necessary to embark upon a speculative turn of thought. The speculation involved here is based upon the prompter's notations regarding entrances and exits. These tell us that **three** entrances, or the intervals between four wing positions, were used in this scene, on each side. We find, moreover, that although there are several references to the second and upper entrances on the right and to the second entrance on the left, **there are no references to the upper entrance on stage left.**

The question immediately arises: "Why was the available entrance in the upper position on the left never used in this scene?" And the answer, a purely speculative one, it must be admitted, is that it was not
used for the simple reason that it was not available for use because the space was needed for the continuation of the Shrine which had its downstage end at the second entrance on the left-hand side. In other words, the massiveness of the piece, as indicated above, required more than the space allowed by one entrance position.

If this speculative thought has led to conclusions that are acceptable, we have learned the following things about the Shrine:

1. It was on stage left.
2. It had large practicable doors and was pierced with windows.
3. It was massive, rather than small.
4. It occupied the second and third entrance positions on the left, or the space between the second and fourth wing grooves.

Let us amplify these statements a little. The only possible conclusion to be drawn from the facts, it is believed, is that the Shrine was an unusually large set-piece, placed obliquely upon the stage, as shown in Figure 17 (B). Moreover, since an important tableau was visible through the doors of this piece, it could not have had an acute rake, for the acute rake would have made it impossible for part of the audience to see the tableau. The rake, therefore, was gentle.
Concluding that the rake had to be gentle, and knowing that the piece had to be large, we may deduce that this particular scenic element stretched, perhaps, almost to the center of the stage, and, by its massiveness, dominated the stage. Since this was so, and since (as will presently be demonstrated) there was also a practicable set-piece on stage right, we may conclude that the backscene (whether flats or some variety of back-cloth) probably functioned only as a cut-off to the scene, and played no real part in identifying the locality of the scene itself. In other words, the massiveness of the set-pieces would have almost obscured the backscene, and therefore rendered it unimportant except as a terminus to the scene.

If the foregoing conclusions are accurate, it is probably safe to assume that the backscene probably represented a Grove, since this is what the playwright called for in his scenic description. Moreover, since it functioned merely as a cut-off, it was probably an element drawn from stock, either a pair of Grove flats or a backcloth painted as a Grove.

Next, let us turn our attention to the Convent and see what secrets the promptbook will yield with regard to that element.
We know that this portion of the scenery was placed in the upper entrance on stage right. A further examination of the script reveals several other interesting pieces of information about this scenic element.

We learn that there was a platform and some rocks associated with the entrance in which the Convent was situated. The prompter referred to these elements throughout the scene as follows:

Abbess enters "from the platform R. U. E."

Imma enters "R. U. E. from Platform"

Imma and Claudia exeunt "going up the rocks R. U. E."

Nuns are seen "descending the Rock R. U. E."

Here, then, we find three references to a platform and two references to a rock, both of which elements were located in the upper entrance on the right.

These notations make it clear that the upper entrance on the right contained (1) a Convent, (2) a platform, (3) a means of entry up to the platform, and (4) some rocks. The logical explanation of these phenomena is that the Convent itself, with a practicable door for entrances, was elevated above the floor on a platform, with steps leading to it. Figure 17 (D) shows the plat-
Figure 17.—Plan of scenic elements in
Adelgitha, Act I, Scene 1

form with steps, and the masking ground-row is shown in
position in Figure 17 (C).

Conclusions: Act I, Scene 1.—The conclusions to
be drawn from the above synthesis of bits of evidence are
as follows with regard to the nature and placement of the scenery in Act I, Scene 1, of _Adelgitha_:

1. The setting was composed mainly of two set-pieces. The first, representing the Shrine (Fig. 17, B), was massive and dominated the stage. It was situated on stage left in a gentle rake towards the upstage area, beginning in the second entrance and extending through the upper entrances. The second, representing the Convent (Fig. 17, D), stood upon a platform in the upper entrance on stage right. The steps leading up to it were masked by a ground-row representing rocks (Fig. 17, C).

2. The backscene was non-functional as to locality, and was probably a pair of stock flats representing a Grove. It was in the fourth groove position (Fig. 17, E).

3. The downstage wing positions, although not described, were probably stock Grove wings, matching or blending with the backscene (Fig. 17, A).

4. The major elements, the Shrine and the Convent, contained practicable doors, and the Shrine was pierced with windows through which lighted lamps were visible.

_Act I, Scene 2._—The second scene of the first act of _Adelgitha_ does not require such a lengthy synthesis as the first, for the prompter has fortunately given us the position of the scenery. Alongside the playwright's
descriptive passage the prompter clearly wrote, "1st g," which we may take as meaning that the scenery was placed in the first, or downstage, set of grooves as illustrated in Figure 18 (N).

We can also be certain that this scene was composed of a set of flats, without the addition of any set-pieces or properties of any kind. The playwright described the scene as "a Gothic Chamber.---A Sopha." The prompter, however, drew a line through the words, "A Sopha," and also deleted a stage direction for Imma to throw herself on the sofa. Moreover, at the conclusion of the action of this scene, the scenery opened to reveal another setting, but there were no directions for the removal of furniture or set-pieces; there is merely the notation, "The Scene opens." Furthermore, when the Gothic Chamber was required later in the play (Act IV, Scene 1) the tapers required by the playwright were deleted. There seems to be no reason, here, to cut the tapers (surely an inexpensive and available item) unless there was no means of providing them on the scenery which was being used. We may conclude, then, that they were not provided because the scene was composed of a pair of flats to which it would

\[\text{For the probable reason for this deletion see p. 158, infra.}\]
Figure 18.—Schematic Plan for all Flats and Wings Used in Staging *Adelgitha*
have been impossible to affix tapers if the flats had to be opened and shut, as required in this case.

We may assume, then, that no set-pieces or furnishings were used. The flats, running in the first grooves, simply closed in on the previous set-scene, and the action of the play continued while another set-scene was erected behind them.

The paucity of the description of the scenic element, limited by Lewis to "A Gothic Chamber," suggests that this particular piece of scenery was drawn from stock. This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that other scenes were much more fully described by the playwright. In the preceding scene, for example, he described a set with lamps, rocks, and a pillar. In the scene immediately following the scene under analysis, the playwright set the locale specifically. In the present scene, however, he required merely any Gothic Chamber.

With stock scenery of this nature it is probable that stock interior wings would also have been employed, located as shown in Figure 18 (P).

Conclusions: Act I, Scene 2.—A summary of the conclusions regarding the nature and placement of the scenery for Act I, Scene 2, follows:

1. It was a carpenters' scene, drawn over the preceding set-scene, and masking the removal of the set-pieces
of the previous scene and the setting-up in position of the pieces used in the scene to follow.

2. It was composed of flats, running in the first grooves, probably drawn from stock (Fig. 18, M), with stock interior wings (Fig. 18, P).

Act I, Scene 3, as played.—The next scene, which was intended as the second act, but which, in the 1818 production, was played as the final scene of the first act, was a fairly complex scene requiring the appearance of a practicable, moving galley. The scenic description follows:

The Port of Otranto, with an extensive view over the Adriatic Gulph. Citizens and Peasants of both sexes are grouped in attitudes of expectation.—Shouts, while the Scene opens.

After the opening discovery, there was a song which was deleted from this production. During this musical interlude, according to the script, a "fleet traverses the background." This latter effect, too, was cut. The stage directions then continue:

As the Chorus end, a galley arrives; GUISCARD stands on the decks, attended by TANCREDE, RAINULF, and Knights. All land.

First, let us consider the size and placement of the galley. According to the prompter's warning note for the entrance of the actors involved, the galley had to accommodate seventeen persons. The prompter's note
includes, in addition to Guiscard and the others mentioned above, a group of six Knights and eight Soldiers. As in the case of the Shrine of St. Hilda in the first scene, where it was concluded that considerable size was indicated because of the number of persons contained therein, so, too, it may be concluded here. A galley containing seventeen living bodies had to be of rather large proportions.\(^5\)

\(^5\)The term living bodies is used to indicate that there is no possibility that the figures were painted on pasteboard and mounted on a profile galley, for the stage direction clearly indicates that all persons landed; moreover, the prompter's warn was for seventeen actors.

There is no direct notation in the promptbook regarding the placement of this galley, but the warning cue for the persons involved placed them (and therefore the galley) at the upper entrance on stage right. The galley, then, was drawn or pushed on to the stage in precisely the same position the Convent had occupied in the first scene.

A possible reason why the galley and the Convent were located in the same positions suggests itself in the light of two pieces of information that is at our disposal. First, we have concluded that the steps leading up to the platform on which the Convent stood were masked by a ground-row representing rock, as shown in Figure 17 (C).
Second, we know that the actors disembarked from the galley. Moreover, it is reasonable to assume that the base of the galley would in some way have had to be masked, and the masking, in view of the stage direction about disembarking, would have had to represent some aspect of land. In view of these two fact, and the assumed third fact, we might form the conclusion that the steps and ground-row used in the first scene were also used here as masking and disembarkation means for those actors in the galley. This view is further reinforced by the fact that the intervening carpenters' scene in the Gothic Chamber was brief; the scene, printed upon twelve small pages, could not have taken more than several minutes to play. During these few minutes, the heavy set-pieces of the first scene had to be removed and the Port Scene, with its movable galley, set up. In the interest of economy of time, alone, it would be natural, wherever possible, to use the same scenic elements in both set-scenes -- in this case, the steps and the ground-row of rocks.

Except for the large galley, the ground-row and the steps, the scenery appears to have been composed of flat elements. There were no references to furniture, other rocks, doors, caves, etc., which would indicate the use of other set-pieces.
In view of the fact that the galley occupied the upper entrance on stage right, we may conclude that the backscene, possibly stock, was a backcloth or a pair of flats representing the Port and Gulf, situated in the fourth grooves position, as shown in Figure 19 (A).

In regard to the wings used in other entrances, there is no concrete evidence. If, however, the subjective judgment above (in connection with the platform and the steps) may be further pursued, we might tentatively form the conclusion that the wing grooves may very well have been occupied by the same exterior wings as were used for the first scene. Again, this conclusion is based on the practical requirements of time and the suitability of the wings which could just as easily represent the foliage on the banks of the Port as the surrounding terrain in the Grove of the first scene.

Conclusions: Act I, Scene 3.--A summary of the conclusions regarding Act I, Scene 3, of Adelgitha as played in 1818 follows:

1. The scenery was composed primarily of flat elements, to which were added a practicable galley of large size and a set-piece of steps masked by a ground-row.

2. The ground-row and the steps were probably held over from the first scene.
3. The cut-off, or backscene, was run in the fourth grooves, if flats, or hung in the fourth grooves position if a cloth.

4. The wings were probably the same as those used in the first scene.
Deletion of the fleet effect.—The question now arises as to why the effect of the fleet traversing the background was cut in this production. It is known that, as early as 1798, cut-out, diminished figures were drawn across the upper part of the stage floor to give the illusion of figures or ships at a distance. This technique, then, was available to stage technicians of 1818. It is also known that the technique was not entirely abandoned, for it was still being used in the theatres of the latter part of the nineteenth century. We may conclude, therefore, that it was not a lack of technical "know-how" that prevented the use of the effect here. Other reasons are, of course, possible. It may have been that the expense was too great. It may also have been that the Port scene located in the fourth grooves position was too close to the audience to allow the effect to come off; that is to say, there may have been no way to place the Port farther upstage to gain distance for the effect. The exact reason for the omission of the fleet effect cannot, from the
evidence now at hand, be determined. In view of the facts, however, that the effect was precluded neither by lack of technique (it was done in 1798) nor by audience taste (it was accepted, apparently, down to 1881, at least) we may feel safe in judging that the scene was omitted either because of its expense or because limitations of stage area made it impossible of achievement on this particular occasion.

**Act II, as played.**—The scene written as the first scene of the third act was played in this production as the whole of the second act. The locality was described as follows: "The Palace Gardens.—On one side is a Bank. The Castle Towers are seen through the Trees in the Back-Ground." The only specific prompter's note that we have regarding the nature and placement of the scenery representing this locality is contained in the insertion of the abbreviation, "1st\$ W R [first right wing]," after the word "Bank," which the prompter underlined. There was nothing in the action to indicate that this Bank was a practicable set-piece; apparently no one ever stood on it, or sat on it, or used it in any other way. It could, therefore, have been merely a low, flat piece, or abbreviated wing, standing in the first wing position on the right-hand side of the stage.
With regard to the trees, however, we are able to glean a little more information in addition to the playwright's specification, "through the Trees in the Back-Ground." The prompter's warning cue for the placement of two characters before their entrance reads as follows: "L. U. K. Lothair [and] Michael Ducas." When Lothair entered, the direction was given, "advances through the Trees," and when Michael Ducas entered, unseen, the stage direction printed in the script reads: "appears in the Background." The stage direction, "advances through the Trees," coupled with the suggestion that Michael Ducas was half hidden in the background, strongly implies that the trees were represented on a cut-out flat, through the cuts of which entrances could be made, and persons and other scenic elements seen.

Under other circumstances, the directions quoted above might be taken merely to mean that the actor came from behind wings representing trees, but it is felt that this interpretation is not valid here in view of the playwright's description of the Castle Tower also being visible "through the Trees."

The fact that the character Lothair was placed at the upper entrance on stage left for his entrance through the trees suggests that the cut-out tree flat was run in the third grooves position, as illustrated in Figure 18 (H),
or in the position immediately below, or downstage of, his entry point.

The cut-off, or backscene, representing the Castle Towers would have been run in the fourth grooves, as shown in Figure 18 (C), since this is the position indicated by the fact that three entry positions are mentioned as existing below the backscene.

With regard to the wings, except for the "bank" already noted as being in the first wing position on the left, it is again probable that they were the same as the wings used for the two previous scenes in depth—notably the Grove and the Port of Otranto, both of which were exteriors also. Wings representing trees would have been entirely suitable for all three of these scenes.

**Conclusions: Act II.**—A summary of the conclusions regarding Act II of *Adelgitha* follows:

1. It was composed entirely of flat elements consisting of a cut flat of trees in the third grooves (Fig. 18, H), and tree wings in all wing positions except the first right wing which contained a "bank" (probably flat and not practicable).

2. Since there was nothing of a highly individualized nature called for by the script or the action, it is probable that all of the elements were stock pieces.
3. The wings were probably the same as those that were used in the two preceding set-scenes.

Act III, Scene 1, as played.--The scene written as the first scene of the fourth act of *Adelgitha* was presented in this production as the first scene of the third act. It called for, and was played in, the same scenery as that employed for Act I, Scene 2; it was again the Gothic Chamber, run in the first grooves.

Act III, Scene 2, as played.--The next scene, played as the second scene of the third act, appears to have been a rather complex set-scene. The insertion of a complex set-scene at this point of the script is quite logical, however, in view of the fact that the stagehands would have had ample time in which to prepare it. The interval between this set-scene and the last previous set-scene is comprised of the interval between the acts, plus the running time of the first scene of this act, which was a carpenters' scene.

