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An apology for the life of george anne bellamy: "a mingled yarn."

Dissell, Dorothy Gillette

Boston University

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AN APOLOGY FOR THE LIFE OF GEORGE ANNE BELLAMY:
"A MINGLED YARN"

by

Dorothy Gillette Dissell

(A. B., Wellesley College, 1935;
A. M. University of New Hampshire, 1940)

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by
First Reader  Donald J. Winslow  PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
Second Reader  L.

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## I. Introduction

A. Reasons for choosing to study the **Apology**

B. Survey of publication data

C. The dual role of the **Apology**

D. Purposes of this paper

E. Principal sources utilized

F. Methods employed

## II. The **Apology** as theatrical history

A. Mrs. Bellamy's chronology

B. Theatrical portraiture in the **Apology**
   1. Mrs. Bellamy's theatrical associates
   2. Individual portraits considered
   3. Brief glimpses of actors and actresses

C. Stage production in the **Apology**
   1. Theatrical riots and disorder
   2. The power of the audience
   3. Oddities of acting style and stage practice
   4. Costuming

D. The **Apology** as a source book
   1. Unfavorable critical estimates
   2. Utilization in biographical sketches
III. The *Apology* as autobiography

A. The critical history of the book
   1. Contemporary reviews and comment
   2. Stauffer's appraisal
   3. The conflict of interpretations

B. The "sense of life" in the central portrait
   1. Areas of success and failure in achieving the sense of life
   2. Characteristics of the successful passages
   3. The self-portraiture analyzed

C. Fictional elements in the *Apology*
   1. Evidences of misrepresentation
   2. Areas influenced by the sentimental novel
   3. The effect of the fictional elements

IV. The question of authorship

A. Some preliminary considerations
   1. Motivation
   2. Form and structure
   3. Stylistic variation
   4. Variety of literary influences

B. The editorship of Alexander Bicknell
   1. His claims of authorship
2. Consideration of Bicknell's works 217
3. Evidence of his influence on the Apology 252
4. Evidence of Mrs. Bellamy's work 257
5. An hypothesis regarding collaboration 264

V. Conclusion
A. Findings summarized 272
B. Major areas reviewed in light of findings 276
   1. Value as theatrical history 276
   2. Value as autobiography 279
C. Broader implications of the findings 280
   1. Biographical writing and the spirit of the century 280
   2. The role of the hack-writer in eighteenth-century literary development 285

Appendix A: Chronological List of Events in the Life of George Anne Bellamy 290
Appendix B: The Meretriciad 293
Appendix C: Mrs. Bellamy the Actress 295
Appendix D: Alexander Bicknell's Occasional Poetry 300
Appendix E: Suggested Areas for Further Investigation 302

Bibliography 303
INTRODUCTION

Great achievements in literature naturally tend to obscure the lesser values of coincident publications; yet it is, of course, upon the foundation of a body of work by minor writers that the great artist must build. As the study of a given field of literature progresses the usefulness of these minor works in increasing understanding and appreciation of major accomplishments becomes more and more evident. Incidentally, attention devoted to the contributions of a relatively unknown author may serve to reveal new and valuable talent. These self-evident facts have given rise to the vastly proliferating body of scholarly investigations which probe into ever more remote recesses of the history of the various genres. In the face of this mass of research it is somewhat surprising to realize how scanty has been the work devoted to a large and significant field of literary labors--that of biography.

Today we are in a period of great interest in life-writing, spurred immensely in late years by the acquisition and partial publication of the now-famous Boswell papers. An immediate result of the present concentration of scholarly attention upon these papers and of their communication to a large reading public is a renewed and enhanced
recognition of the tremendous flowering of the art of biogra-
phy which marks the second half of the eighteenth century.
A secondary effect is to make more and more evident the
need for a better understanding of the background against
which the great eighteenth century biographers wrote. This
paper is an attempt to fill in a small portion of that
background, to illuminate the kind of life-writing that was
being produced and read in great quantity in the England of
Boswell and Johnson, and at the same time to offer for the
appraisal of the student a work of autobiography which may
well claim consideration upon its own merits.

An Apology for the Life of George Anne Bellamy,
1785, the memoirs of an actress celebrated or infamous,
depending upon the point of view of the critic, has been
chosen for study for a variety of reasons. It is part of
an important and distinct category of biographical writing
of the century, the memoirs of theatrical personages, and
is especially representative of the lives of female thes-
pians which commanded much interest from the publication
of Charlotte Charke's life in 1755, to that of the Memoirs
of Mary Robinson in 1801. Its popular success indicates
that it can show us much of the tastes of the reading
public addressed by greater writers than Mrs. Bellamy.
The date of its publication, only four years after the
appearance of the last of the Lives of the Poets and in
the same year as the Tour to the Hebrides, places it within
the peak years of biographical writing and thus lends significance to whatever enlightenment it can provide concerning the growth of the general biographical tradition. It has also, as we shall soon see, been pointed out by a modern critic as an important biography and one that should be attended to for its intrinsic value.¹ These reasons alone constitute a sufficient initial motivation to the investigation of the Apology. The character of the authoress and the odd history of the book itself since its publication serve further to recommend it to our curiosity.

As the Apology tells us, Mrs. Bellamy in 1785 was old, ill, and destitute. She had been retired from the stage for some fifteen years, but she could look back to almost three decades upon the boards and to years of triumph as a leading actress and reigning beauty. She had played principal roles at Covent-Garden Theatre and had been for a short period chosen by David Garrick to act with him at Drury-Lane. At the summit of her beauty and pride she had known well other social groups than that of the theatre—the worlds of fashionable society, of politics, even of literature. Through improvident and romantic self-indulgence, she had allowed all her successes to dwindle away until she lived in constant fear of debtor's prison and in everlasting search for sympathetic assistance. The result of her situ-

¹See below, p. x.
ation was An Apology for the Life of George Anne Bellamy, Late of Covent-Garden Theatre, published in 1785 and sold by J. Bell, the well-known bookseller of the Strand. Fashioned into a series of letters and augmented by the appending of a bitterly ironic epistle attacking a former protector, John Calcraft, the life history of Mrs. Bellamy deals with the events of more than half a century and occupies in all six slim volumes. The history of their publication immediately shows the importance attached to the Apology by the readers of 1785.

The first edition came from the press very early in the year and sold so rapidly that two more editions were necessary before many weeks had passed. In March the Westminster Magazine, noticing the Apology for the first time, commented that the third edition had appeared before they could review the first. These three editions are all in five volumes. They all contain the same number of letters (one hundred and two) with the letter to Calcraft appended. They show, however, that a good deal of revision was done after the original publication. The second edition is different from the first in several ways. In the first place, the division into volumes has been altered. Volume One of the first edition, for example, includes the first thirty letters, while Volume One of the second ends with

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2Westminster Magazine, XIII (March, 1785), 156.
the twenty-eighth. In the first edition, Volume Five is relatively short, containing only one hundred and forty-four pages of text as opposed to two hundred and fifteen in Volume One. The correction of this disproportion apparently accounts for the redivision of the letters. Another reason may have been present, however, for we find that significant additions to the original text appear in the second edition. In the first volume alone, we may point to two entirely new anecdotes and a new quotation from a poem dedicated to Mrs. Bellamy. The story of the actress's imitative portrayal of Portia found on pages 129 and 130 in the second edition is not found in the first, nor is the anecdote of Mrs. Kennedy and the kettle-drum on pages 180 and 181. Mr. Jephson's poem which concludes Letter XXV in the second edition (p. 175) has also been added. There are, as we might expect, a good many corrections, of factual errors or misspellings, as well as some improvement of punctuation. The first edition, for instance, refers a number of times to "Sir Ambrose Williams." This name is altered throughout the second to "Sir Charles Hanbury Williams." One reference to Mrs. Montford is changed to "Mrs. Vanbruggen"; the name of "Quintin Massey"

3 Note alteration in index.
4 I, 187 in both editions.
is corrected to "Quintin Matsys";\textsuperscript{5} and so on.

Little change, however, was made between the second and third editions. Arrangement into volumes remains the same, and there are no additions. Corrections in the text are generally in the form of minor changes in punctuation. One quoted piece of correspondence is moved to a more logical position,\textsuperscript{6} but beyond this the two editions are very much the same. Robert W. Lowe in his \textbf{Bibliographical Account of English Theatrical Literature} has stated that a portrait and five plates were added to the third edition.\textsuperscript{7} I have examined four copies of the third edition, finding only one with any illustration, a portrait and a single plate, which had been inserted after publication.

The avoidance of further significant revision is very likely the result of Mrs. Bellamy's decision to make corrections and additions in a sixth volume. By June this volume was on sale and was being reviewed in various periodicals.\textsuperscript{8} This volume is equipped with foot-notes indicating where the passages should be inserted in previous editions. The fact that these references apply to the second and third editions shows that Volume Six was in-

\textsuperscript{5}First edition, III, 129; second edition, III, 156.

\textsuperscript{6}The letter from Lady Coventry (second edition, III, 196) is found in the third edition on III, 101.

\textsuperscript{7}Page 18.

\textsuperscript{8}E. g. \textit{Gentleman's Magazine}, LV (June, 1785), 468.
tended to form a set with those only.\textsuperscript{9} The extra volume itself apparently was reprinted with slight revisions. Of the two copies which I have examined, one, which contains a plate entitled "Despondency upon Westminster Bridge," is plainly of a later printing than the other (unillustrated) and shows many small corrections of spelling and punctuation.

Some time elapsed before the appearance of the fourth and final edition, which is dated 1786. Here there is some confusion in relation to Volume Six. Lowe says, "The supplementary vol. applies to all editions, whether before or after its issue, the 4th ed. (1766) being still stated to be in 5 vols."\textsuperscript{10} Examination of the fourth edition shows that this is an error, for all the material of the sixth volume is incorporated in its five volumes. Originally marked with foot-notes to indicate the proper place of insertion into the text of the first three editions, the anecdotes and corrections have now been transferred into those spots and there remains no need of reference to the old Volume Six. Lowe is correct, however, in saying that this edition contains a portrait and five plates.

A very interesting feature of the fourth edition is

\textsuperscript{9} In the introduction to the extra volume Mrs. Bellamy states that it may be added to "either of the former editions" (VI, viii), clearly indicating that it applies to two editions, not three.

\textsuperscript{10} Page 18.
the extension of the work through three additional letters (CIII-CV). These include some of the material from Volume Six which apparently could not be assimilated into the earlier sections, but also give us Mrs. Bellamy's account of her farewell appearance at a benefit performance in May, 1785—an entirely new element and one of importance.

The fourth edition is, however, not well suited for use as the basic text in a study such as this. With the single exception of the supplementary letters, it offers nothing to the student that is not contained in the second and third editions, with Volume Six added, and the altered arrangement of the material tends to obscure the process of composition, which will be a subject for our consideration. Of all the editions the third appears to be the most readily available to the student and is the most frequently cited. This circumstance and the fact that it is the most carefully edited of the early editions have led me to choose it, with Volume Six, as the text cited in this paper. Where reference is necessary to the few letters found only in the fourth edition, the change will be indicated.

All of these editions were printed in London and were apparently subject to Mrs. Bellamy's direct supervision. Lowe mentions that there were at least two Dublin editions

in 1785, but I have not seen them. I have, however, examined two short versions of the *Apology* published in London in the same year entitled *Memoirs of a Celebrated Actress* and *Memoirs of George Anne Bellamy*. The second is said to be written "By a Gentleman of Covent-Garden." Both are obvious pieces of literary piracy, intended to capitalize upon the success of the original by condensing and paraphrasing it. The popularity of the *Apology* is also attested to by the fact that it was twice translated into French, once in 1799 and again in 1822.

Not only was the *Apology* well received and rapidly sold; it was also greeted with critical acclaim. In this paper we shall have occasion to analyze at some length the opinions of its worth published in London periodicals. For the moment it is enough to say that the book was treated by them with considerable respect and was, on the whole, judged to be instructive, entertaining, and well-written. Its moment in the sun, however, was decidedly brief and within a few months of its publication critical comment upon it dwindled almost to nothing. After the first enthusiasm, any pretensions it had had to literary artistry

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12 Page 18.


14 See below, p. 72 ff.
were disregarded. The book dropped into a kind of semi-obscurity in which it remained for a century and a half, occasionally read but never very highly esteemed. During this period it held its place entirely as a work of theatrical history, inferior in usefulness to the more reputable volumes of theatrical collections, but still diverting to the less scholarly student of the stage. Its repute can be measured by its principal function during the nineteenth century—that of supplying material for a long series of informal and more or less superficial collections of theatrical lives.\(^{15}\) Even as a source book it was subject to serious strictures from those scholars who valued historical accuracy.

In this theatrical limbo the *Apology* to some extent still lingers. But with the surge of interest in the specialized study of biography which is still only a few decades old there came at least one voice to plead for its reconsideration. Donald A. Stauffer in two volumes invaluable to the new studies traced the development of biographical writing through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.\(^{16}\) In considering eighteenth century theatrical biography, he selected as especially significant the five life-stories of Colley Cibber, David Garrick, Sophia

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\(^{15}\)See below, pp. 54-55.

\(^{16}\) *English Biography before 1700* (1930); *The Art of Biography in Eighteenth Century England* (1941).
Baddeley, Tate Wilkinson, and George Anne Bellamy. His short discussion of the Apology challenges the student to consider it once again as something more than a theatrical record. Postponing for thorough discussion the specific content of his remarks, we should note here that Stauffer lacks all concern with what the Apology can add to the annals of the theatre. Like the critics of the first few months of 1785 he is looking at Mrs. Bellamy as an authoress and at her book as a work of art. He is looking, moreover, from a vantage point of one who, through passage of time and accumulation of critical understanding, should be better able to assess the work than the critics of a day when even the word "biography" was still relatively new. His discussion of the Apology is so full of high praise for its matter and manner that, brief as it is, it must not be overlooked. If Stauffer is right this is an "important biography" not only because of its significance in the development of the form but because it is in itself of real literary worth. More than a decade has passed since this judgment was pronounced and in that time no attempt has been made to confirm or disprove it. The Apology is at best only

17 Art of Biography, p. 32. All references to Stauffer in this paper will be taken from this work.

18 It was first used by Dryden in the preface to his translation of Plutarch's Lives, published in 1683.

19 Page 47.
superficially known to scholars, and the issue of its merit remains in suspense. The challenge is clear.

Thus we see that An Apology for the Life of George Anne Bellamy has had since its publication a kind of double identity. Mainly it has existed as a theatrical source book often scorned as untrustworthy. In this role, however, it has never been thoroughly examined. Its material has been accepted freely by one writer, rejected by another, its real contribution to the history of the theatre remaining clouded by a conflict of opinions. But in this role it may well be of some importance to the student for the light it can throw upon the theatrical practices which influenced the developing drama. It has scarcely begun to assume its second role. Indeed we have only Stauffer's word for its right to take its place in the ranks of important biographical works. Yet the question of that right is of much greater interest to the student than any consideration of factual contribution to history. Neither aspect of the Apology's existence can be disregarded in any attempt to gain a comprehensive understanding of its worth.

The purposes of this paper, therefore, must take into consideration this dual function of the Apology. In order to illuminate its contributions to both theatrical and literary history, we propose, first, to gather and relate information concerning the Apology's function in both
fields and, second, on the basis of that information, to estimate its permanent value and significance.

In pursuing these objectives we are faced with the fact that our source material is exceedingly limited. It is literally true that no student or critic, except those who have merely retold Mrs. Bellamy's history, has recorded more than a few paragraphs of comment upon the *Apology*. The most serious critical consideration ever given it, that of Stauffer, extends to only six pages, and can serve only as an initial stimulus for any lengthy study. In the field of criticism, the researcher is offered only a scattering of brief remarks, in contemporary reviews and personal letters, in bibliographies such as that of Lowe, in dictionaries such as *The Dictionary of National Biography*, or in brief biographical treatments of Mrs. Bellamy. Contemporary material which really bears upon the questions we are raising is likewise strictly limited. A good deal may be learned about George Anne Bellamy from the writing of her contemporaries, for she figures in several volumes of eighteenth century theatrical history, in a number of autobiographies of men associated with or interested in the theatre, and in occasional press notices or satirical

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20 Pages 41-47.

verse. The testimony of these sources is sometimes useful in solving the problems raised by a study of the Apology, but their greatest contribution would certainly be to one dealing with Mrs. Bellamy as an actress rather than as an authoress. We are nevertheless grateful to them for a number of glimpses of the private personality of our subject which become significant as they are related to the contents of the Apology.

Three sources have been found especially valuable in preparing for this paper, and indeed without them whole sections of our research would have been made vastly more difficult, if not impossible. The first is John Genest's Some Account of the English Stage, 1832, a monumental work in ten volumes which covers the activity in the English theatre between 1660 and 1830 in great detail. These volumes are composed of a chronologically arranged compilation of information from play-bills, supplemented by miscellaneous comments depending upon other sources. The manner of presentation and lack of indexing makes the account extremely unwieldy for the student, but it is indispensable to anyone who requires an exact record of theatrical events during the period treated. It will enable us in this study to describe with some confidence Mrs. Bellamy's chronological inaccuracies.

22See Appendix C for detailed treatment of this body of source material.
The second important source is found in the works of Tate Wilkinson, actor, autobiographer, and friend of Mrs. Bellamy. In two publications, *Memoirs of My Own Life*, 1790, and *The Wandering Patentee*, 1745, Wilkinson recalled in great detail the events and acquaintances of a life-time in the theatre. The fact that the *Memoirs*, in four volumes, were continued in the *Patentee* with four more volumes will indicate Wilkinson's volubility. Since he wrote at such length and since he was close enough to the actress to contribute to the composition of the *Apology*, Wilkinson offers us more frequent and more intimate glimpses of George Anne Bellamy than any other writer. His lively comments upon her will be frequently cited.

A third body of writing upon which we will draw heavily in this paper relates neither to the stage nor to Mrs. Bellamy, except indirectly. It is composed of the available works of Alexander Bicknell, who died in 1796, the obscure author of a miscellaneous collection of "pot-boilers," of which we have been able to examine several. The suggestion having been made that Bicknell had some part in the composition of the *Apology*, these books will enable us to investigate relationships and influences of vital importance to our ultimate evaluation of the book.

Given the purposes already stated for this study, the methods to be employed in achieving them are almost self-evident. Our plan will be generally as follows:
the paper will consider separately the functions of the Apology as theatrical history and as biography, relating the two areas in its conclusions. In each area, we shall take as our starting-point the status of the work as it is indicated by judgments of its worth recorded over the years since its publication. We shall then turn to the Apology itself for close analysis of the material and the characteristics which relate to these particular judgments. While this inspection of the text must at all times be central to our purposes, we shall constantly bring to bear upon it all relevant information which can be discovered in sources such as those mentioned above. Thus we shall at once put to the test of thorough investigation the current evaluations of the Apology and evolve, where necessary, new formulations of thought concerning its nature and its values. Although it cannot be part of our plan to delve deeply into the mass of works, biographical and fictional, which form an intricate pattern of relationships around the Apology, we shall try by repeated reference to that pattern to indicate or place the work within the developing literary traditions of the century. Our method should allow us to reach a series of conclusions about the Apology in its two aspects, and, in the end, to weld those conclusions into a new understanding and appreciation of the work as a whole.

With these motivations, purposes, and methods in mind, we may now turn directly to consider, first, the
success or failure of An Apology for the Life of George Anne Bellamy as a contributor to the annals of the stage.
The charge most frequently made against Mrs. Bellamy—and one not mentioned by Stauffer—concerns the factual inaccuracy of her record of theatrical events. When the Apology was published, reviewers who otherwise handled her production gently felt obliged to point out many errors which were not immediately recognizable.\(^1\) Her friend Tate Wilkinson saw to it that she was set straight on many of these matters and plied her with information which she used sparingly in her sixth volume in an attempt to dissipate any impression of deliberate falsification.\(^2\) She was forced to admit to being "but an indifferent chronologist."\(^3\)

This is a very mild statement of the situation. It is evident, in fact, that she recognized her weakness and did everything in her power to avoid being brought to account as a chronologist. The care with which she avoided

\(^1\)Cf. Gentleman's Magazine, LV (March, 1785), 205.
\(^2\)See VI, vii and 42.
\(^3\)VI, 16.
dates and the vagueness of sequence throughout the book seem almost to remove her story from the realm of time. The reader drifts along with her from one experience to the next, occasionally aware that a new theatrical season has begun or dimly cognizant of significant political and historical events taking place in the background. Passage of time is generally indicated in the most indefinite terms possible: "soon," "in a few weeks," "during my stay at this retired abode," "afterwards"; and only once in a while even so precisely as by "this season" or "the next winter." Any attempt to construct a chronology from the book itself would be doomed to failure before many pages of the first volume had been studied. To a certain extent her stratagem probably did protect Mrs. Bellamy in her own day from the kind of sweeping indictments made by later students. Challenged by the memories of others who had lived through the same years, she could be taken to task for numerous isolated failures of fact. Tate Wilkinson could, for example, correct her definite statement that Dr. Francis's Constantine failed on its first night, when in fact it ran for four nights, or he could point out that in the year when Frederick, Prince of Wales, died (1751), Mrs. Bellamy was playing at Drury Lane

4Cf. II, 193-194; III, 119, 126, 175.
5Genest and Lowe. See below, p. 53.
6Memoirs, IV, 183.
and could not have enlisted Mr. Quin of Covent Garden among the players at her benefit. But a really inclusive view of her chronological confusion could not be attempted without the assistance of a full and accurate record of the theatrical events of Mrs. Bellamy's life-time. Genest's Some Account of the English Stage, with its rich fund of exact information derived largely from play-bills of the period, supplies the much-needed standard against which it is possible to judge the actress's involved chronology. With its help, and that of a few contemporary records, it is even possible to construct a tentative chronological chart of the events mentioned in the Apology. The process of compiling such a chart brings out sharply the multitude of errors in the Apology, ranging from confusion as to the sequence of plays within a season to failures of memory that place important theatrical events many seasons before or after their real dates and show the actress as playing at times when she could not have played.

While it may not be quite typical, inasmuch as feminine pride as well as faltering memory probably in-

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7 Memoirs, IV, 161.
8 See Appendix A. Such a chart is of necessity somewhat speculative, since it must be based upon Mrs. Bellamy's precarious chronological sequence as well as Genest's reliable one. Whenever possible dates for events of her private life have been tentatively fixed by their close association in the text with theatrical events of which her account agrees with Genest's.
fluenced its formation, the story of the young George Anne's debut upon the stage shows more strikingly than any other instance the haziness, amounting to mystification, which prevails throughout the *Apology*. She tells us that she first appeared at Covent Garden as Monimia in *The Orphan* and that at that time she was just fourteen. She gives no date for the performance, but Genest establishes it as taking place on November 22, 1744. This fact at once throws into relief the inaccuracy of one date supplied us by the actress, her birthday, which she says fell on April 23, 1733. The obvious discrepancy having been called to her attention after the publication of the first five volumes of the *Apology*, Mrs. Bellamy showed herself ready to accept correction and in her additional volume supplied a copy of her certificate of birth, showing the year as 1731. The correction, of course, scarcely accounts for her original statement of her age as fourteen, nor does it meet current objections such as the statement in *The European Magazine* that "those who remember Mrs. Bellamy's first appearance in Monimia . . . are satisfied that she was then five or six years older than this

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9I, 48.
10IV, 155.
11I, 22.
12VI, 17.
date \([1733]\) would allow her to be.\textsuperscript{13} More significant, however, for the prestige of her theatrical records is her failure to mention that Monimia was not her first role. Genest records the appearance at Covent Garden on March 27, 1742, of "Miss Georgiana Bellamy, who never appeared on any stage before," as Miss Prue in *Love for Love*.\textsuperscript{14} This omission again was called to the attention of the authoress who acknowledged her error in her sixth volume with the incredible explanation that her "first" performance had "made . . . slight impression" upon her at the time.\textsuperscript{15} Here the matter rested, but it should perhaps not surprise us to discover that a later researcher has found a London theatrical bill for April 20, 1741, listing as a servant to Columbine in *Harlequin Barber* "Miss Bellamy who never appeared on any stage before."\textsuperscript{16}

The accounts of theatrical seasons that follow show the same lack of concern for accuracy. When, for example, we compare her record of her years at Drury-Lane Theatre, 1750-1753, with that of Genest, we find for the 1751-1752

\textsuperscript{13}VII (February, 1785), 97.

\textsuperscript{14}IV, 9.

\textsuperscript{15}VI, 17.

season a definitely stated sequence which is actually a blend of the outstanding events of that season and the next. Mrs. Bellamy marks the start of the season by announcing that two new actors, Mossop and Ross, have joined the company. Genest confirms the statement. She then immediately launches into an account of her conflicts with Garrick and her contretemps with the author during the production of Young's The Brothers. This play was not presented in the fall of 1751 but in March 1753. At the conclusion of the story of The Brothers, Mrs. Bellamy continues, "Our next essay was a play . . . by Doctor Francis . . . entitled 'Eugenia, or the supposed Daughter.'" Reference to Genest shows that Eugenia appeared in February, 1752. Then her remembrance turns once again to the following season, as she tells of crucial events in her private life, centering about a performance of Harlequin Sorcerer, which apparently occurred on March 18, 1753.

