The Juvenile Drama

REGENCY AND VICTORIAN PENNY THEATRICAL PRINTS

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Compiled and Edited by
Fredric Woodbridge Wilson

The Harvard Theatre Collection

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The Juvenile Drama

REGENCY AND VICTORIAN PENNY THEATRICAL PRINTS

Toy Theatre Prints, Portrait Prints,
Tinsel Prints, and Toy Theatres
in the Harvard Theatre Collection

Fredric Woodbridge Wilson
Curator

with

Melissa Goldman
Harvard Class of 2006

and

Thomas M. Garrett
Irina Tarsis

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The Juvenile Drama

Fredric Woodbridge Wilson

The Juvenile Drama refers to a theatrical publishing tradition that included several specific kinds of prints that first appeared in England early in the nineteenth century, and continued for several decades before a gradual decline into the early twentieth century. These prints were issued by as many as a hundred publishers, situated all around London, although only a dozen of these were of particular importance. During the long decline, as these small specialty firms inevitably came to an end, and sold out to competitors or successors, many of the original publications saw a second life under new imprints, or adapted to new printing or marketing techniques, and prices declined as the product itself became cheaper and less fashionable.

The earliest of the main categories of Juvenile Drama was the *Theatrical Character Portrait.* These were full-length likenesses of specific actors shown in the roles that were currently seen on the London stage in all of the forms of theatre that were then popular: tragedy, melodrama, spectacle, equestrian drama, history and adventure, pantomime, and, of course, many of the plays of Shakespeare. At first the portraits were sold uncolored, for a penny, in a small format of about 9 inches high by 7½ inches wide. The invention of the genre is attributed to William West (in 1811), inspired both by the more elegant and expensive mezzotints and etchings of theatrical personages that had been popular for the past half-century, as well as by the cheap and vulgar woodcut engravings that had been sold as children's playthings. They were intended specifically at the juvenile market as souvenirs and "collectibles" of entertainments that children were perhaps unlikely to have the opportunity to see in person. In addition to West, the earliest important publishers of character prints were J. H. Jameson and Orlando Hodgson, but the extreme popularity of these *Penny Prints* led many other publishers to enter the market. The newer firms, including John Fairburn, Martin Skelt, and William Webb, introduced the important innovations of hand-colored copies sold for twopence, and

cheaper copies sold for a halfpenny. Always these prints might have been colored by the owner, and this activity was a favorite pastime for young collectors. Ultimately, many of the prints were decorated also by applying pieces of paper, fabric, and tinsel. Some firms, especially Webb, specialized in producing die-cut colored tinsel pieces especially made for their prints, and *Tinsel Prints* have thus become a special category of the Juvenile Drama.

Simultaneously, the same publishers began issuing sheets that represented groups of characters in the plays that currently occupied the London theatres. These *Souvenir Character Sheets,* also sold for a penny, were inspired by the crude "lottery prints," sheets of woodcut characters and typeset captions that illustrated children's stories or lessons, such as religious or moral tenets or the letters of the alphabet, printed in a pattern of boxes that resembled the lottery chances that were cut from a sheet and sold, a popular form of small-time gambling. These character sheets usually portrayed several of the principal characters in a play, sometimes in characteristic stage poses; however, they were not intended to be cut out or manipulated in a domestic re-creation, and they were not necessarily drawn to scale.

Eventually, however, the idea arose of issuing both the scenes and the characters of a play for the specific purpose of producing miniature home versions, and so the *Toy Theatre* was introduced, consisting of various scenes, together with sheets of the complete casts of characters, even in their various postures and costumes, drawn to scale. They were intended to be mounted onto cardboard, hand-colored, and cut out.

The toy theatre sheets were produced using the same printing techniques, the same presses, the same paper stock and size, and many of the same artists and engravers as the theatrical portraits and character sheets. Eventually, the firms that published the sheets also produced printed *Play Scripts,* in shortened versions that often gave emphasis to the parts that particularly excited the young entrepreneurs—namely, scenes of mayhem, combat, heroism, and hilarity. To complete the experience, the publishers produced the wherewithal to reproduce an entire theatre, complete with stage front, slots for scenes, supports and wires to manipulate the characters, and even special accessories for lighting or

stage effects. The theatres could be homemade or purchased complete. To eliminate the considerable time required to color all of the scenes and characters, the publishers offered ready-colored sheets, produced by having apprentices apply the coloring through stencils.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Juvenile Drama began to wane, as fewer new prints were produced and consequently the connection with the live theatre diminished; as the plays represented were written especially for children, instead of being based on the real, "adult" theatre; as the quality of the prints declined, owing to the replacement of engraving by lithography; and as the toy theatre became, more and more, a toy to buy ready-made, and less an activity that required industry and creativity on the part of the young practitioners. In its time it was a popular phenomenon that survives today as historical evidence of an era rich in theatrical interest.

Principal London Publishers of Toy Theatre and Penny Character Prints

(Dates in parentheses indicate dated prints that give the respective addresses.)

Allen, J. (est. 1822).	"Opposite the Asylum, Westminster Road" (1822). 23 Princes Road, Kennington. *An early publisher of halfpenny prints.*
Arliss, John.	35, Gutter Lane, Cheapside, Sold by O. Hodgson, Maiden Lane. *Generally lesser quality. Printed by woodcut and type.*
Bailey.	13 Fetter Lane, Holborn.
J. Bailey and Co. (est. 1830).	1 Clifford's Inn Passage. 13 Fetter Lane. 65 Gray's Inn Lane, Holborn. 2 Slade's Place, Little Suffolk Street. 188 Fleet Street.
Bailey and Hunt.	*Successor to J. Bailey and Co.*
Brown, T. J.	*Some stock taken over by Skelt. Also produced tinsel ornaments.*
Burtenshaw, H. (est. 1812)	130 St. Martin's Lane. *Sales agent for I. K. Green.*
Clarke, H. G.	2 Garrick Street, Covent Garden. 252 Strand. *Sales agent for Webb, Pollock, and Park. Printed play books and paper games.*
Clarke, W. (est. 1821).	265 High Holborn (1821–1824). *Associated with De Burson.*
Cole, W. (est. 1828).	10 Newgate Street. *Successor to Hodgson. Employed W. Park.*
Crawford.	3 Dean Street, Holborn.
Creed, G.	31 Exeter Street, Strand (1820). *Publisher of portraits and combats.*
Creed & Slee.	5 Artillery Lane, Bishopsgate.

De Burson, R. M. (est. 1821)	Theatrical Print Warehouse, Gray's Inn (1821). *Successor to W. Clarke. Possibly B. M. De Burson. Also spelled De Bursen.*
Dyer (est. 1827).	13 Dorset Crescent, Hoxton New Town. 33 Bath Street, City Road. 55 Bath Street. *I. J. Dyer. Took over some of Hodgson's plays. Also traded under the name I. J. Dyer and Co. Took over some of the publications of Hodgson.*
Dyer Junr.	109 Aldersgate Street.
Dyer Senr.	109 Aldersgate Street (1829).
Edwards, F. (est. 1824)	49 Leman Street, Goodman's Fields. *Associated with Dyer.*
Fairburn, J.	110 Minories (1837). 40 Fetter Lane and 110 Minories. Minories and 44 Barbican. Minories. *John Fairburn. Generally high quality. Also published books and pamphlets from 1797 or earlier.*
Fairburn, John.	106 Minories. Minories and 44 Barbican. 44 Barbican.
Fairburn, S. (ext. 1837)	44 Barbican. *Successor to J. Fairburn.*
Forse, R.	57 St. John's Square. *Publisher of character portraits.*
Frost, T.	40 Dudley Street, Soho. *Sales agent for Green.*
Golding, J.	*In partnership with A. Park. Also spelled Goulding.*
Green, J. K. (est. 1812, 1834)	33 Salisbury Place, Walworth New Town. 3 George Street, Walworth New Town. 34 Lambeth Square, New Cut. 9 Thurlow Place, East Street, Walworth. 16 Park Place, Walworth. *John Kirby Green. Generally high quality. Succeeded by Jameson. Pirated some prints by West. Also used initials*

	I. K. Green. Claimed to be the original inventor and publisher of Juvenile Theatrical Prints, established in 1808. His son, George J. Green, also published prints.
Hancock, W.	2 Falcon Place, Bethnal Green. *Sales agent for Green.*
Harriss, G.	60 Bell Street, Edgware Road. *Sales agent for Green.*
Hebberd, Mrs. M.	2 Upper Carlton Street, Marylebone. *Also spelled Hibberd. Sold prints by W. West and Skelt.*
Hodgson & Co.	11 Cloth Fair (or Clothfair). 10 Clothfair, West Smithfield. 10 Newgate Street (1822–1823). 43 Holywell Street. 11–43 King Street, Snow Hill. *Most sheets not dated.*
Hodgson, O. (est. 1831)	10 Cloth Fair (1831). 10 Cloth Fair and 118 Fleet Street. Maiden Lane. 22 Macclesfield Street, City Road. *Orlando Hodgson. Generally high quality. Dated most prints.*
Hodgson, Orlando (est. 1811).	10 Cloth Fair (1832–1835). 132 Fleet Street.
Hodgson.	110 Fleet Street (and Turner and Fisher, New York and Philadelphia). *Printed for export to America, without names of actors.*
Hook, C. (est. 1820).	35 Windmill Street, Tottenham Court Road.
Jameson, I.	13 Duke's Court, Bow Street (1816–1822). *I. is actually an initial J. and this publisher is identical to J. H. Jameson. Dated most prints. Published souvenir character sheets.*
Jameson, J. H. (est. 1811).	13 Duke's Court, Bow Street (1813–1827).
Johnson, W. S.	60 St. Martin's Lane. *Publisher of character portraits.*
King, Jonathan.	Chapel Street, Somers Town. 56 Seymour Street, Euston Square.

	Essex Street, Islington. *Sales agent for Green.*
Langham.	Red Lion Street, Holborn. *Associated with Hodgson and Co. Also published some equestrian combats.*
Layton, W. T. (est. 1820).	10 Petty's Court, Oxford Street. *Publisher of character portraits. Also given as W. J. Layton.*
Lloyd, R. (est. 1829).	Juvenile Dramatic Repository, 40 Gibson Street, "near the Coburg Theatre." Juvenile Dramatic Repository, 42 Gibson Street. Theatrical Print Warehouse, 40 Gibson Street, "near the Coburg Theatre." *Robert Lloyd. Associated with Straker and Dyer, and published play books for Skelt. Succeeded by Skelt.*
Love, W. (est. 1812).	81 Bunhill Row (1812–1823). *Published using West's plates.*
Marks, I. L.	23 Russell Court, Drury Lane. *I. is actually an initial J. and this publisher is identical to J. L. Marks.*
Marks, J. L. (est. 1838).	91 Long Lane, Smithfield (1838). 17 Artillery Street, Bishopsgate. 23 Russell Court, Drury Lane.
Matthews, H. (est. 1887).	Churchfield Road, Acton. *A. How Mathews, 1856–1940. Issued plays based on Park, Skelt, Green, Webb, Pollock, etc.*
Park, A. (est. 1818).	6 Old Street. 17 Leonard Street, Tabernacle Walk. 47 Leonard Street. 47 Leonard Street, Shoreditch. 47 Leonard Street, Finsbury (1848). 40 Marshall Street. 150 High Street, Notting Hill. 30 St. John's Road, Hoxton. *Arthur Park, d. 1863, went to America ca. 1835, published most sheets. Succeeded by Archibald Alexander Park, Mrs. Sarah Park, Alexander Park. Mostly printed*

by lithography. Usually did not date prints.

Park, W. — 47 Leonard Street, Finsbury.

Park, A. & Golding, J. — 6, Old Street Road, City Road, and 61, Oakley Street, Lambeth.