The scenic demands, as indicated by the description in the script, were fairly great:

A Cavern; through a natural Arch in the centre of the back-scene the Sea is visible, with the Moon shining on it. On one Side of the Arch is a rough-hewn Staircase, conducting to an upper Gallery, and on the same side is the Mouth of an inner Cave. . . . On the opposite Side is the great entrance to the Cavern.
Inserted into this description are two notes in the prompter's hand. The first is partially illegible, but seems to be either, "R. E.," or "R. C." The latter has been chosen as being its probable reading, since "R. C." has meaning as "right center," whereas "R. E." is not clear. The prompter for this production was always clear about which entrance he meant, using abbreviations such as "L. U. E.," "1st E. R.," "R. U. E.," etc.; nowhere, in writing of entrances, did he use an indefinite "R. E." without designating the entrance more specifically. Moreover, the note in question makes a good deal more sense if interpreted as "right center" than if interpreted in any other possible way.

The note was inserted into the script above the word "centre," which seems to indicate that the natural Arch was in the right-center portion of the flats in the fourth grooves, as shown in Figure 20 (B).

The second note in the prompter's hand placed the staircase in the upper entrance on stage left. This staircase was a practicable piece, for we find the following directions in reference to its use:

Adelgitha descends the flight of Steps
Lothair rushes down the steps.

Figure 20 (C) shows the stair-case as a set-piece located in the upper left entrance, backed by the flats.
Other notes, however, seem to cloud the picture a little. The evidence seems to indicate that the entrance to the inner cavern was also in the upper entrance on stage left. We find, for example, that Lothair went "into the inner Cavern" and his re-entrance "from the Cave, with his Sword drawn" was made, according to the prompter's note, from the upper entrance, left. These two notes place the inner cave squarely where the staircase has been placed, and in these cases there is no doubt whatsoever about the clarity of the prompter's handwriting.

A possible solution of this riddle presents itself, but again it is the result of subjective analysis. We may assume that the stage left portion of the flats in the backscene had no openings in it, since the only opening in the pair of flats has already been placed in the right flat (Fig. 20, B). Moreover, we know that a practicable staircase takes up a considerable amount of space and would, therefore, be more likely to run horizontally, from the audience's point of view, than vertically; i. e., it would run across the stage rather than up and down stage. If these premises are accepted, along with the fact that the staircase and the cave were in the same entrance, we may conclude that the stairway's topmost portion was over the left upper entrance, and the
stairway itself ran toward stage center against, or near, the left half of the pair of flats. Under the staircase was located the inner cavern, much as a coat closet is located under a staircase in many a modern home. The gap in Figure 20 (D) shows the entrance to this cavern. In other words, the rough-hewn staircase consisted of a flight
of steps which was masked on the downstage side with a profile piece representing rocks; this masking-piece was pierced with the entrance to the inner cave which ran underneath the granite-like flight of steps.

That portion of the setting referred to as the "great Entrance to the Cavern" on the "opposite Side" was mentioned in the prompter's notes only once specifically and several times by implication. On one occasion, three actors were required to enter "by the great Entrance," and these performers, according to the prompter's note, entered through the upper entrance on stage right. On two other occasions, when we may assume that the characters entered the stage from outside the main cavern, we find that these characters entered also from the upper entrance on stage right. On the basis of this evidence, we may conclude that the great entrance was located opposite the staircase, or in the upper entrance on the right. Figure 20 (E) shows this entrance as a raked, flat piece of scenery.

Finally, since we again find reference to three entry positions, or the intervals between four sets of wing grooves, we may conclude that the flats pierced with the arch were in the fourth grooves position, backed by a backcloth representing the sea, visible in the moonlight, as shown by Figure 20 (B and A).
Conclusions: Act III, Scene 2.—A summary of the conclusions regarding the nature and placement of scenery for Act III, Scene 2, of Adelgitha follows:

1. It was a set-scene placed against a background of flats running in the fourth grooves and backed by a cloth representing the sea in the moonlight.

2. The Arch through which the sea backcloth was visible was cut into the right flat of the pair of flats.

3. The principal set-piece was a staircase, masked by a profile piece of rocks into which the inner cave opening was cut. This piece was placed in the upper entrance, left, and probably ran toward the center of the stage.

4. The great Entrance was a raked flat piece in the upper entrance on stage right.

Act V, Scene 1, as written.—A short scene, five pages in length, was written as the first scene of the fifth act, but it was cut entirely from the 1818 production. It was supposed to represent Adelgitha's apartment, and the scene required the presence of a sofa. Since the following scene was a set-scene again, as we shall presently see, it is probable that the short first scene of this act was deleted because of the difficulty of removing the sofa. The scene itself could easily have been
run in the first grooves, thus masking the set-scene upstage of it. But when the flats were drawn off to reveal the next scene, the sofa would have had to be gotten rid of also. It is true, of course, that liveried servants were used, even at a much later period, to remove furniture in plain sight of the audience, but the evidence drawn from this production seems to indicate that the device was used only when strictly necessary. Here, within one production, we find two scenes in which the presence of furniture before the first grooves would seem to be undesirable -- this scene, and the second scene of Act I. In the latter scene, the sofa was cut, and in the present scene, the entire scene was deleted, presumably (in both cases) because of the awkwardness inherent in furniture removal.

Act IV, as played.--The last scene of the play, written as the second scene of the fifth act, but played as the entirety of Act IV, was described as

...a Gothic Hall splendidly illuminated--The background is filled with banquet-tables, round which sit TANCREDE and the Knights with the Pages attending on them. On one side is a Staircase leading to ADELGITHA'S apartment.--Opposite is the Great
Entrance.--GUISCARD occupies an elevated seat.--Opposite to him sits HUBERT, an ancient Minstrel, with his harp, and four younger Minstrels ranged behind him.

Much of this detail was deleted by the hand of the prompter. The references to the staircase and the grand entrance were struck out; so, too, were the references to Hubert and the minstrels (who did not appear at all in this production).

It is fairly certain that no staircase was shown, because Adelgitha, who was supposed to enter from the staircase, entered from the proscenium door on the right. As a matter of fact, all entrances and exits in this scene were through the proscenium doors. This fact might seem to suggest that the scene was shallow, and set in the first grooves, but this notion must be dismissed since we find that many persons were discovered sitting at tables. The note on the interleaf to page 106 indicates that forty persons were discovered at the rise of the curtain. These were: Guiscard, Tancred, 6 Knights, 2 Pages, 8 Gentlemen, 12 Ladies, and 8 Soldiers. So many persons, some of them seated at banquet tables, must have necessitated a fairly deep scene.

The fact that all practicable scenic elements were removed from the scenery would seem to indicate that this setting may have been composed of the ordinary flat, wing, and border setting, probably drawn from stock. Nothing more was required, certainly. Moreover, the great number
of persons revealed on the stage may be evidence of an attempt to compensate for the lack of splendor in the scenery itself by having recourse to spectacle through the use of a mass of persons.

Since a certain amount of depth was needed, and since probably all of the grooves in the fourth set of grooves were already occupied with scenery, it seems reasonable to suppose that the flats representing the Gothic Hall were run in the third set of grooves, just behind the cut-flat of trees that was used in the Palace warden scene. Figure 18 (G) shows the position of the Gothic Hall in the third grooves.

**Conclusions: Act V, Scene 2.**—A summary of the conclusions regarding Act V, Scene 2, of Adelgitha follows:

1. The principal scenic elements were flats and wings, probably drawn from stock, terminated in the third grooves position.

2. Tables and benches were included in the décor.

3. A large, practicable staircase called for by the playwright's scenic description was not provided.

**Depths of scenes and types of alternations.**—The foregoing analysis of Adelgitha as produced in 1818 reveals that four of the seven scenes were placed relatively
far upstage (fourth grooves). One was moderately placed (third grooves), and one was shallow (first grooves). These figures show a marked difference in scenic placement from the productions previously discussed; unlike the others, the production of Adelgitha was played more than one-half of all the time in depth.

With regard to the way in which the scenes were alternated, however, Adelgitha falls into the same pattern as The Grecian Daughter. Four of the six shifts involved alternations from deep-to-shallow settings. One was deep-to-deep and the other was deep-to-moderate.

Tableaus.—The tendency, in English staging practice at the turn of the century, to make extensive use of tableaus has been remarked by a number of investigators. Most treatments of the subject, however, deal with tableaus in final position, i.e., those that occurred before the fall of the curtain at the ends of acts, or at the ends of scenes. Nicoll cites two examples of tableaus as illustrations of his theme, and both illustrations are drawn from the ends of acts:

The Curtain falls upon the picture.

The Characters form into a Picture of mute attention and the drop falls.9

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There is no attention whatsoever paid to the use of tableaus in other positions within plays.

There is some reason to believe, however, that the fondness for tableaus led to their usage within scenes—sometimes even at points at which the playwright did not intend them to be employed. In Adelgitha, for example, the playwright's description and the action that he incorporated into the beginning of the play make it clear that he intended the rise of the curtain to discover only one character on stage. Lewis' description is unmistakable. The opening stage direction reads: "...CLAUDIA is discovered..." Then, after a fairly long passage of monologue, came the direction, "The ABBESS enters with a train of Nuns." In other words, the Abbess and her nuns were intended by Lewis to enter some time after the rise of the curtain. The interleaving of the first page of the script, just opposite to the initial description of the scene, contains the notation in the prompter's handwriting: "Disd Claudia, Abbess, 8 Nuns, Imma." This note tells us that all of these characters were visible at the rise of the curtain, because the word "Disd" was used. Later scene directions placed all except Claudia on the platform leading to the Convent, Claudia was left, leaning against a pillar of the Shrine of St. Hilda.
As written, the opening of the scene is concerned solely with Claudia and her apostrophe to the morning, beginning with the words: "Hail, welcome morn. . . ."
The other characters, ten in all, were not supposed to enter the action until the following page (according to the printed script). In other words, the playwright did not intend these characters to be involved in the action at the rise of the curtain, and yet they were visible, according to the prompter's note.

Moreover, the lighting effect as noted by the prompter seemed designed for a slow, opening tableau. We already know that lamps were glowing behind the windows of the Shrine of St. Hilda. In addition to this information, we have the prompter's notation with regard to the opening of the scene. This note reads: "Lamps a little down. Come up gradually." The note seems to indicate that the scene opened upon a rather dimly lighted stage and that the lights came up gradually in intensity to discover the group of eleven women, ten of whom were not yet needed for the action, in a tableau effect.

Another tableau occurred later in the scene when the doors of the Shrine opened. This one was written in by the playwright, but it was written in at the expense of one of the pieces of dialogue also written by him. Just before the opening of the doors, Michael and Dercetus
were speaking of Adelgitha. The line immediately preceding the effect is as follows: "And hark! the organ speaks the matins o'er, the doors unclose: She comes!—Retire, Cercetus." According to this line, one would expect that Adelgitha entered the scene through the doors, for Michael clearly says: "She comes." The action, however, did not fulfill this prophecy, for the description of the effect reads as follows: "The doors of the Shrine open. ADELGITHA is discovered (in mourning) Kneeling at an altar: IMMA, CLAUDIA the ABBESS and NUNS surround her." Here, then, we find an actress's entrance prepared for by the dialogue, but realized not as an entrance, but as a tableau, and both the tableau and the dialogue (contradicting each other) came from the author's pen. Once again, then, it would seem that we find a tableau at the opening of a sequence rather than at the close.

There were two more instances of opening tableaus in this production. The next instance occurred at the opening of the scene at the Port of Otranto. Here the tableau was written by the author, and was slightly expanded by the prompter. Lewis wrote: "Citizens and Peasants of both sexes are grouped in attitudes of expectation." Then, after a series of welcoming shouts, came a direction: "Enter LOTAIR." This direction was altered by the prompter to read: "Disd LOTAIR [italics
"On the interleaf there is a further notation: "Dis'd Citizens, Peasants, Ladies & Gentlemen of the Chorus." These persons, to whose number Lothair was added, must have made a sizeable and impressive grouping in tableau effect as the preceding flat scene was drawn off. The idea of a tableau is further reinforced by Lewis' choice of words in describing the opening of the scene: "...grouped in attitudes...."

The final instance of a tableau in this play -- again an initial tableau -- occurred at the opening of the last scene (the Gothic Hall). The playwright called for a number of persons to be on stage at the opening. We know the total number from the prompter's note on the interleaf: it was forty, and included Guiscard, Tancred, 6 Knights, 2 Pages, 8 Gentlemen, 12 Ladies, and 8 Soldiers. These persons were discovered, apparently, in attitudes of revelry. There was a song which, however, was cut from this production, possibly because of the deletion of the various minstrels as noted above. After the song, the action commenced with Adelgitha's entrance. Here, again, there is a tableau effect, set somewhat apart from the action by a song intended by the playwright, after which the thread of the action was picked up.

Strangely enough, there was no instance in this production of Adelgitha, except, perhaps, at the end, in
which a final tableau was employed. The end may or may not have been a tableau effect. It is impossible to form a conclusion, because there are no notes from the prompter in this regard.

It is certain, however, that four tableaus were used in this production. These are significant, not because they were tableaus, but because they were initial or medial, occurring at the scene openings or within a scene. Moreover, at least one of these (the first) was forced upon the play by the prompter. The second (the Shrine) was forced upon the play by the playwright at the expense of his own dialogue. These facts seem to form some basis, at least, for the conclusion that tableaus occurred in initial position to a greater extent than is now generally believed.

**Summary and conclusions.**—The foregoing analysis of the staging of *Adelgitha* at Covent Garden Theatre in 1818 has revealed several tendencies that have not hitherto been generally noted:

1. Set-scenes were not confined to the use of relatively small practicable pieces set in the wing areas, but were, on occasion, made up of extremely massive units (e.g., the Shrine) very similar in nature to what we think of as set-pieces today.
2. When set-pieces were extensively used, they, rather than the "surround" or backscene, set the locality, and the backscene functioned merely as a terminus to the scenery.

3. Set-pieces, like flat pieces, may have been used several times within the production of one play to meet the exigencies of time limitations of scene shifting.

4. Wings of stock nature were used, and the same wings were used repeatedly throughout a production.

5. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century fondness for tableaus led stage managers or prompters to incorporate tableaus into the productions even at scene openings, sometimes contrary to the playwright's attention as expressed in the scenic description.

6. More than one-half of all scenes were placed rather far upstage.

7. Two-thirds of all scene shifts involved deep-to-shallow alternations.
CHAPTER VI

ASPECTS OF STAGING

IN THALABA, THE DESTROYER

This chapter is concerned with certain aspects of the staging of a production of the Gothic drama, Thalaba, the Destroyer.¹ This play was first brought out in 1822, a date which falls in the transitional period between the full flowering of Gothicism and the heyday of melodramas. The play is markedly Gothic, containing several ghosts, demons, other good and evil spirits, and intensely romanticized figures. At the same time, this play is especially noteworthy for its extensive use of staging devices later exploited in melodramas such as those so prolifically turned out by Dion Boucicault. Thalaba, the Destroyer, then, exemplifies at one time the full development of Gothicism and the use in the production of Gothic dramas of staging devices later used for melodramas.

¹Edward Fitzball, Thalaba, the Destroyer; Promptbook 556, Microfilm, The Ohio State University Theatre Collection.

The nature and placement of scenery.—The promptbook that was consulted as a basis for the following
analysis is fairly clear about the nature of the scenery that was used, and is occasionally specific about the location of the various scenic elements. As in the case of plays discussed in previous chapters, it is possible to determine the location of most of the scenic items on the stage with a fair degree of accuracy.

The script is extremely clear about most of the stage effects employed, such as sudden appearances (with which the production abounded), fire effects, gauze effects, and thunderbolt effects. These will be discussed at appropriate places within this chapter.