Many of Mrs. Bellamy's errors are curious in that they relate to portions of her theatrical career which one

17II, 129-130.
18II, 131.
19Genest, IV, 361.
20II, 138.
21IV, 343.
22Genest, IV, 361.
would expect her to remember very well. Perhaps her greatest triumph came to her in the title-role of Cleone, first presented on December 2, 1758, yet she discusses that play as if it appeared in the season of 1755-56. Not only is there a three-year discrepancy here, the error is made more striking by the fact that her sequence places the playing of Cleone immediately before the birth of her son, Henry Fox Calcraft, and therefore before the ensuing serious illness which kept her away from the theatre, except for one benefit performance, throughout the 1756-7 season, an experience which might have been expected to separate clearly in her memory theatrical events which preceded and followed it. We are somewhat surprised, too, to find that she has mislocated her famous quarrel with Peg Woffington over their costumes for The Rival Queens. This she appears to place quite definitely in 1753-4, apparently late in the year, after the birth of her daughter. Mrs. Woffington did not even begin her engagement at Covent Garden until the fall of 1754. The Rival Queens was performed on January 15, 1756, for the first time in twelve years, and the quarrel undoubtedly

23 Genest, IV, 559.

24 Genest, IV, 486, clearly indicates this gap, noting that Sparks's benefit in March was "her first appearance since her late indisposition."

25 II, 206-208.

26 Genest, IV, 413.

27 Genest, IV, 462.
took place on that date.

It is perhaps natural that this period of the late '40's and '50's, when Mrs. Bellamy was at the peak of her renown and playing with great frequency, should be difficult for her to recall with any accuracy. We might, for instance, not feel obliged to cavil at her statement that she played Ismena in Phaedra and Hippolytus at Covent Garden, apparently in 1754, when actually she played it at Drury Lane several years before and did not take part in the Covent Garden production. We might even call it remarkable that her memories fairly often tally with items in Genest's record. Even at a later date, when she was not so active, it is perhaps not surprising that she should confuse her chronology by recalling the visit of the King of Denmark in 1768, with its accompanying theatrical events, as having occurred one year later. There are, however, some mistakes which cannot be so easily accepted, in view of the curiously specific accounts that accompany them. A minor but interesting example is the story of her return to the stage after the birth of her first child. George Metham, she says, was born on December 16 (1749) at York, and her re-

28 III, 30.
29 Genest, IV, 343.
31 II, 68.
covery was so slow that she and the child's father did not start back to London until the early part of February.
Moreover their return was impeded: "The waters happening to be out as we proceeded, this gave me some further time to recover strength."\(^{32}\) It is difficult to explain such circumstantial memories in the face of Genest's record of her first performance of the season—on January 23, 1750.\(^{33}\)
Even more specific—and much more damaging to her reputation for reliability—is her description of the start of the 1753-1754 season at Covent Garden when she had just returned to that theatre from Drury-Lane. Strangely, here again the erroneous information is linked to the impending birth of a child. Mrs. Bellamy states that the season opened with \textit{Romeo and Juliet}, in which she scored a great success.\(^{34}\) This is so far from being true that at least ten productions preceded \textit{Romeo and Juliet}, and the role of Juliet was played, not by Mrs. Bellamy, but by Miss Nossiter, a newcomer at Covent Garden.\(^{35}\) Yet in the \textit{Apology} this mythical engagement is amazingly supported by detail. Mrs. Bellamy connects with it an amusing interchange between herself and Rich, the manager, who she says refused to acknowledge her influence

\(^{32}\) \textit{II}, 71.
\(^{33}\) \textit{IV}, 304.
\(^{34}\) \textit{II}, 194-195.
\(^{35}\) Genest, \textit{IV}, 393.
upon the success of the play, ascribing its popularity to the "procession" which he had added to the production. She says, moreover: "My pregnancy prevented this play from having an equal run with that which had attended it two seasons before. . . . During my confinement, 'Romeo and Juliet' was unavoidably obliged to be postponed, much to the regret of the manager." And on the last night of the run, according to her story, she could not resist bedeviling the ungrateful manager by suggesting that he might continue to fill the house by simply transferring his procession into another piece. His ruffled reply has a ring of truth: "If I did not know to the contrary, I should suppose that the man in Brewer Street [John Calcraft, then her protector] did not lead the most easy life." The evidence proves Mrs. Bellamy's account to be, at least in part, what Tate Wilkinson later called "a dream of her own invention," but it is a singularly vivid dream.

Multiplication of instances is needless. Mrs. Bellamy is indeed an "indifferent chronologist." Her explanation, in Volume VI, is disarming and apparently

36 II, 195.
37 II, 195-196.
38 II, 196.
The frequent mistakes which I find I have made in the chronology of my theatrical anecdotes, will, I hope, be imputed to my reciting them entirely from memory. And was I now to set about correcting the error, by an alteration of the dates, I fear such a step would only be productive of greater mistakes.

She is undoubtedly correct in this last conclusion; yet her decision in no way alters the inaccuracy of the theatrical record she has left unchanged. The proven case against her is reflected in most subsequent evaluations of her work. No comment upon the Apology is more scathing than that of Tate Wilkinson:

Mrs. Bellamy took such pains to be untrue in her accounts, that it could not be the effect of a bad memory, as she hints; but, on the contrary, labour and study to dress things so widely different from what they really were.

Wilkinson, indeed, had something to gain by his scorn, for he was extolling the contrasting accuracy of his own work. We shall see, however, in a later chapter that two outstanding students of the eighteenth century theatre, Genest and Lowe, shared his distrust of the Apology.

No one, to date, has risen to the defense of Mrs. Bellamy as a theatrical historian. Little attention seems to have been paid to her own plea that chronological errors

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40VI, 42.
42See below, p. 53.
not be allowed to condemn her theatrical anecdotes in toto. "The deviation," she writes, "I trust, will be excused by you and my readers, as the incidents themselves, though perhaps erroneous in point of time, are real facts." It may well be time for a closer look at the material contained in her theatrical accounts and for a new evaluation of their worth.

\[43\] VI, 42.
II.

THEATRICAL PORTRAITURE IN THE APOLOGY

Surely an actress who for almost three decades lived in the excitement of the London theatre during one of its most flamboyant periods should have much more to give her readers than an accurate recital of places, dates, and productions. These can be determined, as Genest has shown, by later investigation. The life of the theatre—its personalities, its customs and procedures, the minutiae that make it real—can be communicated to us only through records of personal observation and experience. If Mrs. Bellamy's Apology is not overconcerned with dates, it is certainly very much occupied with this more personal kind of communication. If she has succeeded in giving, in spite of the weaknesses considered in the last chapter, a reliable and living picture of the theatre in her time, that fact should be recognized.

The English theatre at mid-century was dominated by its actors and actresses to a degree unknown today even in our world of motion picture "stars." It was a time when, for example, a Cordelia's skill in delivering third-rate poetry to her lover Edgar could cause the public to consider those lines among Shakespeare's best.¹ All the giants of

¹Cf. The Actor (1750), p. 119. Nahum Tate's version
her time Mrs. Bellamy knew, many of them well, and they appear and reappear throughout the pages of her book: Quin, Garrick, Sheridan, Barry, Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Clive, Mrs. Woffington, and with them the host of those only less brilliant—Woodward, Digges, Mrs. Ward, Ross, and the rest. Some of these people were Mrs. Bellamy's friends, some her enemies, and all were her rivals for popularity. It is beyond expectation, therefore, that she should picture each with complete objectivity. On the other hand, the portraits she presents are surprisingly well rounded.

David Garrick is a case in point. The "great little man" as Mrs. Bellamy often calls him, was nothing if not a controversial figure, and the actress shared with many others a feeling of coolness toward him. The universal acknowledgement of his acting skill is with a good many of his contemporaries joined to an irritation which we see clearly even in his friend, Dr. Johnson. From others we get a picture of talent, dominating force, shrewd evasiveness, and egotism. Sir Joshua Reynolds marked him as insincere, an actor in all things. Smollett, who had his reasons for

of King Lear was, of course, that acted in the eighteenth century.

\[2^{nd}, 132.\]


disliking Garrick, lampooned him in *Roderick Random* as the devious Mr. Marmozet, a man whose actions did not match his protestations. Tate Wilkinson, with his knack for mimicry, found a perfect target in Garrick's manner of worming his way out of commitments. When Wilkinson inquired of the manager what parts he might expect under a new contract,

He was on this easy question so full of hum-s and ha-s, and hey, why, now, yes, they, now really I think—that finding nothing would come of nothing, I very soon obliged him by retiring. . . .

In spite of her admitted animosity Mrs. Bellamy's picture of Garrick is not so wholly condemning as any of these. At no point, for instance, does she take advantage of her opportunity to minimize his acting talents. One of Garrick's biographers, Joseph Knight, has spoken of her "grudging acknowledgement of his abilities," but there is nothing grudging about her description of Garrick in *The Masque of Alfred*:

In this Mr. Garrick exceeded even himself. And when he repeated the following line, which the author had borrowed from the Athalia of Racine.

"I fear God, and have no other fear."

He appeared to be another Atlas; and like him carried a world upon his shoulders.

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6*Memoirs*, I, 229.

7David Garrick, p. 137.

8II, 138-139.
Knight also accuses Mrs. Bellamy of ingratitude to the man who had put her forward in capital parts. It is not true that she was unaware of the advantage springing from her association with Garrick, for she specifically expresses her regret at her mistake in leaving the Drury Lane company with its great opportunity for improving herself under Garrick's management. It must be admitted, furthermore, that Garrick's actions need not be considered entirely philanthropic. When Mrs. Bellamy joined his company, he desperately needed an actress who could make a showing against the famous Mrs. Cibber at Covent Garden. Miss Bellamy was growing all the time in popularity and had, for his purposes, the added qualification of stature so small as to disguise his own lack of height. Garrick, if the Apology may be trusted, by that time was already well acquainted with the thorny side of the young actress's nature, after their conflicts in Ireland, and may be assumed to have weighed his own advantage in engaging her.

As a manager, too, Garrick is always treated with respect by Mrs. Bellamy. He was, she says, "the most tenacious man alive of a due observance of theatrical order and regularity," and he saw to it that his company

9David Garrick, p. 138.
10II, 190-191.
11II, 127.
operated at a high level: "As he was unremitting himself in his attention to business, he expected those he employed to be the same."12

Personally Mrs. Bellamy has little good to say about the great "Roscius," but at all points her observations tally with those of others who knew him. Smollett's implication about his business tactics make it easy to believe that Garrick did attempt to be all things to all men--that it would be characteristic of him to welcome Mrs. Bellamy to England with deep regrets that he had no place in his company for her, while at the same time he protested to others his intention to avoid engaging her at all costs.13 There is a naturalness too about her story of his subtle negotiations to prevent her playing at Ross's benefit by presenting opposite arguments to her and to the actor.14 Her insistence upon his jealousy of position, his inability to bear either a brother or a sister near the throne,15 is quite in keeping with all we know of him.

Some of her accounts of relations with Garrick are exceedingly vivid and by a simple recital of facts present a picture which, probably contrary to her intention, is not

12II, 113.
13I, 185.
14II, 184.
15II, 157; IV, 102.
entirely unattractive. Such is her story of their Dublin controversy over the roles deemed proper by Garrick for the young Miss Bellamy. The aging actress appears to recall the whole thing as a triumph over Garrick, but the facts as she gives them rather portray an amused condescension on his part to humor a willful child. While it is marked by characteristic confidence in his ability to manipulate a situation, there is something charming about the letter sent to George Anne but addressed to "the beautified Ophelia" in a frivolous tone unlike the pomposity of the later Garrick. Similarly life-like and amusing is the story of Mrs. Butler's trick at the time of Garrick's departure for England. The picture of the actor taking Mrs. Butler's packet "with a significant graceful air; concluding ... that it contained, not only a valuable present ... but a declaration ... of tender sentiments," is neatly contrasted with his discomfiture as he pitched Wesley's Hymns and Swift's Discourse on the Trinity into the ocean. And the episode is not really complete without the ingratiating glimpse of Garrick back in London, receiving Miss Bellamy with "that cheerfulness and civility which constituted a part of his character," and

16I, 121 ff.
17I, 123.
18I, 127-128.
laughing with her over the episode of the "consequential present." 19

On the whole it seems that, although Mrs. Bellamy assessed Garrick as possessing "as much meanness as merit," she did not disregard the merit. She is frank about her feeling for him but never subjects him to the kind of denunciation she reserved for those by whom she felt she had been persecuted. He emerges from the Apology as a man of many foibles but one who commanded respect even from his adversaries, and it is easy to believe that Mrs. Bellamy was proud of her association with him and subconsciously clung to their quarrels as evidence that she could hold her own against a man of his metal.

In contrast to Garrick, for James Quin George Anne Bellamy had the greatest admiration and affection, and the picture she gives of him is perhaps her best theatrical portrait. Quin, whose outspoken eccentricity Smollett has represented in Humphry Clinker in the midst of his favorite haunts at Bath, 21 was generally known for his gruff tyrannies. In the theatre, says Wilkinson, he "had a manner most terrible to the under-performers," 22 and his shouts and thumpings with

19 I, 185.

20 II, 132.


22 Memoirs, I, 33.
his cane made the young Tate tremble. George Anne Bellamy does not neglect this side of his character. She reports that he "governed the theatre with a rod of iron," never condescending to mingle with ordinary players in the Green Room but keeping apart in his own dressing-room, popularly known as "the lion's den." She lets us see her own real fear of his disapproval and her unhappiness at the cooling of his friendship when she failed to live up to his high standards. Yet from the moment when Quin converted indignation into enthusiasm to hail her as "a divine creature" as she completed her first major performance, he showed to her a second side, the recording of which is her contribution to our knowledge of James Quin. She gives us the Quin who, once having bestowed his friendship, "was determined not to oblige by halves," who aided her with money and advice, who introduced her into his literary parties, who brought tears to her eyes by his fatherly counsel on the advantages of virtue for a much pursued young actress. In spite of her affection Mrs. Bellamy does not set Quin up as a saint.

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23 I, 49.
24 II, 4.
25 I, 55.
26 I, 56.
27 I, 57.
28 I, 59.
He is very human in her pages, a man who "loved his good fat capon; his ale and orange; and ungartering, as he called it," and who would not attend Lord Tyrawley's affairs because Tyrawley abjured the bottle. We should not be doing Mrs. Bellamy justice, moreover, if we did not note that her picture of Quin is deliberately and carefully drawn with the intent of objectivity. Her summation of Quin's character states her plan:

It is worthy of remark, that all characters have their bright and shaded parts. ... Thus it was with Mr. Quin; who, with the most liberal mind and benevolent heart, had his whims, his prepossessions, and his prejudices; many of which he frequently expressed in language somewhat too sarcastic, and not over delicate. But perfection is not to be expected in this transitory state.

In contrast to her success in portraying James Quin, we should note for its possible significance the weakness of Mrs. Bellamy's treatments of two actors to whom she was especially close. These are West Digges and Henry Woodward, with each of whom she lived for a period of years. Their very nearness to her private affairs seems to have placed them in the shadow of encroaching events, so that neither emerges as convincing and real. This fact is especially marked in the case of Digges. Her lengthiest description of him is given at the time when she first met him in Dublin, where "he was a great favorite ... particularly among

29II, 30.
30I, 57-58.
the ladies." "He is blest," she says, "with talents, is a fine figure, his face is handsome, and he has the art of persuading those with whom he converses, that he is the best of men." A few pages further, she characterizes him as "really the accomplished gentleman and an entertaining companion," and almost immediately we hear that she has formed with him "a serious connection" which "made us mutually unhappy, during the two years we lived together." This intriguing introduction certainly raises the reader's expectation of more to come about the fascinating Mr. Digges, but in actuality there is little more. Occasional references keep before us the fact that he is perpetually "embarrassed in his affairs," and consequently usually on the move to escape his creditors. He is involved in one violent scene in which his passionate interference with her plans alters the whole course of Mrs. Bellamy's life, but this episode is at once so melodramatic and so confused as to leave us in considerable doubt as to the actions and motives of everyone concerned. Thereafter he remains largely a lay figure until he slips quietly out of the picture at about the time of

31 IV, 11.
32 IV, 13.
33 IV, 16.
34 E. g. IV, 32.
35 IV, 38 ff.
Mrs. Bellamy's discovery that he has a wife living. Even then she bears him no malice and dismisses him with a reference to "the delicacy of his tenderness, and the unremitting attention he always paid me." There is never any amplification upon their mutual unhappiness.

It may be that Mrs. Bellamy handled Digges delicately because he was still living when her Apology was published, or, more likely, that she felt his character to be already very well known to her readers. In either case, it is regrettable that she has not let us know more about him, both as an actor and as a person, for he was certainly a man who caught the imagination of his public. For instance, it is probably fair to say that West Digges exercised a greater influence over the youthful James Boswell than Dr. Johnson could hope to do. Boswell's journal constantly reiterates a desire to be like Digges, who, Boswell says,

has more or as much of the deportment of a man of fashion as anybody I ever saw; and he keeps this up so well that he never once lessened upon me even on an intimate acquaintance. . . .

That Digges's influence worked in opposition to the inspiration of Johnson is quite clear, but that fact does not

36 IV, 70.
38 Note, for example, that Boswell chose as the place of his first assignation with Louisa an inn recommended by Digges and gave his name as Digges, claiming West as a cousin. London Journal, p. 137.
alter our interest in so striking a personality. Some contemporary writers have given us glimpses of the man more illuminating than anything Mrs. Bellamy has to say, although indeed they never contradict the impression she gives. John O'Keeffe in his Recollections illustrates Digges' command of his audience with an anecdote of a Scottish admirer, who, trying to follow the play-book while the ill-prepared Digges was confidently "launching out at random," rejected the book in anger at the printers who "never print a book right." Lee Lewes remembered him in his later years (1777) as manager of the Cannongate Theatre in Edinburgh, where his debts finally sent him to prison and led to his breaking jail, involving the jailor, eloping with another man's mistress, and leaving Edinburgh two thousand pounds in debt. Even more revealing, and certainly more direct, is the unintended self-portrait which has survived in a collection of letters between Digges and Sarah Ward, the actress who preceded Mrs. Bellamy in his affections. These letters, now at the Houghton Library of Harvard University, illustrate the charm, persuasiveness, and elegance of West Digges, while at the same time they record the pathetic story of Mrs. Ward's inability to hold that elusive gentleman. Something of Digges's entertaining and delicate way with people comes

39 I, 290.
40 Memoirs of Charles Lee Lewes, III, 75.
through even in the letters that represent his futile attempts to educate Mrs. Ward in the art of correspondence:

Your two Last Epistles were very kindly but also very carelessly wrote, What a pity it is you neglect the Pretty Hand you can Write. Here is one of the Letters on the table before me and Your Lines in it are so uneven and the words so unproportion'd that It puts one in mind of a Review of the train bands, where some soldiers about five foot high are plac'd next to others two feet Higher. 41

This is a man of whom we would like to know more and about whom Mrs. Bellamy, for reasons of her own, chose to be reticent.

She has more to say about Woodward, the then celebrated Harlequin who sheltered her in her late years and tried to provide for her in his will. As a matter of fact, she devotes several pages to a kind of memorial "portrait of him in private life," 42 mentioning, rather formally, his education, his choice of the theatrical profession, and his principal characteristics: gravity, wide knowledge, reserve, generosity, high principle. 43 The last she carefully and aptly illustrates by repeating a rebuke he addressed to her for her extravagance. As in the case of her account of Digges, there is nothing here that conflicts with what we

41Letters of Digges and Ward, #5, dated July 27, 1753. Although the original letters were consulted for this paper, they have been published, and the Edinburgh edition of 1833 is listed in the bibliography.

42IV, 108 ff.

43IV, 109.
know of Woodward from other sources. But again there is strangely little beyond this careful and undeniably cold description. We get no real picture of his stage personality, nor are we conscious of him as much more than the signer of a highly controversial will. Mrs. Bellamy appears to be conscientiously avoiding revelations of any degree of intimacy. Her own relationship to Woodward, indeed, seems to be left intentionally obscure among circumlocutions and a lofty air of honi soit qui mal y pense. The resulting ambiguity of her position is less important than the effect it appears to have had upon her willingness to recall and record the bits of Woodwardiana which she certainly had access to and which would have made him more than the static subject of an eulogy.

These two men, however, were the only ones among Mrs. Bellamy's theatrical acquaintances whose personal lives impinged closely upon her own. With others she was freer to express her opinions and record her memories. Such freedom undeniably included the opportunity for malicious portraiture, of which her handling of Peg Woffington is the foremost example. It should be noted immediately that Mrs. Bellamy, by her account, was not one who could bear no sister near the throne. Two of her greatest rivals for public

44Cf. Davies, Life of Garrick, I, 274, and Chetwood, General History of the Stage, pp. 243-244.

45E. g. IV, 106 and 111.
applause, Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Clive, she admired both as actresses and as persons. She spoke of them as "the two first female performers that ever trod the stage" and throughout her Apology freely acknowledged their superiority to herself. They appear as personal friends, and the anecdotes concerning them are typified by that of Mrs. Clive's solicitude when she feared Mrs. Bellamy had broken her arm in a stage fall. But if she could acknowledge merit, Mrs. Bellamy was also a good hater. She and Mrs. Woffington played much together; they competed for parts and rivaled each other in beauty. In temperament they seem to have been curiously alike—wayward, impulsive, proud, usually worrisome to their current managers. The natural result was a relationship which Wilkinson expresses even more strongly than Mrs. Bellamy when he says that in 1755-1756 the two were "implacable enemies." Since the writer of the Apology is very frank about her feeling, we are amply warned to expect and discount the element of bias. Indeed it is surprising that she refers so frequently and generously to Mrs. Woffington's beauty, which she says "beggared all

46 IV, 101.

47 E. g. I, 48, and II, 189.

48 III, 61.

49 Davies confirms Mrs. Bellamy's report (II, 76) that Rich likened Mrs. Woffington to the notorious murderess, Sarah Malcomb. See Memoirs of the Life of Garrick, I, 135.

50 Memoirs, IV, 218.
description, "51 and which she implies was beyond her own, numbering among the attractions of The Rival Queens "Mrs. Woffington's beauty, and my fine robes."52 For the rest, her picture of her rival is black, an indictment of envy, scandal-mongering, low wit, and underhanded malice uttered with a scorn which perhaps reaches its fullest expression in one sweeping dismissal:

The situation of Mrs. Woffington being rendered uneasy, by the jealousy of her lover at home, and the anxiety of the one abroad; and at the theatre, by the envy of her own mean mind, and her disappointment from Melpomene's refusal to admit her as a favourite; she took dudgeon, and set off for Dublin; where her beauty alone would insure her success.53

Such venom must, of course, lessen the reader's trust in Mrs. Bellamy's accounts of Mrs. Woffington. Yet anecdotes related by enemies may be lively and telling, may even genuinely reveal the less admirable parts of a character; and, apart from her direct comments, Mrs. Bellamy gives us some vivid stories about her rival which have not, so far as I know, been challenged by those who quarreled most frequently with her presentation of fact. The tale of the Rival Queens costume controversy54 especially bears the mark of truth. It is humorously told, and Mrs. Bellamy

51II, 49.
53II, 77-78.
54II, 206ff.
seems to be recounting actual events even at the expense of showing herself in a less than attractive light, as one who may "despise revenge" but does not "dislike retaliation," who is quite a match for Mrs. Woffington in low insinuation, and who extricates herself from the resulting situation by flight. The anecdote is indeed self-portraiture, but it also gives us an apparently reliable description of Mrs. Woffington, enraged by a blow to her professional pride and fighting back with the weapons whose use was natural to her. A second and shorter anecdote is equally telling. This is the account of Mrs. Bellamy's accompanying the Duchess of Queensberry on a dignified sight-seeing tour of the green-room, only to find there Mrs. Woffington, who had just played Cleopatra. They were greeted, she says, by the sight of "the Fair Egyptian Queen, with a pot of porter in her hand, crying out, 'Confusion to all order. Let Liberty thrive.' The table was surrounded by suitable company, and covered with mutton pies." This dramatic surprise is convincing by its very oddity and may well be accepted as a true glimpse of the beautiful but unrefined Peg Woffington.

Both of the passages just mentioned illustrate two characteristics which mark many of Mrs. Bellamy's sketches of her contemporaries, a fine sense of the ridiculous and

55II, 208.
56II, 50-51.
a patent enjoyment of the weaknesses of others. We have seen that she does not always condemn; at the same time she is seeking to entertain and seems well aware that readers in general will take more delight in the vagaries of the actors and actresses than in any praise she can render them. As a result she seizes each opportunity to give a quick sketch of one or another in moments of folly or absurdity. In contrast to the descriptions discussed above, the great body of her theatrical portraiture consists of these literary snapshots, which make no attempt at full characterization but contrive to give us a sense of acquaintance with a set of very human thespians. While we neither could nor should here try to catalogue the anecdotes of this type, a few of many may be noted to define it. One sentence, for example, presents the apathetic Mrs. Ward calmly making adjustments to her glove ribbons at the height of Garrick's passionate utterances in The Fair Penitent and thereby earning his natural resentment.57 Then there is Ross decked out pompously and absurdly for his role in The Prophetess in a full-bottomed wig and a hooped lambrequin to make himself more conspicuous.58 Mrs. Furnival is shown as Octavia, inappropriately dressed in Cleopatra's jeweled robes, "borrowed" from Mrs. Bellamy's dressing-room.59

57II, 113-114.
58III, 50.
59I, 132 ff.
Mrs. Hamilton, completing her death-scene in Tamerlane, finds that her bearers cannot carry her from the stage, rises, and departs with a curtsey to the audience. During Mrs. Bellamy's first season in Dublin, she shows us the sententious Sheridan attempting the unsuitable role of Antony and Mrs. Kennedy, oblivious to her situation, dragging onto the stage "the half of a kettle-drum" caught in her skirt.