Also Park & Goulding. The name Goulding, which appears on some early prints, seems to be a misspelling.

Pitts (est. 1809). — Printer and Toy Warehouse, Great Street, Andrew Street, Seven Dials.
J. Pitts. Generally lesser quality. Printed by woodcut and type. Publisher of street ballads and character portraits.

Pollock, B. (est. 1877). — 73 Hoxton Street, Hoxton.
Benjamin Pollock. Successor to J. Redington, his father-in-law. Reissued Redington's plays. Generally lesser quality. Mostly printed by lithography. Did not date prints. Redington's address. After his death the business was continued by his daughter, Louisa Pollock, and then by Benjamin Pollock, Ltd.

Pollock, Benjamin, Ltd. (est. 1946) — 1 John Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C.2.
Successor to B. Pollock.

Redington, J. (est. 1838). — 208 Hoxton Old Town.
73 Hoxton Street, "formerly called 208 Hoxton Old Town."
John Redington. Sales agent for Green. Successor to J. K. Green and Crawford. Generally high quality. Did not date prints. Succeeded by Pollock.

Skelt, M. (est. 1835). — 11 Swan Street, Minories.
Martin Skelt, d. 1840. Publisher of halfpenny prints. Generally lesser quality. Successor to R. Lloyd. Employed W. G. Webb. Did not date prints.

Skelt, M. and M. — 11 Swan Street, Minories.
Martin and Matthew Skelt, d. 1850, brothers.

Skelt, M. and B. — 11 Swan Street, Minories.
Matthew and Ben Skelt, uncle.

Skelt, B. — *Ben Skelt, d. 1862.*

Skelt, E. — 11 Swan Street, Minories.
Ebenezer Skelt, son of Ben, d. 1913.

Slee, G. (est. 1814).

5 Artillery Lane, Bishopsgate.
Partner of Green (1814), Anderson (1815–1825). Halfpenny publisher. Sold plates to Skelt.

Smart, J. (est. 1821).

35 Rathbone Place, Oxford Street (1821).
Publisher of character portraits.

Spencer, J. (est. 1815).

63 East Street, Manchester Square.
Publisher of character portraits.

Stokes, Mrs. S. (est. 1832).

57 Wych Street.
Sarah Stokes, d. 1844. Housekeeper to W. West, reprinted some of West's prints. West's address.

Straker, D. (est. 1825).

21 Aldersgate Street.
Succeeded by Lloyd. Some plates were acquired by Dyer and Lloyd and later passed to Park and Skelt.

Turner and Fisher

New York and Philadelphia.
American sales agents for some character prints by Hodgson.

Webb, W. G. (est. 1838).

Ripley, Surrey.
Cloth Fair.
Bermondsey Street.
206–234 Bermondsey Street.
49 Old Street, St. Luke's.
146 Old Street, St. Luke's.
Long Lane, Smithfield.
William George Webb, founder. Apprentice to M. Skelt. Mostly printed by lithography. Did not date prints. Succeeded by H. J. Webb.

Webb, H. J. (est. 1890).

146 Old Street, St. Luke's.
124 Old Street, St. Luke's.
H. J. Webb, 1890–1933, successor to W. Webb, his father. Succeeded by H. J. Webb, his son.

Webb, W.

146 Old Street, St. Luke's.
W. Webb, 1920–1890. Apprentice to Park. Successor to J. Redington. Mostly printed by lithography.

Webb, W. C.

19 Cloth Fair, West Smithfield (1843–1844).
Supposedly the same person as W. Webb, who changed his name to William Charles Webb in 1856, after the death of W. G. Webb. to whom he may not have been

related.

Webb. 75 Central St., St. Luke's.

Webb, J. 75 Brick Lane, St. Luke's.
Central Street, St. Luke's.
Uncle of W. Webb. Sales agent and manufacturer of tinsel ornaments.

West, W. (est. 1811). Exeter House, Exeter Street, Strand.
Theatrical Print Warehouse, 57 Wych Street, Strand, "Opposite the Olympic Theatre, Strand." (1813–1831).
William West, 1783–1854. Inventor of penny portrait prints and toy theatre sheets. Generally high quality. Succeeded by S. Stokes. Dated most prints. Published souvenir character sheets, character portraits, and theatrical scenes.

Wood, J. T. 278 Strand.
Sales agent for Green and Webb.

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Brander Mathews, *Scribner's Magazine,* October 1915.

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George Speaight, "Toy Theatre," *Harvard Library Bulletin,* Cambridge, Mass., 1971.

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Robert Louis Stevenson, "A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured," *The Magazine of Art,* New Series, April 1884 (Vol. 7, Part 42), reprinted in *Memories and Portraits,* Chatto and Windus, London, 1887.

Joseph Viscomi, *Playing With the Toy Theatre,* exhibition catalogue, Neuberger Museum, State University of New York at Purchase, 1976.

A. E. Wilson, *Penny Plain, Twopence Coloured, A History of the Juvenile Drama,* George G. Harrap and Co., London, 1932.

"Toy Theatre Makers," *The Evening News,* December 16, 1908.

CAUTION

TO

PRINT-SELLERS, &c.

WHEREAS several spurious and piratical Prints have lately been sold and hawked for Sale; This is to give notice, that the undersigned Publishers most respectfully solicit the Trade, that should any thing of the kind be again offered from this date, they will have the goodness to reject them, as it is their intention to take Legal proceedings against any Person or Persons, who sell the same, they being vile Copies of some of the Plates of the undersigned Publishers, and sold at one half the price of the originals with a malicious intent of Defrauding the same.

Dated this
12th MAY, 1831.

R. LLOYD.
I. J. DYER.
J. FAIRBURN.
J. L. MARKS.

As the above 'CAUTION,' no doubt, as been printed and widely circulated in the true spirit of malice, and for the express purpose of intimidating and compelling the Trade to refuse all such Publications as may be offered to them through any other Hands than those employed by the Persons above named, (of whose notorious Piracies WE, the undersigned beg to call not only their attention but that of the Trade also,) NOW WE DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE, that so far as regards the Purchase or Sale of any Print or Prints, already published, or hereafter to be published, in the Name of us or either of US, WE undertake to guarantee all and every such Purchaser or Purchasers, Seller or Sellers, against the Costs and Expences of any Action or Actions, that may be brought in the name of any or either of the above named Persons, from the day of the date hereof, until the 25th day of December, now next ensuing; provided such person or persons buying or selling such print or prints, shall immediately on the receipt of a Notice of any such Action or Actions, give Notice in writing, signed with their name, to our Attornies, Messrs. ABBOTT and BARNES, 15, Clifford's Inn Square, Fleet Street, (who have our authority to protect such Buyers and Sellers) of such Action or Actions, for the purpose of such Defence.

As Witness our Hands, this 31st day of May, 1831.

6, *Old Street Road, City Road.* A. PARK.
61, *Oakley Street, Lambeth.* J. GOLDING.

(Witness.) WILLIAM WEST,
57, *Wych Street, Strand.*

WILLIAM DAY, PRINTER, 17, GOSWELL STREET.

Printed handbill dated May 1831, containing accusations of forgery against some of the upstart publishers of theatrical prints (including Arthur Park and J. Golding) who priced their prints at a halfpenny, half the price of the earlier publishers (Robert Lloyd, I. J. Dyer, John Fairburn, and J. L. Marks). The earliest publishing firms, including William West, Orlando Hodgson, and J. H. Jameson, are not mentioned, although Jameson may have ceased business by that time, and William West is named as Witness. From a ten-volume bound set of juvenile drama prints, "Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured." Harvard Theatre Collection, the Gift of Robert Gould Shaw, 1915.

The Juvenile Drama

Essays by

Henry Mayhew
Edward Draper
Robert Louis Stevenson
Godfrey Turner
Edward Gordon Craig

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Contents

The Celebrated Publisher of Penny Theatrical Characters

By Henry Mayhew *

I continue my inquiries among the Toy-makers. In my last Letter I dealt chiefly with the makers of playthings for the children of the poor. In the present one I purpose dealing with those who manufacture the superior description of articles,[1] such as are seen principally in the arcades and bazaars. One among those whom I visited was a celebrated publisher of penny theatrical characters and maker of toy theatres. He is the person to whom the children of the present generation are indebted for the invention. I found him confined to his room with asthma. He sat in a huge arm-chair, embedded in blankets, with a white night-cap on his head. He evidently was very proud of having been the original inventor of the toy theatres, and he would insist upon presenting me with the earliest prints in connection with the mimic stage. He was a little spare man whose clothes hung loose about him.

"I am a maker of children's theatres, and a theatrical print publisher. I have been in the line ever since 1811. The first time I began to publish anything of the kind was when the pantomime of *Mother Goose*[2] was performing. I was the first in the line. I think I had the business all to myself for two years. Mrs. J——,[3] who lived in Duke's-court, Bow-street, took to it after that. She sold my prints at first, and then she

* Originally headed "Labour and the Poor. The Metropolitan Districts. [From our Special Correspondent.] Letter XXVIII." Published in *The Morning Chronicle*, Monday, February 25, 1850. Neither William West nor Henry Mayhew are named in the interview. This article was reprinted by Gerald Morice and George Speaight, "New Light on the Juvenile Drama," in *Theatre Notebook*, 1971, pp. 115–121, based on an earlier transcription by E. P. Thompson and Eileen Yeo, in *The Unknown Mayhew* (Merlin Press, 1971). Speaight guessed at some of the names of the artists whose identities were suppressed by Mayhew. This transcription is based on the original article from the *Morning Chronicle*. Some minor inconsistencies in orthography have been regularized. [F.W.W.]

1. There is some irony in this description, since toy theatre sheets and penny prints have generally been regarded as cheap and somewhat tawdry. [F.W.W.]

2. *The Golden Eggs and Mother Goose.* [F.W.W.]

3. Mrs. H. J. Jameson. [F.W.W.]

began to print and publish for herself. Now, I think, there's about six in the line. I was originally in the circulating library and haberdashery line. My mother was in the haberdashery way, and I continued it. We had a glass case of toys as well, and among the toys we sold children's halfpenny lottery prints—common things that were done in those days, sir. Well, you see, my parents used to be at Covent-garden Theatre, and I took it in my head to have a print done of *Mother Goose,* I can show you the old original print by me. You shall see, sir, the first theatrical print ever published. [He here produced a bundle of impressions.] Here's the third cheap theatrical print ever published. It's numbered up here, you see—but I brought 'em out so fast after that I left off numbering them very soon. I brought out one a day for three years." The print consisted of eight characters in as many separate compartments. The first was the elder Grimaldi[1] as Clown, the second Bologna as Harlequin, the third was the Columbine of that day. "Oh dear," said the publisher, "what was her name?—she was a werry[1] excellent Columbine at Covent-garden Theatre." The other compartments were filled with other characters in the piece. "You'll see, sir," continued the old man, "there's a line of foolish poetry under each of the characters. I made it myself to please the children. It runs:—

> 'The Clown, Joe Grim,
> John Bologna, the Harlequin;
> Gay and merry Columbine,
> With her lover, Spaniard fine;
> Demon of Interest, fiend of gold,
> Don Alvaro very old;
> A poor Chinese man,
> And Mr. Raymond, as Magician.' "

The first theatrical print published was not very different from the third in the character of its art or poetical descriptions. There was, however, a spirit and freedom of touch about the execution that was far superior to what might have been expected.

The lines under the eight distinct characters were as follows:—

1. Joseph Grimaldi, 1779–1837. 2. John Peter (Jack) Bologna, d. 1846. 3. Mayhew attempts to reproduce West's speech by showing his occasional exchange of 'v's' and 'w's' and his added initial 'h's' (e.g., "werry" for "very"; "adwance" for "advance"; "vild" for "wild"; "horgan" for "organ."). [F.W.W.]

