

- DL Manners and Moral: It's often acted now a daies, and by the help of the Author's own good action, it pleases to this Day.
- Monday 13 YB CONCERT. Mr Purcel's Farewel, set by Mr Finger, with other variety of Musick (*Post Boy*, 9 Jan. 1695/6).
- Tuesday 21 COMMENT. Robert Shirley to Thomas Coke, Chartly, 21 Jan. 1695/6: I must agree with you that Wit and Sense seem this winter to have suffered an eclipse, and the dramatic writers more especially have showed how little they consulted either. I do assure you, I have not of late met with more of both than in your ingenious diverting letter to me, so that I am satisfied Wit is not retired out of town, but has only forsaken the stage. We that live in these northern parts are forced to range over fields and woods to find subjects of diversion, for in the frozen season of the year, there is nothing that is more so in the country than conversation. In my last ramble, either my own innate fancy, or the aversion I had to see such plays wrote in English as would hardly bear the reading, made me imagine I met with one of the Muses that had left the town, and by her discourse seemed to be Patroness of Dramatic Poetry. You know, Sir, to meet with a Nymph in the desert was no rarity in some countries heretofore, but yet I vow and swear between us, I asked her the occasion of her leaving the town, to which she made this sudden answer:

*Neglected Wit is silent at a time
When puns, or bombast, stuff each doggrill rhyme.
In comic strain when they'd describe a fool,
The author proves the only ridicule.
In tragic verse while others fain would boast,
Landing some thousand Romans on the coast,
In what they would express themselves are lost,
Make Romans cowards, and make English great,
And make Bonduca valiant, to be beat.
Would Congreve or would Blackmoor now engage,
They might with manly thoughts reform the stage:*

. . . As for Mr Southern's play, I have not yet seen it, so that I cannot at present give you my thoughts on it (HMC, 12th Report, Appendix, Part II, Cowper MSS., II, 359-60).

Thursday 30

A FAST DAY FOR THE MARTYRDOM OF CHARLES I

February 1696

- LIF THE HUSBAND HIS OWN CUCKOLD. [By John Dryden Jr.] Edition of 1696: Prologue, Written by Mr Congreve, Spoken by Mr Betterton. No actors' names. Epilogue, Spoken by Mrs Bracegirdle, Written by Mr Dryden.
- COMMENT. Betterton's Company. The date of the première is not known. The Dedication to the play, written in Rome, is dated 20 Aug. 1695 N.S., and the advertisement of the play in the *London Gazette*, No 3200, 9-13 July 1696, represent the limits on its production. In a letter, dated (probably) November 1695, Dryden refers to the forthcoming appearance of his son's play, and on 26 May 1696 he negotiates with Tonson for its publication (*Letters of John Dryden*, pp. 79, 82). Probably the play appeared early in 1696, and certainly not much later than April 1696.
- John Barnard, "The Dates of Six Dryden Letters," *Philological Quarterly*, XLII (1963), 400-401, believes that Dryden's letter was written ca. 26 May 1695 and that the play was probably acted in late 1695.

THE YOUNGER BROTHER; or, The Amorous Jilt. [By Mrs Aphra Behn.] DL

Edition of 1696: Prologue, by an unknown hand, Spoke by Mr Powel. Epilogue, Spoken by Mr Horden. Prince Frederick – Verbrugen; Sir Rowland Marteen – Johnson; George Marteen – Powel; Welborn – Horden; Sir Merlin Marteen – Pinkerman; Sir Morgan Blunder – Bullock; Mr Twang – Smeaton; Brittone – Kent; Mirtilla – Mrs Knight; Olivia – Mrs Verbrugen; Teresia – Mrs Temple; Lady Blunder – Mrs Powel; Mrs Menage – Mrs Willis; Lady Youthly – Mrs Harris.

COMMENT. Rich's Company. The date of the première is not known, but the fact that the play was advertised in the *Post Man*, 29 Feb.–2 March 1695/6, and the *London Gazette*, No. 3165, 9–12 March 1695/6, suggests that its first appearance was not later than early February. One song, "The town rakes," set by Daniel Purcell and sung by Mr Edward, was separately printed ca. 1696.

Epistle Dedicatory, Edition of 1696: The unjust Sentence this Play met with before very partial Judges in the Acting. . . . So that I may reasonably impute its miscarriage to some Faction that was made against it, which indeed was very Evident on the First day, and more on the endeavours employ'd, to render the Profits of the Third, as small as could be . . . Ch. Gildon.

NEGLECTED VIRTUE; or, The Unhappy Conquerors. [The Dedication is signed by Hildebrand Horden, who does not claim it for his own.] Edition of 1696: The Prologue, Writ and Spoke by Mr Horden. Phraates – Powell; Artaban – Horden; Memnon – Dizney; Castillio – Mills; Lysander – Hill; Castillio Jr – Penkethman; Bretton – Bullock; Lycastes – Harland; Curio – Simpson; Thermusa – Mrs Knight; Alinda – Mrs Rogers; Eudora – Mrs Powell; Emilia – Mrs Mills; Ariena – Mrs Temple; Aramdine – Mrs Cross. The Epilogue, Written by Mr Motteux, Spoken by Mr Haynes, Acting the Mad-Man. *Mid-February* DL

COMMENT. Rich's Company. The date of the first performance is uncertain, and the play has been sometimes assigned to December 1695. There are indications, however, that the play first appeared at a later time, but certainly not later than 14 March 1695/6, the date attached to the Dedication. The Epilogue has some allusions which suggest mid-February, for it refers to the "Fasting time" of Lent and to "Dancing at Drapers-Hall last Masquerade" (a masquerade ball was held there on 4 Feb. 1695/6).

Dedication, Edition of 1696: This Play was given to my Care by a Friend: I promis'd him not to neglect it in the Difficulties it was to pass through. It has had hitherto but an unpleasant Journey; and I knew no better way to make Amends, than by taking up its Rest with you [Sir John Smith]; where I am assured its Reception will be the best a truly Noble and Generous Soul can give. I beg not your Protection, Sir, from those wide-mouth'd Curs, the Criticks: But since they have had their Ends in running it down, 'tis under the Shelter of your Name I desire a poor maim'd Thing, that did its best to shew them Sport, may lye secure from farther Danger. . . . H. Horden. *A Comparison Between the Two Stages* (1702), p. 18: Damn'd.

March 1696

THE LOST LOVER; or, The Jealous Husband. [By Mrs Mary Manley.] Edition of 1696: Prologue, Spoken by Mr Horden. Epilogue, Spoken by Miss Cross. Sir Rustick Good Heart – Johnson; Wilmore – Verbrugen; Wildman – Horden; Sir Amorous Courtall – Powell; Smyrna – Cibber; Pulse – Penkethman; Knowlittie – Haynes; Lady Young Love – Mrs Kent; Marina – Mrs Rogers; Belira – Mrs Knight; Orinda – Mrs Cibber; Olivia – Mrs Verbrugen; Isabella – Mrs Cole; Phoebe – Mrs Mills. DL