Some of Mrs. Bellamy's sketches, we should notice, are to be regarded with more question than others, for not all are records of her own observations. For example, the dramatic story of Mrs. Montford in her insanity playing the mad Ophelia is admittedly one she heard told when she was little more than a child. There are likewise a number of sections in the sixth volume which she seems to have added upon the prompting of friends. One of these, the story of Miss White and her termagant mother, is definitely claimed by Tate Wilkinson, who retrieves it for use in his own memoirs, asserting that it was his originally. The excellent anecdote of Theophilus Cibber in Volume VI is probably another of these second-hand stories and has the

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60IV, 51.
61I, 180.
62I, 188.
64VI, 76.
sound of an oft-told tale. There is none of this feeling about the scenes she describes as a participant or an eyewitness. They do not have the hackneyed anecdotal form of the Cibber episode but instead an incisiveness and gusto producing an air of authenticity which we have little reason to question.  

We may well conclude then that in the area of theatrical portraiture, Mrs. Bellamy has somewhat atoned for the ineffectuality of her chronological attempts. Her characterizations are usually somewhat shallow and often marked by bias or levity; yet they are bright and revealing enough to be of some use to any student of the period in recreating the personalities of men and women who, in greater or less degree, left their mark upon the development of the eighteenth century theatre and theatrical literature.

65 Although we are concerned in this chapter only with the information Mrs. Bellamy gives about the actors and actresses of her time, we should not neglect to notice the variety and effectiveness of her portrayals outside that group. For longer treatments, we might look to the sections on the Duchess of Queensberry (I, 60-64 and 66) and on William Pitt (III, 72 ff.); for briefer glimpses to those on Pope (I, 36), Chesterfield (I, 137), or General Braddock (II, 193 ff.). The comments made above are generally applicable to these passages.
Further examination of the Apology brings us to another large area of information potentially important to the student of the theatre—that is, information about the productions of the period, the circumstances under which they were played, and the manner of presentation. It would not appear just to condemn as theatrically valueless any work that succeeds in giving the student details of a kind that can be supplied only from observation and that illustrate actual stage practices, no matter how trivial those details may be. Although in the Apology such accounts are made distinctly subordinate to the object of major interest, the actress's personal life, they appear in considerable quantity and certainly deserve examination as to their scope and validity.

In the face of so much question as to Mrs. Bellamy's reliability, it seems fair to look first of all at sections of the Apology which are important pictures of stage conditions and which at the same time can be checked against the facts as presented by other witnesses. The history of the theatrical riots in Dublin offers an unusual opportunity
for such a test. Mrs. Bellamy's account\(^1\) is long and circumstantial, describing step by step the development of the riot which began during a performance of *Aesop*: the intrusion of one Mr. Kelly upon the stage, his invasion of the green-room, his conflict with Sheridan, and the confusion he stirred up in the theatre at the play presented the following night. Mrs. Bellamy is herself directly involved in the proceedings, subjected to the pursuit and insult of the rioter, and a witness to events which even Sheridan himself did not see. Her memory of the disturbance, not unnaturally, appears to be vivid and detailed, producing a lively impression of the violence which so continually threatened the players of the mid-eighteenth century.

She was, however, not the only person to observe and record the riot. Attached to the company at the time as treasurer was Benjamin Victor, who in 1761 published his *History of the Theatres of London and Dublin*, covering the period from 1730 to 1760. Victor discusses the riots at even greater length than does Mrs. Bellamy, enlarging upon succeeding events and especially upon the trial which brought the rioter finally to justice and won a victory for Sheridan.\(^2\) Examination of Victor's history reveals at once that his account of the happenings described by Mrs. Bellamy is in complete agreement with her on most points. The correspond-

\(^1\) Pages 93-127.

\(^2\) Pages 93-127.
ence, indeed, is so exact that it suggests the possibility that Mrs. Bellamy used Victor as a source. This possibility cannot be entirely ruled out, but the evidence certainly is against such an assumption. We notice, in the first place, that in spite of exact correspondence in the sequence of events, Mrs. Bellamy and Victor disagree as to the name of the principal rioter. Victor calls him Fitzgerald. Mrs. Bellamy mentions a Fitzgerald as one of the rowdy group but assigns the major role to Mr. Kelly, which she would certainly not have done were she relying upon Victor's memory rather than her own. Incidental details, too, indicate that their memories are different. Victor, an observer from the sidelines, recalls exactly Sheridan's crucial words to Kelly (Fitzgerald). Mrs. Bellamy, who was in the thick of things upon the stage, says only, "He went forward, and addressed the audience . . . ; but what he said, my fright prevented me from hearing." On the other hand, she adds a number of curious little details of the sort that often are branded upon the mind in moments of emotional crisis. She describes, for example, how the orange thrown at Sheridan from the audience "dented the iron of the false nose which he wore,

3I, 161.

4Page 98.

5I, 156.
into his forehead,"\(^6\) and how the rioters on the second night, finding Sheridan had escaped, "revenged themselves upon the stuffing of Falstaff, which they stabbed in many places."\(^7\) We may therefore assume that her reporting of the riot is reliable and serves to supplement rather than to repeat that of Victor. In this connection, it is interesting to notice that Hitchcock, who produced a history of the Irish stage some years after the publication of the *Apology*, appears to have relied heavily upon Victor for many parts of his story of the riot but clearly referred as well to Mrs. Bellamy, whose name for the principal rioter he accepted.\(^8\)

Another instance of corroboration of the *Apology* may be mentioned, important in that it concerns a smaller and more personal incident and because the corroboration comes from one who was not given to accepting the word of Mrs. Bellamy. The *Apology* relates the story of an insult to the actress from one she thought her friend, Lady Coventry, formerly Maria Gunning, who apparently greeted Mrs. Bellamy's performance with laughter and who was forced to leave the theatre in the face of a storm of protest from the loyal audience.\(^9\) Tate Wilkinson, speaking in his *Memoirs* of the

\(^6\)I, 156.

\(^7\)I, 160.


\(^9\)III, 98-99.
power exercised by the audience in his day, says:

On an uproar, when Lady Coventry and several other persons of quality were obliged to quit the stage-box, on account of a supposed affront given to Miss Bellamy in Juliet, it was the audience and not any other force compelled those disturbers to leave the theatre.\textsuperscript{10}

This great power and privilege of the pit and the various disorders that resulted are often referred to in the theatrical literature of the day. Davies in his \textit{Life of Garrick} discusses at some length the problems that the manager faced in attempting to correct the situation and describes the crowded condition of the stage where "the battle of Bosworth Field has been fought in less space than that which is commonly allotted to a cock-fight."\textsuperscript{11} Wilkinson gives us a similar picture of a stage where Mrs. Cibber is dying in the lonely tomb of the Capulets, with two hundred persons in an amphitheatre across the back of the stage.\textsuperscript{12} Victor and Hitchcock describe the same conditions in Dublin, implying that they were perhaps even worse than in London, for they emphasize the indecencies and irregularities committed by idlers upon the stage.\textsuperscript{13} Mrs. Bellamy does not dwell on these matters, except in the case of the aforementioned riots, but offers some concrete illustration of the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{10}IV, 4.
\item \textsuperscript{11}I, 348.
\item \textsuperscript{12}Memoirs, IV, 110.
\item \textsuperscript{13}Victor, I, 94; Hitchcock, I, 170.
\end{itemize}
disorder. Her account of the insult offered her by Mr. St. Leger upon the stage in Dublin, her angry defense of herself, and the delighted applause led by Lord Chesterfield himself\textsuperscript{14} makes very real the indignities which forced Sheridan to bar members of the audience from the stage and by so doing to bring on the riots. She shows us too the grimmest aspect of an intolerable situation by describing the death of a sentinel, posted to protect the members of the company, at the hands of a drunken officer determined to force his way on-stage.\textsuperscript{15}

If Mrs. Bellamy appears to have accepted without unusual disturbance the irregularities of the audiences to which she played, she was certainly deeply impressed by their power to help or harm her, and she has given us an unusually vivid picture of the close relationship of player and spectator in the eighteenth century. We have already noticed two demonstrations of that intimacy in the cases of Lady Coventry and Mr. St. Leger, both of whom were disciplined by the audience. Other passages show the helplessness of manager and company in the face of any sort of public demand. That no player could remain upon the stage without the approval of the pit is evidenced by Mrs. Furnival's experience in Dublin, when the audience, shocked at her

\textsuperscript{14}I, 137.

\textsuperscript{15}I, 152.
appropriation of Miss Bellamy's costume, called out, "No more Furnival!" and caused her to be hastily replaced. Mrs. Bellamy was always ready to make use of this force as a means of gaining her own ends against the decisions of her managers. She describes at length at least two occasions when she forced herself into roles already assigned to Miss Wilford by reliance on the fact that "the public ... would not suffer a child of their favour to be oppressed." On the second occasion, she says, she not only refused to give up the role of Cordelia to Miss Wilford but had her own handbills printed and distributed among the audience, explaining the situation and announcing her readiness to play the role upon demand. Miss Wilford was driven from the stage as Mrs. Bellamy waited "ready dressed for the character," and the victory was hers. The chagrin of a management powerless in the face of such a rebellion can only be imagined.

Back of such indulgence of the public was a genuine and warrantable fear, not merely of loss of patronage, but, as the riots against Sheridan indicate, of actual physical violence. Mrs. Bellamy did not hesitate to turn even so grim a threat to her own advantage. The universal acceptance

16 I, 135.
17 IV, 142 and 145-146.
18 IV, 147.
19 Genest gives an even more extreme illustration of
of a condition almost incredible to us today is reflected in her frank account of the manner in which she arranged to be employed at Covent Garden in the period of her waning popularity. Sir James Brudenell, the Apology says, forced her upon the managers, who had already refused to hire her but who instantly produced a contract upon his demand. Not only were they impressed by Sir James's social position, but, writes Mrs. Bellamy, "They knew that he had great influence over all the young men of quality, many of whom would be happy in having an opportunity of breaking chandeliers, and pulling up benches."20

On the other hand, the eighteenth century audience could and did exert its great power in a warm and friendly manner. Any kind of crisis seems to have been taken by the pit as an opportunity to assert themselves. When Mrs. Bellamy fell upon the stage, "the audience took the alarm, and called out, with a kind of concern, for the curtain to be dropped."21 Nor could the play continue until, assured of her safety, they granted permission for her to proceed.

One of the most interesting insights given by the reliance upon the whims of the audience in the anecdote of Mrs. Hamilton's actually coming upon the stage as a second Lady Townley and pleading that she be allowed the part (IV, 660).

20 IV, 93.
21 III, 61.
Apology into the matter of audience participation concerns the gentleman appropriately called "Mr. Town," whom Mrs. Bellamy identifies as one Mr. Chitty. This "dictator to the pit" appears at intervals throughout the book as the spokesman, and as his name indicates, the personification of the public. Usually his pronouncements are benevolent in intent; certainly there seems never to have been any thought of resisting them. When Miss Bellamy made her first entrance upon any stage, it was Mr. Town who took pity on her stage-fright and ordered the curtain to be dropped until she could recover. He had the power to demand that a play be repeated or that an author be given a benefit night. He was fully aware that his authority was virtually absolute. When the point of an actor's sword touched Mrs. Bellamy's eye during a performance of Tamerlane, Mr. Town feared that she was badly injured, and, as she puts it, "he ordered, in a peremptory manner, the curtain to be dropped, and the piece to be concluded."

The character of "the pit" as portrayed by Mrs. Bellamy—whimsical, full of very personal loyalties to in-

\[22\text{i, 54.} \]
\[23\text{i, 54.} \]
\[24\text{II, 5.} \]
\[25\text{II, 138.} \]
\[26\text{VI, 50.} \]
dividual actors and actresses, always much more conscious of the virtues of the player than of those of the play—is naturally reflected in the stageways of a theatre that catered to popular taste even at the cost of the vehicle in hand. The Apology introduces incidentally a good many of the oddities of acting style and stage practice that resulted. Among the most curious of these is the fad for imitation, which, of course, reached its peak in the "teas" of Mr. Foote, at which he managed, under pretense of entertaining friends at tea, to present his famous representations of actors and actresses without provable infraction of the theatrical licensing laws. \(^{27}\) The popularity of Foote's imitations, and those of the younger Wilkinson, evidently caused the gradual encroachment of imitation upon acting. Wilkinson, for instance, mentions his success in playing the part of Shift in The Minor as an imitation of Mrs. Bellamy. \(^{28}\) She herself testifies to a further extension of the practice to the playing of parts in imitation of well-known members of the audience. Thus she recalls a performance of Woodward's in the guise of Mr. St. Leger, a notable dandy. \(^{29}\) More strik-

\(^{27}\) It is strange to notice that Mrs. Bellamy professes not to have understood this rather obvious maneuver. See I, 179. See also Wilkinson, Memoirs, I, 24.

\(^{28}\) Memoirs, III, 77.

\(^{29}\) II, 84.
ing still is the pride with which she describes her own adaptation of her lines as Portia to the voice and mannerisms of the Lord Chief Baron Bowes of Dublin, an achievement which delighted the Irish audience regardless of the strange effect it must have had upon Shakespeare's work.

The audience's insatiable appetite for spectacle, of course, produced other extraneous elements in the productions of Mrs. Bellamy's time. This facet of the eighteenth century theatre has been so thoroughly studied that we should not expect further evidence from the Apology, but certainly Mrs. Bellamy gives additional illustration of the importance attached to the spectacle by everyone in the theatre. In another connection, we have already mentioned her reference to Rich's confidence that the whole success of Romeo and Juliet rested upon the magnificent funeral procession which he had appended to it. Later in her career, she was with Rich at Covent-Garden during the run of an even more splendid addition to Shakespeare, "a most superb Representation of a Coronation, in the historical plays," in which she "walked as Queen every night." Genest testifies to the success of this production, showing that during that season (1761-2) Henry V, with the Coronation, was acted twenty-three times

30 I, 129-130.
31 II, 195. See above, p. 9.
32 IV, 31.
in succession. Mrs. Bellamy takes that success for granted but amuses us with a glimpse of Rich, so proud of his achievement that he determined to walk in the procession himself, only to be sadly prevented by illness even from seeing "the grand pageant he had spared no expense to render as magnificent as possible." The actress speaks as if the coronation procession was wearisome to the participants but never implies anything but agreement with the current assumption that any play could be improved by additions that might serve further to titillate the appreciative audience. Back in her early Dublin days, when she played in *All for Love* with Sheridan, she notes with satisfaction, "To render the piece as pleasing as possible, a dance of gladiators was introduced, as an entertainment to the enamoured Queen." This entertainment, she implies, almost rescued the piece from the bad effects of Sheridan's injudiciously assuming the role of Antony.

Of all the areas of stage usage, however, the most thoroughly explored by Mrs. Bellamy is that of costuming. Dress, indeed, was a major preoccupation with her, and the *Apology* contains numerous references to gowns, jewels, gloves, and so on. All such items the actress seems to recall in such fond detail that we are constantly reminded

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33 IV, 648.
34 IV, 31.
35 I, 180.
of the position she claimed as "sole dictatress among the polite ranks in the article of dress" during her years of greatest popularity, when fashionable ladies crowded to her for advice on costumes for masquerades or important festivities. The result of her interest in adornment is almost a history of costuming during her years upon the stage. It commences with her very first play when Rich, recognizing her as "a true daughter of Eve," favored her with the opportunity to choose new dresses for her debut. Her appearance, as a result, was, she says, "simply elegant, a circumstance not very customary," and she takes the occasion to give us the details of costuming for actresses at that period (c.1744). The passage, since it furnishes the background for a developing picture, is worth recalling in full:

The dresses of the theatrical ladies were at this period very indifferent. The Empresses and Queens were confined to black velvet, except on extraordinary occasions, when they put on an embroidered or tissue petticoat. The young ladies generally appeared in a cast gown of some person of quality; and as at this epoch the women of that denomination were not blest with the taste of the present age, and had much more economy, the stage brides and virgins often made their appearance in altered habits, rather soiled.

Perhaps Rich's indulgence immediately set a pattern of extravagant dress for the young actress. Certainly she pictures

36III, 1.
37I, 52.
38I, 54.
39I, 51-52.
herself as remaining always somewhat in advance of the current stage fashion and allows the impression to be created that important changes in costume tradition were due in some part to her influence. Since she herself was not exempt from the necessity for using second-hand gowns, her first step seems to have been to make them as elegant as possible. Within a few years (1746-1747) we see her in Ireland preparing for the part of Cleopatra in All for Love by adorning "a superb suit" of silver tissue, purchased from the Princess of Wales, with all the diamonds she could borrow from her local patronesses. The influence of her taste had apparently been strongly felt by her fellow-actress Mrs. Furnival, who, having been taught to despise black velvet, made off with the gown, leaving Miss Bellamy to appear in white satin and pearls. The extent to which the art of costume had then developed is excellently illustrated by Mrs. Bellamy's comment that Mrs. Furnival acted "without considering the impropriety of enrobing a Roman matron in the habiliments of the Egyptian Queen," for whom a fashionable silver gown strewed with diamonds was obviously the proper thing.

The importance of jewels to the actress is emphasized repeatedly in the Apology. Mrs. Bellamy's jewels are almost

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40r, 130-131.
41r, 134.
42r, 132.
her first concern in allocating her income. They are the last thing to go when she reaches desperate financial straits and the first thing to be purchased when she has a little extra money. They must, moreover, be real, and she scorns such actresses as Mrs. Furnival who "appeared in all the pomp of false jewels," her head like "a furze-bush stuck round with glow-worms."  

By 1753-1754 a new development had taken place in the matter of Mrs. Bellamy's costumes, and she was allowed a sum by the management for the purchase of her own dresses. By 1756 she had reached such a peak of magnificence that she was able to order through a friend in Paris "two tragedy dresses, the most elegant she could purchase," for her role of Statira in The Rival Queens. Mrs. Woffington, still dressed by the management, had a suit of the Princess Dowager of Wales, "not in the least soiled... but being a straw color... a dirty white, by candle-light." Mrs. Bellamy's appearance in a deep yellow Paris gown set off by a purple robe naturally precipitated a quarrel that left the two life-long enemies.

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43III, 195.
44II, 192.
45III, 84-85.
46II, 197.
47II, 205.
48II, 206.
Up to this point in her career Mrs. Bellamy apparently never questioned the rightness of costumes designed solely to make the actress beautiful and fashionable. But there are indications that she gradually became aware of the absurdities resulting from strict adherence to contemporary costumes, although this awareness came first through her critical view of the actor's dress. The episode of Ross's ridiculous costume for *The Prophetess*, she says, led toward the break-down of "one of the most absurd customs that was ever introduced on the English stage; that of dressing the Grecian and Roman heroes in full-bottomed perukes." At the same time she writes of her amusement at the famous French actor Le Quin (Lekain) "sawing a little Spanish hat and feather between his hands, in the character of Oreste, when every other part of the dress had been truly Grecian."

Probably Mrs. Bellamy, despite these seemingly acute observations, was not fully aware of the change that was taking place. Her remarks on Garrick's playing of Othello in Moorish costume fail to recognize the importance of the event. Instead she quotes Quin's comment that the actor looked like "Desdemona's little black boy." We may, of course, ascribe some of her lack of vision in this instance to personal prejudice, and she certainly over the years ab-

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49*III, 51.

50*VI, 22.
sorbed some of the growing feeling that costume should adorn the character and not merely the person. By the time she appeared in what was probably her greatest success, Dodsley's Cleone, first produced in December, 1758, she was able to take the step of discarding finery to accord with her conception of the simplicity of the heroine's character. It would be foolish to credit Mrs. Bellamy with undue perception in making this decision. There had always been recognition of the fact that some parts called for simpler costumes than others; we have just mentioned the accepted ideas about Cleopatra and Octavia. Then too we must be aware of her desire to achieve a sensation by novelty. As she says, "This [simplicity] was perfectly nouvelle," and "novelty has charms which cannot be resisted." But simplicity for an Octavia had still involved fashionable white satin and jewels, and all progress involves novelty. Whatever the motives held consciously by Mrs. Bellamy, the fact is that for the first time in her career she discarded adornment for the sake of effective characterization, daring even to eschew the hoop which fashion decreed, as she notes, even for professed nuns of the period.

Her choice of costume for Cleone was the result rather of her ability to sense and utilize for her own immediate advantage a new stage trend than of any fully reasoned

51 Genest, IV, 559.
52 Apology, III, 106. The remainder of the paragraph refers to the same page.
theory of the art of costuming. Even had she not in 1758 been closely approaching the rapid decline of her reputation, there is nothing in the opportunistic nature of Mrs. Bellamy as she reveals herself that would lead us to expect of her any consistent championing of an artistic cause. The Cleone departure remains an episode without significant sequel in her own practice. By the mid-1760's, when her declining fortunes had led her to the extreme of an engagement in Glasgow, she was again properly punctilious about the accepted form and scrupled to play the part of Lady Macbeth without the correct black garments, until her Scottish friends assured her that the lady's ghost always walked at Dunsinane in white satin. To some extent, her accounts are the more valuable for this seeming inconsistency. They show clearly the lingering of a strong tradition of costume design among those actors and actresses who were by nature or necessity impelled to follow convention, and at the same time they illuminate the prophetic innovations of those who could and would lead in a departure from tradition.

The areas of stage practice we have mentioned include much, but not all of the information Mrs. Bellamy has to offer about the mid-century theatre. There are many small allusions in the Apology which for a moment high-light isolated but interesting facts and events: a hint of the manner in which

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53 IV, 65.
the actor was affected by the changing pronunciations of the period; a testimony to the frequently low level of theatrical criticism; evidence of the popularity of pantomimes; and so on. Mrs. Bellamy's apt description of actor Ryan, the "wear and tear man," does indeed "point out the real state of the theatrical community." Her reported argument with Dodsley about her lack of "force" in playing the mad scene in Cleone underscores the tradition of "heavy" acting which produced what Victor called "quavering tragedy tones" in Colley Cibber and caused Tate Wilkinson to remember ruefully his own "flounder-like flouncing" in death scenes.

All in all, the Apology provides a surprisingly large fund of information about theatrical practices, informal in its presentation, made up of scraps and bits as they occur to the memory of the writer, but marked by that freshness of personal observation that can so effectively enliven historical accounts. Its existence leads naturally

54II, 40.
55IV, 184.
56II, 147.
57VI, 20-21.
58III, 105-106.
59Victor, II, 164. Note that Victor on p. 163 states that Colley Cibber taught his manner to all those playing with him, including Miss Bellamy.
60Genest, IV, 415.
in any evaluation of Mrs. Bellamy's work to an investigation of the usefulness of the *Apology* to students of her period. Accordingly, our next chapter will seek to determine to what extent writers since Mrs. Bellamy's time have recognized her memoirs as theatrically valuable.
As has been previously indicated, one reason for insisting upon consideration of Mrs. Bellamy's usefulness to the theatrical historian is that she has been weighed and found wanting by two men of outstanding authority in the field. The first of these was Genest, who included among his notes for the season of 1784-5 a brief comment upon the Apology. His judgment is concise: "It is certainly entertaining; but in a theatrical point of view it is of no great use, as she is very far from correct, and seldom gives a date." Undoubtedly this pronouncement reflects the particular interest of a dedicated theatrical chronologist, who must surely have been disappointed by the uselessness of the Apology for his purposes. The same sentiment appears, however, in the note appended to the listing of the Apology in the authoritative Bibliographical Account of English Theatrical Literature by Robert William Lowe, published in 1888. Lowe is, if anything, more unequivocal than Genest

1IV, 343.
and says simply, "It is of no value theatrically." It may be surmised that Lowe's verdict relied heavily upon Genest's opinion. Other parts of the notes from which these comments are taken are so strikingly alike that Lowe's remarks appear to summarize Genest's. If such is the case, we have an established judgment proceeding from the opinion of a scholar most unlikely to view the Apology favorably—and a judgment more absolute in its second expression than in its first. In any case the verdict has remained undisputed, even Stauffer, whose concern was, after all, entirely with the Apology as life-writing, having failed to make any defense of it in the area of history. The question may therefore appropriately be asked, "Has the Apology actually been of any value as a theatrical source book?"

It would probably be well to notice immediately the most extensive, and least significant, use to which the biography has been put. As we might expect, it has served over the years to supply material for a good many sketches of George Anne Bellamy in collections of theatrical biography. These brief treatments of her life should probably be included in this section, because their interest depends so much upon accounts of her stage career. They are, however,

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2 Page 17.

