

**HENRY IRVING, ACTOR
AND MANAGER, A
CRITICISM OF A
CRITIC'S CRITICISM**

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Henry Irving, actor and manager, a criticism of a critic's criticism by Francis Albert Marshall

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FRANCIS ALBERT MARSHALL

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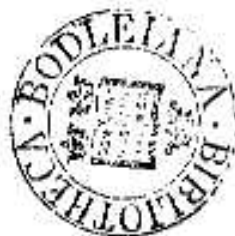
HENRY IRVING

ACTOR AND MANAGER

I Criticism of a Critic's Criticism.

BY

AN IRVINGITE.



LONDON

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS

BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL

NEW YORK: 9 LAFAYETTE PLACE

1883

George Routledge & Sons

PRELUDE OF MOTTOES.

. . . . non ego paucis
Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura.
HORACE, *ARS POETICA*, *lines 351—353.*

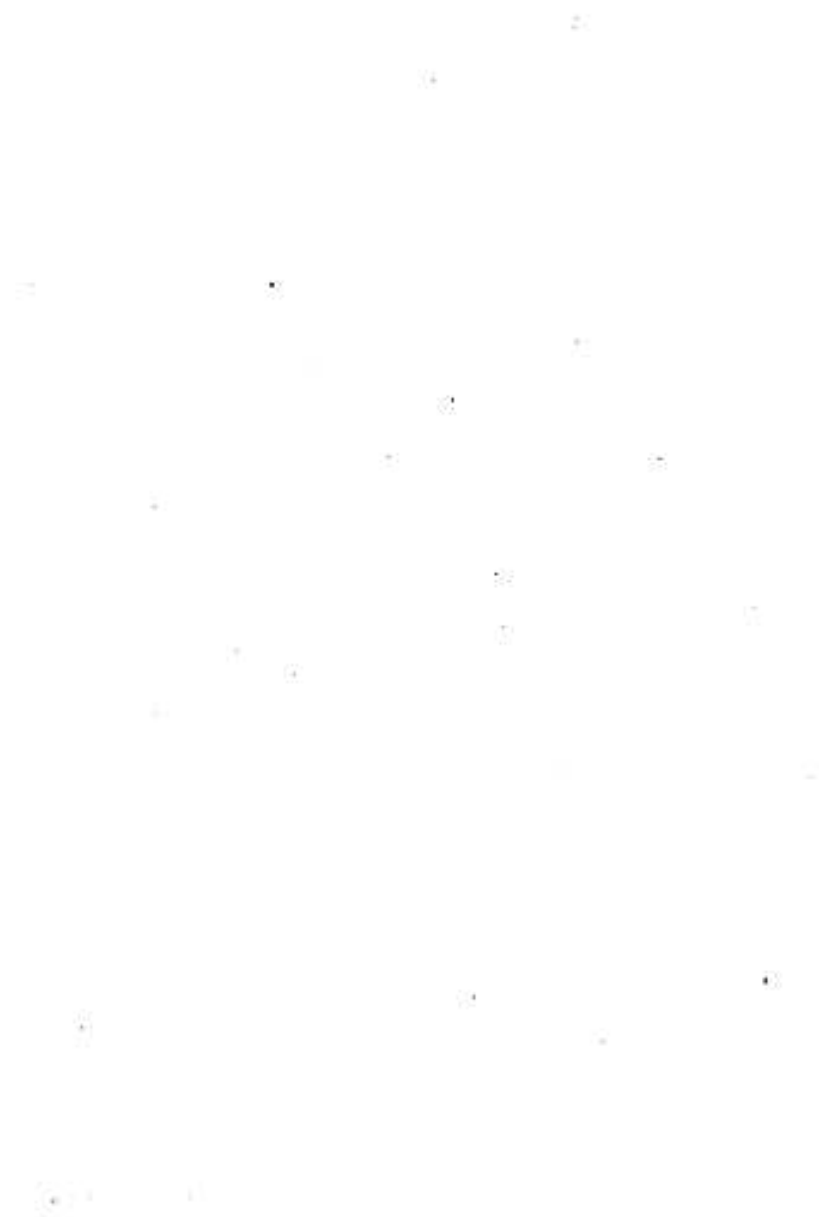
. . . . over that art
Which you say adds to nature, is an art
That nature makes,
WINTER'S TALK, *Act IV., Sc. 4, lines 90—92.*