**Act I, Scene 1: Scenery.**—The first scene of *Thalaba, the Destroyer* made use of two set-pieces placed within a "surround" composed of a sky background and appropriate wings and borders.

The playwright's description of the scenery is rather full; it is much more detailed, for example, than the terse descriptions that we found in earlier Gothic plays such as *The Grecian Daughter*. The description reads as follows:

The Sepulchre of Zeinah, opening to the sky, by moonlight—in the background an Arabian tomb, on which is inscribed the word "ZEINAH." OKBA and the Hag of the Rocks, bending over a blue flame, C.

Accompanying this description are a number of notes in the prompter's hand. The first note, "See Cauldron
lighted and Ghost in Tomb," tells us two things: first, that the "blue flame" over which Okba and the Hag were bending was contained in a cauldron, and, second, that the Tomb was a practicable set-piece, capable of containing an actress. The next note, taken in connection with a second piece of evidence, helps us to locate the position of this Tomb and of the backscene which terminated the stage setting. The note reads: "Ring Trap Bell for Kawla to ascend 2d G Trap,/ white Fire/Gong." The second piece of evidence comes from a drawing on the next page of the script. This small sketch shows the cauldron at center, with Kawla standing down stage right of it. Figure 21 (A) shows the approximate location of Kawla's trap, according to the prompter's notes. Figure 21 (B) shows the location of the cauldron, as pictured in relationship to Kawla in the prompter's sketch.

With these locations established, it is possible to locate the positions of the other scenic elements. The descriptive passage suggests that the tomb was "in the background," (or above the other elements such as the cauldron). This would logically tend to place it, as shown in Figure 21 (C) in the area between the third and fourth grooves. Above this, probably in or near the fourth grooves, was the sky piece, according to the description of the sepulchre "opening to the sky."
With the sky background, sky borders would obviously have been used. There is no indication, however, as to the nature of the wings that were employed in the production. Since, however, the nature of a number of the later scenes required rock or cavern wings, it seems probable that these were also used here in the first groove of each wing position.

Act I, Scene 1: Effects.--The first scene of Thalaba, the Destroyer was rich in stage effects. Among these, the most spectacular were, perhaps, the effects that employed the stage traps. The first use of a trap occurred at the very opening of the play. At the rise of the curtain, the lighting was very dim, for the scene was to be played in "moonlight." The dimness was broken by the chemical blue fire (probably lycopodium) flickering in the cauldron. Almost immediately the demon, Kawla, appeared through the corner trap at stage right, and, to draw the audience's attention to this appearance in the dim light of the stage, two tricks were employed: first, "white fire" flashed, and then a gong was struck. (A gong was struck at each ghostly appearance but one in this production.) Then, the Hag and Okba "throw each a

2 The gong was a theatrical effect rather than a prompter's signal; the signal for the manipulation of the traps was a bell, as exemplified by the prompter's note quoted on p. 170, above.
Figure 21.—Plan of Traps in Thalaba, the Destroyer, Act I, Scene 1
powder into the Cauldron," -- a theatrical device, probably, for maintaining the fuel supply for the blue flames.

Soon after Kawla's appearance, the cauldron trap (Fig. 21, B) was sunk. Then the prompter noted the effect of thunder and lightning, followed by another gong, and immediately the original corner trap (Fig. 21, A) was again brought up, this time bearing Kawla's helper, Abdalda. In this case, we have an example of an "improvement" of staging over the requirements of the script, which merely asked for Abdalda to "rush in R." The operation of the trap, however, would clearly have been far more spectacular than the prosaic appearance of Abdalda from the wings.

If speed in the operation of these traps was re­quired (and one gathers that it was required, since all the actions thus far described occurred on the first two pages of the script), it is probable that Abdalda shot into view on the counterweighted corner trap through a star opening previously used by Kawla.

Hardly were these traps operated to provide the effects just described than another effect was intro­duced. Once again the "Thunder, Lightning, & Gong" were used to herald the appearance of a ghost. This apparition was described by the prompter rather fully: "Tomb Doors opened. Ghost points. Change inscription on Tomb to
'Thalaba' etc. [Thalaba the Destroyer comes: All shall perish]. The means of gaining the effect of the appearance of the letters in the inscription is pictured by Hopkins in an illustration reproduced here as


Figure 22, which shows a stagehand removing a cloth or paper backing from letters cut in the piece of scenery, thus permitting light to shine through them and making them visible to the audience.

After this spectacle, the prompter noted the conclusion of the scene: "Ghost sinking slowly on Trap as Scene closes. White fire." This note tells us that still a third trap was used in the scene. This one was located inside the framework of the Tomb and sank down slowly amid the flickering of chemical white fire to disappear from sight.

Conclusions: Act I, Scene 1.—The foregoing analysis of Thalaba, the Destroyer, as the promptbook reveals it to have been produced, has led to the following conclusions about scenery and effects in Act I, Scene 1:

1. The scenery was composed of two set-pieces in a surround of drop, rock wings, and sky borders.
2. The scenery was relatively deep, terminating in or near the fourth grooves.

3. Extensive use was made of trap doors, fire effects, and other stage tricks.

4. The staging for spectacle went slightly beyond the requirements of the script.
5. A gong was used as a theatrical device rather than as a prompter's signal at the appearances of supernatural beings.

Act I, Scene 2: Scenery.--The second scene of Thalaba, the Destroyer is only two pages in length, and appears to have been inserted as a carpenters' scene to provide masking for the removal of the tomb of the preceding scene and the setting up of the set-pieces required by the action of Scene 3. The scene was described as "a Romantic Pass near the Sepulchre -- daybreak." A note in the prompter's hand appears to read "1 0," but the figure "1" is not entirely clear, and no further information of any kind was given, either by the playwright or the prompter, to help in locating the placement of the scenery. Since it was a brief carpenters' scene, we may be sure that it was located downstage in order to fulfill its masking obligations; the first grooves position is the most probable location, especially in view of the fact that most of the carpenters' scenes thus far encountered were located at that point. A stock drop seems more likely to have been used than a pair of flats, because the scenery represented an exterior locality.  

\[^4\text{Supra, p. 86n.}\]
this drop, the same rock wings used in the preceding
scene could have been retained in the position shown
in Figure 23 (W).

Act I, Scene 3: Scenery.--Figure 23 (D) shows
the upstage terminating point of the scenery in the
fifth grooves as noted by the prompter for the third
scene of the first act. In addition to the backscene, a
number of set-pieces and properties were used to fill
out the stage picture which was described in the
following terms by the playwright:

The Cottage [sic] of Moath, R., in the Valley of
Date-Trees--a rude Bridge, crossing a small
meandering stream, in the background--a luxuriant
date-tree, covered with fruit, C., and a rustic
seat beneath it.

The scene as described was realized more or less faith­
fully upon the stage, but some of the elements appear to
have been omitted or placed in positions different from
those given in the scenic directions. The prompter's
first note gave the location of the backscene as "5G,"
and immediately went on as follows: "Date Tree L. C./
3 Low Stools discovered on./ Basket with dates on L. C.
Dates on Tree to pluck." Other notes on the same page,
also in the prompter's hand, indicate the existence of
several other scenic elements. One reads: "When Thalaba
X Bridge R to L. . . . ." This note indicates that a
practicable bridge (set-piece) was placed in a
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---Prosencium Arch---

**Figure 23.** Schematic Plan of Flats and Wings Used in *Thalaba, the Destroyer*
horizontal position across the stage. Since it was supposed to be associated with the "meandering stream" we may be sure that it was situated near the fifth grooves where the backscene representing the stream was located. Moreover, since the bridge ran from stage right to stage left, we can only assume that it did not span the stream painted on the backscene but that it appeared to run parallel with it. If so, this convention had precedent in productions of a much earlier period, for it was noted that the scene of architecture in Salmacida Spolia in 1640 took the same artistic license.  


The last note on the page, "during dialogue Samba has put the Table with Supper under Date Tree," tells us that a table (in addition to the stools and basket) was also a part of the décor.

The date tree was a set-piece capable of being climbed. The dialogue indicates that the character Samba was discovered seated in the tree at the opening of the scene, and Moath called to him: "Come down from the date-tree, Samba. . . . Come down, I say. . . ."

Strangely enough, the production seems to have dispensed entirely with the Cottage of Moath, unless it was painted on the backscene. The rustic seat beneath
the date-tree also seems not to have been present, but the stools mentioned above probably took its place.

The scene, therefore, was made up of two set-pieces (bridge and date tree) and some furniture and properties in an exterior surround backed by the meandering stream which was represented in painting probably on a stock drop.

Act I, Scene 3: Effects.—Scene 3 of Act I of Thalaba, the Destroyer was not quite so rich in stage effects as the first scene; nevertheless, two trap doors were used and a thunderbolt trick was also employed. The latter effect was noted by the prompter as follows:

"Darker--Quick. Thunder & lightning./ Gong. Thunder-bolt X from R. H. flys [sic] thro' small Trap L. C. Abdalda falls." Here we find evidence of still another trap employed in addition to the three already used—this time a trap at stage left center, situated near the date tree. This trap was opened to receive the thunder-bolt, an effect achieved in many theatres by using a taut wire stretched from the flies in a diagonal line down through an open trap. This wire acted as a guide or track for a rider made of iron pipe around which was wrapped
asbestos soaked with alcohol. When lighted and released, this bar of flame ran down the wire and disappeared from view through the open trap whence it could be recovered and doused by a stagehand beneath the stage floor.

The final stage effect of the scene made use of still another trap, a Vampire trap, in the center of the stage. The directions for this effect were as follows: "Gong. Thunder & lightning. Abdalda vanishes thro' Vampire Trap in C. Stage Dark. . . . Tableau & Scene closed."

Conclusions: Act I, Scene 3.—The analysis of Act I, Scene 3, of Thalaba, the Destroyer has led to the following conclusions with reference to scenery and stage effects:

1. The scenery was composed primarily of set-pieces placed with furnishings and properties in an exterior surround made up, probably, of stock scenery.

2. The scene was deep, terminating in the fifth grooves.

3. Extensive use was made of trap doors and other stage tricks.
4. The scene probably made use of scenic convention with regard to the placement of the bridge.

5. Some of the scenic detail described in the script was omitted.

**Act I, Scene 4: Scenery.**—The scenery in view at the opening of the last scene of Act I of *Thalaba, the Destroyer* seems to have been stock scenery. It was described simply as "Thalaba's Chamber—a door in the flat, C., with curtains, in the Asiatic style." The only entrance used, below the flats, was the first entrance on the right, so we may assume that the scene was shallow, placed probably as shown in Figure 23 (T). Doors were used instead of curtains in the backscene, for a prompter's note later refers to center doors, rather than to curtains. During the action, Thalaba hung his quiver on the wings, and these would have been interior wings, located as shown in Figure 23 (U).

**Act I, Scene 4: Effects.**—During the course of the action of Act I, Scene 4, the spirit of Zeinael again appeared, and this time she appeared in the opening of the center doors of the flat, just as the spectre appeared in *The Castle Spectre*. These doors were intended by the playwright for use both by ordinary characters and by the ghost. The prompter, however, reserved their use for the
spirit, and had other characters enter through the wings. We do not know, of course, whether he did this through a nice sense of what was theatrically appropriate (reserving the doors for supernatural appearances only makes them seem less like ordinary, prosaic doors) or because he had to do it in order to leave the center door free to be readied with the trapping for the ghost's appearance.

The apparition effect was described as follows:

Soft, plaintive Music.—The curtains of the doorway slowly unclose, and the SPIRIT OF ZEINAH appears—Thalaba Kneels—the Ghost blesses him, and, pointing to the east, withdraws.

7The reader has already noted, probably, the strong resemblance the theatrical details of this passage have to the details of the ghostly appearance in The Castle Spectre. Cf. ante, pp. 92-93.

To accomplish this effect, the prompter noted several details: "Lights down. C. Doors open. White Fire behind." Then the description continued:

Music.—As Thalaba rushes towards the curtains they instantly rise, and discover a vapour, on which is written—"Obey thy Mother's Ghost: Thalaba, Sultan of the Isles, avenge thy Father's death."

This part of the scenic description was accompanied by the following notes in the prompter's hand: "Gauze rise before Ghost. White Fire. Tableau & end of Act."

Moreover, the prompter deleted the words, "Obey thy Mother's Ghost," from the inscription, possibly because
he thought the inscription too long for theatrical effectiveness or because the space framed by the area of the doors was not of ample size to hold all of the inscription.

The gauze which rose up before the ghost obviously was the theatricalization of the "vapour" mentioned in the script's description. We are not told, however, how the inscription was placed on it. The effect could not have been accomplished by the same techniques as would have worked for the first scene's inscription, because the entire gauze here would be transparent, thus not being capable of forming the opaque area around the letters. Since, however, the letters had to "stand out" somehow, we are forced to the conclusion that they were made of opaque material sewed or otherwise fastened to the gauze. These would then have appeared as silhouettes in the light of the white fire behind the gauze.

Conclusions: Act I, Scene 4.—The analysis of the promptbook of Act I, Scene 4, of Thalaba, the Destroyer has led to the following conclusions:

1. The scenery was composed of stock flats run in the first grooves. These contained center doors, and were flanked by interior wings.

2. A number of theatrical effects were used.

3. The spectral appearance almost exactly paralleled the appearance of the ghost in The Castle Spectre.
4. A tableau concluded the scene.

Act II, Scenes 1 and 2: Scenery.--The scenery for the first scene of Act II was the same as that used in Act I, Scene 3 -- the Cottage and Valley of Date Trees (Fig. 23, D). During this scene, a cloud bearing an inscription was supposed to rise from behind the date tree, but the effect was deleted from this production.

The second scene of Act II is very brief -- only one page in length. It was obviously a carpenters' scene upon which the stagehands depended as masking for their movements behind the scenery. In this regard, we find a prompter's note which reads: "See Stage Set before you change scene." It was described as "An Apartment in the Sultan's Palace." Entrances were noted merely as "R" and "L" and it is most probable that the flats were stock, run in the first grooves as shown in Figure 23 (S), accompanied by the interior wings already used for Thalaba's Chamber.

Act II, Scene 3: Scenery.--The third scene of the second act, like several of the preceding scenes, was composed largely of set-pieces of a practicable nature. The printed description of the setting reads:

A Well in the Desert, R.--Mountains and Passes of sand in the background--Pelicans on the projections--a Rock, L., with a black fan-palm and rocky seat beneath.
On the interleaf opposite to this description, the prompter drew a thumbnail sketch which shows that the basic requirements were carried out. The well was a set-piece on stage right, and the tree and rock were on the left, downstage. A note referring to the upper entrance on the right indicates that the backscene was located above this entrance, in the fifth grooves (Fig. 23, C) just above the backscene for the Valley of Date Trees.

As in an earlier scene, the dialogue and action make it clear that the tree was practicable; Samba climbed it at the bidding of his master. The rock, too, was practicable, as is shown by a small drawing containing Thalaba's name as if the character was seated on the rock.