3 E.g. Genest writes, "She furnished Bell the book-seller with what materials she could. . . ." (IV, 343); Lowe says, "She furnished the materials for her celebrated 'Apology' to Bell, the bookseller. . . ." (p. 17).
for the most part quite superficial. They are popular and occasionally sensational in treatment and are focused primarily upon the intriguing and scandalous personality of the actress. The best of them show that their authors are thoroughly grounded in theatrical history and are interested in Mrs. Bellamy as a representative actress. Although in greater or less degree, they are all heavily dependent upon the Apology and relatively uncritical of the material they derive from it.

Biographies of this sort begin in The Thespian Dictionary, published anonymously in 1802, and continue through John Galt's Lives of the Players, 1831; Percy Fitzgerald's Romance of the English Stage, 1874; Henry Barton Baker's English Actors from Shakespeare to Macready, 1879; Brander Matthews' and Laurence Hutton's Actors and Actresses of Great Britain and the United States, 1886; John Fyvie's Comedy Queens of the Georgian Era, 1906; Lewis S. Melville's Stage Favourites of the Eighteenth Century, 1928; and Otis Skinner's Mad Folk of the Theatre, 1928; to Walter J. MacQueen-Pope's Ladies First, 1952. Of these the sketches by Galt, Baker, Fyvie, and Melville are conscientious reviews of Mrs. Bellamy's life, using frequent quotations from the Apology but also giving some evidence of supplementary investigation. The Thespian Dictionary gives us a simple condensation of the Apology but fails to indicate its source. Fitzgerald's sketch is, as he intended it to be, almost entirely made up
of long quotations from the *Apoloogy* in an attempt to give the actress's life in her own words. The same Percy Fitz­gerald, one of the most prolific writers among stage historians, is likewise the author of the essay included in the collection edited by Matthews and Hutton. This mass of theatrical biography, filling five volumes is remarkable in a scholarly plan which calls for life stories written by "experts" and supplemented by extracts from "sources not generally drawn upon." In the case of Mrs. Bellamy, Fitzgerald's concise statement of the life is followed by pages of quotation from Galt, Doran, Wilkinson, Dibdin, and Reynolds. The life itself, although it uses some supplementation from Johnson, Chetwood, and Lewes, is, however, largely a judicious condensation of the *Apology*. The restraint with which the memoirs are treated and the valuable material appended make this the most reliable and admirable of the biographies here listed. Quite in contrast are the works of Otis Skinner and W. J. MacQueen-Pope. In both of these books, only the most spectacular, scandalous, or dramatic events of the *Apology* are treated. Skinner develops them with unprecedented exaggeration and with entirely fictional elements. MacQueen-Pope relates Mrs. Bellamy's life in a tawdry style

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4I, vi.
5I, 211-212.
6I, 212 ff.
and with a multiplicity of almost incredible inaccuracies. The extreme unreliability of these recent works is perhaps evidence that the subject has been treated too often and can now be made attractive in a new volume only by increasing sensationalism.

Omitted from the list above and reserved for special consideration is Dr. John Doran's *Annals of the English Stage*. It deserves such consideration partly because the biographical sketch of Mrs. Bellamy it contains represents both the strengths and the weaknesses of the best treatments listed above and partly because the work has attained thorough recognition as theatrical history. It is an imposing biographical series, originally published in 1864, which concerns itself with stage personalities from Betterton to Kean. Twenty-four years after its publication Robert W. Lowe chose to edit and revise it, and in the preface of the new edition Lowe referred to the *Annals* as the "standard popular history of the English stage." The serious and encyclopedic intent of these volumes, as contrasted with most of the foregoing group, results in the relegation of Mrs. Bellamy to a minor position, determined rather by her theatrical importance than by the sensational

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7 He says, for example, that in Ireland Mrs. Bellamy "played for Calcraft, the Dublin manager, with whom she lived openly." (p. 210) This is the only reference to John Calcraft. Such glaring errors seem to indicate that the account was hastily compiled from secondary sources.

8 I, v.
value of her life. She appears as one of "A Bevy of Ladies" in a chapter devoted to the actresses of the mid-eighteenth century. Here again is a condensation of the Apology, showing some supplementation from Doran's broad knowledge of the period but more often relying unquestioningly upon Mrs. Bellamy for the details. The sketch in the Annals relates closely to some of the other biographical treatments in its highly-colored and often extravagant style, which leads Doran to include in his account such a statement as the following, almost totally inaccurate and couched in terms like Skinner's at his worst:

...To say that she was a syren who lured men to destruction, is to say little, for she went down to ruin with each victim; but she rose from the wreck more exquisitely seductive and terribly fascinating than ever, to find a new prey, whom she might ensnare and betray.  

Neither Doran's usually intelligent treatment of the Apology nor the lapses from virtue which result from his popularizing touch, however, are so significant for our purposes as the identification of the editor. Here we have Lowe choosing as worthy of his edition and praising as a standard history, if indeed a popular one, a work which relies heavily in one section upon the Apology. Yet in the same year, 1888, was published his bibliography with the note regarding the Apology's theatrical worthlessness. Since no foot-note by

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9III, 84-114.

10III, 91.
the editor contests the validity of Doran's pages devoted to Mrs. Bellamy we must assume that his judgment did not refer to its utility as a source for information about the actress and her activities.

We have reserved for a later section of this paper consideration of the *Apology* as pure life-writing. At that point we shall notice the areas of dubious reliability which show the unwisdom of some of the aforementioned writers in accepting uncritically the self-portrayal of the *Apology*. For the moment it is sufficient to observe that the *Apology* has frequently been called upon to supply autobiographical material and that such material has thereby been credited with value as illuminating theatrical history. We may then turn to the areas already studied as most significant to theatrical history and consider any indications of their usefulness.

It may immediately be said that the chronology of Mrs. Bellamy has been completely disregarded by theatrical historians. Since it is in fact almost nonexistent, we are not surprised to find that no writer has cited the *Apology* as an authority upon the dating or sequence of theatrical events, unless we can consider as exceptions the dating or misdating of her birth and first stage appearance as given in various biographical sketches. In the areas of theatrical portraiture and stage practice, however, the story is different.

A survey of pertinent articles in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, for instance, shows at once that Mrs.
Bellamy's records of her fellow players have been sufficiently regarded to be used in even such brief biographies. The Apology is listed as a reference work for at least three Dictionary of National Biography articles in addition to that concerned with Mrs. Bellamy herself. The life of James Quin repeats one of her anecdotes and quotes fully from the Apology a characteristic note from Quin to Ryan;\(^1\) the Rival Queens quarrel is recounted in some detail in the essay on Peg Woffington;\(^2\) and the Woodward sketch refers to the Bellamy-Woodward domestic arrangements as well as to the preservation in the Apology of an otherwise unknown literary work of the actor, The Seasons.\(^3\) Brief though these references are, they amply confirm the fact that researchers do turn to Mrs. Bellamy's Apology for certain kinds of information about her theatrical companions.

When we begin to examine the volumes of theatrical history covering Mrs. Bellamy's period, it is immediately clear that her usefulness is slight to the historian dealing with broad fields of investigation or interested in general outlines of theatrical development. Most standard histories are too condensed to allow excursion into the minutiae which are Mrs. Bellamy's specialty. For the author whose work is long and detailed or concentrated upon a limited area,

1. Joseph Knight, s. v. "James Quin."
2. Joseph Knight, s. v. "Margaret Woffington."
on the other hand, these theatrical bits can assume importance. At least four major histories can be cited to illustrate the utilization of her material, and in all four the emphasis is similar, showing the reliance of the researcher upon her testimony as to the actual process of stage production.

The earliest of these works, Percy Fitzgerald's *New History of the English Stage* (1882), offers an excellent statement of the point we are making. Fitzgerald quotes from the *Apology* at some length but carefully prefaces these excerpts with this comment:

"... in her [Mrs. Bellamy's] recollections--making due allowance for the exaggerations of a vain and beautiful creature--there are some curious and useful incidents of life 'behind the scenes'."

As "useful" he chooses to cite accounts of the intellectual gatherings at Quin's *petit soupers*; of Mr. Town and his dictation of theatrical schedules; of the varying pronunciations used by Quin and Garrick; of the Bellamy-Woffington feud; and of Mrs. Bellamy's own startling abductions. The inclusion of the last is perhaps surprising, so personal are they in nature and therefore so subject to the "exaggerations of a vain and beautiful creature," but he treats them as a phenomenon of the time, not unrelated to the stage productions that so often mirror similar elopements, and he presses home his point by emphasizing Quin's explanation.

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14II, 197.

15II, 197-203.
to the audience of Miss Bellamy's sudden disappearance, couched appropriately in terms of the play then being acted. At the same time, it is likely that Fitzgerald was to some extent motivated by the appeal of the actress's personal history, so familiar to him—already given at length in his Romance of the English Stage and again to be repeated in his article for the collection edited by Matthews and Hutton.

Among the authors of more specialized works to follow Fitzgerald's lead in consulting the Apology is George C. Odell, whose Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving appeared in 1920. In discussing the employment of spectacular devices in productions of Shakespearean drama, he makes good use of Mrs. Bellamy's story of manager Rich's pride in the funeral procession annexed to Romeo and Juliet. This is a particularly interesting reference in the light it throws upon both the flaws and the values of the Apology for the researcher. The passage mentioned is, as we have seen, faulty chronologically, the whole episode of conflict between Rich and the actress being associated with an opening performance at Covent-Garden in 1753 in which she actually took no part.

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17 See above, p. 55.
19 See above, p. 9.
Odell even reiterates her statement that she made her debut as Juliet, but the transferred error is insignificant in the face of the effective enforcement Mrs. Bellamy lends to the point he is making. There is little reason to doubt that some such exchange did take place, perhaps at another performance of the same play. Certainly the episode expresses perfectly the manager's feeling of the overwhelming importance of pageantry to the audiences of the time.

Odell's principal interest in the *Apology*, however, lies in its description of stage costume. In his survey of the period of Garrick, he includes a chapter on costumes, beginning with a section called "Testimony of Mrs. Bellamy." Like Fitzgerald he is careful to avoid any appearance of credulousness and brushes a great part of the *Apology* aside by terming it "that very entertaining romance." But he goes on to say, "This authoress-actress ... avails herself of the privilege of her sex and reveals more of costume-convention on the middle and late Eighteenth Century stage than does any of her male contemporaries." He then cites, with extensive quotation, virtually every passage in the *Apology* containing reference to costume. Mrs. Bellamy is, indeed, the principal contributor to the chapter, her three pages being followed by six which report the combined recollections

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20I, 447-450.

21Page 447.
of five actors: Garrick, Macklin, Wilkes, Cumberland, and Wilkinson.\textsuperscript{22}

It is her information about costuming, again, that recommends itself to Allardyce Nicoll and is used in his \textit{History of Late Eighteenth Century Drama} (1927). Here the dress of actresses in the early part of the half-century is illustrated by quotation from Mrs. Bellamy's classic account of the gowns worn by Cleopatra and Octavia in \textit{All for Love}.\textsuperscript{23}

Had none of these historians noticed Mrs. Bellamy, however, her reputation would be safe as the result of a single publication. Alwin Thaler's \textit{Shakespeare to Sheridan}, published in 1922 by the Harvard University Press, is a unique work, which, by the nature of the author's purposes, is better suited to the utilization of the \textit{Apology} than any other we have mentioned. Rather than a standard history of the drama, Thaler has written a book about the theatre itself, concentrating his attention upon what he calls "the phenomena of the living stage"\textsuperscript{24} and tracing through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the continuing traditions of Shakespeare's theatre. Since he lists among

\textsuperscript{22} Pages 451-456.

\textsuperscript{23} Page 37. Cf. \textit{Apology}, I, 130 ff.

\textsuperscript{24} Page 5.
the topics to be handled

... playhouse finance and administration; the pay and general status of playwrights and players; the star system; general costs and problems of production, of costumes, scenery, and properties; the personal equation as it finds expression in the history of great players and managers; and, finally, the audiences, their riots and their generous deeds,

the application of the Apology to his purposes may readily be seen. Shakespeare to Sheridan is amazing in its richness of detail, and, of course, the role of the Apology among its sources is a small one. Yet the variety and aptness of the references are most significant. In five separate citations Thaler draws upon Mrs. Bellamy for substantiating evidence concerning the authority of the playwright in matters of casting;25 Garrick's occasional lapses of judgment in choosing plays;26 the supreme importance of the "benefit" to a player's financial condition;27 the generosity of actors in contributing to their fellows' benefit nights;28 the tradition of "possession of parts";29 the ability of the public


to dictate casting;\textsuperscript{30} the practice of "papering the house";\textsuperscript{31} the continuing custom of special performances for royalty;\textsuperscript{32} and the use of "cast gowns" as costumes.\textsuperscript{33} Incidentally, to one familiar with the \textit{Apology}, in reading \textit{Shakespeare to Sheridan}, there is the constant reminder of other bits of testimony which Thaler must have been tempted to use—on theatre riots, on Garrick's talent as a manager, on the managerial quarrels at Covent Garden in the late sixties, and so on and on.

In all of the foregoing examples and particularly in the last, we see proof positive of the injustice of the verdict passed upon the \textit{Apology} by Genest and Lowe. Far from having no value theatrically, it is a mine of information which has as yet scarcely been touched by historians. However, its use in scholarly endeavor is on the increase in this century. The major values of the work theatre-wise seem to be more and more recognized, so that as the long series of superficial biographical treatments begins to lose significance in the 1920's, a new emphasis appears in the books of Odell and Thaler, and the \textit{Apology} receives the accolade of respectability as a reliable reference.

\textsuperscript{30} Page 146. Cf. \textit{Apology}, IV, 146.
\textsuperscript{31} Page 149. Cf. \textit{Apology}, II, 114.
\textsuperscript{32} Page 173. Cf. \textit{Apology}, IV, 183.
There are some indications that it is likely to retain that status, although to cite them we must move slightly away from the field of theatrical history. For example, in 1931 Charles Harold Gray extracted from the Apology evidence for use in his study of theatrical criticism to the end of the eighteenth century. The pit critics coming under his scrutiny, he relates Mrs. Bellamy's story of her debut and the peremptory demands of Mr. Town. "The Town," he says, was "a power more to be feared than the writings of scholars." At a later point in his book he shows that the submissiveness of the reviewers to popular opinion too frequently resulted in absentee reviewing, again calling upon Mrs. Bellamy, this time for her anecdote of Dr. John Hill, who had never seen her play in Romeo and Juliet, in spite of the encomiums he had bestowed in print upon her performance.

Most recently the Apology has aided a student of theatrical literature in an interpretation of a piece of the Rosciad. Arthur Waldhorn, writing for Modern Language Notes in 1948, proposed a reidentification of the actress referred to in Churchill's lines:

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34 Theatrical Criticism in London to 1795.
37 "Charles Churchill and Statira," MLN, LXIII (February, 1948), 114-118.
Ross (a misfortune which we often meet)
Was fast asleep at dear Statira's feet;
Statira, with her hero to agree,
Stood on her feet as fast asleep as he. 38

Noting that three editors of the Rosciad have unanimously declared Statira to be Mrs. Pritchard, but that she never played the part of Statira except with Powell, Mr. Waldhorn offers as his candidate George Anne Bellamy and quotes what he considers her own evidence against herself, written of a particular performance of The Rival Queens:

I, as usual played Statira . . . Mr. Ross who played Alexander, happened that night to be in one of his active dispositions, and intending to do the part justice, which was fully in his power when he did not choose to walk over the course. 39

The acuteness of Mrs. Bellamy's comment upon Ross's acting habits, which so closely agrees with Churchill's judgment, is so evident that it has perhaps attracted Waldhorn's attention unduly to the actress herself. However striking may be the passage quoted, he is probably wrong in his hypothesis. 40

The implication in which we are interested

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38 The Rosciad (Laver's edition), I, 28, ll. 629–632.
39 III, 83.
40 A likelier candidate would be Mrs. Sarah Ward.
Although Mrs. Bellamy did play the part with Ross in 1759, she was absent from London at the time when Churchill was making his rounds of the theatres and writing The Rosciad (Genest, x, 449 ff.). An early rejoinder to The Rosciad, entitled The Churchilliad (1761), attacked the lines in question, saying incidentally, "I never saw anything like sleeping, either in him [Ross] or Mrs. Ward." (p. 34)
Following out this suggestion, we find that Mrs. Ward played with Ross in The Rival Queens in March, 1760 (Genest, IV, 592), a more likely date for Churchill's observations. It
remains, however. When Mrs. Bellamy is seriously cited in the pages of a scholarly journal, the charges of worthlessness and unreliability must assume their proper perspective, as incomplete and prejudiced appraisals of a work which, misleading to the inexpert, becomes a useful tool to the discerning.

Is also probably fair to note that whereas Mrs. Bellamy was generally acknowledged to be unusually bright and vivacious, she herself gave us a picture of Mrs. Ward stolidly adjusting her gloves in a highly dramatic moment upon the stage (Apology, II, 113-114).
When we have established the existence of values in Mrs. Bellamy's *Apology* for the student of the theatre and the drama, the question of its worth as a purely literary achievement remains largely unanswered. In turning now to study this aspect of her case we are undoubtedly following a line of investigation which would have pleased the actress herself. Even a casual perusal of the autobiography is sufficient to show that she was possessed of literary ambitions and sought whenever she could to make the reader aware of her skill. We shall have occasion later to point out in some detail the carefully emphasized narrative techniques of the *Apology*. For the present, it is sufficiently indicative of her aims to notice her habit of allusion to the great men of literature with whom she shares interests, sensibilities, and skills. As a child she is of such a literary turn of mind that she fancies herself in congenial colloquy with Alexander Pope. At Quin's parties she passes ecstatic hours of intellectual communion with Smollett and Thompson, among others.

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1 I, 36.
2 II, 1.
She shows herself to be quite capable of discerning a flaw in lines by Edward Young—and of directing the author's attention to his error. She suggests to her readers that her story may at times seem to be that of a "female Crusoe." But her principal allegiance is to Lawrence Sterne, whom she repeatedly invokes as a kindred spirit and whose sentimental successes she openly, if not always fortunately, emulates. To round out the portrait of the actress turned litterateur, she speaks in the Apology of a comedy upon which she worked until interrupted by ill-health, and of topical verse she composed for newspaper publication.

With these tastes and ambitions, George Anne Bellamy must have been well pleased with most of the comments upon the Apology printed immediately after its publication, and it is only unfortunate that she could not know of praise awaiting her after the passage of a century and a half. We have already noticed the striking absence of any significant critical commentary over the period intervening between the contemporary reviews and the assessment of the Apology by Stauffer in 1940. It now becomes important to analyze

3II, 134.
4IV, 120.
5Cf. II, 142; III, 10 and 148; IV, 141.
6IV, 191.
7VI, 56.
8See above, p. ix.
more fully this very limited body of critical writing in order that we may have some point of reference in our own consideration of the work.

The periodicals of the early months of 1785 gave an amount of space to Mrs. Bellamy's work quite in accord with the popularity evidenced by its successive editions. A good deal of the space is taken up in ways that are of no critical importance except in the approbation implied, for the papers seized upon the Apology as a source of interesting copy. With or without preliminary critical writing, a magazine often made use of the work over several months. The Gentleman's Magazine, for example, devoted a part of each of five issues to summarization of and commentary upon the Apology, with exceedingly generous quotation from its anecdotes.\(^9\) The European Magazine followed up a preliminary survey of the book in its February issue by printing in the next two months seven directly quoted anecdotes.\(^10\)

The interest and approval revealed by this practice is echoed by the reviews themselves. The critics' acclaim was, in fact, such that by June Mrs. Bellamy was able to collect and append to her sixth volume an impressive array of notices applauding her efforts. From them we may judge

\(^9\)LV (1785), 174 (March), 204-208 (April), 294-298 (June), 423-424 (July), 449-450 (September).

\(^10\)VII (1785), 97 (February), 180-182 (March), 251-253 (April).
what virtues the actress's contemporaries found in her work. There is almost universal comment upon the moral benefit to be derived from the Apology and recurrent mention of the amusement to be gained from her glimpses of persons and events of her era. Of greater importance to us, however, are tributes to characteristics more closely related to literary art. Several reviews mention favorably the style of the authoress, The English Review stating that "her capacity is very considerable; and we are disposed to a knowledge, that her composition is generally natural and easy and on particular occasions, solemn and forcible," while The Westminster Magazine speaks of the animation of her style and of her talent for "keen and close satire." The European Magazine points out the effective contrast of mood in the Apology, "where light and shade, properly disposed, present, if not a masterly, at least a faithful picture of what Shakespeare calls 'The web of life' . . . ." The Monthly Review applauds her skill in portraiture, saying, "Many of her characters are happily and justly delineated; particularly Quin and the Duchess of Queensberry," and approves her many "reflections, often truly moral, and . . . agreeably tinctured with female delicacy." Again two re-

11V (February, 1785), 89.
12XIII (March, 1785), 156.
13VII (February, 1785), 97.
14LXXII (March, 1785), 183.
viewers in The English Review and The Westminster Magazine specifically mention her success in sentimental expression. According to The English Review, "Mrs. Bellamy knows how to communicate the exquisite tone of her feelings." 15 All of these comments are found in the reviews printed in Volume Six as a testimonial to the highly favorable reception of the book and as evidence of what Mrs. Bellamy calls "the intrinsic merit of the Work." 16 Receiving so much approval, she would appear to have had reason for pride.

These reprinted reviews, however, represent only a portion of the true picture and may be rather interestingly supplemented. The London periodicals of the first months of 1785, as we have said, do testify to a vast interest in the publication but are not so entirely laudatory as Mrs. Bellamy would lead us to believe. Of them all, The Gentleman's Magazine, to which she does not refer, gives her the greatest amount of space, but in all the pages devoted to the Apology there is just one genuinely favorable comment, to the effect that the work "may afford a useful lesson to the young and giddy of her own sex." 17 The March and April issues contain an eight-page condensation of the Apology. 18

15V (February, 1785), 81.
16VI, 171.
17LV (March, 1785), 205.
18LV, 204-208 and 294-298.
In addition, the March and July issues print extracted anecdotes from the *Apology*. In June the appearance of Volume Six is greeted. A subsidiary attraction of the June issue is the publication of three addresses (all in abominable verse) written for Mrs. Bellamy's benefit performance at Covent-Garden that month. In spite of all this attention, with the exception already mentioned the reviewer for *The Gentleman's Magazine* has only fault to find with the details of the work. In April he appends to the condensation a series of questions as to the truth of particular episodes. He finds it hard to believe Mrs. Bellamy's story of the kidnapping by Lord Byron and quotes a popular bit:

Ma Belle Amie, I prythee say  
The first time thou wert stolen away  
Without a bonnet,  
Why didst thou in the coach sit quiet?  
Why didst thou not kick up a riot?  
O fie upon it.

Moreover he argues that her claim of warm friendship with prominent and highly respectable noblewomen is incredible; that the story of the death of her great admirer, Lord Downe, as a private on sentry duty is amazingly inaccurate, the noble Lord having died of wounds after the battle of Campen,

19*LV*, 174 and 519.

20*LV*, 468-469.

21*LV*, 449-450 and 476.

22*LV*, 296.
in the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel; that no one who genuinely wishes to commit suicide does so by sitting down and waiting to be covered by the tide! 23 The consideration of the sixth volume is again largely composed of questions as to the reliability of the information she has to offer. Here the reviewer doubts, for example, her tale of Sir Thomas Robinson (who was mistaken for Robinson Crusoe), saying he has heard the story "often related, but not of him," and likewise suggests that the anecdote of the King's receiving the news of victory at Culloden while he was attending the theatre cannot be true," as Lord Bury, who brought the express, arrived, the Gazette says, in the morning." 24 Finally, a letter from a reader comments further upon "mistakes in Mrs. Bellamy's Apology." This writer suggests the admittedly unprovable possibility that George Anne's father was not Lord Tyrrawley, but one Mr. Hartstonge of Dublin. Next he protests vigorously against the actress's claims about her own birth-date, terming the "extract from the register" printed in Volume Six "laughable" and pointing to the fact that it is ostensibly a record of the non-existent parish of Fingall in Ireland. And he ends with the testimony of "all the gentleman's friends" that Mr. Crump, at the time he knew George Anne, could not have been

23LV, 297-298.

24LV (June, 1785), 468-469.
more than twenty-eight or thirty years old, in spite of her picture of him as a man of fifty. The impression left with the reader of this periodical must be that it considered the Apology curious and newsworthy, but not very respectable.