'The golden egg and Mother Goose—
Prime, bang-up, and no abuse.
Here's Harlequin as feather light,
And Zany's antics to please you with delight;
Here's Mr. Punch you plainly see,
And Joan, his wife, both full of glee.
In woman's habits does Harlequin
Deceive the clown, by name Joe Grim.'

"I brought out this print, you'll understand, to please the children. The lottery things was so bad, and sold so well, that the idea struck me that something theatrical would sell. And so it did—went like wildfire among the young folks. Shopkeepers came to me far and near for 'em. Bad as the drawing of these here is, I can assure you it was a great adwance on the children's halfpenny lotteries. These two figures here in the corner, you see, a'n't so bad, but they're nothing to what we do now. This plate was done by a 'prentice of the name of Green, who worked at Mr. Simkins', an engraver in Denmark-court. He used to do them in his overtime. He was obliged to have something to look at to copy. He was no draughtsman himself, you know. This here picture of *Mother Goose* he took from a large print of Mr. Simmonds in that there character published by Ackerman, and sold in Covent-garden at 2s. 6d. plain, and 5s. coloured; the others was all copied from large prints of the day. I dare say I sold right off as many as 5,000. It was printed many times over, and every edition I know was a thousand. We don't do so many now. It was sold at a penny plain, and twopence coloured. You had better take that there impression with you. It's a curiosity, and a bit of the history of one's country—yes, that it is, sir. Why it's 39 years ago. I think I must have been about 24 when it was published—I'm 63 in June. The success of the theatrical prints was so great, I was obliged to get three presses to print them fast enough. I brought out a new one every day, as I told you before. We only did the characters in the pantomime at Christmas time. The small ones wasn't likenesses—they was merely characters to give the costumes. We didn't make likenesses till very late. The wardrobe people at the minor theatres and masquerade people used to buy a great many to make their dresses from. Young Green[1] only did me two plates. He was such a bad draughtsman he couldn't do anything without a copy, and I was forced to get permission of the better printsellers for all he did. I gave Green

1. J. K. Green. [F.W.W.]

30*s.* or £2 for each plate he did for me. He was very dear, 'cause he was so slow over the engravings. Well, I think I had done about seven prints—they were bad-uns—only copies, and badly done too—all by apprentices, when Mr. Hashley, of the Hamphitheayter,[1] sent young —— with a drawing to show me. It was uncommon well done; oh, such a beautiful picture! he got on to be one of the first-rate artists arterwards, and drawed half-crown caricatures; he did all the battle-pieces of them times—all Bonaparte's battles and Nelson's shipping. Well I gave him an order directly for the whole of the characters in the *Blood Red Knight,* wot Hashley was performing at that time. I can show you the print on it—you must see it, for it was a great adwance in my purfession, sir. I should like you to look at it, sir, cause I considers it as a matter of history like." He here brought out another brown parcel of prints. "Look here, sir," he said, as he turned over the impressions—"here's one of the stage fronts we do now—it's only part of it, you'll understand. It's done by a real architectural designer—but *he's* dead too: I suppose I shall go next. —— did this here stage-front of Drury-lane as it was after the fire; and he did Covent-garden for me as well, but he wasn't good at architect. This here, sir, was the first stage front we began to make. It's the large impression; we had a small one out as well. The date, you see, is 1812—and it wasn't quite a year after I published my first print. I got liberty from the master carpenter to go and make the drawing of the front as soon as ever it was up after the fire. This here print," he continued as he turned over the different copies before him, "was done for me by a Royal Academician of the name of Mr. ——; it's Ducrow in the scene of the *Ingun and the Vild Oss.*[2] You see, sir, Mr. Ducrow paid for it being done by my man, and guv it away on his benefit night, and I had the plate of him afterwards. This is a late production, so you can see the improvement. There's the first plate —— did for me. It's the principal characters in *The Lady of the Lake,* as produced at the Surrey, and a great advance you see it is on the others. After that he did the *Blood-red Knight.* Here's one of the first prints of osses. It's *Baghvanho,*[3] as performed at Hashley's. Here's the first battle he ever drew. He did it unbeknown to me on a copper of mine, thinking I would like it; but it was quite out of my line. It was that there as got him all J——'s[4] battles to do. He showed it to him, and J—— guv him an order directly. After that he had ten pound a week from J——, and ten pounds a week from

1. Philip Astley; Amphiteatre. 2. *The Indian and the Wild Horse.* 3. *Baghvan Ho,* 1812. 4. J. H. Jameson's. [F.W.W.]

me too. He had 30s. a plate, and never did less than six in the week; and for the larger ones he had more. I found the copper. Why, I used to pay my coppersmith £70 and £80 a year for plates only. ——, the artist and scene painter, did a great many for me, and he was the only one as turned out grateful to me. All the others got such great men they wouldn't look on me."

"At first, you see, we didn't do any but the principal characters in a piece, 'cause we didn't think of making theayters then, and went on as we begun for two years. After that we was asked by the customers for theayters to put the characters in, so I got up the print of a stage front, thinking that the customers would get the woodwork done themselves. But after the stage front they wanted the theayters themselves of me more than ever, so I got some made, and then the demand got so great that I was obliged to keep three carpenters to make 'em for me. One was a horgan builder and could make anything in machinery. I turned out the first toy theayter for children as ever was got up for sale, and that was in the year 1813. You see my father was the under property-man at Covent-garden Theatre, and I had a sister a dancer there, and another sister belonging to the fruit-office in the boxes—so we was all theatrical; and when I was about seven year old, I got my father's 'prentice in the shop to make me a wooden theayter—he was uncommon clever at carpenter work, and the painters and carpenters of Covent-garden used to come and see it when we exhibited in our one-pair back three times a week. We used to charge 2d. a piece. It was thought a great thing in those days; and so many people used to come to see it, that father and mother wouldn't allow it after a time; so it was put up as a raffle, and it was won by a young man, who took it with him to Scotland.

"It was that as gave me the hidea of making toy theayters for sale. After I made a few I was hobligated to make scenery, and to do the sets of characters complete. Nobody but me made toy theayters for a long while; nor did they do the scenery. One man used to do me three dozen theayters a week; and another man did me a dozen more of the small. The larger theayters took longer time, and I don't think I made more than a dozen of them in a year. I used to make, I think, about fifty toy theayters a week. I always had a room full of them upstairs, except at Christmas, when we couldn't turn them out fast enough. I think I must have sold about 2,500 every year of 'em. Some theayters I made came

to as much as £20 a piece. I have made about four of them, I think, in my life time. They was fitted up with very handsome fronts—generally 'liptic harch[1] fronts, built all out of wood, with ornaments all over it—and they had machinery to move the side wings on and off; lamps in front, to rise and fall with machinery, and side lamps to turn on and off to darken the stage, and trick sliders to work the characters on and change the pantomime tricks; then there was machinery to make the borders rise and fall as well, and cut traps to open for the scenery to go up and down through the stage.

"*The Miller and His Men* has sold better than any other play I ever published. I wore out a whole set of copper plates of that there. I must have sold at least five thousand of that play, all complete. It's the last scene, with the grand explosion of the mill, as pleases the young 'uns, uncommon. Some on 'em greases the last scene with butter—that gives a werry good effect with a light behind; but warnish[2] is best, I cant abear butter. Some of them explosions we has made in wood work, and so arranged that the mill can fly to pieces; they comes to about 4s. 4d. a piece. The next most taking play out of my shop has been *Blue Beard.* That the boys like for the purcession over the mountain—a coming to take Fatima away—and there's the blue champter with the skelingtons in it—that's werry good too—and has an uncommon pretty effect with a little blue fire, though it in general setts all the haudience a sneezing. The next best after that was *The Forty Thieves*—they likes that there, for the fairy grotto and the scenery is werry pretty throughout. Then again, the story pleases the children uncommon—It's a werry good one I call it.

"I'll give you the date of the first likeness[3] as ever I did; I've got it here handy, and I should like you to see it, and have it all correct, 'cause you see, as I said before, it's a matter of history, like. Here's all my large portraits—there's 111 of them. This here's one of ——. It's Liston, as Moll Flaggon, you see. That there one is done by Mr. ——, the royal academician. It's Mr. H. Johnston as Glaffier. I think the part was in a tragedy called the *Hillusion.*[4] That was the werry first portrait as I published. Here's one by ——, done about the same time. That's Mrs. Egerton, as Hellen Macgregor.[5] The portraits I have just been showing you are 2d. plain, and 4d. coloured—but they don't sell now, the penny

1. Elliptical arch. 2. Varnish. 3. Portrait character print. 4. *The Illusion.* 5. Sarah Egerton, 1782–1847, as Helen Macgregor in *Rob Roy Macgregor.* [F.W.W.]

has quite knocked them up. Then there's other people wot makes as low as a halfpenny, but they a'n't like the performance at all. You see the cheap shops makes up the dresses with silk, and tinsel, and foil, but I never did. My customers used to do some: but, to my mind, it spoilt the figures, and took away all the good drawing from 'em. Formerly they used to cut out the parts of the figures, and stick pieces of silk, and tinsel, and lace behind them. Then the boys used to make all their own dots and ornaments themselves; and I used to sell punches expressly for doing 'em, and arter that I sold the ornaments themselves. Now the ornaments are sold in large quantities by these halfpenny printsellers. They are punched out by children I think—they make them as low as a halfpenny a packet."

"I haven't published a new set of characters for this seven year. You see they began to make halfpenny plates—they used to copy my penny ones and sell 'em at half-price, so I thought it high time to give over. I had come down in my large portraits from 2d. to 1d., and I wasn't going to reduce to halfpenny—not I. It seemed like lowering the purfession to me—besides, the theayters themselves couldn't make a do of it, so I gave over publishing. The decline of the drama is hawful, and it's just the same with the toy theayters as it is with the real ones." [He then showed me his books. They were all indexed alphabetically. First came the small characters under A—*Aladdin*; then came those in B—*Blue Beard, Battle of Waterloo* (of this nearly 10,000 had been printed), and *Bottle Imp*; under C were *Comus* and *Coriolanus*; under F was the *Forty Thieves*; under H, *the High-mettled Racer, Hamlet,* and *Harlequin Brilliant*; under I came *Ivanhoe*; under M the *Miller and His Men, Maid and the Magpie, Montrose,* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*; under O was the *Old Oak Chest* and *Olympic Revels*; under R, *Robinson Crusoe* and *Rob Roy*; and under T, *Timour the Tartar.* Then came the index of the scenes in the same plays, arranged in a similar manner, with the number of impressions attached.]

I remarked that he had printed a great many portraits of Mr. Bradley?[1] He said that gentleman was such a great favourite with the children—he made himself up so murderous looking—and then he was such a fine swordsman with T. P. Cooke,[2] you'd think they were going to kill one another. It was quite beautiful to see 'em—people used to go on purpose. He told me he had printed more portraits of Huntley, Bradley,

1. Thomas Bradley, d. 1829. 2. Thomas Potter Cooke, 1786–1864. [F.W.W.]

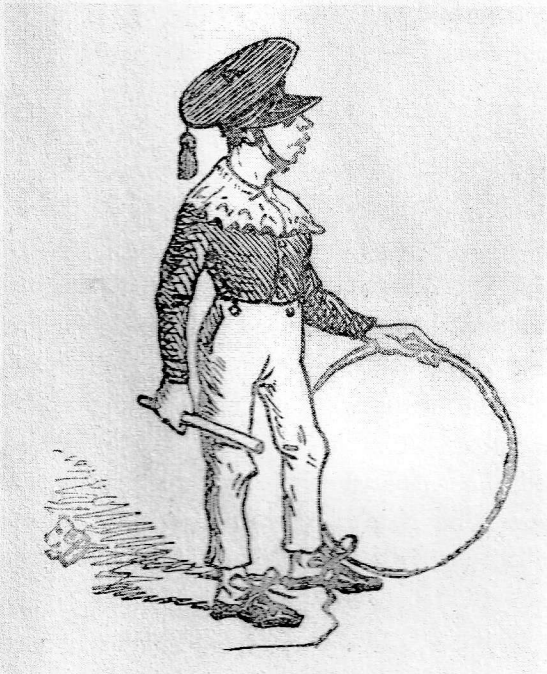
and Blanchard,[1] than of any other members of the theatrical profession—with the exception of Kean[2] in *Richard.* He hadn't done anything particular with the others. He had made upwards of 1,000 pantomime tricks. He was fond of doing them for the children. Now he has scarcely any call at all for them. This Christmas has been a little better—he didn't know why. He showed me also an account of the expense of making a toy theatre that he had made to be sent out to Australia. It was for the children of the Chief Judge there. He had made two for the same party. The second was the best, and came to £16 12s. 6½d. He told me that his receipts used to be in his best time as much as £30 a week for theatres and penny and twopenny plates of characters only. Now he only takes about 3s. 6d. or 4s. 6d. a day, or from £1 to £1 5s. a week.

