two shares each; Taylor and Lowin a share and half each ; and four others parted the remaining two shares equally among tl>em. Each share was valued at L.33. 6s. 8d. per annum, and was offered to the corporation at seven years’ purchase : the building was valued at L.1000, the ward­robe and properties at L.500. The whole property was thus estimated by the players themselves at L.6166. 13s. 4d., besides compensation demanded by the hired men, and allowances to the widows and orphans of deceased players. Shakspeare’s interest was valued by him at L.1433. fis. 8d., which might be equal to between L.6000 and L.7000 in modern money. All these valuations, however, must have been above the truth.1

The representation of Sir William Davenant’s Siege of Rhodes, in 1656, was the first step towards a revival of theatrical amusements; and three years later, two rival companies began to act openly in London, the one at the Cockpit, the other at the Red Bull. The former, originally organized by one Rhodes, a bookseller, was composed chiefly of new actors, among whom the best, Betterton and Kynaston, were youths who had been his own apprentices ; the latter embraced those old actors who had survived the wars, in which several of them had served with some dis­tinction. Two royal patents (the origin of the modem mo­nopoly) were issued in 1663. The one was in favour of Deve­nant, who placed himself at the head of Rhodes’s players, and acted for some time at a new house in Lincoln’s Inn Fields, calling his company the Duke of York’s, though they were sworn in as servants of the king. The other patent was given to the witty Killigrew, whose actors, called the King’s Company, were those who had begun to play at the Red Bull, but who were removed to a new theatre built in Drury Lane. The new companies pre­sented one remarkable novelty, in the accession of several females to their number. Before the Restoration, the fe­male parts had been performed by the younger male actors ; and the only instance in which an innovation had been tried was in 1629, when a French company appeared at the Blackfriars, consisting partly of women, or, as Prynne is pleased to express it, “ monsters rather”—“ an impudent, shameful, unwomanish, graceless, if not more than mere­tricious attempt.” Those who looked on the matter in a more candid and philosophical temper, might not unreason­ably have expected that the introduction of actresses to the stage would have helped to purify it from that coarse­ness which had disfigured the drama in its preceding ages. But after the Restoration, the players, the public at large, and the court, which gave law to the public and the players, were all alike corrupt ; and if the new addition did nothing to deteriorate, it did at all events nothing to retard the in­creasing degradation. That which, in most of the dramas produced in Elizabeth’s reign, had been merely coarseness of language, had been accompanied in very many of the later plays with real licentiousness of principle and feeling; and the profligacy of Charles the Second and his minions was now aped with applause in works full of the most dis­gusting and disgraceful obscenity. The injury which mo­rality received from the stage was accompanied by injury to taste, inflicted not only by that undramatic spirit which pervaded the very best works of the time, but by the pomp of decoration, the singing, music, and dancing, by which Da- venant sought to make his theatre a match for the superior histrionic skill displayed by his rivals. The licentiousness was greatly amended after the Revolution, but the corrup­tion of taste gave way much more slowly.

In 1671 the Duke’s players opened a new theatre in Dorset Gardens, probably on the site of the old house in Salisbury Court; and in 1674 the King’s players opened a second new theatre in Drury Lane, in the place of their former one, which had been burned down. A union of the two patents, and of both companies, produced discon­tents both among the actors and the public ; and a new patent having been granted by King William to Betterton and some of the rebellious players, a third theatre was built by them in Lincoln’s Inn Fields, for which was afterwards substituted a splendid but ill-designed house in the Hay­market, planned by Sir John Vanbrugh, and opened in 1705. In the mean time, various disputes and misfortunes happened among the old patentees. The interference of the Lord Chamberlain, whom, as coming in the place of the Master of the Revels, the actors and the public some­times considered as having exclusive jurisdiction over the playhouses, while at other times the managers voluntarily submitted their disputes to his arbitration, was repeatedly exerted, and often very arbitrarily, to restore something like order and prosperity ; and at length matters were placed for a time on a footing not materially different from the modern one. The theatre in the Haymarket was appro­priated solely to the opera; and the two old patents of Charles the Second were the warrant under which the re­gular drama was played at Drury Lane by a company acting under Killigrew’s patent, and at the theatre in Lincoln’s Inn Fields (once more rebuilt) by a company directed by the younger Rich, the holder of the patent which had been granted to Davenant. At Drury Lane, plays which, how­ever indifferent, were the best the age could produce, or the public endure, were acted with excellent skill by a com­pany directed by the first actors of the day, Wilks, Dogget, Booth, and Cibber, with whom, for a good many years, Sir Richard Steele was associated in the patent. At Lincoln’s Inn Fields were produced those execrable abortions called pantomimes, on which the manager Rich prided himself so much, and whose scenery and drolleries gained for his house a popularity which he probably thought cheaply purchased by the ridicule showered on him without ceasing by the wits of Queen Anne’s reign.

In 1720 there arose new quarrels, new financial embar­rassments, and new interferences and prohibitions by the Lord Chamberlain ; but of the events which took place for many years, two or three only demand notice. The first was the opening, in 1729, of a new theatre in Goodman’s Fields, rebuilt in 1732, which did not for some time obtain such success as to tempt the patentees to suppress it. Λ second occurrence was the transfer of Rich’s company, in 1733, to a new house in Covent Garden. In 1737 there was passed, in spite of energetic and well-founded opposition, an act of parliament, taking from the crown the right of granting any new patents for theatres in the metropolis, and forbidding the representation of any plays not previously licensed by the Lord Chamberlain. In 1741 Garrick appeared at Gcβd∙ man’s Fields, in the character of Richard the Third.

In 1747 the patent of Drury Lane was renewed in fa­vour of Lacey, who was to be the man of business of the establishment, and Garrick, who was to support it both as actor and author. Under the direction of these managers the theatre enjoyed uninterrupted prosperity’ for nineteen years ; and, however faulty Garrick's ideas of the literary qualities of the drama may in some respects have been, we owe him a heavy debt of gratitude for the benefits he con­ferred on public taste by his restoration of Shakspeare’s works to that place on the stage from which they had been banished with equal constancy by the debauchery of Charles the Second’s time, and the pedantic coldness of Queen Anne’s. In the mean time, after the death of Rich in 1761, Covent Garden was chiefly supported by its musical pieces ; and the new management, begun in 1767, at the head of

, For the history of the theatres till their suppression in the civil wars, see Collier’» Annals of the Stage, 3 vols. 1831 ; and Malone's His­tory of the Stage, in his posthumous Shakspeare of 1821.