In fairness to Mrs. Bellamy, it should be said that the reviews in Volume Six are accurately quoted, and the praise she claims was indeed generously given. It is noticeable, however, that at certain points, she employed an immemorial advertising technique by excising undesirable portions of the reviews. Her quotation from The Monthly Review is a good case in point. She gives us four short paragraphs, entirely favorable in tone. Actually the review contained two other passages not so favorable. The first paragraph is fairly lengthy and, after the quoted portion, informs the reader that the book is "an agreeable mixture of Colley Cibber's Apology and that of Con Phillips." It proceeds to allude humourously to George Anne's "connexions," which were, says the reviewer, "all three marriages: marriages not valid on this earthly globe; but, unlike all other marriages, made in Heaven!" In the same way, Mrs. Bellamy has carefully omitted from the middle of the third paragraph a sentence which condemns her acrimony against John Calcraft (whose death she openly desired) as "shock-

25LV (September, 1785), 703.
26LXXII (March, 1785), 182.
ingly reprehensible."\(^{27}\)

The same thing occurs in her quotation from The Critical Review, in which she omits a comment upon her "moral reflections" to the effect that they are "often trite or misapplied, and their return at the end of every letter, rather tends to disgust than to instruct."\(^{28}\) In this same magazine there appears, moreover, the only thorough damnation of the Apology. The single omission just mentioned had after all been a very small part of a critique that gave much praise to Mrs. Bellamy's book for its "fidelity and candour", its moral tendency, its spirited style, its anecdotes of the stage, and so on.\(^{29}\) But in June of 1785, there was published a series of letters to Mrs. Bellamy from the pen of Edward Willett, the lawyer she blamed so bitterly for her ill-success in obtaining her due from Woodward's estate.\(^{30}\) In this paper we shall have more to say about Willett's counter-charges. It is enough now to notice that he accuses Mrs. Bellamy of extreme duplicity and that he not only attempts to disprove her allegations by citing facts and figures on his handling of the Woodward estate but also, in his anger, adds descriptions of Mrs.

\(^{27}\)LXXII, 188.

\(^{28}\)LIX (April, 1785), 271.

\(^{29}\)LIX, 270-272.

\(^{30}\)Letters Addressed to Mrs. Bellamy, Occasioned by her Apology.
Bellamy and quotations from letters of hers that present a picture far from pretty. The Critical Review's June issue makes no mention of the new volume of the Apology, an omission that would be surprising in view of their earlier enthusiasm, were it not that in its place we find a note on Willett's Letters which includes this admission, perhaps regretful:

The descriptions of the lady in some situations, and her letters in others, leave impressions very different from those produced by the Apology; but, as no suspicion of stain seems now to rest on the present author [Willett], we shall only remark, that we seem to have conversed with this representative of an eastern princess at a humble distance, with the assistance of an interpreter.31

Without being so condemnatory, The European Magazine somewhat shifted its position on the Apology and in explaining the change supplied a little food for thought. The review (in the February issue), extensively quoted by Mrs. Bellamy, claimed that "these volumes ... cannot fail to suit the tastes of the day," praised her use of "light and shade," offered no adverse criticism.32 When in June the reviewer turned to consider Volume Six, however, he wrote, with an air of patience worn thin,

Though the same motive (a wish to relieve distress) which induced us to speak favorably of the former publication, still prevents our being extreme to mark what is amiss in the supplement; yet justice

31 LIX, 478.
32 VII, 97-98.
obliges us to observe, that it is considerably inferior both in matter and manner to the others.33 Equivocal as this is, it forces us to remember the many expressions of pity and the wishes for better fortune contained in other reviews and to wonder to what extent compassion guided the pens of the critics.

Certainly there are other indications that once the first months of popularity were past, the Apology began to decline in reputation. When, two years later, the biography of Sophia Baddeley came from the press,34 its association with the Bellamy Apology brought renewed references to that work, but in a different tone. The Monthly Review now notices that in both books "many are the names introduced, and many the reputations that are hack'd and hew'd, past all mending."35 A periodical which had not been in existence at the time of the original publication of the Apology took the occasion to include Mrs. Bellamy's book in its condemnation of the Baddeley Memoirs, which it termed a "composition . . . unworthy of criticism" written "in emulation of the pious and sentimental labours of Mrs. Bellamy . . . ."36

33 VII, 427.
34 Mrs. Elizabeth SteeLe, Memoirs of Mrs. Sophia Baddeley (1787).
35 LXXVII (June, 1787), 83.
36 General Magazine and Impartial Review, I (June, 1787), 20.
Expressions of opinion about the Apology are largely confined to the periodicals, and we have little opportunity to learn what response, if any, it evoked in literary circles. It is unfortunate for the reputation of the work that one writer did take note of it. Horace Walpole, never notable for the quality of compassion, took great delight in ridiculing the memoirs. Even at the height of their popularity he saw no good in them and, in writing to a friend, included a faintly scurrilous quatrain on the downfall of a silly maiden, prefacing it as follows:

I have just written the life of a young lady in verse; in which, perhaps I have too much affected brevity, though, had I chosen to spin it out by a number of proper names, more falsehoods, and a tolerable quantity of anachronisms, there was matter enough to have furnished as many volumes as Miss Bellamy's Memoirs. 37

To the same correspondent a few weeks later he wrote concerning a new study of Grecian art, "I read such books as I do Mrs. Bellamy's and believe in them no more." 38 With the passage of two years, Mrs. Bellamy had become for Walpole almost a symbol of literary ineffectuality. When Earl Harcourt sent him a sample of the writings of Lady Craven, whom Walpole heartily disliked, the wit wrote in reply, "I have just received the honour of your Lordship's letter,

38 Toynbee, XIII, 292.
with the enclosed apology of 'Lady George Anne Belle Amie', which I return, and which your Lordship charitably only calls absurd."

Thus the happy reception of the Apology seems to have gradually subsided into a critical attitude of mingled apathy and scorn, the fortunes of the book following those of the authoress, who after a few months of acclaim and generous assistance sank back into the morass of obscurity, misery, and debt, to die within three years in a debtor's prison. Yet decline of reputation in no way proves that the values found at first in the Apology were purely the invention of benevolent critics. It seems rather that the longer the book remained under the scrutiny of the public, the more reasons were found for wondering to what extent the reader was being hoaxed. In confusion and uncertainty, the reaction was often to reject the entire work, either regretfully, in the manner of The Monthly Review, or angrily, as in The General Magazine. In the early months of its success, a lady admirer of the Apology sent to The Universal Magazine a poetic tribute to Mrs. Bellamy in which she asserted

These well wrote pages, real scenes impart,
And claim soft pity from the feeling heart.  

39 Toynbee, XIV, 14.
40 According to Wilkinson, who should have known the facts. See his Memoirs, II, 202.
41 LXXVI (April, 1785), 203.
One wonders whether "Julia" continued to consider the pages "well wrote" as accumulating doubts about many of the "real scenes" began to undermine her trust. Yet perhaps a number of factual inaccuracies are not enough to condemn Mrs. Bellamy's self-portrayal, any more than chronological errors destroy the value of her theatrical notes. The style, the ability to evoke tender feelings, the valued reflections remain, nor has more than a small portion of the anecdotes, formerly thought so amusing and informative, been called in question. In the absence of any defense against a series of charges the case against Mrs. Bellamy seems almost to have prevailed by default.

The case, however, has been definitely reopened by Stauffer. In truth, his remarks about the Apology are very brief, as must be the case in a survey of a century of biographical writing. Scarcely longer than some of the early reviews, they are especially significant not in length or penetration but in the fact that they unearth a work so long disregarded and find it acceptable in the light of modern biographical study. Without question, if Mrs. Bellamy achieves a place of importance among the ranks of memoirists, to Stauffer will be due the credit for her discovery.

It is interesting to notice what changes in critical emphasis seem to have been produced through the passage of a century and a half and through the increasingly specialized study of life-writing. Many of the aspects of the Apology
which appealed to contemporary reviewers remain attractive to Stauffer, but the appraisal is no longer fragmentary. Without interest in the uplifting nature of the work or the secret histories which the readers of the eighteenth century loved to study in isolation, Stauffer, as he must, concentrates his attention upon the life as a life and judges its anecdotes, its reflections, its portraiture entirely in their relation to the success of the *Apology* as biographical art. His criteria for determining that success are not extensively worked out in his book, but in the simpler outlines are sufficiently clear. The key-word for Stauffer is life. Early in his study he remarks, "The great biographies. . . have not survived because they present a mass of facts, but because they present a living person." 42 This sense of life, he insists, is achieved only by true art.

Biography . . . may legitimately be criticized . . . as the work of the creative artist. It must necessarily try to state the facts, but it must also be moving, convincing. It must have life to be a life. . . . To create the illusion of a career being lived over again requires art, art of the highest order; art akin to that of the dramatist and novelist. 43

Upon this basis he chooses six theatrical autobiographies, including that of Mrs. Bellamy, for special attention, saying of them, "They continue to move with unmistakable

42 Page 10.

43 Page 32.
life through old volumes." 44

What then does he find in the Apology that produces this life, this sense of the reality of George Anne Bellamy as she lived? Particularly he admires her objective self-analysis. He writes,

In the galaxy of eighteenth century actresses who recorded their own lives . . . none had a greater faculty for dispassionate self-observation than the little spitfire who, still in her teens, acted Juliet opposite Garrick's Romeo . . . She coolly analyzes scenes that the novelists around her would have submersed in a warm flood of sentiment. 45

Apposite quotations are not hard to find, and Stauffer gives several, including the highly unsentimental reporting of her mother's greeting to young George Anne: "'My God, what have you brought me here? This goggle-eyed, splatter-faced, gabbart-mouthed wretch, is not my child!'" 46

Next Stauffer points to what he calls Mrs. Bellamy's "power of psychological motivation, as firm and penetrating as most novelists." 47 Although he does not develop this point, apparently feeling that it is a self-evident truth, he returns more than once to this belief in the actress's unusual ability to penetrate the springs of human action, detecting it, for example, in her "reflections" and choosing

44Page 32.
45Page 41.
46Apology, I, 26, quoted by Stauffer, p. 42.
47Page 43.
as an illustration this passage:

There is, I believe, no impression that so strongly affects a young mind as the supposition of being dear to another. Though originating merely from self-love, it incites a reciprocation. The very idea that you are pleasing, stimulates you to render yourself really so, even though there be not that similarity of manners and disposition on which an union of souls is usually founded.  

The sense of life lies, he adds, to some extent in the "dramatically projected figures and conversations" of the Apology, among which he singles out for special mention the descriptions of Quin and the Duchess of Queensberry. In connection with these two persons, he introduces a point of view which would have amazed the early reviewers—a point of view which is of considerable importance to us in this study in its very contrast with the impression of the Apology that must have remained with readers who enjoyed its evocation of "soft pity from the feeling heart." They would hardly have recognized the George Anne Bellamy of Stauffer's picture: "Cold and conceited she was—reckless, brassy, headstrong, improvident, worldly." Because she is all these things, Stauffer thinks she is most successful in her portraiture when she deals with persons (such as Quin and the Duchess) who like herself are "hard-headed." More-

48 Apology, I, 33, quoted by Stauffer, p. 44.
49 Page 43.
50 See above, p. 82.
51 Page 42.
over this realistic toughness in her character leads her to a mastery of ridicule, of herself or of others. As Stauffer puts it, "Mrs. Bellamy is at her natural best in scenes that contain some element of the ridiculous. . . . Even her most emotional scenes are in danger of ending in a burst of laughter." Sentimental successes in the Apology, he thinks, are infrequent, and the style, usually "fulsome," is to be admired in such examples of "bitter and effective irony" as the letter to Calcraft. 52 The tender-hearted, pathetic, morally instructive Mrs. Bellamy glimpsed by the periodical reviewers has disappeared. It is quite another person to whom Stauffer devotes the enthusiastic summation contained in his final paragraph:

The beautiful little actress may have been impulsive, selfish, and heartless. Her history may have been sordid at the close, but it was not weak. Her career had been crowded, active, unpredictable; notable events happened to her, and she gave them, thanks to her temperament, sharp outlines. And at the end, with some of her old indestructible vitality, she takes debtors' prisons, squalid quarters, and the ominous waters of the Thames, views them dispassionately, and shapes them into this pure expression of her spirit: "An Apology for the Life of George Anne Bellamy," one of the important biographies of the eighteenth century. 53

This is high praise indeed, but perhaps, after all, it would not without some exceptions have been warmly received by Mrs. Bellamy herself. To being impulsive, she

52 Page 44.
53 Page 47.
would and did readily admit, but selfish and heartless—never! Nor could she have been considered so by the critic who spoke of her "sensibility of soul, and fineness of passion," her "mind formed for elegant desires," and "the amiable source of her benevolence." Here we have a curious and meaningful conflict of interpretations. If the reviewers came to question the validity of the self-portraiture of the Apology, none of them saw in it a coherent picture of the kind of woman Stauffer describes. This conflict must be taken into account in evaluating the Apology. No one will quarrel with Stauffer's requirement that a life must have life, must be the recreation of a career and a personality. Nor can we hope that every reader of a biography will receive and understand the subject in identical terms, no matter how great the accuracy and art of the presentation. But such wide disparity as is shown here casts doubt upon the integrity of the central portrayal. Although Stauffer goes only so far as to say that the autobiographer must try to state the facts, there can be no question that he would demand that the recreated life approximate that which really was lived; that the sense of life be imparted to self-portraiture sufficiently coherent to present a distinct identity. When all allowances have been made for the natural inconsistencies of human conduct and for the distortions of truth which no autobiog-

54English Review, V (February, 1785), 81, 89, 90.
raphy can hope to avoid, the inescapable fact remains that Mrs. Bellamy could not have been entirely selfish yet genuinely benevolent, nor full of fine sensibilities yet heartless and opportunistic. One of two things must be true. Either we have an astonishing failure of the critics to understand the text or the book itself is so ambiguous as to invite diametrically opposed interpretations.

This possibility leads into a critical problem in the study of the Apology, allied to the problems we have noticed in connection with Mrs. Bellamy's theatrical accounts but of even greater importance in the area of self-portrayal. A charge of ambiguity necessarily implies that portions of the autobiography, at least, veer away from the truth to present a fictional picture. The suspicion of fictionizing in the Apology is not new. One of the admiring reviewers noted as a reservation, "In many parts, ... there is an air of romance, which would be more proper for a novel, than a narrative of fact," and Stauffer has quoted this remark.\(^55\) We recall that Odell spoke of the Apology as an "entertaining romance."\(^56\) Beyond the suggestion of its existence, however, this blurring of genre lines has not been explored. Yet it would seem to have a vital importance to the student of literature who is urged by Stauffer

\(^{55}\) *Westminster Magazine*, XIII (March, 1785), 156, quoted by Stauffer, p. 43.

\(^{56}\) I, 447.
to accept the work as an important biography.

If we are to evaluate the Apology, then, we have before us a complex task. Not only must we determine whether the illusion of life exists and study the artistic means of its creation, but we must face and explore the possibility that we are dealing with a mixed literary form. If this is found to be true, we must attempt to estimate the significance of the work in relation both to the study of biography and to that of other fields upon which it impinges. To begin this task, we must turn back to the Apology itself.
VI.

THE "SENSE OF LIFE" IN THE CENTRAL PORTRAIT

The "sense of life" which Stauffer so highly praises in the Apology is, of course, a direct communication to the individual reader and as such largely incapable of demonstration. At the same time it is clear that most readers, Horace Walpole to the contrary, have received from certain parts or from the whole of the work a feeling of intimate acquaintance with real people and events to which some have testified openly in critical commentary and others indirectly by using the Apology as a source for lively biographical narrative. What follows here is of necessity based upon another individual response and its generalizations will be proved valid only by the test of others' experience.

Real communication of life does not seem to be continuous throughout the Apology. Rather it is an intermittent flickering which causes certain passages to be imprinted vividly upon the mind and allows others to remain shadowed. To a certain extent the interest that is built up in Mrs. Bellamy by her most successful strokes carries over into less telling accounts of her exploits, but some pages remain that are hopelessly lacking in any kind of vitality. Extreme examples are the sections in which she presumably
describes her travels to the continent, usually in terms of the streets, squares, churches, and other landmarks found in the principal cities along her route. These remarks are, as she admits, "cursory and unconnected observations." They savor strongly of the guide-book and offer no impression of personal observation. But the most deadening parts of the Apology are unquestionably found in the many "reflections" and sentimental asides. Even at a time when such moralizings were in the height of literary fashion, it is notable that at least one reviewer was forced to condemn them as "often trite and misapplied." They are indeed almost without exception trite and even absurdly so. Juxtaposed to the natural ease and wit of many of Mrs. Bellamy's anecdotes, they are frequently distressingly unnatural. They pull the reader up short with a feeling that this cannot be the same woman who has just been speaking. The commonplaceness of thought and artificiality of style in these passages will be the subject of further discussion in this paper. For the moment we may point to a single example of their power to block the illusion of reality. Here we see Mrs. Bellamy gradually straying from a concrete account of the financial and social rewards of her theatrical success into a wilder-

1III, 155-160 (Brussels and Antwerp); 183-186 (Amsterdam and the Hague).

2III, 159.

3Critical Review, LIX (April, 1785), 271.
ness of platitudes:

I besides received presents from Asia, Africa, and America, together with others the produce of our own climate. In short I was now in possession of every thing that could excite the envy of the world. And yet amidst all this, even in the very zenith of my splendor, I was not happy. Like the celebrated Harlequin Carolin, who wept under the masque, while he excited peals of laughter from his admiring audience, my smiles covered an uneasy mind. And many a time when I have been thought by my surrounding guests to be as happy as affluence and the acquisition of fame could make me, I have secretly exclaimed: "Where art thou to be found, 0 happiness! Thy only residence can be with those blessed votaries of Heaven, who having never experienced the delusive pleasures and corroding cares of the world, secure within the cloistered walls, the peaceful abode of innocence, know not a wish but to render themselves acceptable to their God."

Some sections of the narrative which should be most dramatic similarly lose force through exaggeration and through what appears to be an attempt to follow standard melodramatic patterns. Such is the description of Metham's threat to Mrs. Bellamy's life, which calls upon us to believe that Metham demanded of her a choice between life and death with him, poised his dagger above her breast, and as she lay "deprived of her senses," was deterred from his awful purpose only by the cry of their child for his mother.

In contrast to these dull or unconvincing sections, we find in many parts of the Apology a striking air of truth. They are marked by certain qualities, some or all of which

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4 III, 2-3.
5 II, 157-158.
seem to be missing from the less believable passages. Keen observation of detail and concise reporting characterize them without exception. Mrs. Bellamy is expert in the art of supporting a story by details that bring it to life. We have already mentioned her account of Peg Woffington in the Green-Room, celebrating "with a pot of porter in her hand" at a table "covered with mutton pies." Another especially delightful anecdote which owes most of its success to the accumulation of detail is that of Mr. St. Leger's encounter with the scavengers. The description of Mr. St. Leger approaching Mrs. Bellamy's window, decked in all his continental finery, "with a small cane hanging to his button, and attended by two Italian greyhounds," crying out affectedly "Bonne nouvelle! Bonne nouvelle!" is a remarkably complete and concise impression of the coxcomb returned from the grand tour, and it leads expertly into the dramatic reversal of his victory over the rough fellow who thought to "smoke" him. If she uses minutiae well in telling a story, Mrs. Bellamy also delights in them for their own sake. Her thumb-nail sketch of Conte Haslang, whose only way of expressing approbation or disapproval was "the aspiration, umph!," accompanied by either "a recline of the head" or a shrug of the shoulders, is ex-

\[6\text{II, 51. See above, p. 29.}\]
\[7\text{II, 83.}\]
cellent proof of the good use to which she put her powers of observation.8

The same quality of exact expression appears frequently in the passages of conversation reported by Mrs. Bellamy and often used as the climax of an episode. Her generally admired portrayal of the Duchess of Queensberry, for example, depends in great part upon the successful reproduction of her Grace's brusque, blunt manner of speech.9 Similarly, her glimpse of General Braddock on the eve of departure for America is made memorable by the combination of affectionate familiarity and sad solemnity in his remark, "Dear Pop, we are sent like sacrifices to the altar."10 At its best, the reporting of conversation in the Apology has a Boswellian sharpness and naturalness, as in the often-quoted remark of Quin over-heard by the young Miss Bellamy from outside his dressing room door: "Why, my Lord, we have Woffington at the receipt of custom, and who bids more!—Ward, flatter than a half-baked pan-cake—and little Bellamy as cold as ice, and as conceited as the devil."11

The fact that Mrs. Bellamy quotes such a description of herself indicates another reason why her writing

8II, 104-105.
10II, 194.
11II, 6.
has a quality of life. The complete candor of many of her anecdotes makes it hard to disbelieve them and convinces the reader, as Stauffer has noted, of her ability to perform detached self-analysis. Usually her frankness is the result of directing upon her own actions her keen sense of humor. She willingly and even gleefully exposes her foibles to the laughter of the reader and, in so doing, wins sympathy for them. Three of her weaknesses furnish the great majority of her confessions—her vanity, her extravagance, and her impulsiveness—and even of these three it is interesting to note how particularly she recognized the humor of vanity. There are many stories that turn upon this characteristic, and they are among her best. Nothing could be more engaging than the account she gives of her annoyance at the amorous gaze bent upon her beauty by a dinner guest and her chagrin at discovering that the stares came from a glass eye, unless perhaps it is her exposure of her "waking dreams" of conquering the king of France and the mortification of their disruption by the cold reception given her by mere Irish gentry at Tunbridge Wells. The latter episode is masterful in its delineation of psychological patterns not often confessed to even by the frankest of autobiographers, but for sheer self-ridicule it is per-

\[12\text{II, 66.}\]

\[13\text{II, 91-100 passim.}\]
haps exceeded by the anecdote, contained in Volume Six, of her disastrous attempt to beautify her hands with a pair of "chicken gloves." Her picture of herself with her hands clad in their "wonder-working coverings" lashed to the head of the bed is one that few vain women could ever bring themselves to draw, even in the objective mood of old age.

The revelation of her foibles is not, however, limited to humorous anecdotes, but is often found in simple acknowledgments of her failings. Thus she tells us that, in spite of the munificence of the Duchess of Queensberry, and the justice of the rebuke directed at her by that lady, injured pride made her prefer the Countess of Cardigan, who on the same day had received her graciously and flatteringly. Or she quietly acknowledges the "impropriety" of her extravagance in ordering the sumptuous dessert which brought on her quarrel with Metham. Whatever the form of her candor, it serves always to lend life and conviction to the Apology. Indeed the quarrel at Metham's birthday party is more convincingly presented than most of the dramatic dissensions that form climaxes of her narrative, the frank admission with which it begins seeming to set the mood of

\[14VI, 72.\]
\[15I, 66.\]
\[16II, 140.\]
the whole and to lead inevitably to Metham's understandable
but fatal public exclamation that she might rot in the
poor-house before he would rescue her.

Mrs. Bellamy's self-revelation, we should note,
actually takes two forms. That which we have just been
discussing results from real objectivity and from willing­
ness to expose her frailties for the delectation of the
reading public. At the same time we have noticed the rather
restricted range of these admissions. Other and less
appealing failings she occasionally reveals inadvertently
but with equal effect upon the credibility of her account.
In the midst of a joyful reunion with Lord Tyrawley, after
years of estrangement, she gives us a glimpse of her coolly
calculating nature. She writes of her father's presenting
her with two valuable rings, a legacy from his recently
deceased sister, then adds suspiciously: "I apprehend
this was not the whole of my legacy; but as his Lordship
took no notice of anything else, I could not with propriety
ask him."17 Any consideration of money or value, indeed,
tends to bring on these inadvertencies. When Calcraft has
given her his portrait in miniature, set in diamonds, but
not of the most expensive variety, she explains: "As I
always had an invincible aversion to any finery, which was
not the compleatest of the kind, I never wore the picture,

17I, 22.
nor do I know what became of it."\textsuperscript{18} Her repeatedly emphasized aversion to any crude involvement with financial matters is a revelation of character as telling as it is unintended. Witness a part of a dispute with Calcraft over the settlement of her debts:

\ldots he concluded with saying, that if I would once convince him that I knew the value of money, he would give me a thousand pounds for every hundred I then required. Tired with this pecuniary conversation, which always was the most unpleasing to me of any, and now holding him in sovereign contempt, I replied that I left it to plodders like him, who were possessed of no other knowledge, to set a value upon such trash.\textsuperscript{19}

Here the picture is surely not at all what Mrs. Bellamy intended, but truth comes through even in unconscious self-exposure, bearing witness to the actuality of the situation about which she writes. (Incidentally, here as in many other passages, we see her ability to reproduce conversation to good effect even in indirect discourse.) Truthful reporting of her own reactions without full understanding of their significance also lends reality to Mrs. Bellamy's story of her last interview with Mrs. Woffington, when her enemy, upon her death-bed, called upon her for forgiveness, confessing an old injury. Here was an opportunity for picturing a noble and sentimental reconciliation. Instead Mrs. Bellamy admits that she was "much surprised at the wickedness and

\textsuperscript{18}III, 78.

\textsuperscript{19}III, 32.
meaness" of the injury revealed after so long a time and, though forced in the circumstances to grant her forgiveness, "left the lady, as soon as possible, to reflect upon the illiberality of such a proceeding."\textsuperscript{20}

Many of the illustrations we have given of Mrs. Bellamy's surprising frankness also give evidence of a third quality in her writing which contributes strongly to the feeling of life in the \textit{Apology}. Stauffer, as we have seen, calls this quality "her power of psychological motivation," and terms it "as firm and penetrating as most novelists!."\textsuperscript{21}

A question might be raised as to whether this power is a real ability to interpret actions and their accompanying emotions or whether it results simply from a great interest in the manifestations of emotion and a knack for describing them on paper. Some examples we have used might cast doubt upon her understanding even of her own reactions. The fact remains that sound psychological touches constantly recur in her work, lending it undeniable authority.