**Act II, Scene 3: Effects.**—Act II, Scene 3, introduced a theatrical device in the nature of a profile piece representing the character Abdalda riding on an elephant. The printed directions read: "Enter ABDALDA . . . R. U. E., riding on an elephant—he crosses, and then reenters, L. S. E." To this, the prompter appended the following note: "Abdalda on elephant (profile) XR to LH over Mountains. When off L. H. Abdalda enters 2. E. L. H." This note seems to be clear-cut evidence of the use of a device described by Fitzgerald:

In a certain class of pieces, in which horses, ships, etc., are shown, first at a distance, then coming
nearer, the custom is to cut, as if on pasteboard, profile figures of small size for the distance, when they are drawn across (the stage) with many hitchings and stops.  


This device was first used very early, probably under Servandoni, 9 and was almost certainly used in 1798 in the opening production of Blue Beard by Colman. 10


Profile pieces of the same kind were also employed in later melodrama; Rohrig cites the case of a profile horse "ridden" by a living actor. 11 In the present case, however, it is very clear that both the beast and its rider were profiled, since the figure of Abdalda went off stage, and then the living actor reentered.

The note to the effect that the elephant went "over Mountains" suggests that there was some sort of a
track arrangement on the backscene along which the profile piece was drawn, but the promptbook gives no clue as to the specific characteristics of this track.

In a production of this play done at Covent Garden Theatre on November 25, 1836, profiles of this nature were used for all animals except horses, which were real.12

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This is an example of the juxtaposition of the illusionistic and the real; one wonders what the effect must have been.

In addition to the profile piece representing an elephant and rider, this scene made use of two stage traps for theatrical effects. Marmina, another spirit, ascended through the Well on stage right, accompanied by the usual 'Thunder & Gong.' Abdalda then went down through the center trap, to the accompaniment of music and a gong. And, at the end of the scene, Marmina descended through the Well, this time accompanied only by the sound of the gong.

The trap beneath the frame of the Well appears to have been a different trap from that used by Kawla in the first scene. The thumbnail sketch mentioned above indicates that the Well was farther upstage than Kawla's trap which, it may be remembered, was in the second grooves
position. Thus far, then, the production had made use of six different stage traps.\(^\text{13}\)

\(^\text{13}\) These were: (1) Kawla's trap; (2) Cauldron trap; (3) Zeinah's trap; (4) Trap for thunderbolt effect; (5) Vampire trap; and (6) Well trap.

Conclusions: Act II, Scene 3.—The analysis of the promptbook for Act II, Scene 3, of Thalaba, the Destroyer has led to the following conclusions regarding scenery and stage effects:

1. The scenery was composed primarily of set-pieces of a practicable nature.

2. The scene was a deep, or "long," scene terminated in the fifth grooves.

3. Traps, sound effects and music were used profusely.

4. A profiled animal and rider was drawn across the backscene on some kind of track, the nature of which is not determinable.

Act II, Scene 4.—The fourth scene of Act II is very brief, being only one page in length. It was a carpenters' scene with the same locality as that of Act II, Scene 2, as shown in Figure 23 (S and U).

Act II, Scene 5: Scenery.—The requirements of Act II, Scene 5, of Thalaba, the Destroyer are very
similar to the requirements of Act V, Scene 2, of Adelgitha; the former called for a Sultan's Pavilion, with much elaboration, and the latter called for a Gothic Hall, with a good many decorative elements. As in the case of Adelgitha, however, the elaborate scenic details envisioned by the playwright according to his description of the scene did not seem to have been accomplished on the stage in Thalaba, the Destroyer. The stage setting was described as follows:

The Sultan's Pavilion, with cushions in the garden—a tripod of burning perfume each side of the steps—tripods of flowers, pagados [sic] etc., R. and L.—Attendants discovered bearing coloured lanterns, banners, etc.

The prompter, however, wrote nothing to indicate that the elements described above were utilized in the production; perhaps the elaboration of the scene was curtailed because of the brevity of the preceding scene (one page) precluded the setting-up of many details. In any event, the prompter's notes about the scene are extremely brief. There is a note that probably reads "5 G," although the digit is malformed, and might possibly refer to grooves other than the fifth. The reading of "fifth," however, seems valid in the light of a later notation referring to the upper entrance on stage left which, in this case, indicates that the scene was terminated in the fifth grooves (Fig. 23, B) just upstage of the Well in the Desert.
A drawing showing the plan of the actors' stage positions after an opening procession in this scene shows a small rectangle upstage center framing the word "Sultan." This rectangle is taken to indicate some form of set-piece representing a pagoda or throne for the Sultan, since the positions of other characters on stage are indicated merely by dots and straight, unjoined lines not framed in rectangles. No steps are shown in this drawing, and a printed stage direction referring to an exit "through the Pavilion," was altered by the prompter to read "U. E. L.," which further substantiates the view that no pavilion, as such, was provided. All in all, the few details given about the scene, including the drawing, lead to the conclusion that the décor was greatly simplified, and that the scenery consisted probably of a stock garden backscene with the tree wings already used in other scenes. This surround was augmented by a throne or pagoda for the Sultan, and the quality of spectacle seems to have derived from the procession and stage positions of the actors, rather than from the scenic elements themselves.

Conclusions: Act II, Scene 5.—The analysis of Act II, Scene 5, of the promptbook for Thalaba, the Destroyer has led to the following conclusions:

1. The playwright's demands, as reflected by the printed script, were greatly modified; the modifications
were possibly a result of a lack of time in which to set up an elaborate set-scene such as that visualized by the playwright.

2. Spectacle derived from the action rather than from the scenery.

3. Stock scenery in depth was probably employed.

Act II, Scene 6.—Scene 6 of the second act of Thalaba, the Destroyer is only two pages in length, and it appears to have been designed as a carpenters' scene to intervene between the intended elaborate set-scene preceding it, and the rather complicated scene following it. The scene was described as: "In the Isles, near the Rock of Badelmandel." No further information was offered, but since it was a carpenters' scene, the scenery was probably located in the first grooves (Fig. 23, R) as were most of the carpenters' scenes already noted.

Act II, Scene 7.—As written, the last scene of the second act was intended to be extremely elaborate, with a number of unusual and spectacular effects. As played in this production, however, many of the playwright's requirements were ignored, and the effects were greatly simplified. The scenic description reads as follows:

An Enchanted Cavern, beneath the waters of Badelmandel, with the waves gently agitated above—-an
opening in the background, transparently showing the water's depth, and the bed of the ocean—an immense pillar of rock, L., overhung with coral shells and submarine plants. KAWLA discovered seated on a throne of amber, R., and attended by Water Demons--HAG, OKBA and Demons over a cauldron, R. C.

Later directions indicate that Abdalda appeared "through the waters, C. F." Then a galley was supposed to enter, stage right, bearing a number of passengers:

The galley is seen vainly contending with the storm, and is at length wrecked--Oneiza is heard to scream--dead pause--picture--and the galley is seen sinking . . . . Thalaba seen floating, with Oneiza in his arms--they go down and appear through the water.

Immediately following the action described above, Thalaba was supposed to enter through the "C. F." supporting Oneiza in his arms. Later, Thalaba was bound to a rock, but Marmina appeared in the water waving her wand, and Thalaba vanished, presumably to safety.

These extensive directions show that a highly complex scenic arrangement was intended, probably on two levels -- the sea above and cavern below, with an "entrance" to the lower part of the sea in the center of the flats. Probably the galley was supposed to appear in the upper half of the scene and sink behind the flats, from above, thus providing for Thalaba's entrance with Oneiza through the opening in the center of the flats.

Strangely enough, however, the prompter made no notes at all about any of this. His only addition to the script was a drawing, on the interleaf at the beginning
of the scene, and this drawing shows only one scenic element on the stage. This was labeled "Trick Rock Marmina," and was located on stage left. The other parts of the drawing show the stage positions of various characters at the opening of the scene. No throne is shown for Kawla, and no cauldron is shown for the Hag and Okba. These omissions suggest very strongly that the scenery was greatly simplified. The "Trick Rock" was surely the means of Marmina's entrance; it was probably also the means of Thalaba's disappearance when she waved her wand, for the directions state that Thalaba was bound to the rock when made to disappear.

When we consider the detail with which the prompter noted the effects in preceding scenes -- notes about visual and aural effects and about the manipulation of stage traps -- it strikes us as odd that he made no notes with regard to this scene which according to the printed directions seemed to have been the most complicated of all. The only possible conclusion to be drawn from his failure to do so seems to be that he made no notes because the effects were not used. This conclusion becomes a little firmer when we discover what was done in another production of this play at about the same time.14 In this second production,

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14 Edward Fitzball, Thalaba, the Destroyer (Promptbook 555, Microlfilm, The Ohio State University Theatre Collection).
the directions about the galley and all the business related to it were deleted. There was no opening in the flats at the back, and Marmina was simply raised on the center trap. That this second production omitted many of the scenic details is not concrete evidence, of course, that the production under analysis omitted them also, but this evidence, taken with the prompter's failure to note the details of the stage picture, suggests that the productions were similar in nature -- both omitting the elaborate scenic details "required" by this scene.

Unfortunately, the lack of specific notations on the part of the prompter makes it impossible to determine clearly the nature and placement of the scenery.

Conclusions: Act II, Scene 7.--The only conclusions to be drawn from the analysis of Act II, Scene 7, is that the playwright's requirements were greatly modified and simplified.

Act III.--The third act of Thalaba, the Destroyer was written in seven scenes, most of which are extremely short. In this production of the play, however, the act was played in eight scenes (rather than seven) and the order of playing was altered from the sequence followed in the script. Scene 5 was played as Scene 6; Scene 6 was played as Scene 5; the last page of Scene 6 was
played as Scene 7; and Scene 7 was played as Scene 8. In the following discussion, the scenes will be referred to by the number of the scene as played, rather than as written.

Act III, Scene 1.—The scenic description of the first scene of the third act reads as if a set-scene was intended: "A Ruined Cemetery, R., a Tomb, L.,-- a broken Tomb, C..." The specific references to right and left in regard to definite objects suggests that these objects were three-dimensional, placed as indicated on the stage. The prompter, however, gave no indication as to how the scene was realized. His only notation was to an exit in the second entrance on the left, which may indicate that the scenery was terminated in the third grooves position, as shown in Figure 23 (L).

Act III, Scenes 2, 3, 5, and 7.—Scenes 2, 3, 5, and 7, of Act III are treated here together because they are all so brief -- from \( \frac{1}{4} \) page to 1 page in length -- as to be able to be grouped for analysis.

Scene 2 was described as "an Apartment in the Sultan's Palace," -- the same locale as Act II, Scenes 2 and 4 (Fig. 23, S).
The description of the third scene is much more elaborate:

Entrance to the Silver Cavern, with the words "THE CAVERNS OF THE BURNING SWORD," in blue fire, on the rock, and an immense serpent in gold writhing on a blasted tree above the entrance—dark.

Since the scene is only one-half page in length, one wonders how much of this scenic detail was really present on the stage. That the flats were upstage of the first grooves is made clear by the fact that the characters Okba and the Hag were discovered on the stage at the opening, i.e., when the flats of the preceding scene (first grooves) were drawn to the side these characters were made visible. Since there would not have been sufficient room for their bodies if the flats of the Cavern were in the same set of grooves, we may assume that these flats were farther upstage. That the scene terminated deeper than the second grooves is doubtful, because no "pieces" were indicated to fill in the extra space that a long scene would have left vacant, and it was apparently the custom of the time to minimize the ill effect of vast space by filling it with stage properties. The scene was not deep, therefore, and was

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probably located in the second grooves, as shown in Figure 23 (0).

Scene 5 consists of merely a few lines of dialogue. It is described as "the Valley of the Mountains," and was probably a drop in or near the first grooves. Scene 7 utilized the same scenery.

**Act III, Scenes 4 and 6.**—Scenes 4 and 6 of Act III were played in the same scenery which was described as follows:

Inside of the Silver Cavern—a sumptuous Altar, C., represented by the recumbent figure of a Warrior in bright armour, bearing in his hand the burning Sword, with Hodeirah's Banner above, containing the word "HODEIRAH."

In addition to the wording of the description which suggests that the altar was a set-piece, the script contains a prompter's note, "Ring Trap Bell to sink altar...," which also indicates that the altar was a separate, free-standing item. It seems very probable that it was located on the same trap that Zeinah's tomb was on in the first scene of the play (Fig. 21, C). This conclusion was reached after reference to another note which reads: "When Ghost on Trap Center Ring Trap Bell." We know from Scene 1, Act I, that the cauldron trap was in the center, so that the trap referred to here as "center" was probably the same trap. Moreover, when this action occurred,
the ghost was downstage of the altar, or standing in the
same relationship to it as the cauldron stood to the tomb
in the opening scene of the play. Figure 21 (B), then,
shows the position of the ghost on the center (cauldron)
trap, and Figure 21 (C) shows the location of the altar
itself, between the third and fourth grooves. The back­
ing for the scene, therefore, would have had to be up­
age of the uppermost trap, probably in the fourth
grooves as shown in Figure 23 (G). The Rock wings used
in several previous scenes would have been appropriate
here.

Act III, Scene 4: Effects.—Several of the traps
used in Scene 4, Act III, have already been mentioned
above. The center trap was used to sink the ghost, and
the uppermost trap was used to sink the altar. In addition,
another stage trap was used to sink Abdalda. The note in
reference to this action reads: "Ring Trap Bell to sink
Abdalda on L. H. Trap." This was obviously still another
corner trap on stage left, different from that used for
the thunderbolt effect in Act I, Scene 3, which was in
stage left center.

The last, and possibly the most interesting effect
in Scene 4, Act III, involved the use of a cloud car. The
prompter's note with regard to this effect reads in full
as follows: "Ring Trap Bell to sink altar, and discover
cloud car. Thalaba steps into car. It [sic] ascends 10 feet when scene closes."
Whether this cloud car worked in vertical grooves, or was merely lifted, swinging free, by means of lines from the flies cannot be determined from the script. One would think, however, that in the interests of safety some form of vertical guide would have been used; without such a guide a "cloud" might swing badly, and perhaps do violence to some other parts of the scenery.

Conclusions: Act III, Scene 4.--The analysis of the promptbook has resulted in the following conclusions regarding Act III, Scene 4:

1. The major scenic element was a set-piece (the altar).
2. The scene was terminated in the fourth grooves.
3. A number of stage traps were employed for theatrical effects.
4. A cloud car, placed upstage of the altar and revealed when the latter was sunk, was used at the conclusion of the scene.

Act III, Scene 8: Scenery.--The last scene of Thalaba, the Destroyer was apparently conceived as being something very special with regard to the scenery. The printed description of the scene is extremely full,
and when one attempts to visualize it one tends to see a heavy, built-up set, with a number of practicable platforms, galleries and windows. The description is highly specific:

Interior of a heavy Fortress, of three triangular Towers, set on an archway, forming a sort of piazza—beneath the centre tower, an opening to outer ramparts, through a narrow archway, over which, on the inside, a latticed window, covered with transparent green.—the [sic] tower, L., has a grated window, and practicable communication with the centre one, by a latticed gallery.—the [sic] tower, R., communicates only by a plain wall of formidable stone-work.—Hareb's banner waving—Slaves arranging barrels of combustible matter beneath the tower, L, through the shuttered window of which Oneiza is seen—Soldiers pacing the walls, ramparts, etc.