So excellent in art, and still so rising,
That Christendom shall ever speak his virtue.
HENRY VIII., *Act IV., Sc. 2, lines 62, 63.*

. . . . now art thou what thou art, by art as well as by nature.
ROMEO AND JULIET, *Act II., Sc. 4, line 94.*

As for such as have neither the grace, nor the good gift, to
do well themselves, nor the common honesty to speak well of
others, I must (as I may) hear and bear their baitings with
patience.

R. WILMOF (1591).



Number of species

Number of individuals

PREFACE.



PREFACES, like petticoats, should be short ; many people think the shorter the better, at least with regard to the former ; for long petticoats do not more encumber their wearer, than long prefaces do the book to which they are attached : moreover, the public, especially those who are in a hurry, are wont to find both very much in their way.

In introducing the little stranger, for whose appearance I am responsible, but few words are necessary. It is written in answer to the "Critical Study" lately put forth by Mr. William Archer ; but I hope that it will interest all those who care for dramatic art, whether they have read Mr. Archer's work or not.

I must own that I am a friend of Mr. Irving : I have been so for some fifteen years, and I hope to be so for many more years. I do not

believe that a friend of an artist need be any the worse critic, because he is a friend; and I am old-fashioned enough to think that friendship has few duties more pleasant or more urgent than that of fighting one's friend's battles. I have not the pleasure of Mr. Archer's acquaintance; I do not know him even by sight; I bear him no grudge :—

“No levelled malice
Infects one comma in the course I hold.”

In my endeavour to refute his arguments, or to rebut his criticism where adverse to my friend, I trust I have used no unfair license, nor have been guilty of any rude personality. I have simply tried my best to justify the opinions that I, in common with many others, hold as to the merits of Mr. Irving as an artist, and to vindicate his claim to occupy that high position which he has reached, as I believe, by his own merits. To one who really loves the art which he professes and practises, success, with all the rich rewards that it brings, is less valued than the honour of that art to which he is devoted. To such a one the golden proofs of his audiences' favour are less dear than the consciousness that,

in all he does, he is faithful and loyal to the beloved mistress whom he serves. If a true artist be told to count the gains that he has made by the exercise of his profession, and not to mind how much adverse critics may question his merits, the answer to such advice is very obvious. "If I am not entitled," he will say, "to the substantial rewards lavished on me by the public, on any better grounds than the caprice of that public may furnish, I do not care for them; what I desire is the right to feel that I have earned them, not only by my perseverance and industry, but by my faithfulness to the true principles of my art." It is in this spirit, I am sure, that Mr. Irving would meet such criticism as that of Mr. Archer; and it is that spirit which has actuated me in writing the following pages.

If I have not put my name on the title-page of this pamphlet, it is from no desire to escape the responsibility of the opinions contained therein. It is only because I do not wish to obtrude my own personality, but rather to assume, I hope without presumption, the character of a representative of those who hold Mr. Irving to be indeed a great artist. If it should

be urged that Mr. Archer's pamphlet is merely the expression of an individual opinion, and therefore is not worthy such serious notice as I have taken of it, I would answer that, although he writes as an individual, he embodies the opinions and arguments of those who hold that Mr. Irving's success is due less to his merits as an artist than to the favour of fortune. I think it is time that those who hold such opinions should be fairly encountered; and that their arguments should be met with the care and elaboration which are scarcely possible within the limits of an ordinary magazine article. If there be any ridicule attaching to the principles of that artistic sect of which I profess myself a member, I am perfectly ready to face it. To my mind such ridicule is utterly without foundation; and it is with no feeling of hesitation, much less of shame, that I sign myself

AN IRVINGITE.

NOTE.—In all cases where Mr. Archer's actual words are quoted, the reference is given to the page of his work in which those words occur.