In passing we have touched upon this characteristic in Mrs. Bellamy's story of her plan to captivate Louis XV of France. Here is an admirable epitome of the day-dream with its typical evasion of reason and convention:

\begin{quote}
Notwithstanding I loved Mr. Metham, with the truest
\end{quote}
affection, and would have rejected being a second Maintenon for his sake, yet the flattering prospect of holding a sovereign in my chains, and at the same time nobly rejecting him, which I was fully determined to do, presented such a train of pleasing Ideas to my mind, that I thought the expense which insured me so much happiness a mere bagatelle.  

Mrs. Bellamy knows too that it is the nature of dreams to thrive even in the face of discouragement and disillusionment. Thus, as she creeps away from her humiliation at the Wells with a humble mind and an almost empty purse, it takes only the cheering words of her maid to raise her once more to "the same elevated pitch," secure again in anticipation of the royal conquest.  

Stauffer has likened her psychological insight to that of a novelist. In these pages there are surely most of the components of an excellent short story in the modern vein.

Some of the fine psychological strokes of the Apology appear in references to persons other than the actress herself. Sometimes there are simple pictures of recognizable behavior patterns—Mrs. Elmy, for example, the perpetual clown, reacting in the way she knows best even in a miserable and dangerous situation, by mock-heroics delivered in the teeth of a mountain storm; or George Metham, the discarded lover, adroitly, if somewhat caddishly, restoring

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22II, 91-92.
23II, 99-100.
24I, 105-106.
his own self-esteem by condescension to the woman who has spurned him. Occasionally the pattern analyzed is fairly complex. The Metham of the birthday party quarrel is very real, a man compelled by mingled impulses. His explosion of rage seems out of keeping with its ostensible cause until Mrs. Bellamy implies that a simmering jealousy of the ubiquitous Lord Downe has found an outlet in the more trivial exasperation over her extravagance. The best strokes, however, are naturally to be found in Mrs. Bellamy's self-analysis. Another delightfully penetrating bit, this time into the emotions of a child, is her account of her long-anticipated visit to Alexander Pope, when "Miss," who had planned to enchant the great poet by her recitations from his translation of Homer, was summarily turned over to the housekeeper for a tour of the gardens. Young George Anne's meditations upon revenge for "so gross an affront" are so certainly those of a child that they are sure evidence both of a vivid memory and of amused self-knowledge:

At last I concluded to carry into execution the following plan of revenge: I determined never to read the cynic's translation of the Iliad again, but wholly to attach myself to Dryden's Virgil. My heart exulted in the thought; and I experienced those sweet sensations, which arise from hopes of being amply revenged for insult.27

26 II, 141.
27 I, 37.
The feeling of life in the *Apology*, then, appears to inhere principally in acute observation, vigorous reporting, openness and objectivity, and psychological penetration. We should further notice, however, the extent to which these qualities are enhanced by the sure dramatic sense of the writer. Alone it could not produce the impression of vitality, but, given the other elements, it turns a merely convincing narrative into a minor work of art. Mrs. Bellamy knows well how to hold an episode in suspense until the right instant for a swift denouement, as many of the aforementioned passages demonstrate. When all the characteristics we have admired are completed by this dramatic touch, we have something as finished as the memorable story of Mr. Crump's attentions at Bangor. This is Bellamy at her best, approaching her tale with the humor that allows her to laugh a little at her "divinityship," surrounding the action with details of her linsey-woolsey gown, of the cozy fire in the parlour, of her sensation of comfortable fatigue, of the prancing and "deep-fetched" sighs of her companion. The action itself is quick and spare, building rapidly through dialogue in which no word is wasted to the frank and revealing declaration that she is in love with herself. The curtain is then dropped suddenly upon the little scene by the appearance of the rest of the

company. The ease, conviction, and completeness of the episode leave us convinced that this is indeed art akin to the novelist's, and we are reminded of other similarly finished sections of the memoirs: Mr. St. Leger and the scavengers, the guest with the glass eye, and the interchange between Quin and "little Bellamy, cold as ice," among them.

The conclusion that the Apology does, as Stauffer maintains, convey an impression of reality through definite artistic techniques leads directly to the question of the integrity of the self-portraiture in the book as a whole. If the memoirs give us Mrs. Bellamy as a very real person, what are the characteristics ascribed to her, and do they form a coherent picture? Can the whole be said to possess, in spite of some weak passages, the sense of life which we have seen in certain brief episodes? In taking up these questions, we shall consider the autobiography as an artistic entity, without regard, for the moment, for any extraneous influences which may have helped to shape the finished memoirs. Mrs. Bellamy presented the Apology to the public as a work formed in its entirety by herself and as such we must undertake to assay it.

It appears to be the intention of the Apology to ascribe to Mrs. Bellamy at least the following outstanding

29 See above, pp. 94-96.
characteristics: vanity, impetuosity, extravagance, sincerity, elevated moral principles, and extreme sensibility of soul. All of these traits received comment, and most of them commendations, from one or another of the eighteenth century critics. By examining somewhat minutely the presentation of these characteristics, we should be able to determine the reasons for the divergence of interpretation which we noted in our last chapter. It should be admitted at once that the order in which we are about to take up Mrs. Bellamy's pictured attributes is a deliberate one. In recounting one's own life, there are bound to be certain areas of the personality which may be freely revealed with confidence that the reader will be interested in them and at the same time not repelled by them. These areas are usually those of the foibles or venial sins. Such are the first few traits of Mrs. Bellamy that we shall discuss. The writer of his own life finds really formidable, however, the problem of his true virtues or his heinous faults. Especially to such a one as Mrs. Bellamy, whose purpose in writing her book required that the ultimate portrait be attractive, bringing upon her neither the charge of unjustifiable conceit nor that of unworthy character, must this problem have loomed large. Social approval or disapproval could be expected to spring most strongly from those parts of the book relating to her moral standards, her honesty, her purity of heart, and it is in these considerations that
we may look to find any serious distortion. We shall accordingly proceed from the more superficial characteristics to those deeply involved with the standards and ideals of the reading public, thus hoping to measure the reaction of the Apology to increasingly perplexing autobiographical problems. Indeed the listing of characteristics according to this principle hints immediately at the course our discussion may take, for we notice that as the list moves into the critical areas all mention of failings disappears, leaving the impression that, in spite of her weaknesses, Mrs. Bellamy was, in things that really counted, entirely admirable. We shall see how well the Apology supports this impression.

In an earlier part of this chapter, we pointed out the unusual concentration of the authoress upon the single characteristic of vanity. On this point the autobiography is thoroughly consistent. Episodes have already been cited sufficient to show both Mrs. Bellamy's attitude of rueful amusement at her youthful folly and her convincing illustrations of this foible. From these accounts she has everything to gain. They amuse the reader. They arouse in him a pleasant feeling of sympathetic condescension. Yet they reveal in the Mrs. Bellamy who writes them a natural wisdom and humility that is most attractive. They seem to have been written with no misgivings or inhibitions, confidently and easily, and their number indicates Mrs. Bellamy's sense that she was on sure ground.
She is equally frank about her impulsiveness, although she does not dwell upon it so extensively. We have some testimony aside from that of the Apology to show that this characteristic was recognized by friends and acquaintances. Tate Wilkinson, for instance, writes of her as "the unthinking Bellamy."\(^{30}\) Dibdin mentions her sudden refusal to perform certain plays in Edinburgh, saying casually that she "had taken some tantrum."\(^{31}\) But her own words are far more revealing. She tells how in anger she burned Count Haslang's "evasive note" without reading it—and with it money that would have paid for her new furniture;\(^{32}\) how, again in anger, she clipped her own hair off close to the head so that she could not appear on the stage in Edinburgh;\(^{33}\) how she thoughtlessly signed legal papers without considering the consequences and without reading the fine print.\(^{34}\) Most of the crises of her life are directly influenced by this tendency. Her harsh vow never to be reconciled to George Metham,\(^{35}\) her sudden decision to desert Calcraft and take

\(^{30}\) *Wandering Patentee*, II, 187.


\(^{32}\) V, 15.

\(^{33}\) IV, 43.

\(^{34}\) See IV, 32, for her neglect in checking the due date of a bond.

\(^{35}\) II, 142.
refuge with Digges in Edinburgh, even her abrupt changes of theatrical contracts stem immediately from her habit of acting without preliminary thought. Mrs. Bellamy takes a much more serious attitude toward her impetuosity, however, than toward her vanity. She does not regard it as a suitable subject for amusing anecdotes, and she recognizes the deplorable effect it has had upon her life. Yet she will not concede that this characteristic is entirely regrettable. Many passages in the memoirs suggest a genuine pride in a temperament which forced her into hasty and violent action. She says, for example, "Every part of my conduct is generally in the extreme ... there is a fervour in my manner which I cannot control," and, in another connection, "not a particle of moderation is contained in this frame of mine." And, while she may occasionally regret the specific hasty action, there is no sign of any desire to be temperamentally different. Indeed, the tone of pride which is noticeable in these statements is accompanied by explanations that leave no doubt of her feeling that her impulsiveness, if not actually laudable, was at least excusable in one of her beauty and fame and, moreover, that

36 IV, 38.
37 II, 107.
38 V, 75.
39 IV, 208.
it explained away some of the incidents in her life that without it might have appeared reprehensible or merely stupid. In one of the passages from which we have just quoted, she goes on to relate her "errors" to her lack of moderation. "As these," she writes in the passage just cited, "like my speech have ever been spontaneous and unpremeditated [sic], and always attended with sincere compunction; may they upon this account, be viewed with a less rigorous eye." Although her reasoning upon this point may be a bit devious, it is clear that she writes not merely to reveal herself to the reader but also, insofar as possible, to excuse her own conduct. Perhaps the most direct exposition of this rationalizing tendency appears in the Apology immediately after the account of the beginning of her abhorrent union with Calcraft. It relates to the solemn oath by which Metham was barred from her life and a place made for Calcraft. Mrs. Bellamy addresses her correspondent:

You see me now entered into a new track of life; and will, I doubt not, do me the justice to acknowledge, that a train of events contributed towards it, which it was scarcely in the power of human prudence to counteract.—I have, indeed, to blame myself, as I have had occasion to do more than once before, for precipitation. To my precipitation in making the rash vow I did, never to have any further intimacy with Mr. Metham, and to my obstinate adherence to that vow ..., am I indebted in a great measure for the fatal consequences which ensued. ⁴⁰

⁴⁰II, 182.
This theory that impulsive actions set in motion a chain of unavoidable events enables Mrs. Bellamy to skirt some rather uncertain areas in her discussion of the Calcraft contract—the fundamental question, for instance, of why she felt it necessary to accept a new protector, and one she disliked, so promptly upon the dismissal of the old love. While the supposition that the actress was carried along helplessly by the consequences of her ill-judged act is, upon examination, not a sufficient explanation, it is disarming enough to lead many a sympathetic reader past that part of the narrative which seems most likely to arouse critical curiosity. We cannot help wondering whether admission of a new venial error is not here being used to divert us from recognition of traits and actions less easily defensible. Beyond doubt, Mrs. Bellamy is rationalizing. There is no reason, however, to doubt that her picture of the particular trait is accurate, in spite of the purpose it may have been made to serve. "The unthinking Bellamy" is certainly with us throughout the Apology, entrusting valuable jewels to an acquaintance she knows to be dishonest, signing contracts in unfounded pique, taking journeys without enough money to pay the coachman. The

41 IV, 97-98.
42 II, 107.
43 II, 100.
rationalizing of her errors, indeed, might be taken as merely a further self-revelation, were it not that the writer is somewhat over-insistent in the attributing of fatal consequences to imprudence. She protests so much that she makes us suspect a conscious design on her part, rather than mere natural self-protection.

Mrs. Bellamy's discussion of her extravagance is somewhat in the same vein. The material pertinent to this characteristic is, however, so extensive and the nuances of its treatment are so significant that we will be justified in devoting to it considerable attention. The element of rationalizing grows markedly more prominent and the acknowledgment of her fault is noticeably less frank and direct. Unquestionably, this was a facet of her own character which the actress never really understood. Always ready to admit and to regret that vast sums of money had flowed through her hands, leaving her constantly impoverished, she nevertheless shows by her accounts of expenditures, borrowing, and debts that she remained for the most part unaware of the nature of her extravagance and never until she died quite comprehended why money vanished as it did. She writes of the forming of the spending habit during the early days of her life with George Metham:

I had now contracted a taste for expence; and without considering that I was not intitled to gratify it equally with the persons of fashion with whom I was intimate, could not curb the propensity.—So do the
habits of this nature creep and creep upon us by degrees, till they become too strong for reason and prudence to master.\footnote{112}

This seems to be a clear recognition of what constitutes extravagance; yet as we go further in the \textit{Apology}, we are struck by the number of times she apparently is unaware of her spendthrift tendencies. Perhaps some awareness is present in her description of her own splendor during her second theatrical engagement in Ireland, at a time when she was heavily burdened with debt, for she speaks of the inroads upon her large salary of "the extravagance of my servants, and my own thoughtlessness."\footnote{114} "Thoughtlessness" seems a weak term when she mentions "my suite, which consisted of two postillions, a guide, two footmen, and three maids,"\footnote{115} and of "the beauty of my sedan; which, indeed, attracted every eye."\footnote{114} Curiously, she seems to forget these drains upon her income when trouble results. When she is finally arrested for a debt of two hundred pounds and held at a sheriff's house, she makes it very plain that the arrest was motivated by a malicious desire on the part of her creditor to prevent her playing at the theatre. The plaintiff Coates, she says, "had the impudence to tell us, that he knew he should easily have got the money, but he

\footnote{112}{II, 87.}
\footnote{114}{IV, 14.}
\footnote{115}{IV, 6.}
\footnote{114}{IV, 14.}
wished to prevent my playing that night."48 Yet this woman, who says she could easily have paid the debt, finds herself within a few months unable to leave Ireland without borrowing four hundred pounds. Characteristically, she explains that this necessity arose because the manager could not pay her the whole sum mentioned in her contract.49

Mrs. Bellamy does not often itemize her extravagances as she does in the matter of her Irish retinue and equipment, although she does speak at one time or another of a diamond bracelet, set with her initials,50 a pair of diamond earrings,51 and a jeweled windmill, "which, upon being wound up, went for three hours."52 The greatest evidence of the extent of her expenditures is found in her listing of debts, and it is very unusual for her in so doing to imply in any way that her borrowings were dictated by anything but grim necessity. Even by her own account, how she did drain any willing victim! Worth noting is the recurrence of the name of Mr. Hearn, a friend from the days with Metham, who came to Mrs. Bellamy's assistance in Edinburgh with a gift of two hundred pounds. Very shortly she called upon him for

48IV, 16.
49IV, 18.
50IV, 23.
51III, 123.
52IV, 20.
two hundred more, and when she returned to London, finding new debts, she applied to him again for the same amount. Almost immediately she needed one hundred pounds more to redeem some pawned jewels, and again Mr. Hearn was sent for, even though, as she says, he "had formerly paid ... him [the jeweler] large sums of money upon my account." When a wine bill soon presented itself she was obliged "to have recourse once more to the friendship of Mr. Hearn." In the end, her debt, apparently discounting the original gift, amounted to six hundred and forty pounds, on which she says a gold snuff box, three or four dividends, and some tickets for a benefit were all she was ever able to pay. "And," she adds conscientiously, "inexpressibly happy shall I be, if ever it is in my power to discharge [the debt]."53

This is merely one striking example among many which could be introduced to exhibit both Mrs. Bellamy's freedom in revealing her monetary indiscretions and the strange blindness she shows to the implications of her financial transactions. Mr. Hearn's trying experience is perhaps as significant as any, for we must remember that during the period of these borrowings the actress was almost constantly employed, first in Edinburgh and then in London, and was free from involvement with Calcraft's luxurious establishment. Yet in all her discussion of the problems in which

Hearn assisted her there is no hint that these debts were anything but unfortunate inevitabilities. Plainly the concept of economy had become so foreign to Mrs. Bellamy that she had no longer any basis for judging her extravagance and could portray it only inadvertently, whatever her anxiety to be frank about it.

The description is the more telling for this limitation in her understanding, and its accuracy cannot be questioned. We need only to turn to Tate Wilkinson's Memoirs to find that the patterns described in the Apology persisted, exactly as they are there revealed, until Mrs. Bellamy's death. In the last section of Wilkinson's book, called "The Actor's Tablet," are reproduced six letters from George Anne Bellamy, written in 1785 and later, the only products of her pen other than the Apology which I have been able to discover. They will be important in this paper on several scores but in the present connection are meaningful because of their preoccupation with her poverty and her attempts at economy. The first letter, undated but apparently written during the time when the fourth edition of the Apology was being completed, tells of her being "in real want" and anxious to obtain a frank in order that she may send Wilkinson some of the copy for her book.54 Below the letter Wilkinson notes, apparently referring to a Mr.

54 Memoirs, IV, 186-187.
Digby, briefly mentioned in the text: "The gentleman alluded to in the foregoing letter sent her 50 L. yet she wanted ditto, ditto, as the instant it was got, the same instant it was squandered."\(^{55}\) The second letter also shows her in dire straits but full of indiscreet projects. On August 11 (almost certainly 1785) she writes: "I was in hopes to have been able to furnish an apartment, which would have enabled me to live cheap, and enjoy quiet. . . ."\(^{56}\) Disappointed in this plan for reasons that are hard to fathom, she has taken exactly the wrong step:

In almost the certainty of money, I took a small house, and disposed of her Grace of Devonshire's quarter to put up fixtures, etc., but credit I cannot hope in the predicament I now stand; and my annuity will not be clear until Christmas.\(^{57}\)

The letters continue until the fall of 1787, and in the last, dated September 23, she shows that her financial habits remain unaltered:

You need not enforce my error; I am too sensible of it: for though the debts I have given fresh security for were such as would not have oppressed me, yet with the unexpected ideas I had of security in being able to pay, I indiscreetly not only paid every guinea I received from a generous public, but gave fresh securities. What I shall do now is a matter of great vexation.\(^{58}\)

\(^{55}\)Page 188.
\(^{56}\)Page 192.
\(^{57}\)Page 193.
\(^{58}\)Page 194.
The comment by Wilkinson which immediately follows forms an epitaph in terms of this outstanding weakness. "A few months after the last letter," he writes, "the good-natured and unthinking Bellamy, by her death, paid all her debts."59

The extent, then, of Mrs. Bellamy's extravagance is fully revealed in the Apology, but usually without conscious intent upon her part. Just as inadvertently she gives the reader curious glimpses of the confused thinking which lay beneath the overt acts. Her optimism in money matters, for example, is so unquenchable as to approach the ridiculous. We have just seen some hint of that characteristic in her letters to Tate Wilkinson. Even more striking, however, is the unreasoning trust she repeatedly claims in Calcraft's good faith in the matter of her debts. After each refusal on his part to cover her expenditures, she is momentarily maddened with resentment, but very shortly is once again building upon the weak foundation of his promise. The hope recurs so frequently that we finally cease to believe in her protest of gullibility. In one section of the third volume, for instance, she describes the events of what must have been the summer and fall of 1758. She had been living for five years with Calcraft, who had not in that time relieved her financial burden. Yet that summer she decided to take a vacation trip to the continent, secure in the

59Page 195. Her death actually occurred on February 16, 1788.
knowledge that her debts would be paid. She adds, "But in this expectation I was once more disappointed."60 Upon her return she was offered a theatrical contract by Rich but saw no need for accepting it, since "I made no doubt of my debts being soon paid by Mr. Calcraft."61 Of course, they were not paid. In addition she shortly had good reason to fear his bad faith in the discovery of his attentions to another woman. Her next reference to the debt is so much the more irrational: "Notwithstanding what had happened, I entertained no doubt but that he would keep the promise he had so often made to me, and so solemnly repeated to Lady Tyrawley."62 Again, he did not.

This cheerful assumption that somehow her needs will be met might be linked to another in her complex of attitudes toward money, the pose of complete divorcement from the crudities of finance. Not only is she often angered at Calcraft for "his speaking ... on pecuniary subjects";63 she claims a life-long dislike of such discussions, "that inexpressible aversion I always had to enter into a conversation on money matters."64 Occasionally her

60III, 181.
61III, 186.
62III, 192.
63III, 132-133.
64III, 86.
detachment seems to extend to a debonair refusal to notice debts. Sometime in 1765 or 1766, she tells us, she received an application for payment of two wine bills run up a number of years before in the Calcraft menage and therefore, to her way of thinking, a responsibility of her ex-protector. She describes her reaction to the notification: "As I could not think myself liable to these demands, I took no manner of notice of them; the consequence of which was, that they both commenced actions against me."\(^{65}\) In short, she was arrested.

It is not unfair to Mrs. Bellamy, moreover, to notice that this often-emphasized indifference conflicts curiously with one of the most striking characteristics of the Apology, the tendency to recall in full detail all financial transactions, even of her earliest days. Not only does she present an itemized account of the minutest kind in her letter to Calcraft,\(^{66}\) she remembers just how many tickets the Duchess of Queensberry took for her first benefit,\(^{67}\) how much she tipped a farm-boy for a favor while she was still in her teens,\(^{68}\) what was the charge to her for ticket-orders

\(^{65}\) IV, 113.

\(^{66}\) V, 190-193.

\(^{67}\) I, 66.

\(^{68}\) I, 89.
during her 1749 season in Dublin, how much money remained in her purse when she returned from Tunbridge Wells, and so on through many illustrations. In the matter of debts and expenses she can be counted upon to mention exact amounts, sometimes by what appears to be a considerable feat of memory. Concerning expenses of a trip she may write, "Out of two hundred and odd pounds I had brought down with me, I only retained twelve guineas; and out of these I had a week's lodging to pay, which amounted to half of them," or of one among many borrowings:

I therefore left the repeating watch with Mr. Still for seventeen guineas, and I believe consented that he should take ten or fifteen from the office. I could not spare any more, as in a few days I should want the two hundred which I had agreed to pay to my inflexible creditor. Her discussion of the difficulties arising from Woodward's will is accompanied by figures in the manner of the charge against Calcraft. Of seventeen or eighteen hundred pounds called in by the executors, she states, only fifty-nine pounds ever reached her, not to speak of two hundred pounds due her yearly from a bond which was never collected.

These are not the words of a person who utterly dis-
regards money. She never mentions the keeping of any accounts, and indeed such a procedure would seem somewhat out of character. Yet by giving evidence of either careful account-keeping or a prodigious memory for sums of money, she has revealed a concentration upon pecuniary detail quite at variance with her own professions. Of course, the details we have noted may be a contrived stylistic device. Her choice of such a style would still be revealing. If, by any chance, the details were added to the Apology by the hand or through the influence of another, we can still find in the memoirs ample evidence of her acute consciousness of financial values. We have already mentioned her careful estimate of the amount of the legacy from Mrs. O'Hara, brought to her by Lord Tyrawley.74 Her father seems to have been the subject for a good deal of her financial calculation. She says, for example, of Tyrawley's advice that she should leave the theatre, "I could not help observing that he made no offer of furnishing me with a provision adequate to the emoluments I reaped from my profession,"75 this although Tyrawley at that time gave her half of the contents of his purse at each visit.76 The same tendency to expect and to scrutinize any financial assistance is evident in the tales of

74 See above, p. 98.
75 II, 46.
76 II, 42.
other benefactors. Usually it is somewhat concealed by her protestations that the honor of their favor far outweighed any monetary benefits, but occasionally evidence of what can only be termed greed slips out. At one point she speaks of a visit from Lord Hampden, who had, indeed, not seen her since her girlhood, but who could be expected to make a large donation. He, she says, "presented me with a bank note for twenty pounds, in as pompous a manner as if it had been a million."77 The same note can creep even into her most emotional moments. Anyone familiar with her delicate circumlocutions will recognize it in her report of the death of her son George during an expedition to the West Indies in search of a fortune. Her "inexpressible" grief, by her account, "was rendered more pungent, by the hopes I had encouraged of soon having the happiness to see him; and in him, all that a fond mother could wish or expect."78

To these apparently contradictory attitudes of indifference and extreme concern, she adds others even more curious. Bankruptcy she regards as the utmost dishonor, and, when in about 1760 her debts amounted to 10,300 pounds, she refused to consider such a step. Her reasons as stated were noble in the extreme: "I was incapable of such a thought. In me, I said, it would be the blackest fraud; as mine were

77v, 12.
78v, 100.
debts which had been contracted in extravagant thoughtlessness." Accordingly she determined to offer her whole salary to her creditors. In her memoirs she does not seem to notice any inconsistency with her dedication to the achievement of solvency when she mentions only three pages later that she is living "in a degree of elegance little inferior to what I had been accustomed to." By another quirk of reasoning she rejects the idea of borrowing money from a gentleman for her own uses but has no scruples about borrowing from him in order to give to others.