Certainly this description seems to preclude the use of flats as the major element of the scenery; the side towers, at least, would seem to have had to be three-dimensional pieces. A stage direction in the prompter's hand, however, suggests that flats were used, and that the solid look was merely illusion, at least in this production. This note reads as follows: "...walls give way, R. H. flat. ... Malaba rushes off L. U; E. Xs [crosses] up platform to Tower in C." This note makes it clear that the usual openings between the wings were preserved, since the character going out used the left upper entrance. (Another note shows a similar entrance on the right.) In other words, no large raking pieces blocked these entrances. Moreover, Malaba did not cross up the platform until after he had
left the acting area, which indicates that the platform was not a visible part of the scenery, but merely the actor's off-stage means of access to the window in the tower in the center. Finally, the note about the walls in the flat giving way seems to indicate that the flats represented most of the major elements -- painting, rather than solid, built-up forms, accomplished the illusion. We have no choice, therefore, but to conclude that the scene was mainly represented on the flats run, since we have references to the upper entrances, in the fifth grooves, as shown in Figure 23 (A).

**Act III, Scene 8: Effects.**--As written, the final scene of Thalaba, the Destroyer was rich in theatrical effects, but this particular production of the play apparently omitted most of them. The promptbook contains no notes with reference to them except the one, already quoted above, about the walls giving way. The lack of notes suggests, once more, that a number of the effects were not realized in the production. A second production, already noted above, was much fuller in its treatment of the scene. Here are a few of the notes taken from the promptbook of that production:

*Crash Thunder Ball, etc, in Flies*

*Roman Candles [These were fired when the tower was ignited]*
Noise of explosion as soon as torch is thrown in.

Explosion at Picture [Tableau]

Plenty of fire.

The promptbook under analysis, however, seems to have omitted these details. There was a battle, followed by a tableau at the end, but no notes about any other spectacular devices are to be found in the production's promptbook.

It might be argued, however, that some representation of explosion or fire must have been made, since the walls did give way, and certainly there must have been some stage effect, or at least a conventional signal, to indicate why they gave way. When we recall, however, that various effects were sometimes painted on the scenery, rather than practically accomplished, we must admit the possibility that the reverse side of a double flat scene may have been painted as a conflagration, and that, when the tower flats gave way, the painted conflagration would have been sufficient to "signal" that action. Double flat scenes were certainly used at the time of this production, for an account of 1803 mentions and describes them.16 And Fitzgerald, it may be remembered,

stated that stage fires were symbolized rather than represented as late as 1850.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{17}Supra, p. 53.

Conclusions: Act III, Scene 8.--The analysis of the promptbook has led to the following conclusions regarding scenery and effects of the final scene of Thalaba, the Destroyer:

1. The principal element of scenery was composed of a pair of flats run in the fifth grooves.

2. The playwright's requirements appear to have been greatly modified.

3. The fire was probably symbolized rather than practically represented.

Depths of scenes and types of alternations.--The foregoing analysis has revealed that eight of the nineteen scenes in Thalaba, the Destroyer were played against scenery placed in the first grooves; the scenery for five scenes was placed far upstage (fifth grooves); four scenes were placed in the fourth grooves; and one scene each in the third and second grooves. The placement of one scene could not be determined. These figures show that nine scenes were shallow and eight were deep -- a pattern almost identical with the pattern that we observed in The Grecian Daughter.
With regard to the way in which the scenes were alternated at scene shifts, Thalaba, the Destroyer parallels Adelgitha in having the majority of shifts from deep-to-shallow settings, or the reverse; fourteen shifts were of this nature. Of the remaining four, one was moderate-to-shallow, one shallow-to-shallow, and two are unknown.

Summary and conclusions.--The foregoing analysis of the promptbook for Thalaba, the Destroyer has led to the following major conclusions:

1. The production made a great deal more use of set-pieces than any of the productions discussed in previous chapters.

2. When set-pieces were used they, rather than the backscene, tended to establish the locality.

3. Stock scenery was mostly employed to form the surrounds within which the set-pieces were placed.

4. The production made extensive use of stage traps.

5. Many visual and aural effects were incorporated into the production; one effect (the fire) was probably symbolized rather than otherwise represented.

6. The playwright's requirements were often modified and simplified.
7. The stage was usually darkened during the more spectacular effects.

8. Considerable use was made of the tableau for the closing of scenes.

9. Scenes were almost equally divided in placement between deep and shallow settings; only one setting was moderately placed.

10. Fourteen of the eighteen scene shifts involved deep-to-shallow alternations.
This chapter is devoted to the discussion of the productions of a group of Gothic plays, each of which was subjected to the same general methods of analysis as were used as the bases of the discussions in the preceding chapters. Here, however, the intention is to present an abstract of the evidence uncovered by the analyses, and the discussion is limited to those aspects of staging which resemble or strongly depart from the aspects of staging revealed by the analyses of productions discussed in the preceding chapters.

The nature of the scenery.--The evidence of the five promptbooks already discussed makes it clear that the productions used stock scenery almost exclusively for the surrounds -- backscenes, wings and borders. Often, the playwright's modest requirements were adequately served by stock scenery, but it was noted that stock was used most of the time even in those relatively rare scenes in which the playwright's description of the locality
seemed to call for scenery that was especially constructed and painted.

Were these five productions freaks departing from general staging practices? Does the evidence from other contemporary productions tend to support the conclusions we drew from them about the nature of the scenery? Was stock scenery actually used most of the time for the surrounds of the productions of Gothic plays?

To answer these questions, let us turn our attention to promptbooks for six other productions ranging over approximately the same period as the five already discussed. These plays have a total of 61 scenes, of which 27 are described as "Hall," "Apartment," "Chamber," or "Room," with occasional qualifying adjectives. If we add those scenes described as "Saloon," "Corridor," or "Gallery," we tally 32 scenes of a highly similar nature, as far as their localities are concerned, not one of which has unique requirements. We find, then, that more than one-half of the total number of scenes in this
group of plays was capable of being staged in scenery representing the same general type of locale. None were described at length by the playwright, and none made any special scenic demands. All that was needed in each case was an interior background.

This figure of one-half of the total number of scenes exceeds the figure which we arrive at by computing similar scenes in the plays already discussed. In those, 23 Apartments (or the like) are to be found in a total of 64 scenes. The eleven plays together contained a total of 125 scenes, of which 55 were almost identical in scenic requirements.

That theatre managers would have laid out considerable sums of money for new scenery for so many practically identical scenic backgrounds seems incredible, especially in view of the fact that the terseness of the playwrights' descriptions of some scenes often bespeaks an almost monumental indifference on their part as to what the scenic background looked like. The only possible conclusion to be reached is that the Apartment scenes alluded to were almost always played in scenery already stocked by the theatres.

In addition to the backgrounds of Apartments, which were vast in number, most of the remaining scenes of the six plays mentioned above seem to have required nothing
more than stock scenery for the surrounds, also, for we find a liberal sprinkling of libraries, forests, glens, woods, and gardens — all of which, like the interior scenes, make no special demands.

Several promptbooks offer additional positive evidence that stock scenery was employed almost exclusively. The prompter's note with regard to productions of Fontaine-ville Forest make it clear that only stock scenery was used. In addition to other notations that clearly refer to stock scenery, we find the following items listed:

Blue Bear's trees
Merlin's Cave
Blue Beard
Omiah's Moonlight.

These notes were placed opposite the scenic directions in the printed script; these printed descriptions, in the same order, were as follows:

A Wood
A remote Apartment
The secret Apartment, gloomy and rude.

The Forest.²

²Boaden, op. cit., Act I, Scene 3; Act II, Scene 2; Act III, Scene 2; Act V, Scene 1, respectively.

The prompter's notes quoted above indicate that scenery identified with earlier productions was being pressed into use for the current production. "Blue Beard's" trees were probably left over from productions of Blue Beard, a play
by Colman originally produced in 1798, and "Merlin's Cave" may have been scenery associated with productions of a play entitled The Royal Chace; or, Merlin's Cave, a piece originally produced at Covent Garden Theatre in 1736. In any event, since neither the character Blue Beard nor the character Merlin was associated in any way with the action of Fontainville Forest, we may be sure that the scenery listed in their names was drawn from stock. All other notations in the prompter's hand with reference to scenery also seem to refer to items of stock, as is indicated by the following examples:

Great Bow Windows
Gothic Canopy
Toy Chamber.

Placement of scenery.—Of the 64 scenes in the five plays discussed in previous chapters, 33 were placed far downstage (first or second grooves), 10 were placed moderately (third grooves), and 20 were placed relatively far upstage (fourth or fifth grooves); the placement of the scenery for one scene (Thalaba, the Destroyer, Act II, Scene 7) could not be determined. In other words, more than one-half of the total of all scenes were played rather far downstage. Let us see whether the same thing was true of other productions.
The Woodman's Hut placed four of its five scenes in depth. The promptbook for the production of Evadne; or, The Statue listed the location of six of the seven scenes; four were shallow, one was moderate, and another was deep. An analysis of the promptbook for The Conquest of Taranto revealed that the scenes were probably placed as follows: 5 shallow, 2 moderate, and 6 deep. A similar analysis of a promptbook for The Iron Chest indicated that the probable placements of ten of the eleven scenes were as follows: 6 shallow and 4 moderate; none were deep in this production unless the one scene of which the placement cannot be determined was a deep scene.

When these figures are totalled, we find the following results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The original five plays</th>
<th>Plays tabulated above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33. . . . . . .</td>
<td>Shallow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. . . . . . .</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. . . . . . .</td>
<td>Deep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. . . . . . .</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shallow:</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate:</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep:</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown:</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures show that almost exactly one-half of the scenes whose locations are known were placed rather far
downstage; the downstage grooves held eighteen scenes more than the upstage grooves, which seems to be fairly conclusive evidence that there was a decided preference for placing scenery downstage.

The use of furniture.—The five productions with which the previous chapters dealt rarely used furniture; in only eight of the sixty-four scenes was furniture employed. A few plays, like *The Iron Chest* (which incorporated furniture into 6 of its 12 scenes), made a good deal more use of it than the majority of contemporary Gothic dramas. Even in *The Iron Chest* the furniture was not always on stage at the opening of the scene, but was sometimes brought on by servants. The production of *The Conquest of Taranto* made use of only one item of furniture in thirteen scenes, *Evadne* made use of it in only one of its seven scenes, and the same was true of

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5 Colman, op. cit., Act I, Scenes 1, 2, and 3; Act II, Scene 4; and Act III, Scenes 2 and 3.

6 Act I, Scene 2; and Act III, Scene 3.

7 Dimond, op. cit.; a chair was used in Act III, Scene 2.

8 Sheil, op. cit.; a throne, Act I, Scene 1.
It was noted in previous chapters that when furniture was used the scenery was usually arranged so that the furniture could be placed on stage by stagehands behind the closed flats that served as the background for preceding scenes; in only two cases did we note that furniture was placed or brought on by stagehands or actors in full view of the audience. We noted further, in Adelgitha, that furnishings were not used, even though the text called for them, if the furniture would have had to be placed in view of the audience. In fact, the text was sometimes altered in order to remove the necessity of having furniture on stage during the scene. In other words, those responsible for staging were clearly attempting to arrange the scenery so that the flow of action would not have to be interrupted while furniture was placed by stagehands.
Of eight other productions\textsuperscript{12} analyzed in this

\textsuperscript{12}George Soane, \textit{The Falls of Clyde}, Promptbook 715; John Tobin, \textit{The Curfew}, Promptbook 126; both promptbooks on microfilm, The Ohio State University Theatre Collection; and the six productions listed on p. 208, above.

regard, all but two were so arranged as to mask the
placing of furnishings. \textit{The Iron Chest} and \textit{The Falls of Clyde}, however, were rather inept. The second scene of \textit{The Iron Chest} required furniture, but the flats were placed in the first grooves, thus precluding the masking of stagehands placing the various items, since an act curtain was not used between scenes. Here the prompter noted "Table 2 Chairs," and a second hand, clarifying the point, added the words "brought on." Again, in the last scene of the play a note occurred: "2 Ser. ts to place a couple of Chairs C," and "Servants bring Chairs forward."
The last scene of \textit{The Falls of Clyde} closed over the preceding deep, set-scene, and the script reads: "A table with writing materials, and a chair are brought on."
These three scenes, however, of a total of thirteen scenes using furniture, were the only ones in which the staging arrangements failed to mask the placing of furniture.

\textbf{Departures from playwrights' requirements.---}In several instances it was noted that the productions did not realize on the stage some of the requirements of the
scripts. Occasionally the settings were greatly modified or simplified (probably so that stock scenery could be used) and several times special effects were cut. Not all other productions, however, exhibited this same tendency in regard to the cutting of effects.

Of all the promptbooks analyzed, only one (in addition to the five previously discussed) showed definite evidence that certain effects were cut, and these cuts were extremely minor. The promptbook concerned was for a production of The Falls of Clyde in which the opening scene called for "a large party of armed peasants." The prompter drew a line through this requirement, and wrote in the phrase, "6 Soldiers," which certainly indicates that a less spectacular effect was achieved than that visualized by the playwright. Later in the same scene, the "peasants" were supposed to destroy some huts on stage, and this too was deleted, as was a moonlight effect in the second act.

Apparently, however, the major departures from the playwrights' intentions lay in the use of stock scenery on occasions when that scenery was not appropriate. As noted above, stock scenery was ample and adequate for most scenes; occasionally it was not, but it was used anyway. For example, in a production of Evadne, when a street was called for the prompter noted that what was used was "The
Bay, and View of Naples. A second production of

Thalaba, the Destroyer altered the scene from "Thalaba's Apartment" to "Forest-Wood," and a production of

Fontainville Forest substituted "Abbey Gates" for two scenes, "The Wood," and "The Hall," despite the fact that these same Abbey gates had already been used (appropriately) in an earlier scene described as "Without the Abbey."

Types of alternations of scenes.—In the five productions discussed in the preceding chapters the scene shifts accomplished alternations as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Alternation</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deep to deep</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep to moderate</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep to shallow</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate to shallow</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shallow to shallow</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total scene shifts</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures plainly demonstrate that these productions used alternations from deep scenes to shallow scenes.
(or the reverse) far more than they used any other combination; indeed, this combination occurred more than twice as often as any other combination and was used for almost one-half of the total number of all scene shifts. Moreover, it is clear that, after this combination, shifting from shallow setting to shallow setting was the most popular.

Analysis of the alternation of scenes of five other productions, as these productions are reflected by their promptbooks, shows a startlingly different major emphasis, but shows a secondary emphasis consistent with the figures shown above. For these productions, the scenes alternated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Alternation</th>
<th>Number of Scenes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deep to deep</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep to moderate</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep to shallow</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate to shallow</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shallow to shallow</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total scene shifts</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The type of alternation of the twelve scene shifts that could not be determined from the evidence in the second group of promptbooks probably constitutes a factor in what seems to be the oddity of the pattern as revealed by the figures. One suspects that many of the twelve
shifts that are unknown might fall into the "Deep to shallow" category, thus forming a pattern entirely consistent with the pattern established by the first group.

The figures combined, however, show that out of 104 scene shifts, more were deep-to-shallow alternations than any other type, with shallow-to-shallow and moderate-to-shallow almost tying for second place. The total breakdown follows:

- Deep to deep ................................ 3
- Deep to moderate ............................ 7
- Deep to shallow ........................... 32
- Moderate to shallow ....................... 23
- Shallow to shallow ........................ 25
- Unknown .................................... 14
- Total scene shifts .................... 104

Stage effects: Ghostly appearances.—A number of ghostly appearances were discussed in previous chapters, notably in connection with The Castle Spectre and Thalaba, the Destroyer. Major similarities in the staging of the principal apparition scenes of the two plays were as follows:

1. Same stage position for the appearance (through center doors in the flats).
2. Use of soft and plaintive music.
3. Use of a picture or a group of words to convey information.
5. Use of special lighting effects, combined with over-all dim lighting.
In fact, so similar were the staging directions for the principal ghost scenes that they seem to have been capable of replacing each other, with no real harm done to either production. Let us see whether any other promptbooks show evidence of the same kind of treatment of the same kind of scene.