1. Francis Huntley, 1787–1831; Thomas Blanchard. 2. Edmund Kean, 1787–1833, in Shakespeare's *Richard III.* [F.W.W.]

Characters and Scenes

By Edward Draper *

FIVE-AND-THIRTY years ago London-bred boys scarcely spent their time so pleasantly as their successors do now. Let us begin with the matter of costume. Without the aid of a pencil it would be difficult to indicate to the present youthful generation the absurd appearance presented by a boy in the full-dress of—let us say 1830. Here is a sketch which may answer the purpose.



It will be at once evident, that every article of this wretched child's attire is constructed with a view to his personal misery. Note well that ridiculous cap, with its circumference of cane, which, protruding, in

* Published in *The Savage Club Papers for 1868*, edited by Andrew Halliday, published by Tinsley Brothers, London, 1868, pp. 180–185. The illustration was drawn by E. C. Barnes. [F.W.W.]

fulness of time, will be drawn out to serve for purposes of castigation. Observe the Panjandrum button at the top, to which is affixed a silken braid, whence dangles a foolish tassel, which, inevitably attaining the miserable urchin's mouth, will give him experience of the flavour of silk and dye for the remainder of his days. Mark the exasperating japanned-leather chin-strap; also the maddening collar pinned in front. This latter will be constantly coming unfastened, and will then exhibit some half-yard of cambric, edged with an idiotic frill, streaming down his back. His skeleton suit of short-waisted jacket and thin "nankeens," buttoned outside, is purposely so contrived that he can only by dint of great trouble get into it or out of it. His shoes are tied with ribbons. Only fancy a parent calmly contemplating a big boy of his own with shoe-ties, and entertaining no sense of the absurd therein!

This poor boy was unhappy at school. Nicholas Nickleby had not as yet exploded the brutality of the pedagogue; and the scholastic system was of the simplest. The pupil's lessons were set him, and he was thrashed whenever unable to repeat them *verbatim,* without reference to his comprehension. He was indeed thrashed for every thing, from spilling a blot of ink to breaking a window. Sometimes a boy was thrashed simply for not having been thrashed. So it was with Jonkins. He was a very good boy, who learnt all his lessons, never blotted his copy-book, did all his sums, called out the names of his schoolfellows when they tried to talk in school-hours; never fought, and was the greatest sneak in the school. One day he was thus accosted by a big fellow: "Jonkins, you haven't been caned for some time. I think a hiding would do you good." He had it; and the aggressor was thrashed in his turn by the master.

But the London boy, as if to console him for his many miseries, had one source of supreme enjoyment. This was his theatre. The stage sometimes relieved even his school torments. One of his daily reading-lessons was usually taken from the drama, and at the Christmas breaking-up it was not at all unusual for the boys to play regular set pieces, with accessories of scenery and costume. An abridged version of *Richard the Third,* the scene between Arthur and Hubert in *King John,* and the farce of *Turning the Tables,* were in great favour on such occasions.

Moreover, nearly every boy had a toy-theatre, with its pasteboard characters and scenes, either his own, or joint property of himself and his "partner."

These "characters and scenes" must by no means be judged of by the wretched little sheets still occasionally exhibited in the windows of sweet-stuff shops in metropolitan alleys. In those days they were really artistic pictures. The chief publisher was one West, who kept a shop opposite the Olympic Theatre in Wych-street. His colouring was quite a marvel of effectiveness. The scenes were engraved by clever scene-painters, who designed and carried out many of the originals under the tasteful management of Madame Vestris, at the theatre across the road. The characters were etched by skilful artists, and were so well drawn that they frequently presented actual portraits of the performers. Karl, for instance, in the *Miller and his Men*, is still easily to be recognised as Liston; and the likeness is carried on throughout the various positions of the character. I have mentioned the colouring; it was often the work of the late William Heath, famous in his day as a water-colour painter and etcher. His caricatures and plates of military costume are still well remembered. There are yet extant entire sets of characters and scenes painted by the late celebrated John Varley, and by Alfred Cocking, the unfortunate artist who sacrificed his life to a craze about a novel form of parachute.

When the long evenings rendered out-door amusements impossible, the toy-theatre was the one absorbing delight of the boys; and very frequently of their fathers. To carry out a play, from the preliminary saving of the pocket-money to the purchase or construction of the theatre, the colouring, pasting down, and cutting out of the characters, and the final fruition in a stage performance on the parlour-table before an admiring party, was something really worthy of a boy's ambition. It had, moreover, the beneficial effect, beyond the mere exercise of ingenuity and industry, of practically familiarising him with form and colour. Probably many an artist of the present day first conceived a love for art from being taught the use of his colour-box upon characters and scenes. It is true, there were certain difficulties inseparable from a dramatic performance carried on through the medium of pasteboard.

In whatever attitude a character entered, he remained unalterable until his "exit," and when, as not unfrequently happened, he fell upon his face, he became instantly invisible except as an edge. But these small drawbacks only served to stimulate imagination.

An artist, now renowned as a sculptor and illustrator, perfected, when a lad, a wonderful representation of the *Miller and his Men.* The scenes were painted and the characters coloured, cut out, and spangled in a style of unparalleled magnificence. A grand performance was announced, and so great was the renown of the *mise-en-scène,* that a large audience of boys, at a penny per head, was collected in a corn-loft belonging to the father of the projector. Gunpowder and red fire were liberally provided to give effect to the explosion at the finale, stage-lamps were dangerously plentiful, and the performance proceeded with great *éclat* until a disaster occurred in the middle of the second act. The manager's papa, armed with a horsewhip, suddenly appeared above the ladder, and the catastrophe was supplied by a liberal thrashing bestowed with like goodwill upon the management and what actors call "the front of the house."

It may be wondered how an amusement so popular and so pleasing as the toy-theatre ever fell into decay. It was for this reason: certain speculative print-publishers suddenly filled the market with inferior productions at half the prices previously charged. The boys bought eagerly at first, but soon their instinctive tastes revolted at the miserable substitutes, while the original pictures seemed too dear. But the legitimate trade had been ruined. No boy of ordinary perception would now care to posses the wretched pictures supplied for the toy-stage. The boys, too, seemed to have lost, with their toy, the relish for dramatic entertainments. One now seldom sees a young fellow at the play, unless indeed at a broad burlesque. You may talk to a score before you can find one who can quote half a dozen lines of Shakespeare, or handle his pencils. Instead of the intellectual pleasures of the theatre, they resort to the less intellectual amusements of the music-hall.

Of course no one would pretend to hold forth the *Miller and his Men* as a highly intellectual play. The alphabet and spelling-book are not great works of literature, but they in like manner are means to an end.

It is now many years since poor West—the great publisher, if not the originator, of characters and scenes—finally closed his little dark shop, whence had emanated so much salutary amusement to the boys of a former age. A short time before his death he commenced selling off all his stock at ridiculously low prices. The poor old man could be heard gasping behind the simple screen which divided his death-bed from the public portion of his shop. There might then be hand, capitally drawn, and when coloured, gorgeous as summer flowers, engraved character-portraits of all the dramatic celebrities of a past generation; and these—we allude to the larger prints—were really good characteristic portraits; not, as now, mere outrageous idealised figures sprawled into impossible attitudes to fill all four corners of the sheet. The bright colouring of such series as *Blue Beard*, the *Elephant of Siam*, and the other Oriental plays, was specially wonderful. The "scenery" was unrivalled in its touch and picturesqueness. There were characters in the *Wild Boy* in which the free flowing lines of George Cruikshank could easily be traced, while those in *Tom and Jerry* were etched by Robert Cruikshank, who partially illustrated the original work. There were first-proofs coloured by the artist to guide the ordinary print colourer; and some of these were as brilliant as though the pencil of Heath had but just quitted them. The means by which the extraordinary brightness of West's colouring was obtained was a continual puzzle to the boys. Much was certainly due to daring apposition of colours; but, even granting this, there must have been some trade-secret in the preparation of the pigments. Shortly before West's death, the late Mr. Albert Smith, happening to pass along Wych-street, entered the shop and purchased a copy of every print then remaining on sale.

All the plates are now destroyed, and scarcely a character, scene, or theatrical portrait of West's exists save in the folios of collectors. The miserable prints now published in their place are, as works of art of interest, simply beneath notice.

"A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured"

By Robert Louis Stevenson *

THESE words will be familiar to all students of Skelt's Juvenile Drama. That national monument, after having changed its name to Park's, to Webb's, to Redington's, and last of all to Pollock's, has now become, for the most part, a memory. Some of its pillars, like Stonehenge, are still afoot, the rest clean vanished. It may be the Museum numbers a full set; and Mr. Ionides perhaps, or else her gracious Majesty, may boast their great collections; but to the plain private person they are become, like Raphaels, unattainable. I have, at different times, possessed *Aladdin, The Red Rover, The Blind Boy, The Old Oak Chest, The Wood Dæmon, Jack Sheppard, The Miller and his Men, Der Freischütz, The Smuggler, The Forest of Bondy, Robin Hood, The Waterman, Richard I., My Poll and my Partner Joe, The Inchcape Bell* (imperfect), and *Three-Fingered Jack, the Terror of Jamaica;* and I have assisted others in the illumination of *The Maid of the Inn* and *The Battle of Waterloo.* In this roll-call of stirring names you read the evidences of a happy childhood; and though not half of them are still to be procured of any living stationer, in the mind of their once happy owner all survive, kaleidoscopes of changing pictures, echoes of the past.