Not to labor the point unduly, we may simply conclude that Mrs. Bellamy's whole relationship to money is revealed as unrealistic and confused. That is not to say that we are given a false portrayal. We must remember that every comment made thus far is in keeping with what her letters to Tate Wilkinson show to have been her persistent attitudes—indestructible hope, a docile acknowledgment of her wastefulness without any real idea of how to correct it, a continuous and greedy demand for assistance coupled with a casualness of spending which, in her own mind, was rationalized into a lofty disregard for anything niggardly. She was like a young bird in the nest, forever gaping for more.

79 IV, 21.
80 IV, 25.
81 IV, 185.
and more sustenance, gulping down whatever came her way, and immediately intent upon the next morsel. If only those elements which have so far been noted had appeared in her treatment of her extravagance, we could pronounce the portrayal a successful result of truthful relation, if not a conscious product of clear self-understanding. The characterisation would be acceptable, and its complexities only such as are constantly encountered in life.

Unfortunately, there is a great deal more in the Apology which bears directly or indirectly upon the spendthrift habits of Mrs. Bellamy and which distorts the picture badly. One has the feeling that neither for her own selfrespect nor for the purposes of her publication could she face all the implications of her failing. She could not afford to acknowledge what Tate Wilkinson, the unsparing friend who was aware of her evasions, pronounced upon her some time after her death. Comparing her improvidence with that of her fellow-thespian Mr. Mossop, he writes, ungrammatically but forcefully, in his memoirs, "Alas! poor Mossop and Bellamy! may you rest in peace, and prove an awful, useful lesson, which shews that their own errors, and not the rod of God brought on their miseries and dreadful end. . . ."82 Mrs. Bellamy refers freely to her errors, but to have admitted that they alone were the cause of

82 Memoirs, II, 201.
poverty and misery would not only have robbed her of sympathy but would have destroyed much of the impact of her book. Her life, as she envisioned it and as she wanted her reader to envision it, was a dramatic struggle against forces that overwhelmed and dragged her into the pit of destitution. Mere frivolous extravagance was not an admissible agent of such destruction. Accordingly a central part of her Apology is devoted to explaining her fall in other and more appealing terms. It is unnecessary to dwell upon most of this self-evident rationalizing. The letter to Calcraft which is appended to the first five volumes speaks for itself. Its vitriolic demands for reimbursement, addressed to a man already more than a decade dead, can now serve only the purpose of assigning to Calcraft much of the responsibility for her impoverished state by exposing what she calls "my injuries and your perfidy." Nor, although Calcraft is her principal villain, is he the only lover whose injustice she denounces. George Metham, too, is castigated at intervals for his failure to meet her just demands, perhaps the most remarkable and revealing of these accusations being concerned with his refusal, many years after their separation, to provide her with money for mourning

83v, 143-195.
84John Calcraft died in 1772.
85v, 194.
clothes when their son George died. The evidence of her own extravagance in the appeal and its unquestionable influence upon Sir George's decision is unnoticed by the actress, who continues to project herself as the victim of ungrateful men.

If further explanation is necessary, she can point to the injuries done her in the matter of legacies. She tells in detail the circumstances of each of three inheritances which, with a dreadful consistency, were all withheld from her. The legacy of Mr. Sykes is diverted by a dishonest servant, that of Henry Woodward by the inveterate cruelty of a lawyer, the putative fortune of her son by the obstinacy of English and Jamaican officialdom in refusing to allow her to investigate and administer the estate. Of these accounts, the story of Woodward's will ranks next only to the attacks upon Calcraft in the violence of its indictments. Here again the link between her improvidence and her injuries is avoided. Mrs. Bellamy, for instance, accuses Willett, the lawyer, of blocking the sale of consols which would have provided her with a considerable sum. His claim that he did so because the intent of Wood-

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86v, 101.
87III, 59.
88v, 47 ff.
89v, 102-104.
ward's will was to keep them secure from her extravagance she dismisses, calling his action a "wanton piece of cruelty," attributable only to his "fear of being obliged to come to a regular account." Unfortunately for her case, there seems less reason to believe that a lawyer of good reputation had stooped to embezzlement than that Woodward, who by her own account had disapproved of her spendthrift habits, had attempted to protect her from her own weaknesses. It is, of course, impossible, from our distant position in time, to pass judgment upon the right and wrong of the Woodward case, but certainly Edward Willett in his reply to the Apology's attack gives a good straightforward defense of his stewardship, presenting itemized financial accounts and documentary evidence of the fair treatment accorded Mrs. Bellamy by the executors. The letters, written in anger equal to the actress's own, are heavily sarcastic, yet they answer the Apology's accusations point by point in a manner more coherent and convincing than that of the original attack. It is also interesting to notice that although Mrs. Bellamy told Wilkinson she had composed

90, 107.
91 See above, p. 79.
92 IV, 109.
93 In his Letters, especially note p. 6 ff. and p. 17 ff.
a reply to the letters,\textsuperscript{94} there is no evidence that it was published, and willett was left in possession of the field. In any case, it may be pertinent to notice willett's explanation to a friend who wondered why Mrs. Bellamy had accused him. He writes,

\begin{quote}
I told her the Apologist had, by her extravagances, reduced herself to a very humble situation; and, her external allurements having bid her an everlasting adieu, she now \ldots wants to raise a public contribution, by publishing an hypocritical state of her case \ldots but in order to do this, she tells the world that monies are unlawfully withheld from her; and she has fixed upon me as the DEFAULTER.\textsuperscript{95}
\end{quote}

If we set aside the acrimony engendered by the feud, it must be admitted that willett's contention receives some support from the Apology itself, which manages by heavily emphasizing the losses Mrs. Bellamy has suffered in the matter of the will to pass over the causes in her own habits of life which made the revenue of the estate so vital to her existence.

Willett calls this hypocritical. It is certainly self-delusion, but if hypocrisy can be charged to Mrs. Bellamy's account, it is in connection with another of her methods of evading the responsibility for her own poverty, this time by the claim that her irresistible bent toward benevolent actions was a major cause of her diffi-

\textsuperscript{94}See her letter, dated August 11, in Memoirs, IV, 192.
\textsuperscript{95}Letters, p. 44.
culties. We may say at once that undoubtedly Mrs. Bellamy in her more affluent days was benevolent. Such a characteristic would be quite in accord with her free-spending habits. Moreover we have direct testimony from John O'Keeffe that in her periods in Dublin she was known for her charitable acts. What we must call in question is the extreme exaltation of this facet of Mrs. Bellamy's character by her Apology and the impression constantly created that she impoverished herself by her unselfishness. The reader will instantly call to mind the long series of episodes centering about her benevolent activities: her rescue of the Gunnings, her adoption of Peter, her charity to Lady Lindsay, her championing of the cause of the British soldier, her aid to Biddy Kendal and to Sally French, to mention only a few. Something remains to be said of several of these stories, but in our present connection it is enough to note that, by themselves, they sufficiently establish in the mind of the reader the existence of Mrs. Bellamy's humane impulses. Her further insistence upon the matter passes into the realm

96Recollections, I, 107.
97I, 176.
98II, 94 ff.
100III, 113-114.
101III, 160 ff.
of exaggeration. We grow familiar with the typical Bellamy "aside" upon the subject, a combination of high-minded musings with a false depreciation clearly intended to enlist the admiration of the public. Such are her comments upon a pension granted by George Metham:

Oh how I envied Sir George his feelings upon this occasion! The exquisite sensation such a benevolent act must excite in a susceptible mind is truly enviable. --Though envy is a vice, with which, thank Heaven, I am totally unacquainted, yet I never hear of the performance of a generous action, but a wish instantly arises in my breast, that I had been the happy person who possessed the power . . . to perform it. Whether this desire of robbing another of so great a happiness, falls under the denomination of envy, I leave to the casuists to determine; but it is a desire I cannot suppress.102

This apologetic tone running through many of her references to her charities is certainly an attempt to avoid boastfulness, but it manages only to give an impression of insincerity. The pose is too obvious when she speaks, for example, of "some trifling instances of humanity, from which I could not arrogate to myself any merit."103 We realize, however, the reason for the excessive and awkward emphasis upon her benevolence as it becomes clear that she is seeking to establish a justification of her character in the eyes of the world. One passage, early in the Apology, proves this intent beyond question, and at the same time

102IV, 78.
103II, 137.
shows the tortuous process necessary to present the desired picture without appearing unduly complacent. Very signifi-
cantly this paragraph on benevolence follows immediately an outspoken statement of her extravagance. The two form a surprisingly clear and complete illustration of the points we are trying to make about Mrs. Bellamy's self-charac-
terization in this area. Here are her unconscious revelation of mercenary motives and her forthright reporting of the extent of her spending, together giving a truthful por-
trayal but immediately followed by rationalizing, which in the end becomes sheer hypocrisy:

Soon after my arrival at Richmond, I had the happi-
ness to effect a reconciliation with Lord Tyrrawley. And it was fortunate for me that I did so, as his bounty was very needful to me at this time. For notwithstanding my salary, which was a handsome one; the emoluments of my benefit, which were great; and the generosity of Mr. Metham, which was unlimited, I frequently found myself without a guinea.

A circumstance far from pleasing to a disposition like mine, to a heart susceptible of no gratifi-
cation equal to that of relieving the necessities of others.--Of all the pleasures this world can bestow, that of giving is certainly the most ex-
quisite and satisfactory. More real happiness results from it, than can enter into the imagina-
tion of the selfish. Like Mercy, "it is twice blessed; it blesseth him that gives, and him that takes." And if the advantage lies on either side, it is on that of the giver.--I claim, however, no merit for the little assistance I have been enabled to bestow on others. It was an impulse of nature that I could not resist. It was an impulse of nature that I wished not to resist. And though to the present hour I labour under many and great in-
conveniences from the indulgencies of this liberal disposition; instead of regretting it, I bless
the great Giver, that he favoured me with so large a portion of his own beneficence.\textsuperscript{104}

The impropriety of such claims from the pen of a woman who also tells us of her retinue, her gowns, her jewels, her coaches, and who as she concludes these sentiments is just about to describe her expenditure of three hundred pounds on a single evening of private theatricals\textsuperscript{10b} is completely unheeded. Perhaps we could cite no more obvious example of how the Apology contrives to cloak a defect in the robes of a fashionable virtue and so to make possible such disparate interpretations of Mrs. Bellamy's nature as those of Stauffer and of the contemporary reviewers.

We have concentrated particularly upon the various aspects of the portrayal of extravagance because it shows clearly the confusion wrought by the attempt not merely to justify Mrs. Bellamy in the eyes of her public but to win their warm support, and because the conflicting layers of communication are here most distinct. In areas even more crucial to her reputation the element of confession is sometimes completely absent, and we have simply a conflict between the ideal image set up by the protestations of the authoress and the fallible human being she inevitably shows herself to be as she records the events of her life. We may instance the matter of Mrs. Bellamy's

\textsuperscript{104}\textsubscript{II}, 89-90.

\textsuperscript{10b}\textsubscript{II}, 91.
sincerity. Honesty and openness are requirements in the autobiographer of which she was thoroughly sensible, as the repeated asseverations of truthfulness in the Apology show.\textsuperscript{106} To win both the trust and the regard of her readers she certainly felt it necessary to avoid any implications of deviousness or deceit on her part. Yet it would indeed be surprising if a woman who lived by her wits as George Anne Bellamy did had not occasionally resorted to stratagem, and we are not surprised to find ample evidence in her narrative of her ability to dissimulate. Often her slyness is understandable and amusing. There are the letters from Metham which she carefully conceals from her mother;\textsuperscript{107} likewise the letter to her mother from Mr. Crump which she could not resist looking into,\textsuperscript{108} although she deemed the reading of other persons' correspondence "a breach of the most sacred of trusts."\textsuperscript{109} Again there is her practice of allowing it to be thought that she was married. By the discreet use of silence she gained the approval, for example, of Lord Tyrawley after her contract with Calcraft. "I resolved," she says, "to let the dial point, though it spoke not. His Lordship, therefore, taking it for granted, that we were

\textsuperscript{106} E. g. III, 126; V, 134.
\textsuperscript{107} II, 19.
\textsuperscript{108} II, 20.
\textsuperscript{109} II, 17.
legally united, made one in our parties." In the same way she, with the support of Lady Tyrawley, gained the friendship of such eminently respectable women as Lady Powerscourt and Lady Dillon.

These are small matters, however, by comparison with some of her more notable successes as an actress in private life. Her final scene with John Calcraft, during which, with her packing done and a chaise ordered for six o'clock, she calmly and scornfully borrowed from him enough money to finance her running away, is full of the sense of life but scarcely calculated to dispel any suspicion of double-dealing. Most notable of all, however, is her experience as a "wet Quaker." It forms one of the best episodes of the Apology, a sprightly short story for the inclusion of which we must be grateful, but it does not lend itself to the support of her claims of straight-forward honesty. Escaping from London, where her early stage career had been interrupted by the scandalous elopement with Lord Byron, George Anne had taken refuge with Quaker relatives in the country, who were convinced by the simplicity of her dress that she was one of them, albeit only a "wet Quaker," a wearer of some trifling adornments. Mrs. Bellamy resists

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110 III, 64.
111 III, 65.
112 III, 195.
any thought that she had dressed so by design, but, whatever her original intent, she did not undeceive the simple people and even cheerfully accepted payment of a legacy left her by one of the family upon condition that she never go upon the stage. This act troubled her little, if at all, for she explains, "I acknowledge that I made no scruple of receiving what they did not stand in need of, as they were in very opulent circumstances, and had no children." When, after she had enjoyed weeks of country quiet in her new role, George Anne's real identity was accidentally revealed and her hostess in anger termed her an "impostress," her defense was startlingly audacious and certainly inconsistent with everything that had gone before. In the Apology she reports it partly in indirect discourse, with an air of injured dignity. She told the accuser, she writes,

that conscious of my own innocence, I readily forgave her for every crime she had accused me of, except that of deception, which made too deep an impression on my heart to be forgiven. Then assuming a very solemn air, in order, if possible, to make her repent of her illiberality, I thus went on: "Madam, I would have you to know, that I have a soul above all art." By equating deceit with verbal falsehood, she is excusing herself from any charge of duplicity. After all, she had never said that she was a wet Quaker.

In brief form, the last quotation illustrates the

113 I, 79.
114 I, 85.
method by which Mrs. Bellamy seeks always to dispel any suspicion regarding her behavior—by passionate denunciation of the fault in question or equally extravagant praise of the corresponding virtue. Long after the above events, she accepted a sum from Lord Huntingdon for the expenses of a law-suit, but, pressed by many necessities, "appropriated the money,"\textsuperscript{115} as she says, for another purpose. His Lordship's anger when he discovered that the suit had never been instituted shocked and humiliated her. Her complete innocence is implied in her comment,

\begin{quote}
Duplicity being a crime of the first magnitude in my estimation, and with which it has ever been my boast that I have been totally unacquainted, a charge of this nature, consequently, could not fail to give me uncommon pain.\textsuperscript{116}
\end{quote}

This is a recurring sentiment, as if to convince by repetition. Mr. Lacy's deceitful methods in persuading her to accept a Drury-Lane contract bring out a strong protest in the Apology, replete with fine thoughts on duplicity:

\begin{quote}
Little reason has a man to boast of his cunning, when his schemes are effected at the expense of truth, and at the price of his honour... There is such a meanness in deception, that my nature recoils at it. And, as I am incapable of it myself, I can forgive it the less readily in others.\textsuperscript{117}
\end{quote}

Reflections of this sort, by the fifth volume, reach the

\textsuperscript{\textit{115}}v, 22.
\textsuperscript{\textit{116}}v, 23-24.
\textsuperscript{\textit{117}}II, 108.
heights of her pseudo-Miltonic "impromptu" upon the occasion of a quarrel with a friend who deceived her, beginning

Avaunt, Duplicity, detested child of art, begot by Deceit, and nurtured by Hypocrisy! Dare not intrude thyself into the generous bosom, lest every vice, thy sure attendants, follow.--But come, oh come, thou faithful inmate of my breast, Sincerity, daughter of Heaven!  

Such extravagance may invite ridicule, and Edward Willett seized upon the passage in his letters accusing her of false statements against him. His proofs, he claimed, had metamorphosed Mrs. Bellamy's "boasted friend, MISS SINCERITY" into a likeness of "that filthy old hag, MRS. Duplicity." Readers without Willett's reasons for skepticism may well experience a similar sense of confusion. In the end they will be forced to accept as true either the word or the deed and upon their choice will depend in part the impression of George Anne Bellamy which they receive from the Apology.

The most difficult task of all for Mrs. Bellamy was certainly the presentation of her unconventional sexual life. The problem is best appreciated if we keep in mind the number of theatrical lives of the period which relied entirely upon their interest as scandal to attract the public. Mrs. Bellamy must have been thoroughly familiar with these. She would surely not have missed, for instance, the scurrilous biography of Peg Woffington which appeared in 1760 and which con-

118v, 133.
cerned itself almost exclusively with what its title termed "amours with many persons of the first rank." Well aware of the appeal which this part of her life would have for many readers, she yet was obliged to reconcile it with conventional standards or to destroy the image of oppressed respectability which she was striving to create.

In view of her undeniable history, this could be no easy task. Never married, she had lived openly with four different men, had borne three children, and had been the center of many rumors regarding other love affairs. Acknowledgment of these facts in the Apology was unavoidable, but her manipulation of the facts is most interesting. In the first place, a good deal of concealment unquestionably attends her seeming frankness. We have already pointed to the mistiness of the narrative at certain crucial points in her story and to the surprisingly limited information she gives about most of her protectors. The story of the Byron elopement is the most striking example of explanation so vague as to arouse, and almost to confirm, suspicion. In his Stage Favourites of the Eighteenth Century, Lewis Melville, for one, draws a clear conclusion from her

120 Memoirs of the Celebrated Mrs. Woffington, Inter-spersed with Several Theatrical Anecdotes, the Amours of Many Persons of the First Rank; and Some Interesting Characters from Real Life (London, 1760).

121 See above, pp. 21-23.
own words, stating "Her relationships with Lord Byron, who abducted her, are not in doubt, though she may have been more sinned against than sinning." He also looks askance at the tale of the abduction by Metham, remarking that after one such experience, she had only herself to blame. These are conclusions most readers will be unable to avoid drawing from the evidence of the text, and they are likely also to question the motivation of the Calcraft contract, the reluctance professed in the matter of the Edinburgh trip with Digges, and finally the innocence of the relationship with Woodward. There are reasons to believe that Mrs. Bellamy was not unwilling to titillate the reader with hints of activities she would not reveal. Lord Downe, for instance, plays a mysterious part in the *Apology*, never in the forefront of her life, but always referred to as an aspirant to her favor, the cause of much jealousy on Calcraft's part, and the object of her own admiration. He possessed "every attraction which captivates our sex." He was the person to whom she immediately ascribed a munificent gift of one thousand pounds. He was "the only admirer who ever

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122 Page 255.
123 Page 257.
124 I, 160.
125 II, 151.
really loved me."  

Even more subtly, she suggests, and immediately denies, that Henry Fox was more than casually attentive to her. She tells of his reference to her benefit as "his benefit," of published reports of their connection, of the coolness shown by Lady Caroline Fox toward her, of her constant attendance at his political councils, where no other woman was present. Vigorous denials do not serve completely to counteract the impression she builds up. Similarly there are repeated references to the attentions of the Earl of Harrington. Sometimes they are merely mysterious hints of a noble admirer, but his identity is stated in connection with Mrs. Bellamy’s separation from Calcraft, who, she says, falsely accused her at the time of "some gallantries ... particularly with the Earl of Harrington."  

Actually all this is probably a diversionary action, designed to conceal the real reasons for her desertion of Calcraft after so many years. If the suddenness of her capitulation to Digges upon her arrival in Ireland is somewhat startling in the Apology, it is probably because their relationship had begun before her departure from England and

126 III, 115.
127 III, 118.
128 III, 126-127.
129 IV, 160.
was merely continued in Ireland. Although there is not a great deal of material to substantiate this fact, what there is so clarifies the events of the Apology that it may be given some credence. Wilkinson tells us that, during her second visit to Ireland in 1764 "her living publickly with Mr. Digges, though at the same time wishing it to be understood, that she was wife to Mr. Calcraft, altogether sunk her into universal contempt..."\textsuperscript{130} Evidently the break between the two relationships was not so distinct as Mrs. Bellamy pictures it. Lee Lewes is even more circumstantial in his account of West Digges's reasons for going to Ireland in the first place. He writes of the complications involved in Digges's shift of allegiance from Mrs. Ward to Mrs. Bellamy:

\begin{quote}
What encouraged him to this undertaking\textsuperscript{[the trip to Ireland]} was, the circumstance of his having formed a new connection with the celebrated Mrs. Bellamy. The first thing, on his arrival, was to deprecate the wrath of mother Crashaw, his principal creditor. \ldots She agreed to supply him with a new sum to begin upon; but not till he had satisfied her as to his new connection, for she had been very fond of Mrs. Ward. \ldots \textsuperscript{131}
\end{quote}

One of the imitative productions which followed close upon the publication of The Rosciad supports Lewes's contention. A satirical commentary upon stage luminaries, published

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{130}\textit{Memoirs}, II, 200.
\item \textsuperscript{131}\textit{Memoirs}, III, 45-46.
\end{itemize}
anonymously in 1761, it is entitled The Meritriciad.\textsuperscript{132} It devotes more than thirty lines to Mrs. Bellamy--"the Juliet of her days, fall'n from the pinnacle of public praise,"\textsuperscript{133} severely attacking her for deserting her children to "fly in raptures to the Irish shore."\textsuperscript{134}

There is reason, then, to suspect that a certain amount of concealment is practiced by the Apologist. Occasionally the words of the Apology alone are sufficient to suggest that Mrs. Bellamy is reinterpreting a situation she regards as unfavorable to her reputation. It seems very strange, for instance, that immediately upon her parting from Digges, she receives an invitation to visit her old and preferred lover, George Metham, to whom she has just written requesting a loan.\textsuperscript{135} The most natural explanation is that her letter somehow suggested the invitation and that she hoped for a reconciliation at a moment when she was alone and desperately involved in debt. Her apprehension as to the warmth of the welcome awaiting her would seem in keeping with such a project. Certainly Sir George so

\textsuperscript{132}A copy of The Meritriciad, bound with The Rosciad by the Strawberry Hill Press and annotated in Horace Walpole's hand, is in the collection of the Houghton Library at Harvard University. The lines on Mrs. Bellamy are here reproduced in Appendix B.

\textsuperscript{133}

\textsuperscript{134}L. 376.

\textsuperscript{135}IV, 75.
interpreted the visit, for she tells us of his prompt and solemn statement of his intention never to resume their former relationship. Her reception of the news is so exactly what we would expect of a disappointed woman that it fails of its intended effect. Her amusement and "unaffected indifference" appear defensive, and her comments upon the injured vanity and the chagrin of Metham can, in view of his part of the conversation, be understood only as a projection of her own feelings. 136

So much of her history, however, is incapable of disguise that her principal means of dealing with it must be the same kind of rationalizing we have found in other areas. The pattern here is so similar that no lengthy discussion is necessary to make it recognizable. Here, again, is the ever-recurring plea of helplessness in the face of forces beyond her control. "My misfortunes were not always the consequence of my own imprudent conduct, but sometimes of such deep-laid plans of villainy and deception, as it was impossible for an unexperienced girl ... to guard against," 137 she says of the unfortunate Byron affair. The connection with CalcRAFT is, of course, explained in like terms, and, even with Digges, she pictures herself as yielding reluctantly to the forces of circumstance.