The play *The Phantom Bride*\(^\text{17}\) contains two spectral appearances, each of which bears some points of resemblance to the major spectral scenes involved in the plays mentioned above. The first was staged in similar scenery. The script called for "a handsome Curtain" to conceal "Folding Doors in centre," and it was after this curtain was withdrawn that the spectre, as in *Thalaba, the Destroyer*, was discovered. Music accompanied this effect. The second appearance resembled the others in that "crimson fire" was used to surround the shade, and a benediction was performed.

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\(^{17}\)C. J. Barnett, *The Phantom Bride; or, The Castilian Bandit* (Film 363, The Ohio State University Theatre Collection).
The drama *Raymond and Agnes* also contains scenes staged to contain some of the elements seen in *The Castle Spectre* and *Thalaba, the Destroyer*. In Act II, Scene 4, the ghost pointed to a sign which read: "Protect the Child of the Murdered Agnes," an adjuration uncommonly like in style to that proclaimed by the sign in *Thalaba, the Destroyer* which read: "Avenge thy Father's death." At the end of the play, the ghost reappeared upstage center and blessed Raymond and Agnes, just as the ghosts of *The Castle Spectre* and *Thalaba, the Destroyer* blessed Angela and Thalaba, respectively.

Stage traps, too, were employed in other productions for the appearances of ghosts. None of the promptbooks that were examined show evidence of using traps as often as the production of *Thalaba, the Destroyer* used them, but all of these were productions of plays written earlier than *Thalaba, the Destroyer* and requiring fewer startling effects.

*Raymond and Agnes*, although a relatively early play (1797), employed a center trap in Act II, Scene 4, for the disappearance of the ghost when another character tried to embrace her; the script reads: "... she vanishes down centre trap..."; otherwise, traps were not used in this production.
The Phantom Bride, however, made a fairly extensive use of traps. The first of these occurred in the first scene of Act II during the first appearance of the ghost. The description of this effect reads as follows: "...the Altar is struck by a Thunderbolt—it changes to a Tomb. The Shade of Agness [sic] is discovered. ... She approaches." Here it seems probable that a double trap was used in upstage center position. The first would be necessary to sink the altar, and the second to raise the tomb and the ghost within it.

At the end of the play, this double trap seems to have been employed again. Here the ghost of Agness rose up. After she blessed Raymond and Agnes they "sink together through the stage," while Agness remained in view. Two traps, therefore, had to be used.

The script of Matthew Gregory Lewis' Adelmorn, the Outlaw reveals that stage traps were required twice for a spectre which appeared and disappeared on two different occasions. The first appearance, in Act III, Scene 1, was apparently a discovery, not necessitating the use of a trap, for the description of the action reads as follows:

Part of the wall opens, and discovers (in vision) a blasted Heath by moonlight. The figure of an
Old Man, a wound on his bosom, and his garments stained with gore, is seen. . . .

The wound in the bosom is similar to the wound in the bosom of the ghost in The Castle Spectre (which, of course, was written by the same playwright), but the Preface to the script asserts that the idea for the vision was taken from Raphael's picture of the Transfiguration, \(^{20}\) so we may form some fairly reliable notion of the way that it looked on the stage. The scene ended with the Old Man ascending upon "brilliant clouds," an effect comparable to the conclusion of Act III, Scene 4, of Thalaba, the Destroyer.

In Act V, however, the ghost was brought up slowly through a trap and was almost immediately taken down again, apparently through still another trap since the ghost was required to change his stage position during the few seconds that he was visible. On this occasion the ghost carried a burning dagger as an added element of spectacle. \(^{21}\)

\(^{21}\)Ibid., p. i; On the opening night, May 4, 1801, the actor's drapery was blown into the flames of his dagger and caught fire, and "the public was within an ace of being treated with a roasted spectre."

Some ghostly appearances, in other productions, however, made no use whatsoever of traps, nor, indeed,
of the other machinery or effects for the staging of appari-
tion scenes. In the third act of Fontainville Forest the
staging was minimal. The prompter merely noted: "Phantom
appears," and "Exit--Phantom P. S." Then he wrote: "Enter
Phantom--glides to corner of stage O. P." These notes make
it clear that the ghost appeared, went off stage left
through a normal entrance, reappeared at stage left and
glided across to upstage right. He remained there until
the conclusion of the scene, a second or two later.
Apparently no music, fire, gauze, or other spectral effects
were used in this production.

In Raymond and Agnes all of the ghost's appearances
(but not her disappearances) were managed without traps;
indeed, most seem to have been extremely prosaic. The
first appearance was made in Act II, Scene 3, and consisted
merely of an entry through the regular scenic entrance,
after which the ghost merely walked across the stage and
went off. The second appearance, Act II, Scene 4, found
the spectre entering "O. P. U. E.," but this appearance
ended a little more spectacularly with the use of the trap
mentioned above.

The ghost in The Castle of Otranto was dis-

22 Gilbert Abbot a'Beckett, The Castle of Otranto
(Film 722, The Ohio State University Theatre Collection).

covered as a portrait, hanging on the wall. Perhaps a
supernatural quality was achieved by the staging, however, through playing this scene in very dim light. Shortly after the scene opened, servants entered with candles, but were immediately commanded: "Out with that light!— I didn't ring for candles," which indicates that the stage was probably rather dark during the spectral appearance itself.

In addition to the productions discussed in previous chapters, seven other productions that were examined contained ghostly appearances and disappearances. In these seven plays, there were 15 appearances and 10 disappearances. (Ghosts concealed by the close of a scene are not considered here to have "disappeared" in the course of the action.) In other words, there was a total of 25 spectral effects, excluding those at scene endings. Of these, only eight made use of stage traps -- 4 for appearances and 4 for disappearances. Stage traps, therefore, appear to have been used less than one-third of the time to accomplish spectral appearances and disappearances. Apparently "discoveries" were more favored.
Stage effects: Collapses and conflagrations.--It was noted that the final scene of *Thalaba, the Destroyer* called for a conflagration, and a part of the scenery was supposed to collapse in ruins. This type of scene -- fire accompanied by collapse of scenery -- occurred in several other of the Gothic productions that were examined.

The *Woodman's Hut* employed two such scenes -- the first at the conclusion of the second act and the second at the end of the play. The first effect was supposed to include a thunderbolt striking a character in much the same way as a thunderbolt struck Abdalda in *Thalaba, the Destroyer*. The directions read:

Lightning and thunder. Schampt is knocked down by a bolt of lightning. The wall of the cottage is struck by a thunderbolt, and falls with a loud noise; the river is seen through the opening. . . .

The prompter deleted the words "a bolt of" and wrote in the word "the," thus causing the directions to read: "Schampt is struck down by the lightning." The deletion suggests that this production did not use the thunderbolt effect at this point, possibly so as to preclude the necessity of rigging the stage with wires for two different bolts occurring one after the other. It is clear, though, that flats representing the wall of the cottage were caused to collapse, because the action necessitated the audience's seeing a tossing boat on the river through the gap left in the walls.
The last scene of The Woodman's Hut was even more spectacular, and made use of real fire as we adjudge from the prompter's note to "fetch Water from Below," and other notes reading: "Begin to fire cottage," "more fire in the Cottage," "Trees on Fire," and "The whole of the cottage and O. P. side of Wood on Fire." During this conflagration, part of a practicable bridge collapsed, blazing, into the river.

This scene probably made use of some of the fire techniques described in Chapter I, but, even so, the production did not quite meet the playwright's intentions. Where the script originally read: "...the whole of the wood is on fire," the prompter altered it to read: "The whole of that side [stage right] of the wood is on fire." Here, apparently, only one-half of the scenery was ignited, rather than the whole wood.

The Bride of Abydos like The Woodman's Hut, had two similar spectacular scenes. The first was a fire scene occurring in Act III, Scene 5, but in this case most of the flame effect seemed to have derived from the use of skillful lighting rather than from the use of actual fire. The directions read: "Suddenly vivid light overspreads
the distance of the scene." The use of the word "light" suggests that actual flames were not required. At the very end of the scene, flames were used briefly, and were confined in their appearance to lattices upstage. Here, braziers of lycopodium placed upstage of the flats containing the lattices would have accomplished the effect; actual igniting of special coverings on the scenic elements was not required by the script.

Act III, Scene 5, of The Bride of Abydos also required fire -- probably actual flames; and, like The Woodman's Hut and Thalaba, the Destroyer, part of the scenery fell down. One description reads: "...the entire floor of the apartment gives way and sinks... into the flames below." Then "part of the wall falls upon one side" and "the entire upper front falls down." These descriptions make it clear that flames of some sort were required, and that collapsible scenery was also employed. Unfortunately, the prompter made no notes as to how these effects were to be accomplished specifically.

The Conquest of Taranto also utilized two effects which involved the collapse or disappearance of scenery. In act II, Scene 4, a direction reads as follows: "He [Rinaldo] applies the key, instantly the iron portals sinks [sic] into the ground, and armed Moors rush into the space it has unfolded." The use of the verb "sinks"
suggests that the flats were taken down to the mezzanine underneath the stage on a bridge operating through a floor aperture. Later, in Scene 6, truly collapsible scenery seems to have been used, for the directions clearly imply its use:

Instantly the front of the terrace gives way, and falls into a frightful ruin, over which the Moors tumultuously emerge from the bottom of the earth. ... Destruction envelopes the scene at every point.

Here, apparently, flats fell down to reveal an opposite face representing ruins, while from stage traps the actors playing the Moors swept up onto the stage.

Tableaus.—Tableaus at the ends of scenes were common in productions of Gothic dramas, and have been commented upon elsewhere. Of more interest to the investigator, perhaps, are examples of tableaus used freely not only for scene closings but for opening or medial positions as well. A number of such uses of the tableau were found in the production of Adelgitha, and other productions reveal the same tendencies in some instances.

The opening of The Conquest of Taranto appears to have been visualized as a true tableau rather than as an ordinary discovery, for the stage positions of the characters who were discovered seem to have been held while a lighting effect occurred. In fact, an opening song was
excised and the tableau appears to have taken its place. The prompter's note after the rise of the curtain reads: "Lamps up, and on, as the Horizon brightens," and the dialogue and action commenced only after this mood effect had taken place. During it, as far as can be ascertained, there was no movement on the stage, although a number of characters were visible.

Another instance of an unusual use of tableau occurred in Raymond and Agnes. During Act I, Scene 5, the following action took place:

He [Robert] advances to the bed and is going to stab him [Raymond], when Marguerite overturns the table, and retreats behind the door. Raymond starts up, holding his sword to Robert's breast. They form picture.

The key words in the passage are, of course, "They form picture," and these words become especially interesting when we note that the tableau did not close the scene. After the picture was held, dialogue and action commenced again. Here is clear evidence of the use of tableau in medial position.²⁶

²⁶The same effect was intended in Thalaba, The Destroyer; cf. ante, p. 193.

The Phantom Bride contains a scene (Act II, Scene 1) very similar to the opening of the Shrine of St. Hilda in Adelgitha, and it, like the Adelgitha scene, seems to imply a pause in the action during which positions were
held for a tableau. During this "hold," music was played. While the actors were on stage, the following activity occurred:

The curtain [this was a curtain in the scenery, not an act curtain] is drawn up, and discovers the Oratory lighted up—Altar, with Book and large Crucifix before it. A strain of solemn Music is heard, which presently ceases.

After the music had died away, the action recommenced, and the "frozen" pause seems clearly to indicate a tableau.

Whether or not the Oratory scenes of various productions of The Castle Spectre were handled as tableaux cannot be determined, but the nature of the discovery suggests the strong theatrical value of a pause for tableau.

Conclusions.—An analysis of a number of Gothic productions in addition to those already discussed has led to the following conclusions regarding scenery and stage effects in general:

1. More than one-half of all scenes in Gothic productions were interiors of highly similar qualities.
2. Most scenes were composed of stock scenery.
3. One-half of all scenes were very shallow, being placed far downstage; about one-fourth were moderate and one-fourth were deep.
4. Furniture was rarely used on stage.
5. In the rare cases in which furniture was used on stage, the placing of it was masked more often than not.

6. More scene shifts were from deep to shallow (or the reverse) than any other combination; moderate to shallow (or the reverse) and shallow to shallow were used about equally. Deep to deep was rarely used.

7. The staging of major ghost scenes appears to have followed a certain rather conventional pattern, so that the ghost scene from one play might quite easily have been used in a number of other productions, with no one in the audience being the wiser.

8. Stage traps were used only about one-third of the time for the appearance and disappearance of apparitions.

9. Collapsible scenery, used in connection with fire effects, was common.

10. Tableaus were used not only for the closing of scenes but were also used freely for their theatrical value, whether at the beginning or in the middle of a scene.
CHAPTER VIII

STAGING PRACTICES

AS RELATED TO MELODRAMAS

One of the purposes of this study was to determine the theatrical relationships, if any, that existed between Gothic dramas and melodramas especially in the areas of scenery, scenic placement, and special effects. To this end, ten melodramas 1 were analyzed to determine their major staging requirements, and the results were then compared with the requirements and characteristics of Gothic productions.

Types of scenic requirements.—Of twenty-seven different types of environment called for by the Gothic
dramas that were analyzed, all but eight were used by the melodramas.  

The eight that were not used by the melodramas are: Convent Interior (5 in Gothic); Tomb Interior (1 in Gothic); Temple Interior (6 in Gothic); Armoury (1 in Gothic); Oratory (1 in Gothic); Wood (15 in Gothic); Port (3 in Gothic); and Cavern Exterior (1 in Gothic).

Both types of productions used "Apartments," "Halls," and similar environments far more frequently than they used any other; and they used this type of locale in more or less the same proportion to their total number of scenes. The melodramas used settings of this type 54 times in a total of 137 scenes; the Gothic plays used them 88 times in a total of 214 scenes.

Several types of scenes were used exactly twice as often by melodramas as by the Gothic plays. These were Cottage Interiors, Prisons, Tent Scenes, and House Exteriors. Other scenes used almost twice as often by the melodramas were Cemeteries, Gardens, Rivers, Mountains, and indefinite wild romantic scenes. In other words, these types of settings -- common in Gothic productions -- were developed into much greater use in later productions of melodramas.

Another type of scene seemed to be used almost equally by both, but the terminology was different in the two types of productions. None of the ten melodramas called for a Forest or a Wood, but they called for Land-
scapes in the same proportion to their total number of scenes as the Gothic plays had called for Forests of various kinds. The only difference here seems to be in language; it is probable that the scenery was very similar.