There stands, I fancy, to this day (but now how fallen!) a certain stationer's shop at a corner of the wide thoroughfare that joins the city of my childhood with the sea. When, upon any Saturday, we made a party to behold the ships, we passed that corner; and since in those days I loved a ship as a man loves Burgundy or daybreak, this of itself had been enough to hallow it. But there was more than that. In the Leith Walk window, all the year round, there stood displayed a theatre in working order, with a "forest set," a "combat," and a few "robbers carousing" in the slides; and below and about, dearer tenfold to me! the

* Originally published in *The Magazine of Art,* New Series, April 1884 (Vol. 7, Part 42), and reprinted in Stevenson's *Memories and Portraits,* published by Chatto and Windus, London, 1887 (Chapter 13, pp. 131–139). This most famous essay ever written on the subject of toy theatre or juvenile drama has subsequently been reprinted many times. This edition is based on the text as it appears in *Memories and Portraits.* [F.W.W.]

plays themselves, those budgets of romance, lay tumbled one upon another. Long and often have I lingered there with empty pockets. One figure, we shall say, was visible in the first plate of characters, bearded, pistol in hand, or drawing to his ear the clothyard arrow; I would spell the name: was it Macaire, or Long Tom Coffin, or Grindoff, 2d dress? O, how I would long to see the rest! how—if the name by chance were hidden—I would wonder in what play he figured, and what immortal legend justified his attitude and strange apparel! And then to go within, to announce yourself as an intending purchaser, and, closely watched, be suffered to undo those bundles and breathlessly devour those pages of gesticulating villains, epileptic combats, bosky forests, palaces and war-ships, frowning fortresses and prison vaults—it was a giddy joy. That shop, which was dark and smelt of Bibles, was a lodestone[1] rock for all that bore the name of boy. They could not pass it by, nor, having entered, leave it. It was a place besieged; the shopmen, like the Jews rebuilding Salem, had a double task. They kept us at the stick's end, frowned us down, snatched each play out of our hand ere we were trusted with another, and, incredible as it may sound, used to demand of us upon our entrance, like banditti, if we came with money or with empty hand. Old Mr. Smith himself, worn out with my eternal vacillation, once swept the treasures from before me, with the cry: "I do not believe, child, that you are an intending purchaser at all!" These were the dragons of the garden; but for such joys of paradise we could have faced the Terror of Jamaica himself. Every sheet we fingered was another lightning glance into obscure, delicious story; it was like wallowing in the raw stuff of story-books. I know nothing to compare with it save now and then in dreams, when I am privileged to read in certain unwrit stories of adventure, from which I awake to find the world all vanity. The *crux* of Buridan's donkey was as nothing to the uncertainty of the boy as he handled and lingered and doated on these bundles of delight; there was a physical pleasure in the sight and touch of them which he would jealously prolong; and when at length the deed was done, the play selected, and the impatient shopman had brushed the rest into the gray portfolio, and the boy was forth again, a little late

1. Spelled "loadstone." [F.W.W.]

for dinner, the lamps springing into light in the blue winter's even, and *The Miller,* or *The Rover,* or some kindred drama clutched against his side—on what gay feet he ran, and how he laughed aloud in exultation! I can hear that laughter still. Out of all the years of my life, I can recall but one home-coming to compare with these, and that was on the night when I brought back with me the *Arabian Entertainments* in the fat, old, double-columned volume with the prints. I was just well into the story of the Hunchback, I remember, when my clergyman-grandfather (a man we counted pretty stiff) came in behind me. I grew blind with terror. But instead of ordering the book away, he said he envied me. Ah, well he might!

The purchase and the first half-hour at home, that was the summit. Thenceforth the interest declined by little and little. The fable, as set forth in the play-book, proved to be not worthy of the scenes and characters: what fable would not? Such passages as: "Scene 6. The Hermitage. Night set scene. Place back of scene 1, No. 2, at back of stage and hermitage, Fig. 2, out of set piece, R. H. in a slanting direction"—such passages, I say, though very practical, are hardly to be called good reading. Indeed, as literature, these dramas did not much appeal to me. I forget the very outline of the plots. Of *The Blind Boy,* beyond the fact that he was a most injured prince and once, I think, abducted, I know nothing. And *The Old Oak Chest,* what was it all about? that proscript (1st dress), that prodigious number of banditti, that old woman with the broom, and the magnificent kitchen in the third act (was it in the third?)—they are all fallen in a deliquium, swim faintly in my brain, and mix and vanish.

I cannot deny that joy attended the illumination; nor can I quite forget that child who, wilfully foregoing pleasure, stoops to "twopence coloured." With crimson lake (hark to the sound of it—crimson lake!—the horns of elf-land are not richer on the ear)—with crimson lake and Prussian blue a certain purple is to be compounded which, for cloaks especially, Titian could not equal.

The latter colour with gamboge, a hated name although an exquisite pigment, supplied a green of such a savoury greenness that to-day my heart regrets it. Nor can I recall without a tender weakness the very

aspect of the water where I dipped my brush. Yes, there was pleasure in the painting. But when all was painted, it is needless to deny it, all was spoiled. You might, indeed, set up a scene or two to look at; but to cut the figures out was simply sacrilege; nor could any child twice court the tedium, the worry, and the long-drawn disenchantment of an actual performance. Two days after the purchase the honey had been sucked. Parents used to complain; they thought I wearied of my play. It was not so: no more than a person can be said to have wearied of his dinner when he leaves the bones and dishes; I had got the marrow of it and said grace.

Then was the time to turn to the back of the play-book and to study that enticing double file of names, where poetry, for the true child of Skelt, reigned happy and glorious like her Majesty the Queen. Much as I have travelled in these realms of gold, I have yet seen, upon that map or abstract, names of El Dorados that still haunt the ear of memory, and are still but names. *The Floating Beacon*—why was that denied me? or *The Wreck Ashore? Sixteen-String Jack* whom I did not even guess to be a highwayman, troubled me awake and haunted my slumbers; and there is one sequence of three from that enchanted calendar[1] that I still at times recall, like a loved verse of poetry: *Lodoiska, Silver Palace, Echo of Westminster Bridge.* Names, bare names, are surely more to children than we poor, grown-up, obliterated fools remember.

The name of Skelt itself has always seemed a part and parcel of the charm of his productions. It may be different with the rose, but the attraction of this paper drama sensibly declined when Webb had crept into the rubric: a poor cuckoo, flaunting in Skelt's nest. And now we have reached Pollock, sounding deeper gulfs. Indeed, this name of Skelt appears so stagey and piratic, that I will adopt it boldly to design these qualities. Skeltery, then, is a quality of much art. It is even to be found, with reverence be it said, among the works of nature. The stagey is its generic name; but it is an old, insular, home-bred staginess; not French, domestically British; not of to-day, but smacking of O. Smith, Fitzball, and the great age of melodrama: a peculiar fragrance haunting it; uttering its unimportant message in a tone of voice that has the charm

1. Spelled "calender." [F.W.W.]

of fresh antiquity. I will not insist upon the art of Skelt's purveyors. These wonderful characters that once so thrilled our soul with their bold attitude, array of deadly engines and incomparable costume, to-day look somewhat pallidly; the extreme hard favour of the heroine strikes me, I had almost said with pain; the villain's scowl no longer thrills me like a trumpet; and the scenes themselves, those once unparalleled landscapes, seem the efforts of a prentice hand. So much of fault we find; but on the other side the impartial critic rejoices to remark the presence of a great unity of gusto; of those direct clap-trap appeals, which a man is dead and buriable when he fails to answer; of the footlight glamour, the ready-made, bare-faced, transpontine picturesque, a thing not one with cold reality, but how much dearer to the mind!

The scenery of Skeltdom—or, shall we say, the kingdom of Transpontus?[1]—had a prevailing character. Whether it set forth Poland as in *The Blind Boy,* or Bohemia with *The Miller and his Men,* or Italy with *The Old Oak Chest,* still it was Transpontus. A botanist could tell it by the plants. The hollyhock was all pervasive, running wild in deserts; the dock was common, and the bending reed; and overshadowing these were poplar, palm, potato tree, and *Quercus Skeltica*—brave growths. The caves were all embowelled in the Surreyside formation; the soil was all betrodden by the light pump of T. P. Cooke. Skelt, to be sure, had yet another, an oriental string: he held the gorgeous east in fee; and in the new quarter of Hyères, say, in the garden of the Hotel des Iles d'Or, you may behold these blessed visions realised. But on these I will not dwell; they were an outwork; it was in the occidental scenery that Skelt was all himself. It had a strong flavour of England; it was a sort of indigestion of England and drop-scenes, and I am bound to say was charming. How the roads wander, how the castle sits upon the hill, how the sun eradiates from behind the cloud, and how the congregated clouds themselves up-roll, as stiff as bolsters! Here is the cottage interior, the usual first flat, with the cloak upon the nail, the rosaries of onions, the gun and powder-horn and corner-cupboard; here is the inn

1. From "transpontine," i.e., across the bridge, on the south side of the Thames, away from central London, where the theatre was considered broader and lower in tone. [F.W.W.]

(this drama must be nautical, I foresee Captain Luff and Bold Bob Bowsprit) with the red curtain, pipes, spittoons, and eight-day clock; and there again is that impressive dungeon with the chains, which was so dull to colour. England, the hedgerow elms, the thin brick houses, windmills, glimpses of the navigable Thames—England, when at last I came to visit it, was only Skelt made evident: to cross the border was, for the Scotsman, to come home to Skelt; there was the inn-sign and there the horse-trough, all foreshadowed in the faithful Skelt. If, at the ripe age of fourteen years, I bought a certain cudgel, got a friend to load it, and thenceforward walked the tame ways of the earth my own ideal, radiating pure romance—still I was but a puppet in the hand of Skelt; the original of that regretted bludgeon, and surely the antitype of all the bludgeon kind, greatly improved from Cruikshank, had adorned the hand of Jonathan Wild, pl. 1. "This is mastering me," as Whitman cries, upon some lesser provocation. What am I? what are life, art, letters, the world, but what my Skelt has made them? He stamped himself upon my immaturity. The world was plain before I knew him, a poor penny world; but soon it was all coloured with romance. If I go to the theatre to see a good old melodrama, 'tis but Skelt a little faded. If I visit a bold scene in nature, Skelt would have been bolder; there had been certainly a castle on that mountain, and the hollow tree—that set piece—I seem to miss it in the foreground. Indeed, out of this cut-and-dry, dull, swaggering, obtrusive, and infantile art, I seem to have learned the very spirit of my life's enjoyment; met there the shadows of the characters I was to read about and love in a late future; got the romance of *Der Freischütz* long ere I was to hear of Weber or the mighty Formes; acquired a gallery of scenes and characters with which, in the silent theatre of the brain, I might enact all novels and romances; and took from these rude cuts an enduring and transforming pleasure. Reader—and yourself?

A word of moral: it appears that B. Pollock, late J. Redington, No. 73 Hoxton Street, not only publishes twenty-three of these old stage favourites, but owns the necessary plates and displays a modest readiness to issue the other thirty-three. If you love art, folly, or the bright eyes of children, speed to Pollock's, or to Clarke's of Garrick

Street. In Pollock's list of publicanda I perceive a pair of my ancient aspirations: *Wreck Ashore* and *Sixteen-String Jack;* and I cherish the belief that when these shall see once more the light of day, B. Pollock will remember this apologist. But, indeed, I have a dream at times that is not all a dream. I seem to myself to wander in a ghostly street—E. W., I think, the postal district—close below the fool's-cap of St. Paul's, and yet within easy hearing of the echo of the Abbey bridge. There in a dim shop, low in the roof and smelling strong of glue and footlights, I find myself in quaking treaty with great Skelt himself, the aboriginal all dusty from the tomb. I buy, with what a choking heart—I buy them all, all but the pantomimes; I pay my mental money, and go forth; and lo! the packets are dust.

A Penny Plain: Twopence Coloured

By Godfrey Turner *

COLLECTORS know the difficulties which they have to encounter, and which vary in accordance with the nature of such things as they are accustomed to collect. For example, snuff-boxes, pipes, miniatures, swords, fans, rat-tail spoons, Paul Lamerie tankards, and console clocks of the best periods of French manufacture are hard to come by; but the obstacles to their acquisition are simple enough. All these things really are treasures, and in that word lies the sufficient explanation of their rarity. Old plate was valuable even when it was new plate, and so it had a good chance of being preserved, even through troublous times, when the cups and goblets on many a great man's buffet went to the melting-pot. The labour of collecting is most complicated where the objects have little or no intrinsic value, or where common and careless use has diminished the likelihood of their survival. Old Delf ware, a century ago or less, was looked on with contempt; nor was it probable that "the cat's dining-dish" would be carefully preserved for an age of nicer artistic valuation. Paste buckles, being set in silver, stood a better chance of being handed down through half-a-dozen generations; but where are the hats or shoes in which they were sometime worn? I have heard that one student of old habits and customs, Mr. Joseph Grego, has, with diligent pains and labour, succeeded in forming a fairly good historical collection of shoes and sandals; but imagine the difficulty! Again, it would be a far harder task to collect a score of tinder-boxes, such as were in use fifty years ago, with their proper supply of flint, steel, and matches, than to make up a sideboard-full of Queen Anne candlesticks. When we come to horn-books, primers, nursery-tales, and such destructible possessions of antiquated youth, we approach a class of subjects likely to daunt the spirit of the boldest collector.

