

was the best amateur then extant." He had little means of bearing part in the expenses, yet the *leading characters* were assigned to him at a private theatre then existing in Lamb's Conduit Street: this is an extraordinary fact when the reader is told that in these places he who pays the highest price (*maigre* his incapability) has the right of playing first-rate parts. Mr. Roach, an old theatrical bookseller, who lived many years in the court running from Brydges Street to Drury Lane, often spoke of Kean's acting "Richard" in his (Roach's) garret, with a Scotch lassie for his Lady Anne; her *patois* was a terrible grievance to little Kean, who was teaching her English, and mimicking her Scotch from morning to night. In requital for his initiating her into the mysteries of the vulgar tongue, he made her teach him the dialect of Sir Pertinax Macsycophant, a part in which he appeared for a few nights at Drury towards the close of his career. I think it was considered to be a failure by his best friends.

In the year 1833 Edmund Kean was engaged at Drury, and played "Othello" to Macready's "Iago." He had promised to play "Iago" also, and had a new dress made for it. About this time he had the Richmond Theatre, and played there three nights per week. For his last benefit he acted there "Penruddock" and "Paul." Being in embarrassed circumstances, he requested a loan of £500; this, it was said, the management of Drury Lane hesitated to advance, and he engaged himself at Covent Garden. On the 25th March, 1833, he appeared as "Othello"; "Iago," Mr. Charles Kean; "Cassio," Mr. Abbott; "Desdemona," Miss Ellen Tree. The elder Kean came to the theatre in company with Mr. John Lee and Dr. Douchez; it was with difficulty he made up for the character, the nauseous process of browning his face occasioning sickness. He went languidly through the first two acts, but rallied in the third; he spoke the "Farewell" exquisitely, but at the passage—"Villain! be sure thou prov'st my love," &c., his energy failed him; he essayed to proceed, and then sank on the shoulder of his son. Mr. Payne, who played "Ludovico," came on, and, with Mr. C. Kean, assisted the great actor from the stage, which he never again trod. It was singular that he should end his career in the arms of his son, and that that son's future wife should be "Desdemona." He was taken to the "Wrekin Tavern," Broad Court, too weak to even bear the operation of having the paint removed. In a few days he sufficiently recovered to go to Richmond; here he was sedulously attended by Mrs. Tidswell, said to be his aunt. Mr. Lee, Mr. Hughes, and

Dr. Douchez, were constantly with him. He flattered himself that he was recovering, commenced studying "Master Walter," and was underlined for it at the Haymarket, but his memory had gone for ever. On the 15th May, 1833, he expired. Kean did not know his birthday; though he kept it on the 17th of March, many of his early friends affirm that he was born in November. The year, as well as day, is doubtful. Kean himself said 1787. Mrs. Carey, who claimed to be his mother, died in the same week in the same house.

"On the 25th of March in this year" (1833), writes Mr. J. R. Planché, in his "Recollections," "I had witnessed at Covent Garden the closing scene of a great genius. I was present at the last performance of Edmund Kean. He acted 'Othello' to the 'Iago' of his son Charles. In the third act, having delivered the fine speech terminating with, 'Farewell; Othello's occupation's gone!' with undiminished expression, and, having seized 'Iago' by the throat with a tiger-like spring, he had scarcely uttered the words 'Villain, be sure!' when his voice died away in inarticulate murmurs, his head sank on his son's breast, and the curtain fell, never to rise again upon that marvellous tragedian. He expired at Richmond on the 15th of May following."

The above-mentioned mystery about the parentage of Edmund Kean is thus solved by a writer in *Notes and Queries*:—"The descent of Edmund Kean from the great Lord Halifax is well known. The latter left an illegitimate son, who, as Henry Carey, became famous as the author of operas, ballads, and pantomimes. His lyric, 'Sally in our Alley,' is still held in estimation. The authorship of 'God save the King' is also assigned to him, but upon no very satisfactory evidence. To Henry Carey was born a son, George Savile Carey, who chose the stage for a profession, and, in conjunction with Moses Kean, delivered imitations of popular actors, and a series of lectures upon mimicry. This Carey had a daughter Nancy, from whose intimacy with Edmund, the brother of her father's theatrical partner, resulted the birth of the tragedian. At his first appearance at Sadler's Wells, in June, 1801, he is described in the bills as Master Carey."

Richmond has been the home of other actors besides Edmund Kean.

There George Colman the younger was living in 1797, and from his house here he addressed the following humorous invitation to dinner to a friend: it is given by Mr. Planché, in his "Recollections"—