of acting in winter) was erected about the year 1594. But between 1570 and 1600, there arose eleven buildings, if not more, in or about London, applied to the purpose of dra­matic exhibitions. Several of these were always obscure, but others possess interest, on account of the merit of the works produced on their stages. The Globe and Blackfriars always maintained the first rank, and continued in the possession of the company called the Queen’s Players ; Pa­ris-Garden, an old building, was used both for stage-play­ing and bear-baiting ; and the Rose, built about 1585, and the Fortune, in 1599, were especially under the control of the pawnbroker Philip Henslowe, whose manuscript diary is one of the most instructive documents which we possess relating to the dramatic history of that age. An attempt of the government in 1598 to limit the license of playing in London to two companies, bearing the names of the Lord Chamberlain and Lord Admiral, seems to have been com­pletely unsuccessful. In the reign of James, the Globe and Fortune were successively burnt, but both rebuilt ; and no new theatre of consequence was erected except the Phoenix or Cockpit in Drury Lane, and the Red Bull in Saint John Street, if indeed the latter was not somewhat older.

In the same reign the principal companies of players were three. Those who obtained the royal patent of 1603, at the head of whom stood Shakspeare, Burbadge, and Laurence Fletcher, had been recently called the Lord Chamberlain’s men, but now resumed their older title of the King’s Play­ers or Servants. The company at first named Players of the Lord Admiral (or of the Earl of Nottingham, who held that office) were afterwards called the Players of Prince Henry : these were the actors especially connected with Henslowe ; and his celebrated son-in-law Edward Alleyn, the founder of Dulwich College, was the most distinguished among them. Those actors who had formerly been called Children of the Chapel, but of whom many were persons of mature age, were now called Children of the Revels, and appear frequently in connection with Ben Jonson’s works.

James had passed an act against profanity in plays : his son passed one, the first of his reign, against the acting of them on Sundays, an impropriety which it had been formerly at­tempted to remove, and which the growing spirit of puri- tanism regarded with increasing horror. But Charles, whose taste for literature and art was the best feature in his character, was a liberal and judicious patron of the theatre during those few early years of his reign that pre­ceded the disturbances. In the same year as the act last named (1625), he renewed his father’s patent to the “ King’s Players,” in favour of Heminge and Condell, Shakspeare’s executors, and others; annexing a condition which we find often insisted on in regard to dramatic exhibitions in those days, that no performance should take place in London un­less the persons infected by the plague fell short of a cer­tain number in the week. About 1635 there were in the metropolis, besides a French troop and a Spanish, five set­tled companies of English players ;—the King’s Servants, under Lowin and Taylor, who played, as of old, at the Globe and Blackfriars ;—the Queen’s, who played at the Cockpit ;—the Prince’s men, at the Fortune ;—the Children of the Revels, probably at the Red Bull ;—and the company attached to a new theatre in Salisbury Court. The civil war broke out in 1642 ; and in September of that year an “ ordinance of both houses of parliament,” setting forth the necessity of fasting and prayer, and of all other means “ to appease and avert the wrath of God appearing in these judgments,” ordained that, “ while these sad causes and set times of humiliation do continue, public stage-plays shall cease and be forborne.” In 1647 a more peremptory act declared stage-players punishable by public whipping for the first offence, and authorized the demolition of the theatres. And for nearly ten years from that time we hear of only one or two unimportant infractions of the prohibition.

During those early ages of our dramatic annals, which the civil wars thus brought to a close, the theatres were divided into two classes, the Public and the Private, the dis­tinctions of which are not yet very clear, and do not seem to have been ever very important. The private theatres, it is said by Mr Collier, were smaller than the others, and were entirely roofed over, which the latter were not ; the perform­ances in them were by artificial light ; their “ pits” had seats ; and there were other minor differences of arrangement. The Blackfriars, the Cockpit, and the house in Salisbury Court, were private theatres ; the Globe, Fortune, and Bull, were public. There has been loud controversy on the question whether moveable scenery was at all used in the time of Shakspeare; but it may be considered as having been authoritatively settled in the negative. There was a balcony or upper stage, which served, on multifarious occa­sions, the purposes of a second scene, representing the walls of a town in King John and elsewhere,—-Juliet’s balcony,— or the seat of the audience at the performance of the play in Hamlet, in which the player-king and queen occupied the front of the main stage. Besides the curtain which con­cealed this balcony when it was not required, other cur­tains, called traverses, crossing the back of the stage, served to separate a portion, which, by drawing these partly or wholly, could be made to pass for an inner room. There is good evidence of the use of trap-doors in the stage ; and descents from above were also attempted, as in Greene’s Alphonsus, a play older than most of Shakspeare’s, in which one direction was this—“ let Venus be let down from the top of the stage and another, in the same play, orders that Venus shall either simply make her exit, “ or, if you can conveniently, let a chair come down from the top of the stage and draw her up.” The performances, in Shak­speare’s time, took place but once a day ; the usual hour seems to have been three o’clock ; and nothing except the short and rude pieces called jigs seems to have been ex­hibited besides the principal play. There were play-bills pasted up in the streets as early at least as the middle of the sixteenth century ; and in 1620 a royal patent was granted for the printing of them. The purchases which theatrical companies made from authors seem to have been understood as comprehending, not merely the right of re­presenting the pieces, but the entire copyright ; and the care of the players to keep popular pieces in manuscript was one of the causes especially destructive to the drama­tic literature of those times. Before the year 1600, Hens­lowe, whose loans had made most of the dramatists of the time his bond-slaves, seems never to have paid an author more than eight pounds for a play ; and even authors of repu­tation, such as Dekker, sometimes received much less. But the value of literary labour rose in the beginning of the next century, and we then find even inferior writers, like Daborne, stipulating for sums as high as twenty pounds. The usual price, however, till the closing of the theatres, was about twelve pounds, to which were sometimes added the receipts, in whole or in part, of one of the early perform­ances. The actors were divided into two classes : the Shareholders, who were joint proprietors of the establish­ment, and ranked according to the amount of their interest, as whole sharers, three-quarter sharers, or half sharers ; and the Hired Men, who were the inferior actors, receiving weekly salaries from the sharers. In 1608, when the cor­poration contemplated removing the players of the Black­friars, but proposed giving them compensation for the loss of their property and employment, a statement was pro­duced which gives some curious results. It appears that the whole interest in the profits of the establishment was di­vided into twenty shares, which belonged to eleven actors. Burbadge owned the building and four of the shares ; Shakspeare owned four shares, with the wardrobe and pro­perties ; Fletcher had three shares ; Heminge and Condell