Melodramas, therefore, appear to have used much the same types of backgrounds as were used by the Gothic plays. A difference arises, however, in the way in which these backgrounds were realized upon the stage. The scripts of the later melodramas were extremely explicit in stating the scenic requirements, and these explicit directions make it clear that the environments that were represented upon the stage were composed very largely of set-pieces. The first scene of Dion Boucicault's *The Rapparee; or, The Treaty of Limerick* (1870), for example, was described in these clear terms:

Camp of Rapparees in a rocky country, in 5th grooves. Landscape on flat of view by moonlight. Rocks R. and L., for wings. Set rocks on stage up each side. Set trees on stage, upper entrances. Moon C, in flat. View of bay, with the coast line running out to sea, R., until lost in the distance. On a spit of land, painted on flat, middle distance, houses of town, with tower of a citadel, some of the windows lighted. L. 3 E., an archway in ruins, and tree. Set profile cliffs, L. 4 E. Sky sinks.

Here we are told what was flat and what was three-dimen­sional; we are told precisely where everything was placed, and what the flats were painted to represent. In short, a vivid picture is painted for us by the description.
This specificity as to the elements of which the setting
was composed and where those elements were to be placed
is in marked contrast to the language of most of the
Gothic plays for which, even when the description was de-
tailed, the settings were simple. The second scene of
Bertram, for example, was fairly detailed as to mood,
but the actual setting, as we found by analysis, was ac-
accomplished with a minimum of scenery.  

3 Supra, pp. 105-108.

Earlier melodramas, too, appear to have been more
specific in setting forth the scenic requirements than
were Gothic plays, even of the same period. The melo-
drama, A Tale of Mystery (1802), shows a certain definite-
ness about what was required, even though the description
is somewhat vague as to precisely where the various ele-
ments were to be placed. The last scene of this melo-
drama was described as follows:

... the wild mountainous country called the Nant
of Arpenna; with pines and massy rocks. A rude
wooden bridge on a small height thrown from rock
to rock; a rugged mill stream a little in the
background; the miller's house on the right; a
steep ascent by a narrow path to the bridge; a stone
or bank to sit on, on the right-hand side.

Although this description is not nearly so specific as
the description in The Rapparee, it offers no difficulty
to the reader who is attempting to learn of what the
scenery was composed: a ramp, set-pieces, profile pieces, and other flat elements were required.

The question immediately arises as to why the melodramas -- even the early ones -- were fuller in their treatment of the scenic requirements than the Gothic plays, many of which were contemporaneous with the early melodramas. Why, for example, are the descriptions of Fontainville Forest\(^4\) so very terse and non-informative as compared to the descriptions of A Tale of Mystery -- a play written only eight years later? Common sense tells us that the methods used for melodramas could just as well have been used for Gothic productions, especially since both types of plays called for almost identical environments. Yet the scripts of many of the Gothic plays are much less detailed.

Possibly the solution of this difficulty lies in an interpretation of the use to which the scenery was put in the various types of productions. Early Gothic plays needed scenery mostly for mood or atmosphere; they needed backgrounds of wild, romantic scenery -- scenery to induce a sense of terror or unease in the minds of the members of the audience. Relatively early Gothic pieces

\(^4\)James Boaden, Fontainville Forest (Promptbook 234, The Ohio State University Theatre Collection).
such as **Fontainville Forest** did not have to make **physical** use of the scenery in order to advance the action. But the action patterns of a number of later Gothic plays, like **Thalaba, the Destroyer**, and most of the melodramas often required scenery on which the actors could sit, stand, walk, climb, etc. A practicable bridge had to fall in a fire scene, perhaps, or boats and waves were required for water scenes, as in **Colleen Bawn**, or special traps were needed for transformation scenes as in **The Bottle Imp**. It seems only natural that when the scenery itself was "active" (as in late Gothic plays and most melodramas)\(^5\)

\(^5\) **Melodramas** that did not make physical use of the scenery were often just as laconic as Gothic plays in listing their scenic requirements. A case in point is **Jack Sheppard** which has designations as "The Loft," "A Memorable Room," and other similar tags.

rather than "passive" the descriptions would have to be more detailed. If rocks were needed, as in **Bertram**, mostly for mood, the placement of the rocks was not greatly important; nor was their character important -- profile pieces could be used just as easily as set-pieces. But when a rock had to be used to advance the action, as in **Thalaba, the Destroyer** where a trick rock was used for appearances and disappearances of important characters, the nature and the placement of the rock became fairly important and therefore more likely to be stated in the script.
The fact remains, however, that both types of productions required similar environments. Was the disparity between these environments simply a matter of the language used in the descriptions, or was a greater, theatrical disparity present? The evidence of the promptbooks and acting-edition scripts seems to suggest that, although the same things were represented, the method or manner of representation varied according to the demands of the action of the play. The Gothic pieces, it may be remembered, played more than one-half of all scenes in very shallow settings. The very shallowness of the settings precluded the possibility of extensive use of three-dimensional objects or set-pieces, and the settings would have had to be composed almost entirely of flat elements which were adequate for projection of mood but were rarely extensively practicable. But practicable scenery was not often required by early Gothic plays. Later Gothic plays and melodramas, however, worked with and in the settings (even though the environments were the same as earlier plays), and in these cases set-pieces seem to have taken the place of some of the flat elements. In other words, set-pieces were used both in Gothic productions and in productions of melodramas when needed; it happened, however, that they were needed more often in melodrama. We noted, for example, that a practicable boat was required in
The Castle Spectre, and a practicable boat was used; all other elements of the scene were flat. In Colleen Bawn boats were needed also (and used) but the scene was not nearly so flat in nature as The Castle Spectre (which used only one three-dimensional object) because the action of Colleen Bawn also demanded other set-pieces.

The point that is implied by the above, of course, is that the differences of scenery in the staging of melodramas and Gothic plays were not differences in kind, but only in degree. Most Gothic productions used flat elements because only flat elements were required -- but they used more complex staging when necessary; this complex staging was merely used more extensively in the melodrama. Boats, bridges, and traps are to be found in Gothic productions, but not nearly so often as in melodramas. The staging of melodrama, then, employed few devices and techniques different from those used in the staging of Gothic plays. It merely did the same things more intensively; more boats, more bridges, more trap doors were evident, that is all.

Placement of scenic elements. -- Three melodramas

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6Dion Boucicault, The Corsican Brothers, Promptbook 78; The Octoroon, Promptbook 249; and The Rapparee, op. cit.; all promptbooks on microfilm in The Ohio State University Theatre Collection.

were analyzed with regard to the location of the terminating
point of the scenery in an effort to determine whether the productions of melodramas were similar to Gothic productions in this respect. In view of the more extensive use of set-pieces by melodrama, it was suspected that the depth of stage settings would be greater for it than for Gothic drama. Let us see what the analysis discovered.

There is a total of 25 scenes in the three plays that were analyzed. Of these, 13 were terminated far up-stage (4th, 5th, or 6th grooves). This is in contrast to Gothic productions which, it will be remembered, terminated more than one-half of all scenes in downstage grooves. It seems very likely, as suggested above, that the difference may be accounted for by an increased need for stage space to accommodate the set-pieces and the properties so lavishly used by melodramas; the complexity of melodrama's settings required more room than the Gothic settings which provided mainly atmosphere.

Similarities of stage effects.—A number of the types of stage effects that are to be found in melodramas appear to have germinated in the staging of Gothic plays. Thrilling and unusual effects often found in the staging of melodramas turn out, upon analysis, to have been merely the expanded and glamorized techniques found in a more primitive and simplified state in the Gothic productions. It is possible, for example, that the
thrilling train sequences in melodramas like *Under the Gaslight* were merely modernizations (using the relatively new invention — the train) of the many boat and vessel scenes found in Gothic productions. The script of *Under the Gaslight* describes the placement of the railroad tracks as running horizontally across the stage from the fourth entrance on stage left to the fourth entrance on stage right. When the train made its appearance, it rushed across the stage from left to right. Except for a difference in the type of vehicle used and its speed, scenes of *Under the Gaslight* and scenes of the Gothic play, *Adelgitha*, were very similar. In the latter play the boat was located at the same entrance point as the train in *Under the Gaslight*, and its motion appears to have been on a horizontal line, also. The melodrama, *Colleen Bawn*, also used the upper entrance for the appearance of its boat, but in this case the progression of the boat was a little more glamorized, since it traveled in an oblique line rather than horizontally — a technique that was also used in *The Octoroon*.

Similarly, in the Gothic play *The Woodman's Hut* (1818)

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the boat was far upstage, placed so as to be seen in the distance after the flats had collapsed; and in Thalaba, the Destroyer and Bertram the vessels called for by the scripts were to be seen far upstage. There is a suggestion here, at least, that the placement of such scenes may have been established by the staging practices of Gothic plays, and that the positions worked out by the Gothic productions became somewhat standardized and were taken over and used in the staging of melodramas.

Productions of Gothic dramas sometimes managed collapses of scenery -- occasionally in conjunction with fire effects. At times, the staging showed the setting both whole and as it appeared in ruins. Melodramas also used the same general effects but in an expanded and more sophisticated form. The production of The Conquest of Taranto,² a Gothic play, showed the collapse of a scene at the end of the second act and then, at the beginning of the third act (after an intervening curtain) showed the same scene in ruins. The same principle was used in The Rapparee, except that both the collapse and the ruin were shown in the same scene. This was accomplished by having the major part of the setting (in the fourth grooves) blaze and collapse; then, visible to the audience in the

fifth grooves was a "flat view of the ruined part of the castle as seen by firelight."

It was noted in connection with a number of Gothic productions that eerie or unusual effects were often staged so as to be seen in extremely dim light, and the suggestion was made that this technique may have been employed to mask the mechanical manipulation of the effect as much as to provide appropriate mood qualities. This tendency to stage "effect" scenes and spectacular scenes in semi-darkness is noticeable in the productions of melodramas as well.

In the promptbook for a production of Pauvrette¹⁰

¹⁰Dion Boucicault, Pauvrette; or, Under the Snow (Promptbook 252, The Ohio State University Theatre Collection).

we find prompter's notes that indicate this tendency. An avalanche occurred during the course of the action, and the prompter's notes with regard to it are as follows:

"Blocks of Snow to be Thrown from the Flies & Carpenters [sic] Floor into C trap. 2 pieces striking Bridge which Breaks." While all this activity was going on, the stage must have been very dark, indeed, for the prompter noted:

"Turn out Wing lights & put Borders Down Low." He noted further: "Ready to Turn out Footlights when Avalanche Falls," and "Keep House Lights down." Here we notice
that all of the Wing lights and Footlights were off entirely, and the Border lights were turned down. In the ensuing darkness perhaps the "fake" aspects of the blocks of snow and the breaking bridge would not have been so apparent.

Darkness also appeared to be an ingredient of the staging of effect scenes in *The Bottle Imp*. In the second scene of the first act, a trap on stage left was used to sink a character. The script noted "Dark" for the scene, but as soon as the trap effect was concluded a stage direction brought the "W. [wing] lights up." The stage was also darkened in the sixth scene of the first act and the fourth scene of the second act for the appearance of the Imp.

Other melodramas, too, appear to have been written and staged so as to cloak the workings of the stage mechanisms in darkness. Several different boat scenes come at once to mind. The boat scene in Act II, Scene 6, of *Colleen Bawn* was supposed to occur by moonlight — again evidence of a darkened stage. For a similar scene in Act I, Scene 5, of *Jack Sheppard* the script noted that "the stage is quite dark." Finally, the famous steamer scene in the fourth act of *The Octoroon* was supposed to be played "By Night," and the fifth act canoe scene apparently was also played in semi-darkness since the scenery was supposed to be a Wood in the moonlight.
Use of stage traps.—Productions of melodrama, like productions of Gothic plays, often used stage traps, but there seems to be some reason to believe that the purposes for which the traps were used were somewhat different in the two types of productions. It is true that some melodramas used them for exactly the same purposes for which they were used by Gothic plays — notably, supernatural appearances and disappearances; but more often the melodramas employed the stage traps for other purposes.

Of the thirteen melodramas that were analyzed for their use of stage traps, five proved to have made use of traps, as far as can be ascertained. Of these productions, only two employed traps for supernatural effects. These were The Corsican Brothers, which used a sliding trap, and The Bottle Imp, which made use of various stage traps in seven appearances and disappearances.

The other three plays, however, employed traps for other purposes. In Colleen Bawn, a trap was used in Act II, Scene 6, for two characters to sink through the floor of the stage as if going down under water. The Rapparee apparently opened upstage traps in order to allow flames to shoot up through them in the fire scene, for the script reads, in part: "The upper entrance has its traps open, and red and blue fires ready." And in the melodrama,
Jaek Sheppard, the stage traps were used twice as traps in the stage setting itself, in much the same way as the modern play, The Matchmaker, uses a stage trap to represent a trap-door which is an inherent part of the setting, and is employed in this way rather than for stage tricks.

Use of furniture on stage.—Promptbooks and acting-edition scripts of eight melodramas were examined with a view of ascertaining the frequency with which the staging included the use of furniture.\textsuperscript{12} The total number of scenes in these melodramas was 104, of which only 23 made use of furniture on stage, despite the fact that a goodly number of the scenes were interiors. The practice here, then, appears to have paralleled the practice of the staging of Gothic dramas in which it was found that very few stage settings contained items of furniture.

Conclusions.—A comparison of some of the major staging practices employed by melodramas with those employed by Gothic dramas has led to the following conclusions:

1. Both types of productions used similar environmental backgrounds.
2. In realizing these environments on the stage the melodramas appear to have used more set-pieces than were used by Gothic productions, possibly because of action requirements.

3. Stage settings of melodramas were placed much farther upstage more often than stage settings for Gothic productions.

4. The productions of melodramas and Gothic plays show strong resemblances in the types of stage effects that were used.

5. Both types of productions tended to stage spectacular scenes in dim light.

6. Both types of productions appear to have excluded the use of furniture whenever possible.
CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS

A number of conclusions regarding certain aspects of the staging of Gothic plays have been reached as a result of the interpretation of the evidence revealed by the analyses of promptbooks and acting-edition scripts. These conclusions are largely concerned with scenery, scenic placement on the stage, and stage effects. Some of these conclusions, as is to be expected, reaffirm the points of view already generally held by students of the theatre; others, however, are at variance with the traditional views.

Each of the preceding chapters save the first contains a list of the conclusions which were formed as a result of the analysis with which the chapter was concerned. The function of this present chapter, therefore, is to bring these conclusions together and to suggest possible areas of future exploration that would use the same types of materials and the same methods of analysis.

Scenery.

The nature of the scenery.---The evidence drawn from the analyses makes it clear that productions of Gothic
plays relied extremely heavily on stock flats, wings, and borders as the means of realizing the scenic background on the stages. In earlier productions these stock elements appear to have been used exclusively, and only rarely with other items being associated with them. In *The Grecian Daughter*, for example, it was found that only one set-piece was added to the scenic décor, so that the entire production was played against backgrounds of purely stock nature.

The analyses also revealed that in some cases the use of stock scenery may be attributed to the lack of interest on the part of both playwrights and prompters as to the express nature of the locality represented on stage. In these cases, the background was found to be of little real effect upon the action; a background of some sort was needed, but it did not necessarily have to be composed of specific items. Later productions, however, tended to use the stock items for the surrounds—the back and sides of the stage decorations—but occasionally to create an atmosphere of individuality to the scene by adding set-pieces such as trees, rocks, altars, shrines, and the like. When these were added they became "active" pieces; i. e., they were used physically in the course of the action of the play, and were not reduced to the mere function of supplying background.
Set-pieces, however, were not employed in the majority of scenes at any time, apparently. Of the 64 scenes in the five productions that were individually discussed, only 22 made any use at all of set-pieces.