Something akin to nursery literature of a past generation are those "characters" published, for the delectation of our little fathers and

* Published in *The Theatre*, edited by Clement Scott. New Series, Vol. VIII, October 1, 1886, pp. 177–182. [F.W.W.]

grandfathers, by Mr. West. how ignorantly have they been depreciated! How unjust, how foolish has been the scorn heaped upon that phrase, "A penny plain: twopence coloured"! I shall undertake to show, even by the adoption of a pretty high standard, that a collection of "West's Theatrical Portraits," would be not only curious in the dilettante sense, but worthy the critical heed of the artist and the amateur. To begin—there is the shop-advertisement, not the frontispiece, be it observed, for it contains the significant words, "Sold Here," which refers to the many sheets of scenes and characters that erst were supplied across the counters of dingy but delightful shops in Drury Lane. This shop-advertisement, never printed in any great number, is now exceedingly scarce. I have a copy before me, as indeed I am writing from a renewed acquaintance with the etchings, plain and coloured, that gave me so many happy hours when I was a boy. It is pleasant to see that all was not illusion; that there was true merit in what I admired, nay that, with all my love of these staring, exaggerated, conventional designs, I did not see half, nor a fiftieth part of half, their true artistic skill.

Who, does the reader suppose, drew that same shop-advertisement of "West's Theatrical Portraits"? I am able to tell him with positive certainty. It was William Blake.[1] A pair of Punchinellos are the supporters of a grotesque device on which the title is emblazoned, and over each of the drolls is a floating fairy-figure, touched with a dexterous and easy but by no means careless grace. In the background, half-hidden, is Harlequin, in Harlequin's most striking and characteristic attitude. Blake was one of West's most industrious limners. The monogram combining the two letters, W.B., appears again and again, on these penny sheets, that were twopence when coloured. But the mannerism of Blake is almost a sufficient signature; for remember, it was a signature in spite of itself, and was not likely to be obtruded. West's purpose was to subdue all these designs to one style, an ideal of his own. "West inv." is inscribed on the same plate, the shop-advertisement, with Blake's convoluted "W.B.: The enterprising publisher was evidently a man who knew what he meant. Round him were

1. William Blake drew theatrical character portraits for West, Hodgson, and Dyer; his initials are indeed convoluted, the 'W' being easily read but the 'B' stylized. [F. W. W.]

gathered all the best workmen he could find ready to do his bidding. Among them I have been able to identify hands as diverse—yet all brought as near as possible to one complexion of labour—as Flaxman, George and Robert Cruikshank, Finden, and the Heaths. It was William Heath who chiefly did the colouring, though he etched many of the figures; for instance, Miss Romer as Columbine is his, and, I think, one of his very best. In a simpler, and, if you please, a rougher way, it is not unworthy the flattering skill that made the fame and fortune of "Heath's Book of Beauty." Heath was the preceptor of Robert Nicholson, from whom in turn my friend, Edward Draper, derived the sure methodical touch, in humorous drawing, which he adds to natural insight and quick perception of facial character. I like to trace this genealogy of art back to the powerful if sometimes coarse and exaggerated figures and faces on West's theatrical sheets. In odd relationship thereto, I can scarce repress a smile when I think that Nicholson tried to teach Count D'Orsay drawing, and coached that good-natured cynic and amiable pretender to artistic ability in the design of certain statuettes, notably, the little bronze figure of Louis Napoleon, the model for which was made at Gore House. I have in my possession the original sketch in pencil even now. It is the unmistakable work of Nicholson, with all that artist's anatomical knowledge, and without a line that D'Orsay could for his life have drawn.

And now a word or two about the coloured characters. I appeal to every old boy who has painted and tinselled West's theatrical portraits, in the times of a school-day art now lost, to say truly whether he has not been overcome with despair of ever rivalling, by help of his sixpenny paint-box, the "professional" tone and brilliancy of the sheets that he bought ready coloured. He knew not the trick of it. They were sadly wanting in nuance, and even to his eye they may have had a flaring look. But for all that, their fascination was irresistible, and the boy need have felt no misgiving of his proneness to acknowledge the charm. Of a truth, the artists were unembarrassed by any refinements of theory such as influence the "Michael-Angelo-for-the-Million" school. West's workmen took the readiest means of pleasing the school-boy taste, they did nothing, I am sure, to degrade it. One favourite colour used by

William Heath was carmine, which the boys were never able to get. To heighten its brilliancy, he mixed it well with sugar, and thus prepared it was kept in a bottle. This and a blue, which to the educated eye in these æsthetic days may seem far too Reciketty, but which, nevertheless, is true Navy blue, and stands in admirable relation to black, are as vivid to-day as when they were first laid on in 1915, or from that to 1835, when tinselling was at its height. Gamboge[1] was also used, and this too was enriched with sugar, which gave it a fat unctuous depth very telling in shades of gold. In the use of all these colours, and of an inimitably ripe russet brown, generally applied to the coats of elderly or rustic persons, and the boots of unprincipled and bloodthirsty men, certain conventional and oft-repeated effects were produced which never palled. It was the nice apposition, like the seasoning of the kitten-pies mentioned by Mr. Samuel Weller, that "did it." There was little or no attempt at gradations, the black shadowing of the print, through the colour, serving for the indications of folds or rounded shapes and surfaces. In fact, nothing was attempted beyond the reach of ready means. Ducrow as St. George, Yates as the Red Rover, T. P. Cooke as Fid in the same piece, Martin the lion tamer, who preceded Van Amburgh by many years, these are all drawn on a large scale, and boldly coloured by Heath.

If these and smaller drawings are looked at, down to the little two-inch figures, meant to be cut out, stiffened on cardboard, and set on slides for the stages of toy theatres, a curious mingling melodramatic exaggeration and historical accuracy will be perceived. For instance, in the "Rob Roy" sheets, where some of the portraits are wonderfully animated and characteristic in their likeness and dramatic expression, there are allusions playful or grim, or both, to circumstances such as are mentioned in the notes of Sir Walter Scott; and in some fighting groups, where English soldiers with the musket and bayonet, are opposed at close quarters, as at Culloden, to Highlanders with the claymore and targe, a not to well-known historical fact is directly and vigourously depicted. At first, the bayonet thrust being directed full at

1. Gamboge, the name apparently deriving from "Cambodia," or "Camboja," is a pigment of a mustard-yellow color. [F. W. W.]

the swordsman, the latter met it with his targe, and dealt the swashing downward cut, so that for a time the Southerner had the worst of it. Afterwards the men were taught to depend each on his next comrade, who would divert the guard of the Highlander, while the bayonet-prod was delivered under the targe; and this is precisely what is being done in West's hand-to-hand engagements. I am not forgetful of the fact that George Cruikshank, while admitting that he did a few things for West, spoke of them as casual and unfrequent; but receipts with his signature, which were sold as curious autographs even in his life time, show that his work for West was regular and continuous for a period of at least two years. Once at least, and I know not how often the incident was repeated, he etched, in his rapid, vigourous manner, two plates, or sheets of characters, in one day. West paid his artists, all round, the sum of two pounds for each plate, if approved. This was the price received by Blake, Flaxman, and the rest. In 1824 a set of the characters in "The Miller and his Men" appeared in West's series; and it was so poor a performance that we need not wonder to see it followed next year by a new and vastly more spirited set. Evidently, West had thought it worth while to expend as much money over again as he had paid for the first, and to secure, this time, the aid of George Cruikshank. The uncoloured sheets, full of little figures, are, I confess, my favourites. Nothing could be better of its kind than the story of "The Bottle Imp," told in two plates. The likeness of Oxberry, the original Willibald, a part in which he was succeeded by Keeley, is a most humourous piece of suggested portraiture. Then there are the crowds of two-inch characters in "The Children of the Mist: and "Timour the Tartar," all admirable. I do not say that these, or "The Bottle Imp" characters, are George Cruikshank's work; indeed, I know that "Timour the Tartar" was Heath's. But by whomsoever these little figures were etched, whether Flaxman, Blake, Finden, either of the Heaths, or Crowquill—an elder artist, so styled, than the Mr. Forrester, who drew for Hone and Chambers, and who had nothing whatever to do with West or his theatrical portraits—I say, they are the most conscientious bits of work. Indeed, West took care they should be as good as the artists could make them. He insisted that everything should be drawn "from the front,"

and hence the reality of all the figures, even in their theatrical exaggeration. I recognise in many of the personages, even where the likeness was not strictly necessary, the faces of Oxberry, Wilkinson, Miss Boden, Jack Saunders, and ever so many more, I could only have seen as a child, permitted, all too soon, to go to the play. Many of West's character-sheets were published years before I was born. But others belonged to my time, and I am glad now that I loved them.

There came, anon, one Skelt,[1] whose theatrical sheets were sold at a lower price than West's—a halfpenny, instead of a penny. I know not whether this "competition," as it is called, was the cause of languishing and final cessation of West's designs; but they did languish and they did cease. I have called them etchings, a term which will perhaps be questioned nowadays; but etchings they were. Art in all its manifestations is worshipped by the English people; but it is worshipped more or less blindly, as by a race that worships some hazy idea beyond its reach, beyond its comprehension even. What we do mainly see, and touch, and comprehend in works of art is the fact that they are commercially expensive; or se think it "educational" to fabricate by hundreds of thousands at a price so marvellously cheap as to make them worthless, mechanical copies of original works. The "penny plain and twopence coloured: prints by West, which had original merit and copied or imitated nothing, have been ignorantly despised.

1. See West's own account, page 8. [F. W. W.]

The Best Theatre in London

*By Edward Edwardovitch **
(Edward Gordon Craig)

See this vision of delight. It is the shop where they make the Best Theatre in London.

It doesn't interest me today to explain why our West-end Theatre are not the best, and if you haven't found that out for yourself by this time let's hope you never will. To those who have found it out let me recommend Pollock's Theatre.

It is all very interesting and I hope to come back to it again some day, for there is much that is entertaining in the whole History of the Theatres made for Children. Here I can only touch upon one particular theatre, and that rather loosely.

The above picture shows you a shop window. The design is one of the scenes in a splendid Drama called "Harlequin Baron Munchausen, and his comical Cream Cob Cruiser, or the Queen of the Fairy Steed's haunt". Besides being a scene in a play it is an actual spot in London. Let us go there.

Where? Why, to Redington the Printer, Bookbinder, Stationer, Tobacconist, Jeweller and Theatrical Print Warehouse.

But what part of London? Let us look up an old directory, for the picture is not a new one and perhaps the "Adam and Eve" is gone.

In the old Directory we find Redington is at Hoxton Old Town, and that there is an "Adam and Eve" and that it is 209 Hoxton Old Town. So off we go to the Old Town tonight.

On getting out that way we are told by policeman Z 1 that the Town no longer exists, but that a street still exists and we can try that if we like.

* Published in *The Mask*, April 1912, pp. 54–59. "Edward Edwardovitch" was one of Edward Gordon Craig's many pseudonyms. Orthography and punctuation here follow as nearly as possible Craig's singular style and inconsistencies. [F.W.W.]

We try it. We search for 208 Hoxton Street. We find it. No Redington there. Everyone tells us it is gone. We ask and ask; no clue. We then ask for the "Adam and Eve", but it's now number 74", they tell us.

Off we go to number 74, and lo and behold, there stands the very public house, and there beside it is our Printer and Theatrical Printseller.

Then how is it that no one knew of Redington? . . . . Because Redington is no more, and his place is taken by Ben Pollock, one of the glories of Great Britain.

