

The library was publicly inaugurated and opened in June, 1881, by the widow of Lord Russell, whom we have mentioned as residing in Richmond Park. A bust of the earl himself looks down upon the readers as they sit poring over the books of reference, history, travels, and biography; and a medallion of Lord Beaconsfield on another wall serves to remind them that literary toilers of all and every shade of politics are equally welcome. In the interior all the various

library.\* It certainly is one of which the good people of Richmond may well feel proud. That they appreciate it is proved by the fact that in proportion to the population of the town the Richmond Library can boast of a larger issue of books and attendance than any other library in the kingdom, the issue averaging 350, and the readers in the news-rooms over 1,200 daily.

At the north-west corner is the theatre, built in 1766, under the superintendence of Garrick, by



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departments have been furnished with the latest approved fittings and appliances. An indicator, the invention of the librarian, Mr. A. Cotgreave, and now used in many public and private libraries, shows at a glance what books are in or out, saving much time and trouble both to the borrowers and the staff. This ingenious contrivance reveals in a moment the dates of issue and return of each book borrowed, the several persons who have borrowed it, the books taken out by every borrower, and those overdue; so that Professor Stanley Jevons was scarcely guilty of any exaggeration when, in speaking of the *rationale* of Free Libraries in his Essay on "Methods of Social Reform," he called this place "the beautiful little

Mr. Horne, for his relation, James Dance, the celebrated Falstaff of his day, who played under the name of Love. Quick, Mrs. Jordan, Mrs. Siddons, Kean, and many other celebrated actors, have performed here. George III., when living at Kew, sometimes honoured this theatre with his presence. It was here that Charles Mathews the elder made his *début* as an actor, in September, 1793, in the character of "Richmond" in *Richard III.* Edmund Kean—the greatest of our tragic actors since the days of Garrick—in his later years was lessee of this theatre, and it was in a small room attached to it that the great actor died.

\* See *Contemporary Review*, March, 1881.