Other elements, such as ground-rows, were probably used as necessary for masking purposes. Prompters made occasional references to wings and borders, but their notes contained no references whatsoever to ground-rows; it is assumed, however, that they were employed in scenes, such as in Adelgitha, in which platforms or steps were required to be masked.

All of the productions that were analyzed were capable of being staged with only three sets of wings -- interiors, trees, and rocks. Moreover, it was found that in a number of cases the same wings could be left in place for an astonishing number of successive scenes, thus making a great many scene shifts mere matters of closing or opening the flats at the back.

The placement of scenery. -- Analysis of the stage positions of the flats used as the upstage terminating point of 100 scenes in Gothic plays has shown that almost exactly one-half of the total number of scenes were terminated in downstage grooves -- a fact which, of course, is compatible with the finding that set-pieces were not used in the majority of scenes. Depth on the stage was not
required unless there was something like a set-piece that demanded space for its accommodation; and since set-pieces were rarely used, the demand for stage space was not great and scenes could be shallowly placed.

Those productions which contained the greatest number of deep scenes\(^1\) were also, as might be expected,

\(^1\text{Adelgitha and Thalaba, the Destroyer. Each placed one-half of all scenes in depth.}\)

those productions which made relatively great use of set-pieces. In other words, there seems to have been a definite relationship between the depth of the scenes and the number of set-pieces that were required -- the more set-pieces, the deeper the scene. In most productions, however, shallow scenes were used far more frequently than either moderately deep or deep scenes, or any combination of the two.\(^2\)

\(^2\text{The extent to which the inadequacies of stage lighting may have affected the placement of the upstage scenic elements was not studied in this investigation, but it seems likely that lighting must be taken into account as a factor governing the position of the flats. Even so, it must be remembered that lighting could not have been the only factor, for it was not so inadequate as to preclude the use of deep scenes altogether.}\)

**Types of alternations of scenes.** -- Generally speaking, shallow scenes were followed by deep scenes (or the reverse) most of the time in the production of Gothic
plays. Some individual productions, however, departed from this generality; the most notable exception to the rule was *Bertram* which alternated shallow scenes with shallow scenes one-half of all its scene shifts.

**Use of furniture in stage decor.**—Analysis of the promptbooks has revealed that furniture was rarely used on the stages in productions of Gothic plays; in fact, the use of furniture was exceedingly slight even when the places that were represented on stage were supposed to be interiors. The general policy seems to have been to use furniture only when the action of the play specifically demanded it, as in the escape scene of *The Castle Spectre* when an actor had to place a chair on a table in order to reach an open window. Otherwise, furniture was not considered necessary -- a fact that possibly implies a virtual disinterestedness in the achievement of verisimilitude in these productions.

On several occasions it was noted that furniture was cut from scenes in which its existence was established by the printed scripts, and it was demonstrated that these cuts were probably the result of a disinclination on the part of stage managers to place furniture, or remove it, in plain sight of the audience. In most cases, it was found that when furniture was actually required by the action the scenes were carefully arranged in the upstage
and downstage grooves in relation to each other in such a way that the placing and removing of chairs and tables would be masked from the eyes of the audience. A notable exception to this practice occurred in an early production, The Grecian Daughter, in which a couch was brought on stage by an actor only when it was actually needed (not at the beginning of the scene) and was replaced by another actor when it was no longer required—an awkward arrangement that suggests that furniture was so rarely employed in productions at that time that lack of practice in handling it led to ineptitude in staging scenes that required it.

Stage Effects.

Types of special effects that were used. Special effects such as ghostly manifestations, thunder, and lightning were employed in a number of Gothic productions, but the frequency of their use was rather lower than one might expect. Of the 64 scenes in the five productions discussed separately, only 19 made any use of special effects of any kind.

In all of the promptbooks and scripts that were examined, the types of special effects seemed to be similar; spectral appearances, fires and collapses, and thunder and lightning occurred with regularity. In this connection it was found that scenes from any given play closely re-
seemed scenes in a number of others, both in the writing and staging. It was noted, for example, that the principal apparition scenes in *The Castle Spectre*, *Adelmorn, the Outlaw*, and *Thalaba, the Destroyer* were extremely similar—so similar, in fact as to imply that the form of such scenes, both in writing and staging, was dictated by convention.

It was also noted that in the majority of special effect scenes the lighting was rather dim, which suggests that dim lights were used perhaps as much to mask the machinery producing the effects as to provide suitable theatrical atmosphere.

Conflagrations occurred with some frequency, but the various prompters' notes regarding the staging of such scenes are so few as to lead to the tentative conclusion that scenes of this type were often symbolized through the use of painted elements rather than actually staged. In a few cases, notes were found that showed that actual fire was used, but more often there were no clues about how the effects were accomplished.

**Use of stage traps.**—Surprisingly, stage traps were not employed nearly so often for spectral appearances as one would imagine. The analysis showed that traps were used only one-third of the time for appearances and disappearances; the other manifestations of spirits were effected either by having the ghost appear or disappear
through the ordinary stage entrances, or by sliding flats together or apart, or by lifting scenic curtains to reveal the spectres. Apparently the "vision" type of appearance such as that used in The Castle Spectre was preferred. At any rate, stage traps were used very seldom.

Tableaus.--A number of productions appear to have used tableaus at the opening of a scene or in the middle of a scene, as well as at the end. In at least one production it was quite evident that such tableaus were forced upon the play; i.e., they were products of the staging, not of the script.

General effects.--On a number of occasions the evidence from the promptbooks tended to show that the printed scenic descriptions were not realized upon the stage, both with regard to scenery and to special effects. Sometimes boats were cut from a production or water effects were simplified or set-pieces or other furnishings were deleted. It was suggested that sometimes these descriptions were inserted for the benefit of the reading public, but the effects described were not actually accomplished on stage. Whatever the reason, it is certain that what happened on the stage was often at variance with the printed script.
Productions of
Gothic Plays and Melodramas.

The nature and placement of scenery.--A brief comparison of Gothic plays with melodramas and a comparison of the staging techniques of each as revealed by the promptbooks shows that both types of plays were staged within similar environmental backgrounds. A difference that was noted was that the productions of melodramas tended to make far greater use of set-pieces than did the productions of Gothic plays. In this connection, however, it became clear that the melodramas were merely expanding the practices that were used by productions of those Gothic plays which required a number of set-pieces to meet the demands of the action of the plays. Many Gothic dramas, especially the earlier ones, needed scenery only to provide mood and atmosphere; later Gothic plays (like their successors, the melodramas) made greater physical demands upon the stage, and these demands were met with set-pieces that could be used physically in the action of the dramas. Early plays, such as The Grecian Daughter, required almost nothing on the stage with which the actors had to perform; later plays, however, such as Adelgitha and, more particularly, Thalaba, the Destroyer, required scenery which was usable in the course of the action. These requirements were also characteristics of
melodramas, and productions of these, like productions of later Gothic plays, demanded the use of set-pieces.

One result of the greater use of set-pieces in productions of melodrama was that deep settings were more often required—as might be expected in view of the greater stage space that was needed to accommodate the set-pieces. But the scripts of the melodramas that were examined do not give evidence of any real difference in methods of staging from what had been done before.

Special effects.—Special effects to be found in productions of melodramas also followed the patterns set up by productions of the Gothic plays that were analyzed. Most notable among the effects employed frequently by the two were fire and collapse scenes, but the melodramas apparently tended toward greater verisimilitude in the staging of these scenes. Also common to both were boat scenes, and the location of the vessels follows the same pattern in both types of productions—upstage areas were chosen for their entrances.

Like the Gothic productions, melodramas utilized the stage traps, but their use was a little different from the uses to which they were put in Gothic productions. In the latter, stage traps were most often used in the creation of supernatural effects; in melodramas, however, they were
used for practical purposes such as points of entry for flames in fire scenes or as natural entrances to the stage settings.

The tendency to stage "effect" scenes in dim light seems to have existed in productions of melodramas as well as in productions of Gothic plays. Some occurrences of dim lighting must, of course, be ascribed in both types of productions to the dramatic necessities of the scripts, but other occurrences were possibly evidence of a desire to mask the mechanical means through which the effects were achieved.

The use of furniture in stage décor.—Productions of melodramas also seemed to follow the practice of Gothic productions in excluding furniture from the stage. Less than one-fourth of the total number of scenes analyzed made use of furniture.

Areas for Future Investigation.

The specific aims of this study necessarily excluded detailed investigations of the promptbooks with regard to certain aspects of staging, and a need remains for the exploration of these aspects. Among those that would appear to support investigation are:

1. Analysis of stage lighting techniques. While the promptbooks of the period are singularly undetailed
regarding stage lighting techniques, it seems probable that an investigation of a very great number of promptbooks would produce some evidence that would amplify what is known at present about the subject.

2. Analysis of patterns of stage movement. A number of the scripts that were studies contained scenes that seemed to demand processionals of one kind or another. Further analysis of the staging of these scenes would probably contribute to the field of knowledge about staging for spectacle.

3. Analysis of the significance of stage terminology. A study of a large number of promptbooks may reveal that theatrical terminology sometimes had conventional significance. The present investigation detected that many, many prompters noted the locations of scenery on the stage only when the scene happened to be located in the first grooves; the same was true of the printed directions in a number of scripts. A further study of this odd sort of reference might reveal a pattern of staging, indicated by a conventional means of notation, of which we are not at present aware.
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____. The Iron Chest. P 415.
____. The Iron Chest. P 488.
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_____. The Wife; a Tale of Mantua. P 439.
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_____. Alfonso, King of Castile. Unclassified film.
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_____. The Castle Spectre. P 137.
_____. The Castle Spectre. P 693.
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Sheil, Richard. **Myadne; or, The Statue.** P 123.

Siddons, Henry. **The Sicilian Romance.** Unclassified film.

Soane, George. **The Falls of Clyde.** P 715.

APPENDIX I

Principal Gothic Dramas
With Date of First Performance and Theatre in Which Held


3. Arnold, Samuel J. The Woodman's Hut. Drury Lane, April, 1814.


10. ____. The Italian Monk. Haymarket, August, 1797.


12. ____. The Secret Tribunal. Covent Garden, June, 1795.

13. The Bravo's Son (anon.) Bath, March, 1819.


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18. Colman, George, the Younger. Feudal Times. Drury Lane, January 1798.


23. Elliston, Robert William. The Venetian Outlaw. Drury Lane, April, 1805.


27. Giraldi; or, The Ruffian Boy. Norwich, April, 1820.

28. Thalaba, the Destroyer. Coburg, August, 1822.

29. The Forest Knight (anon). Sans Pareil, November, 1813.

30. Franklin, Andrew. The Outlaws. Drury Lane, October, 1798.

36. Jephson, Robert. Julia; or, The Italian Lover. Drury Lane, April, 1787.
40. Lee, Sophia. Almeyda, Queen of Granada. Drury Lane, April, 1796.
41. Lewis, Matthew Gregory. Adelgitha; or, The Fruits of a Single Error. Drury Lane, April, 1807.
42. Adelmorn, the Outlaw. Drury Lane, May, 1801.
43. Alfonso, King of Castile. Covent Garden, January, 1802.
44. The Castle Spectre. Drury Lane, December, 1797.
45. Raymond and Agnes; or, The Bleeding Nun. Norwich, November, 1809.
46. Rugantino; or, The Bravo of Venice. Covent Garden, 1805.
47. Venoni; or, The Novice of St. Mark's. Drury Lane, December, 1808.
48. The Wood Daemon; or, The Clock Has Struck. Drury Lane, April, 1807.
49. The Lord of the Castle (anon). Sans Pareil, October, 1817.


52. _____ Manuel. Drury Lane, March, 1817.


56. The Mystic Cavern (anon). Norwich, May, 1803.


60. _____ The Exile. Covent Garden, November, 1808.


62. _____ The Phantom; or, Montoni. Covent Garden, May, 1820.

63. Siddons, Henry. The Sicilian Romance. Covent Garden, 1794. See also entry number 38, above.

64. _____ A Tale of Terror. Covent Garden, May, 1803.

65. Soane, George. The Falls of Clyde. Drury Lane, October, 1817.


68. Whalley, Thomas Sedgewick. *The Castle of Montval.* Drury Lane, April, 1799.
APPENDIX II

Operation of Flats in Adelgitha

I. The contents of the grooves: (C = closed; 0 = open).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grvs</th>
<th>Contents of Grvs</th>
<th>Act I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sc 1</td>
<td>Sc 2</td>
<td>Sc 3</td>
<td>Sc 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Arched Flats</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Castle Towers</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Port Otranto</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Grove</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Gothic Hall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cut Tree Flats</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Gothic Chamber</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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II. Manipulation of the Flats:

A. Before the rise of the curtain, the stage is set up as follows:

- Fourth grooves: All four grooves closed
- Third grooves: All four grooves opened
- Second grooves: All four grooves opened
- First grooves: All four grooves opened.

B. To change to Act I, Scene 2:

- First grooves: Close groove # 1.

C. During the preceding scene, to make ready for Act I, Scene 3:

- Fourth grooves: Open groove # 1.

D. To change to Act I, Scene 3:

- First grooves: Open groove # 1.

E. To make ready for Act II while the curtain is down:

- Fourth grooves: Open groove # 2.
- Third grooves: Close groove # 1.

F. To make ready for Act III, Scene 1, while curtain is down:

- First grooves: Close groove # 1.
- Fourth grooves: Open groove # 3.
- Third grooves: Open groove # 1.

G. To shift to Act III, Scene 2:

- First grooves: Open groove # 1.

H. To make ready for Act IV while the curtain is down:

- Third grooves: Close groove # 2.

Total number of operations after the start of the play: 10.
Total number of scenes realized by these operations: 7.
It will be noted that of the seven pairs of flats in Adelgitha, only two are operated more than once. The number of times each pair is operated follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groove Set</th>
<th>Groove Number</th>
<th>Number of times operated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. . . . .</td>
<td>.4 . . . .</td>
<td>.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. . . . .</td>
<td>.3 . . . .</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. . . . .</td>
<td>.2 . . . .</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. . . . .</td>
<td>.1 . . . .</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. . . . .</td>
<td>.2 . . . .</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. . . . .</td>
<td>.1 . . . .</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. . . . .</td>
<td>.1 . . . .</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total shifts  10
APPENDIX III

Types of Flats

Above.---Plain Flat  Below.---Flat with Windows and Door
Above.--Cut Tree Flat

Below.--Flat with Arches
APPENDIX IV

Scenic Operations

Fig. 19. Reconstruction by the author of the working of Foulston's borders.

Lowering Scenery for a Conflagration
AUTobiography

I, Walter Charles Adelsperger, was born in Norwood, Ohio, August 8, 1919. I received my secondary school education at Purcell High School, Cincinnati, Ohio, and my undergraduate training at the University of Cincinnati, which granted me the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1941. After four years of military service during World War II, I taught in the secondary school at Hill City, Kansas, for two years and was employed for one year as editorial assistant in the Bell Telephone System. From the Ohio State University I received the Master of Arts degree in 1950, and I then embarked upon a course of study leading to the Doctor of Philosophy degree at the same institution. While in residence there, I was a teaching assistant in speech for one quarter. In September, 1952, I was appointed Instructor in Speech and Drama at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut, where I am currently an assistant professor and Associate Director of Theatre.