Let me explain how Ben Pollock came to be there.

Redington (1) the writer of the Juvenile Dramas was also the builder of the Theatres, the scene designer, the costumier, electrician, conductor; in fact he was ALL. Glorious old man! Yet so delightful was his occupation that many younger men and women were drawn towards his little magic shop and Redington allowed some of them to join him, . . . some to paint, some to cut, some to print, some to bespangle, some to build, some to look nice and make things look nice.

The one who excelled at this last art was little Miss Redington. She was so delightful that she turned the heads of one and all the young men who worked for her Papa. All the painters daubed; all the builders built crooked; all the cutters cut their fingers, . . . these latter on purpose that Miss Redington might bandage them with their own hands.

At last one passionate admirer, realizing that if this sort of thing went on much longer the ancient and noble art of Theatre making, cutting and colouring would die out, seized the Bull by the horns and demanded of Mr Redington the hand of his Daughter.

This man was Benjamin Pollock, the only surviving master of the great school of ancient Theatrical Art. He married pretty Miss Redington, and in time he changed the name of the magic shop from Redington to Pollock. He also changed the number. From 208 Hoxton

(1) There were not many makers of these Theatres in days gone by, but there was a famous man called Skelt, and one called Marks; one Jamieson, one West, one Hodgeson, one Park, one Lloyd, one Webb and one Green.

Old Town it became 73 Hoxton Street.

And there it is at this day. Anyone who wants to go and see it and who goes there will find the place exactly as it is shown in the picture on page 54. Except for the name, numbers, and the little Theatre hanging out as a sign board. The "Adam and Eve" is outside next door. I don't know if Mr Pollock objects to this, but you can ask him if you like. It was rebuilt about thirty five years ago so it's not the same old English place as shown in the picture, but they say that the same old Scotch whisky is to be found there.

Now that I've told you where and how to find the place I think I've done all that is possible to do. It would be useless my attempting to tell you what you will find there, except, as I say, the best Theatre in London. R. L. Stevenson attempted, and failed, to do the thing justice. Walter Pater even would not have succeeded. Perhaps Alexandre Dumas might have triumphed. But then Dumas did triumph, for his novels and this Theatre are part and parcel of one another.

But what I can do is to tell you the names of the Dramas to be obtained, the sizes of the stages, their prices, and then you can do the rest. And if I don't hear that many of the subscribers of The Mask have written to our old friend Pollock to despatch immediately his whole Repertory Theatre to them I shall begin to think that our subscribers are blind to their own interests.

And remember, *The Mask* never speaks well or ill of a thing because it *pays* to speak well or ill. We may not boast a journal of great commercial power, but possibly of another power still greater.

The names of Mr Pollock's dramas are as follows:

	Plain	Coloured
	s d	s d
Aladdin or the Wonderful Lamp	1 3	2 4
Blue Jackets	0 6	0 10
Brigands	0 10	1 6
Charles the Second	0 6	0 10
Children in the Wood	0 10	1 6
Cinderella	0 11	1 8
Corsican Brothers	0 8	1 2

Don Quixote	0 8	1 2
Daughter of the Regiment	0 8	0 8
Douglas	0 7	1 0
Forty Thieves	1 6	2 10
King Henry	0 7	1 0
Lord Darnley	0 9	1 4
Lord Mayor's Fool	0 6	0 10
Mistletoe Bough	0 9	1 4
Miller and His Men	1 0	1 10
Oliver Twist	1 1	2 0
Paul Clifford	1 1	2 0
Silver Palace	0 8	1 2
Timour the Tartar	0 11	1 8
Waterman	0 8	0 8
Woodman's Hut	0 10	1 6
Blind Boy	0 10	1 6
Maid and the Magpie	0 8	1 2
PANTOMIMES.		
Baron Munchausen	1 4	2 6
Jack the Giant Killer...	1 4	2 6
Whittington and his Cat	1 4	2 6
Sleeping Beauty	1 3	2 4

These prices are with Book of Words, Scenes, Figures and Directions Complete

Then the Theatres are made in two sizes, either fixed or to fold up when you want to pack them away, and, of course, to set them up you have to unfold them. They have glorious Prosceniums highly coloured, a place for lamps or electric lights, (if you are clever you'll put electric lights), and you can buy tin slides for all the figures. Here is the list of all these articles, and all are indispensable.

Stages. Size 6 x 8. (it's the scenes which are 6 x 8 so you'll order a 6 x 8 stage). Prices. 9d. 1/- . . . 1/6 . . . 2/- and 2/6

Size 12 x 9. Prices, 2/-, 2/6, 3/-, 3/6. 5/-.

Tin Slides. 3d, 6d and 1/- per dozen. You will want at least three or four dozen at 3d and 1/- per dozen.

Lamp. These are sold and look well, but I advise everyone to avoid oil and matches. Much better is it to purchase some of the very tiny electric bulbs. You can get them about a quarter of an inch long, and if you have your electrician to put a dozen such lamps on to some wires and fix the wire in an ever ready battery or torch you can light up

and turn out whenever you wish and the effect is charming.

The address of these ever-ready lamp people is 120 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.

Then besides these small lamps you had better get two small pocket lamps which act just like large lime lights. With these follow the star.

Now when you have obtained all these you have to cut out and paste a good deal. If you are lazy you can avoid this by sending to Pollock for scenes and figures already cut out and ready for working, but don't, I beg of you, unless absolutely necessary, for the sake of Great Britain cut them out yourself!

I went to Gammage's the great toy shop one day last year to buy one of Pollock's wonderful theatres. I came away disappointed. I cursed the reasons.

I was told that people didn't like "flimsy" English toy theatres and that the German were much cheaper and that as the German figures were all cut out and pasted on and had wires *fixed* to the figures "the trouble to the purchaser was reduced."

This made me pretty furious; and it seems to me after careful consideration that these British-made Theatres are every whit as cheap as the German things and a hundred times better; . . . and, what is evident, *better for* British purchasers.

The German things were without character, awful up-to-date vulgarities. I was so annoyed at not being able to find my old British friends at this representative British shop that I felt obliged to crave an interview with the Head of the Business.

I extracted no better answer from the great man. The fact that they were British made no appeal to him, and the fact that they were better stuff made less. Let us hope that this is not the incomprehensible kind of attitude for which shopkeepers get knighted nowadays.

So if you want Pollock's Theatres you had better write direct to Pollock at 73 Hoxton Street, London, N. And then you'll have the time of your life!

(1) The drama costs two shillings and four pence, scenes, costumes, actors and book of words complete.

NOTE

In the following pages is given a play from "Pollock's Juvenile Drama", "The Blue Jackets, or, His Majesty's Service. A Farce in one Act. Printed and Published", as the title page tells us, "by B. Pollock, 73 Hoxton St, N, at his wholesale and Retail Theatrical Print and Tinsel Warehouse."

When one speaks of a "Pollock Play", however, one must not entirely forget Pollock's predecessors from whom he has annexed several of his dramas, lock, stock, and barrel. Thus "The Battle of Waterloo" (one of the most brilliant of the "Pollock Plays" and one which should be in the nursery of every officer of the Realm) (1) was invented by Green in 1841, for Green's name is on the original blocks, and Pollock, like Ramases of Egypt, has merely erased Green's name from the monumental work and substituted his own.

In a way this is not quite as fair as Redington, who merely added his name to Green's work, and added it as "sold by J. Redington, etc.".

But some day someone will erase the great Pollock's name and substitute that of Smith. Let us hope it will not then be spelt SCHMIDT.

(Editor) *

* This Note was appended to the previous article. The Editor of *The Mask* is "John Semar," or rather Edward Gordon Craig himself, employing yet another of his pseudonyms. The text of the play "The Blue Jackets" is printed on pages 60–71, and one of the plates of characters of Pollock's "The Blue Jackets" is reproduced as a frontispiece to the issue. The punctuation and orthography in this transcription follow that of the original publication. The statement by the actress Ellen Terry (Craig's mother) appeared on page 3 of the same issue. [F.W.W.]

MISS ELLEN TERRY AND THE POLLOCK THEATRE

Miss Ellen Terry writes us as follows of Pollock's Toy Theatres, about which much will be found in the later part of this number of The Mask: . . .

I remember the little stages well and there is nothing quite like them. I had one when I was a child, when they were known as "Redington's Theatre."

I have no interest in the German Toy stages which today are sometimes offered us in place of the fine old English toys. They can't be in any way compared.

Ellen Terry.

The Webb Juvenile Drama

By H. E. Francis Eagle *
(Edward Gordon Craig)

Among the many publishers of Juvenile Drama and Theatrical Prints . . . . their number has exceeded thirty . . . . William George Webb was in many ways one of the most interesting. Born at Ripley, Surrey, in the year 1819 . . . . the posthumous son of a prosperous London Wool Merchant . . . . at the age of fourteen he was bound apprentice for seven years; "without wages, but with board lodging and washing" . . . . as the quaintly worded old document reads . . . . to another Juvenile Drama Publisher, Mr. A. Park, who then had a printing office in Leonard Street, Finsbury, London.

W. G. Webb was the only publisher of these prints who served an apprenticeship to the trade, and he sketched, engraved and printed his master's work. Later on, when he went into business on his own account at Bermondsey Street Borough he was the only member of the trade who combined these three capacities, as artist etcher, printer and publisher of his own Theatrical Portraits and characters and scenes for the Miniature plays.

In the trade 56 years altogether, W. G. Webb was the doyen of the Juvenile Drama publishers . . . . only two of whom sketched and engraved the work they issued, one Park, before mentioned, and the other his clever apprentice Webb who died in January 1889.

The Plays produced by W. G. Webb are second to none in Artistry and Craftsmanship and are of particular interest to this generation, inasmuch as they illustrate for us some of the fashions, fads and events, during part of the Victorian Era, ... as portrayed on the Stage . . . . that vivid mirror of the day, and were the last work of any importance issued in the Juvenile Drama.

* Published in *The Mask*, July 1913, pp. 347–352. "H. E. Francis Eagle" was one of Edward Gordon Craig's many pseudonyms. Orthography and punctuation here follow as nearly as possible Craig's singular style and inconsistencies. Craig employed the ellipsis in place of a dash. [F.W.W.]

The earlier work of Webb was contemporary with the later publications of Skelt, Park, Fairburn and Green, indeed some of Skelt's plays were sketched and engraved by Webb. This shows that R. L. Stevenson in his memoir "A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured" gives Skelt great praise for work that was not the production of his brain or hands; and with great injustice says: "It may be different with the rose, but the attraction of this paper drama sensibly declined when Webb had crept into the rubric: a poor cuckoo, flaunting in Skelt's nest." This article, when originally published, was illustrated with fifteen reproductions of prints, ascribed by Stevenson to Skelt, as a fact, fourteen of these are taken from original etchings by Webb . . . . the fifteenth, a cavern scene from the "Miller and his Men" was the only Skelt print reproduced. Skelt . . . . a prolific publisher . . . . was neither artist or engraver. Originally a shoemaker, he had his shop window filled with prints issued by the earlier publishers of plays, and, finding this side line more profitable . . . . we may assume . . . . than shoemaking and mending, drifted into the trade! There is more in this R. L. S. incident than meets the eye . . . . and if our editor desires, I will at a later date write the full story.

Webb's first play "The Forest of Bundy" was published in 1847, a fine production, . . . but a play that has been issued by at least two other publishers. The celebrated actor Buckstone made his first appearance in the year 1818 as Captain Aubrey in The Forest of Bundy.

The second play produced about 1848, was "Union Jack", a stirring drama telling of the early settlers in America; among the characters are "Kleas Klafferman", "Mordenbrenner" and "Diderich", the pirates, "Zarembo" the Kaffir Chief, and the hero "Union Jack".

Then followed in the order given: "Three Fingered Jack", a play mentioned by R. L. Stevenson, and I notice Mr. Jack B. Yeats[1] quotes from the book and refers to the play in the "Mask" for July. This play deals with the bygone slave trade in Jamaica.

1. Published in *The Mask*, July 1912. Jack B. Yeats created several elaborate colored toy theatre sets and scripts. Published by Elkin Mathews in London, these projects bear the unmistakeable stamp of Gordon Craig's typography, suggesting a close connection between Yeats and Craig. [F.W.W.]

After this, in 1852, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" . . . this was apparently taken from the first dramatisation of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, produced at one of the London Theatres. After this: "Robin Hood" & the Merry Men of Sherwood Forest."

This play is mentioned and the book quoted by R. L. S. in his memoir. Stevenson evidently considered it to be one of Skelt's plays. The error will be quite obvious when I point out that Webb was the only publisher of "Robin Hood" as a drama.

The next two plays: "The Battle of Alma" 1854. "Battle of Balaclava and Inkerman", are interesting, portraying the scenery and principal actors in these historic battles.

The book of "Balaclava and Inkerman" contains the old patriotic song "The Red White & Blue", also song "Partant pour la Syrie".

After this: "Guy Fawkes" a fine drama now unfortunately out of print.

"Dred or the Dismal Swamp" . . . another play dealing with the slave trade, and then the first Webb Pantomime: "Dame Crump and the Silver Penny, or Pig won't get over the Stile to-night", a clever piece of work in twenty five plates. Among the figures are some delightful caricatures and scene seven represents Webb's old shop demolished in 1898.

The book contains the doggrel verse quoted by Charles Dickens in one of his speeches . . . "Stick won't beat pig, and pig won't go home for me to cook my supper to-night."

Some of the drawings in his play are reminiscent of George Cruikshank's[1] style. It is interesting to note that Cruikshank made drawings for some of the plays issued by the earlier publishers. This pantomime was produced Christmas 1854, by Mr. John Douglass at The Standard Theatre, Shoreditch, now the Olympia Music Hall.

After "Dame Crump", "Paul Clifford, the Highwayman", taken from a dramatic version of Lord Lytton's novel.

After this: "Richard the First, or the Lion-Hearted King" A Musical

1. Spelled "Cruickshank" both times. [F.W.W.]

Drama in two acts. A play Stevenson possessed when a boy.

Next on the list: "Little Red Riding Hood and Prince Love the Day, or Queen Busy Been and the Fiend Wolf." A delightful Pantomime with some quaint characters and pretty scenery. The book contains that famous old clown song "Typitywichet". Date of publication about 1858.

Following this about 1861. . .2: "The Rifle Volunteers, or Form! Riflemen, Form!", a farce dealing with the inception of the Volunteer movement. The book contains song "Riflemen, Form!"

Next in order of publication: "The Brigand's Son" a very popular short play, and then came a masterpiece of the Juvenile Theatre, Webb's Pantomime "Jack and the Beanstalk, or the Pranks of the Good Little Fairies" in twenty seven delightful plates of characters and scenery. The book of this panto is lyrical and the "plot" excellent. The scenes picture the Twelve Months of the year, six scenes allow for the development of the story and the remainder give a rollicking and . . . at the time . . . topical harlequinade, concluding with a scene depicting "The Hall of Happy Old Christmas"; needless to say, the Fairies are all in force in this scene and our old friends, Clown, Pantaloon, Harlequin and Columbine, well to the front. The book contains a Clown song entitled "The Life of a Clown", this song I have not seen published elsewhere. As far as I have been able to ascertain this pantomime was originally produced at Drury Lane.

After this Webb's edition of that old favourite and much published melodrama "The Miller and His Men", purporting to be written by S. Pocock, but the history of its authorship is an oft told tale. In 1817, a poor plundered author, Lyons by name, brother of the first Mrs. H. Bishop, sent to Covent Garden a drama entitled the "Robbers of Bohemia".

In the course of a few weeks the manuscript was returned to him with a note stating, "Not adapted for the house". Some time after a new melodrama was announced at Covent Garden . . . "The Miller and his Men"; and in this piece, Lyons found the plot and characters of the "Robber of Bohemia." Webb's drawings were taken from the last

production of this play in London, at, I believe, the "Princesses Theatre", and differ in various details from older publications by Skelt, Lloyd, Green etc. Stevenson's favourite play was "The Miller and his Men".

Sir Henry Bishop, the celebrated composer, was present during a performance of Webb's "The Miller and his Men" on a miniature theatre and improvised some music appropriate to the movement of the paste-board figures. By request Sir Henry wrote the music down and the M. S. S. is now a much prized treasure of its fortunate possessor.

Next on our nearly ended list: "The Smuggler", a play mentioned by Stevenson, who described one of the scenes as "A sea and shore scape, delicately Skelty."

Then "Blue Beard, or Female Curiosity" a revised and considerably altered edition of Green's play of this name.

After this, Webb's last original published play "The Hunter of the Alps" a drama somewhat of the "Sunday School" order.

The remaining two plays on the list "Aladdin" and "The Maid and the Magpie" are reissues of two old Skelt plays with some alterations.

This is the full list of Webb's published plays. I am however informed by Mr. H. J. Webb, the present proprietor of this old established business, that a number of plays prepared by his father, the late W. G. Webb, were never published.

Before concluding, I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. H. J. Webb for much of the information, now published for the first time, in this little note and also to thank him for permission to reproduce some of the delightful prints he is still publishing in the same Old Street, but not, Alas! the quaint old shop . . . . wherein I purchased many as an eager boy. (1)

(1) For an account of some other Toy Theatres see "The Mask", July 1912.

Principal London Publishers of Toy Theatre and Penny Character Prints

(Dates in parentheses indicate dated prints that give the respective addresses.)

Allen, J.	"Opposite the Asylum, Westminster Road" (1822).
Arliss, John	35, Gutter Lane, Cheapside, Sold by O. Hodgson, Maiden Lane. *Generally lesser quality. Printed by woodcut and type.*
Bailey	13 Fetter Lane, Holborn.
Clarke, W. (est. 1821).	265 High Holborn.
Cole, W. (est. 1828).	10 Newgate Street. *Successor to Hodgson. Employed W. Park.*
Crawford	3 Dean Street, Holborn.
Creed, G.	Exeter Street, Strand (1820).
Creed & Slee	5 Artillery Lane, Bishopsgate.
De Bursen, R. M.	Theatrical Print Warehouse, Gray's Inn (1821). *Successor to W. Clarke.*
Dyer	33 Bath Street, City Road. 55 Bath Street.
Dyer Junr.	109 Aldersgate Street.
Dyer Senr.	109 Aldersgate Street (1829).
Fairburn, J.	110 Minories (1837). 40 Fetter Lane and 110 Minories. Minories and 44 Barbican. Minories. *John Fairburn. Generally high quality.*
Fairburn, John (est. 1837).	106 Minories. Minories and 44 Barbican. 44 Barbican.
Green, J. K.	33 Salisbury Place, Walworth New Town. 3 George Street, Walworth New Town. 34 Lambeth Square, New Cut.

	9 Thurlow Place, East Street, Walworth. *Generally high quality. Succeeded by Jameson. Pirated some prints by West.*
Hebberd, Mrs. M.	2 Upper Carlton Street, Marylebone. *Also spelled Hibberd. Sold prints by W. West.*
Hodgson & Co. (1811).	11 Cloth Fair (or Clothfair). 10 Clothfair, West Smithfield. 10 Newgate Street (1822–1823).
Hodgson, O.	10 Cloth Fair (1831). 10 Cloth Fair and 118 Fleet Street. Maiden Lane. 22 Macclesfield Street, City Road. *Orlando Hodgson. Generally high quality. Dated most prints.*
Hodgson, Orlando (est. 1811)	10 Cloth Fair (1832–1835). 132 Fleet Street.
Hodgson	110 Fleet Street (and Turner and Fisher, New York and Philadelphia). *Printed for export to America, without names of actors.*
Hook, C. (1820).	35 Windmill Street, Tottenham Court Road.
Jameson, I.	13 Duke's Court, Bow Street (1816–1822). *I. is an initial J. and this publisher is identical to H. J. Jameson. Dated most prints.*
Jameson, J. H. (est. 1811).	13 Duke's Court, Bow Street (1813–1820).
Johnson, W. S.	60 St. Martin's Lane.
Johnson, W. B.	St. Martin's Lane.
Layton, W. T. (est. 1820).	10 Petty's Court, Oxford Street.
Lloyd, R.	Juvenile Dramatic Repository, 40 Gibson Street, "near the Coburg Theatre." Juvenile Dramatic Repository, 42 Gibson Street. Theatrical Print Warehouse, 40 Gibson Street, "near the Coburg Theatre."
Marks, I. L.	23 Russell Court, Drury Lane. *I. is an initial J. and this publisher is identical to J. L. Marks.*

Marks, J. L. (est. 1838).	91 Long Lane, Smithfield (1838). 17 Artillery Street, Bishopsgate. 23 Russell Court, Drury Lane.
Matthews, H. (est. 1887).	Churchfield Road, Acton.
Park, A.	17 Leonard Street, Tabernacle Walk. 47 Leonard Street. 47 Leonard Street, Finsbury (1848). *Mostly printed by lithography. Usually did not date prints.*
Park, W.	47 Leonard Street, Finsbury.
Park, A. & Golding, J.	6, Old Street Road, City Road, and 61, Oakley Street, Lambeth. *Also Park & Goulding. The name Goulding, which appears on some early prints, seems to be a misspelling.*
Pitts (est. 1809)	Printer and Toy Warehouse, Great Street, Andrew Street, Seven Dials. *Generally lesser quality. Printed by woodcut and type.*
Pollock, B. (est. 1877)	73 Hoxton Street, Hoxton. *Benjamin Pollock. Successor to J. Redington. Generally lesser quality. Mostly printed by lithography. Did not date prints.*
Redington, J. (est. 1838).	208 Hoxton Old Town. 73 Hoxton Street, "formerly called 208 Hoxton Old Town." *Successor to J. K. Green and Crawford. Generally high quality. Did not date prints.*
Skelt, M. (est. 1830)	11 Swan Street, Minories. *Publisher of halfpenny prints. Generally lesser quality. Successor to R. Lloyd. Employed W. G. Webb. Did not date prints.*
Skelt, M. and M.	11 Swan Street, Minories.
Skelt, M. and B.	11 Swan Street, Minories.
Skelt, E.	11 Swan Street, Minories.
Smart, J.	35 Rathbone Place, Oxford Street (1821).
Spencer, J. (est. 1815).	63 East Street, Manchester Square.

Stokes, Mrs. S. (est. 1832).	57 Wych Street. *Successor to W. West.*
Webb, W. G. (est. 1838).	Ripley, Surrey. Cloth Fair. Bermondsey Street. 49 Old Street, St. Luke's. 146 Old Street, St. Luke's. *William G. Webb. Apprentice to M. Skelt. Mostly printed by lithography. Did not date prints.*
Webb, H. J. (est. 1890).	146 Old Street, St. Luke's. 124 Old Street, St. Luke's. *Successor to W. G. Webb, his father.*
Webb, W. C.	19 Cloth Fair, West Smithfield (1843–1844).
Webb, W.	146 Old Street, St. Luke's. *Successor to J. Redington. Mostly printed by lithography.*
Webb.	75 Central St., St. Luke's.
West, W. (est. 1811).	Exeter House, Exeter Street, Strand. Theatrical Print Warehouse, 57 Wych Street, Strand, "Opposite the Olympic Theatre, Strand." (1813–1831). *William West. Inventor of penny portrait prints and toy theatre sheets. Generally high quality. Succeeded by S. Stokes. Dated most prints.*
Wood, J. T.	278 Strand.