136 IV, 80-83.

137 I, 70.
Even more important, however, is the technique of establishing attitudes which make her "errors" appear to be unfortunate lapses quite contrary to her real nature. We have previously quoted from a reviewer who ridiculed her "marriages." One cannot fail to notice how each liaison is pictured as an approximation of marriage. Although the actual ceremony never takes place, we are constantly reminded that it is immediately intended and are made to feel that her situation is regularized by that intent. Curious but typical of this attitude is Mrs. Bellamy's description of her friendship with the members of a neighboring religious community at York:

When I informed . . . the chaplain that I had not the least doubt but that Mr. Metham's honour . . . and his affection for me, would induce him to make me honourable amends for the disgraceful cloud in which he had for the present shrouded me, I readily procured admittance among them. 139

Deep respect for the institution of marriage is implied by each of the many passages of this sort. The writer of the Apology shows herself to be at all points in accord with conventional standards and often inspired by sentiments of the loftiest kind, which serve to obscure if not to justify her conduct. Her real self, she suggests, may be better seen in her reflections than in her acts. Thus she exalts chastity, saying, "I have as high a veneration for

138 See above, p. 77.
139 II, 64.
chastity and her true votaries, and I as much regret the loss of innocence (my mind still retaining its native purity) as the most unerring of my sex can do.\textsuperscript{140} Constancy is also a part of her code, and she lays claim to a life-long steadiness in her attachments\textsuperscript{141} and indicates that each of her love affairs was a "serious connection\textsuperscript{142}" and one that she "thought to be indissoluble.\textsuperscript{143}" Moreover, she constantly pays tribute to romantic love as an aetherialized ideal toward which she is reaching. She says, with both amusement and pride, of her first acquaintance with George Metham, "... we carried our ideas of love to so romantic a height, that the correspondence ... partook more of the sentiments of Cassandra and Oroondates, than of persons on a level with the rest of mankind.\textsuperscript{144}" This lofty concept of love leads, of course, to much of the dissension with Calcuff, who never could measure up to her requirements. Throughout her accounts of him, she continually reemphasizes the notion of the superiority of her spirit to her sordid situation. Sometimes she appears to be attempting to convince by the sheer extravagance of her claims:

\textsuperscript{140} I, 150.
\textsuperscript{141} I, 32.
\textsuperscript{142} IV, 16.
\textsuperscript{143} IV, 69.
\textsuperscript{144} II, 31.
Mr. Calcrafter and myself may be justly said, to be joined, not matched. For, with a soul of fire like mine, and thoughts which out-stripped the wind; to be happily united to a being, who was only sensible of the effects of passion, but totally unacquainted with the delicate sensations of an exalted affection, was a consummation not to be hoped for.\footnote{145}

When she follows this statement with a lengthy "reflection upon a pure and delicate love,"\footnote{146} she is establishing a concept of her own natural purity and delicacy which will serve to offset any unfortunate impressions created by the factual presentation of her "errors." This presentation is further reinforced by the high moral purpose claimed for the Apology as a whole, which, she assures us, is intended as "a beacon to warn the young and thoughtless of my own sex from the Syren shore of vanity, dissipation, and illicit pleasures. \ldots\"\footnote{147}

The tendency to tailor her self-portrait to the standards of the reader is perhaps most marked in the extended descriptions of her sensibility. Here Mrs. Bellamy was not impelled to establish the characteristic in order to avoid the implications of her conduct. Rather she seems to have added a gratuitous element in her characterization merely because it was a trait then in the height of fashion. Most likely she, with most of her feminine contemporaries, did

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{145}{II, 186.}
\item \footnote{146}{II, 186-187.}
\item \footnote{147}{I, 2.}
\end{itemize}}
consider herself extremely susceptible, and we would have little quarrel with her if any moderation had been observed in the portrayal of this characteristic. But once again the exaggeration is so extreme that we are forced into doubt, and once again we find evidence, both internal and external, which confuses the intended impression. Since we have already well established Mrs. Bellamy's technique in these matters, it is unnecessary to go into all the material which might be cited to illustrate our point, but we may notice a few instances of the contrarieties involved. On the one hand we find a Mrs. Bellamy very like Stauffer's picture--brassy, cold, and selfish. This Mrs. Bellamy is capable of great glee in the relation of her story of the gouty old knight whose admiration led him to a ridiculous pursuit of her chair in the streets of London. She considers this incident so amusing that she sees to it that the tale reaches the wife of the old man, who has always considered him "the most docile and fond help-mate." She has the bad taste to make a joke of his subsequent death ("his entrée into the family vault") and to entertain a sorrowing relative with a repetition of the "gallant attack." There is little softness of emotion in such a woman. From an outside source we get a glimpse of Mrs. Bellamy that conveys a somewhat similar impression of her ruthlessness. Dibdin

148 Iv, 177-180.
describes an event during her Edinburgh stay with West Digges which may be apocryphal but certainly testifies to the character she bore among her Scottish acquaintances. Mrs. Bellamy and Mr. Digges, he tells us, one night in winter had a violent quarrel, at the climax of which Digges dramatically disrobed and flung himself out of doors with the intention of drowning himself in a neighboring pond. Mrs. Bellamy, remaining utterly calm, simply locked the door and waited until "the rigour of the season, along with a little reflection" brought him back with chattering teeth "to submit to the severest terms the lady in possession of the fortress thought fit to propose." If our sympathies are here at least in part with the actress, we are convinced that this is no delicate and tender woman, but one hard and determined, capable of taking care of herself in any situation. Her lack of concern for the feelings of others is shown again and again in her Apology, very strikingly in the case of John Calcraft. Whatever injuries she may have suffered while she was ostensibly his wife, there is an astonishing lack of loyalty in her willingness to join their guests in laughing behind his back at the absurdity of his court costume and a real cruelty in her forcing him into silence in company because he once revealed that he did not know the meaning

149 Annals, p. 121.

150 III, 78.
of "gladiator."\textsuperscript{151} The unrelenting ferocity of the letter to Calcraft enables us to sympathize fully with him as we read of what must have been a similar address upon the subject of his desire for a career in Parliament. Mrs. Bellamy's picture of her righteous indignation is more shrewish than she intended:

As I had collected, whilst I thus addressed him, all the contempt and indignation an offended woman could call to her aid, in my manner, look, and voice, he shuddered as if a Gorgon had presented itself to his view; and, for the time, seemed to adopt my opinion.\textsuperscript{152}

Indeed only a shrewish woman would plan frequent concerts in her home, principally because her "husband" hated music and invariably left the house when it was played.\textsuperscript{153}

But this is not Mrs. Bellamy as she usually presents herself in the Apology. Far more numerous are the references to the tenderness of her feelings. Reflections such as this establish the tone:

Great are the pleasures arising from susceptibility!---Many indeed, and exquisite, are likewise the pains attendant on it.---The inexpressible pleasure of making happy, by a mutual reciprocation of beneficent acts and tender communications, greatly overpays, however, the disadvantages of possessing a susceptible heart.---The enlarged mind alone is capable of these mental enjoyments.---By the liberal-minded, therefore, are the delicate sensations I speak of, only to be comprehended.---To the million they are caviare.\textsuperscript{154}

\textsuperscript{151}\textsuperscript{III, 79.}
\textsuperscript{152}\textsuperscript{III, 177-178.}
\textsuperscript{153}\textsuperscript{III, 189.}
\textsuperscript{154}\textsuperscript{II, 23.}
This Mrs. Bellamy believes, contrary to the evidence of her tale of the gouty knight, that "to repeat stories to the disadvantage of others, even if they are true, is wrong." She is given to describing as "pungent" the emotions that often overwhelm her. After years of theatrical experience, she faints in terror at the sight of a stage ghost in Oedipus. An illness, often lingering and dangerous, is the result of every emotional crisis. The deaths of General Braddock and Woodward, an arrest for debt, the false accusations of Mr. Medlicote, the Byron abduction are only a few of the events which throw her into a fever or, in one case, into "a state of silent insanity." So delicately constituted is she that even the anniversary of the day when she feared she had contracted hydrophobia can afflict her with renewed agonies.
She is so subject to fainting spells that she must utilize a variety of expressions in order to describe her situation without monotony: "I dropped down speechless,"165 "I accordingly fainted away,"166 "I was deprived of my senses,"167 "I fell senseless on the floor."168 Even as she writes, Mrs. Bellamy's feelings sometimes overcome her. Recalling the death of friends, she concludes:

A tear that obtrudes itself . . . dims my sight. . . . The subject awakens all my sensibility.--And surely, a heart more susceptible of all the tender feelings never throbbed in a female bosom.--The soft effusion overwhelms me.--I must lay down my pen.169

The sensibility attested to in these small ways performs a large function in the memoirs. As we have seen, it takes the forms of humanity and benevolence and so serves to offer a justification of Mrs. Bellamy's extravagance. It is essential to the effect of many dramatic scenes in the Apology--for example, the suicide attempt, with its dénouement amid lofty humanitarian sentiments. Above all, it is in itself a means of establishing Mrs. Bellamy's reputation. No other trait could have so thoroughly recommended her to her contemporaries, whose standards for womankind had been formed during a half-century of growing interest in things sentimental. If we look back to the re-

165IV, 125.
166II, 156.
167II, 158. Note that on this and the following page the expression is used three times.
168II, 181.
169I, 167.
views of 1785, we notice how frequently the critics refer approvingly to just this quality, how little skepticism is voiced concerning her explanations of irregular conduct. For the reviewers, feelings are more important than acts and their literary training has taught them to accept and respect the character of the delicate and susceptible female here portrayed. Stauffer, freed from the influence of the sentimental code of the eighteenth century, scarcely heeds the extended sentimental portrayal, looks behind it and there finds an entirely different woman. But Mrs. Bellamy was not addressing the twentieth century. The writer of the Apology knew well the receptivity of the contemporary reader to such reflections as that which invokes Lawrence Sterne and manages an identification of Mrs. Bellamy's spirit with his. It reads in part:

O Sterne . . . it is a doubt, whether, upon a review of thy life, thou wouldst not have exchanged, had it been in thy power, thy susceptibility, . . . for this unfeeling Stoicism.—Impious thought! it admits not of a doubt.—Thou wouldst rather have exclaimed with me, "Give me my susceptibility, though it be attended with more than proportionate unhappiness!—The pleasures flowing from love and from philanthropy . . . fully compensate for the augmented pains!"170

Thus in a few words all the irregularities of Mrs. Bellamy's life are glorified by the respectability of their cause, her susceptibility.

170III, 148.
VII.

FICTIONAL ELEMENTS IN THE APOLOGY

The intent of the last chapter is not to imply that Mrs. Bellamy was entirely lacking in the fine qualities attributed to her by the Apology. It is to be expected that the actress had her share of human inconsistencies, that she could, for instance, be hard and calculating at one moment yet moved by benevolent impulses at another. On the contrary, we have tried to show that Mrs. Bellamy herself, although she laid so much emphasis upon the "Web of Life . . . of a mingled yarn, good and ill together,"¹ in the final analysis presented her virtues as absolute qualities, and so heightened them that the reader is no longer capable of reconciling the inevitable lapses of conduct with such exaggerated claims. As a result the portrait splits in two, and the unfavorable incidents, isolated by the impossibility of integrating them into the total picture, assume an undue prominence and meaning simply by the effect of contrast. There is no evading the fact that a certain amount of falsification, if only in the form of exaggeration, is present. This is no longer the kind of inaccuracy we have noted in connection with Mrs. Bellamy's

¹See title-page quotation from All's Well That Ends Well, IV, 3, ll. 68-71.
chronology, but deliberate addition of elements which cannot be reconciled with the actual life of the subject. We are therefore forced to consider further the question of the fictional nature of the Apology before we can make any evaluation of its place in literature. We have already shown that in general the memoirs follow actual and provable events. Contemporary sources confirm the broad outlines of the life as they are presented. If certain areas, especially those concerned with Mrs. Bellamy's romantic adventures, are allowed to remain undeveloped or are obscured by a seemingly deliberate mistiness of detail, reticence at such points is at least understandable and cannot be cited as proof of falsification.

What evidence, then, is there of the tendency to novelize which is suggested by the nature of the self-characterization?

We may begin by noting certain palpable deceptions in the Apology. One we have already treated in some detail—the strange and confused question of Mrs. Bellamy's birth date. Without reviewing the complications of the matter, we may well add here a meaningful piece of evidence from her own pen. It will be remembered that in her sixth volume, written in 1785, the actress reaches a final position and reproduces her birth certificate to establish the date as April 23, 1731.² We have also seen that this extract from the register was questioned at the time as originating from a non-

²VI, 17.
existent parish. Very pertinent to this objection is a passage in one of Mrs. Bellamy's letters to Tate Wilkinson, dated May 4, 1786. She writes, in self-pity, "They tell me it is my birth day, that is, the day of the month, for I see nobody..." In some ways, the remark merely adds to the confusion, but it is certainly clear that only a year after the publication of her birth certificate, Mrs. Bellamy's own ideas of the correct date are so dim that she accepts the alternative date and, indeed, has to be told about it by the persons around her. Not only does this cast a further shadow upon all the arguments regarding her birth but it suggests that she had so small a part in gathering and presenting the material that no conviction resulted in her own mind.

Two items in the section of the Apology devoted to Mrs. Bellamy's Edinburgh visit are even more suspect. She tells us that when she was about to leave Edinburgh she felt strongly her obligations to her friendly Scottish patrons and according inserted in the papers the following advertisement:

"As Mrs. Bellamy has dissolved her engagement with the proprietors of the Theatre in the Cannongate, she begs leave to return her warmest thanks to the public in general, and to those friends in particular, who have done her the honour to patronize

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3 See above, p. 76.

4 Memoirs, IV, 190.
her in so flattering a degree, since her residence in Scotland; of which she will ever retain the most grateful sense, as their favours are deeply impressed upon her heart.

"N. B. All persons who have any legal demand upon Mrs. Bellamy, are requested to deliver in their accounts at her house opposite Lord Milton's, in the Cannongate, within one month of this date, in order to receive the same." 5

Dibdin, however, who examined the papers involved, states flatly that no such addition ever appeared in the advertisement until it was reproduced in the Apology. 6

Both concealment and falsification are involved in the second of these items, in which Mrs. Bellamy carefully avoids exposing herself to any suspicion of conniving at a deception. Here it is her word against that of Tate Wilkinson, but there is every reason to credit Wilkinson's account of an event of such importance to himself. The simple situation concerned is a departure of Digges for England during the first winter in Edinburgh. Mrs. Bellamy says,

About the middle of the season he informed me, that he had received a letter, acquainting him that his brother, Capt. Dudley Digges, was arrived in England. . . . He therefore determined to set off to visit his brother, and we were obliged to manage in the theatre as well as we could. 7

5 IV, 71.

6 Annals, p. 131. But an informal report, as yet undocumented, from one who has seen the Edinburgh papers, tells me that a note to her creditors did appear several days after the first announcement.

7 IV, 48.
The last clause is hardly very complimentary to Tate Wilkinson, who had then just arrived in Edinburgh and found no opening for him at the theatre. Mrs. Bellamy, however, was his friend and urged him, he says, to stay just over a weekend in anticipation of a "wonderful change." In his memoirs he gives her explanation in full:

"Tate, I will prove myself explicit and honourable to you, as I can rely on your secrecy:—there is a law in force in Scotland, that if any person whatsoever is in debt, and known to be quitting the kingdom, they can arrest, even on a Sunday. ... Mr. Digges is much involved here, and is so unfortunately circumstanced at this juncture that he cannot possibly continue longer without loss of liberty.—On Saturday night Mr. Digges will, on some pretext, get all the cash he can from Mr. Still the treasurer: ... Mr. Digges will by Sunday night be secretly and securely conveyed out of their reach, and safe on the other side of the Tweed, in old England:—On Monday Bates and Dowson will be in the utmost consternation, and their only relief will be that of requesting your assistance.

And, adds Wilkinson, "The event turned out exactly as Mrs. Bellamy's secret advice had painted."9

These are inconsistencies which could be discovered only by comparison of the Apology with outside sources, but Mrs. Bellamy must stand convicted of misrepresentation by at least one piece of purely internal evidence. In the sixth volume she introduces a letter she claims to have received from James O'Hara, her half-brother. It describes at length the famous Lisbon earthquake of 1755. Dated from Lisbon


9Memoirs, III, 220.
only twelve days after the event, it begins, "I sit down to relate to you the dreadful catastrophe that has befallen the once-flourishing city of Lisbon, now a scene of horror and desolation." Toward the end of the letter, among many details of the earthquake and fire, is the following curious passage:

And, though strange to tell, yet true, the hair of your sister-in-law, through terror, from a lovely auburn, became quite grey. So great was the terror the shocking scene occasioned in her mind, that even when she returned to London, she could not conquer her fear; for upon the shaking of a house by a dray or cart, she always, for a considerable length of time after, ran into the street.

There are other revealing sections of the letter—the mention, for instance, of "Father O'Kelly, who afterwards took a passage in our ship to Leghorn." Clearly, this "letter" is a carelessly executed compound of memories and hasty research, put together at a date much later than that assigned to it and seeking to capitalize on the lingering interest in an old catastrophe.

Once led to question the factual accuracy of the Apology the reader will notice many other suspicious passages. There is Mrs. Bellamy's claim that in the seven months of Woodward's illness, she went to bed on only eleven nights,

\[10\text{VI, 59.}\]
\[11\text{VI, 62.}\]
\[12\text{VI, 61.}\]
in spite of the presence of a capable assistant nurse.\textsuperscript{13} Or there is her story of running over a child on the road south from Edinburgh, when she and Miss Wordley did not notice what had happened until "the chaise had gone over its legs" but when "my screams prevented the carriage from going over its head."\textsuperscript{14} There are the fantastically accurate predictions to Mrs. Bellamy and the Gunning sisters of the seeress, Madame Fortune, with the careful reservation which allows for a possible change, even at so late a date, in Mrs. Bellamy's marital status ("I never . . . would be married, unless I played the fool in my old age").\textsuperscript{15}

From these and other examples, we may fairly draw two conclusions: first, that Mrs. Bellamy does not scruple to stretch the truth or even to invent details when it serves her purpose, and, second, that, although she has much to conceal in her life, very frequently her purpose is simply one of adding interest to her autobiography. The letter from Spain, the carriage accident, the fortune teller's story, among others, are gratuitous additions to the narrative of her life which can only be intended to amaze or amuse. These are the sections of the Apology which give rise to the comment that there is about it an

\textsuperscript{13}V, 40.
\textsuperscript{14}IV, 76.
\textsuperscript{15}VI, 38.
"air of romance." In the face of the evidence we have to show that truth, in spite of all protestations, was not an absolute standard in the Apology, we are justified in suggesting that, beyond a mere "air" of romance, the Apology is riddled with fictional elements, designed largely for the entertainment of the reader.

It would be foolhardy to pretend that these fictional passages can be tabulated or that the nature of each can be proved beyond question. Very likely some are out of whole cloth, others merely extensive elaborations of some original truth. We can here only indicate some conclusions that seem likely in view of the character of episodes already shown to be patently false. The general trend both of the questionable areas of self-characterization and of those fictional passages which are not designed solely for purposes of concealment is clear. They usually embody stock characters and situations of the eighteenth century novel. The sentimental heroine looms large in them, and they often concern themselves with dramatic and pitiful accidents or deaths, with trite melodramatic devices such as the fortune-teller or the shock that turns hair grey overnight. Throughout the Apology there are a good many episodes which do not bear within themselves such definite proof of their fictional character as those already noted but which must be classi-

\[16\] See above, p. 89.
fied with them by their adherence to the same pattern. Rescues, robberies, attempted suicides, madness, the reunion of loved ones, pious poverty, even resuscitations from the dead are their themes. Often, but not always, they are not essential to the main narrative of Mrs. Bellamy's life and are linked to it by the thinnest of threads. In every case they are treated in full detail with every benefit of novelistic technique. Let us look at a few major examples.

The story of Peter, the Flemish boy, is certainly to be included in this category. Mrs. Bellamy is largely an on-looker at this affair, taking part in it only as the benefactor who rescued a poor servant boy, "poisoned with dirt," and placed him in her household. For a while he remains merely a "genteel-looking" figure of mysterious origin whose adoration of his mistress is such that "he seemed almost to pay me divine honours." Then one morning a "foreign gentleman" appears to claim him as his son. The scene is described in true sentimental style, the father exclaiming "with transport, 'Then, thank God, I have found my son!',' the son at sight of his father falling upon the floor "in a state of insensibility," and upon being revived and assured that all is well, crying "Thank God! Thank God!" The father's explanation, given verbatim at some length, is

17 II, 94.

18 II, 95.
couched in a formal literary style quite at variance with other sections of the book and presents the familiar story of the run-away boy who believes he has killed a friend:

"My son, whom you see before you, had a quarrel with his favorite school-fellow, at the time he was about twelve years of age, in which he received a blow. Enraged at the affront, he plunged a knife, which he unfortunately had in his hand, into the bosom of the lad who had offended him. Shocked at the deed he had just committed, and apprehensive of falling into the hands of justice, he fled. . . . Some business calling me to England, a townsman of mine informed me yesterday, that he had seen my son Peter go into a house on Frith Street. His information was the means of my paying you this visit, Madam, and has restored to me my child."

Another reunion, involving Mrs. Bellamy herself, shows how consistently this manner of treatment is carried out. The adherence to pattern appears to show that actual events of her own life have been embroidered to conform to novelistic standards. Estranged from her mother, the young actress has taken refuge in the country, where at the moment she is sitting out of doors and reading Mrs. Rowe's Letters from the Dead to the Living. When she suddenly sees her mother walking toward her, Miss Bellamy concludes that the older woman has died of sorrow and now returns in an apparition. The scene continues in a style very similar to that of Peter's reunion with his father:

. . . I fell senseless on the flowery carpet of nature. But what transports did I feel, to find myself, on my recovery, really clasped in her

19II, 118-120.
arms! . . . "Happy, happy hour!" I cried, enraptured, "do I once more receive the endearments of a parent!" 20

Another series of sentimental tales, well calculated to enhance the theme of the Apology, concern the misfortunes of several unhappy women. Mrs. Montford, the actress, is pictured in madness caused by the unfaithfulness of a lover, stealing away to the theatre and startling the audience by her entrance as "Ophelia herself," a final effort which immediately brings about her death. 21 Even more tragic, and certainly more incredible, is the plight of Lady Lindsay, whom Mrs. Bellamy befriends after learning that she suffers from all these hardships: her titled husband has died in a naval engagement; her father-in-law, having disowned his son, refuses support to her five children; she herself is so reduced that she has not even one decent garment; her eldest daughter is crippled by the amputation of a leg; and her youngest child, prematurely born at the time of the husband's death, appears doomed to idiocy. 22 Mrs. Bellamy's trip to Antwerp adds two more to the roster of these unfortunates, Mrs. Bramsted 23 and Sally French, 24 both of whom, like Lady Lindsay, are rescued by the actress's

20 I, 94.
21 I, 186.
22 III, 34-36.
23 III, 161 ff.
24 III, 166-167.
benevolence. That both of these stories contain fictional elements will be obvious to any reader. We may note, for instance, the sensational scene viewed by Mrs. Bellamy in the dwelling of Mrs. Bramsted, appropriately termed by the writer a "receptacle of misery." Both the apparent exaggeration of misery and the minute detail with which the scene is recalled after a lapse of almost twenty years render it unacceptable as a true account:

The first thing which struck my eyes was the corpse of a man, covered over by a rug. . . . A little further, upon a wretched pallet, sat a skeleton of a woman, with scarcely any covering, wringing her hands, apparently in the most extreme anguish. . . . By her lay an infant seemingly in the gasp [sic] of death; and another, in rags, about nine or ten years old, was warming something in a pipkin over a few charcoal embers which were [sic] in an earthen chaffing dish; whilst the tears trickled down its cheeks."26

Sensationalism, however, reaches its peak in those sections of the Apology relating to resuscitation and burial alive. There are actually three episodes of this nature: the revival of Mrs. Godfrey after a week of seeming death;26 the related burial alive of Dr. Walker, who upon disinterment was found to have attempted to "burst his cearements";27 and, in Volume Six, the corroborating story of Mrs. Challoner, who succeeded in bursting from her coffin but

25III, 162.
26I, 8.
27I, 165.
could not escape the tomb. Whatever their basis in fact, these tales are very much in the Gothic style. Mrs. Godfrey is miraculously revived by the sound of the same church bells that rang as she lapsed into unconsciousness. Dr. Walker's fatal premonition is justified in a scene of darkness, groans issuing from the grave, and shuddering on-lookers. Mrs. Challoner's plight arouses an imaginary participation in her sufferings which is strongly marked by the pleasurable horror of the Gothic novel, as Mrs. Bellamy pictures the situation of one who has escaped the coffin and found herself "alone ... unclothed, deprived of light and food, and enclosed within the narrow limits of a vault, among the dead, without a possibility of relief." There is, moreover, a related tendency in the Apology to emphasize with some relish the unpleasant details of decay and death. We hear of the Duke of Marlborough exposed by his callous wife to the public gaze in his senility and finally left to lie in death alone and neglected. Lord Tyrawley, Mrs. Bellamy's own father, is minutely described in his last days in a similar situation: "His tongue was lolling out on one side of his mouth; and he appeared to be counting his fingers." While these

28VI, 30.
29VI, 30.
30I, 7.
31IV, 168.
descriptions may well be truthful, their tone and the very fact of their inclusion evidences the work of a writer who well knew the growing popular taste for morbidity in fiction and was ready to cater to it.

The well-known suicide scene is so similar to the foregoing illustrations in its mood and style that a few comments upon it here seem indicated.\textsuperscript{32} Termed by Stauffer one of Mrs. Bellamy's "successes in sentimental portrayal,"\textsuperscript{33} it has generally been accepted by critics without any expression of skepticism. Tate Wilkinson, indeed, as we might expect, did not take it very seriously and commented upon it by quoting the remarks of Hamlet's Clown on suicide by drowning.\textsuperscript{34} As a matter of fact, the chosen method of suicide, ridiculed by Wilkinson, stands alone in this episode as evidence of truth. A writer of pure fiction would probably not have exposed his tale to such jeers by describing his heroine as sitting upon the steps of Westminster bridge and waiting for the tide to come in. A pause before a fatal plunge would have served equally well to allow for melancholy thoughts and overheard conversations, yet would have been infinitely more dramatic. Moreover, the procedure adopted is perfectly consistent with what we know of Mrs. Bellamy--

\textsuperscript{32}V, 59-62.

\textsuperscript{33}Page 44.

\textsuperscript{34}Memoirs, I, 128.
her sense of the dramatic, her self-love, and her fundamental optimism, which even in a moment of despair would be apt to render any "suicide attempt" a tentative thing. It is hard to believe that she ever seriously wanted to die or that, uninterrupted, she would have carried out her plan, but very easy to picture her in a period of melancholy musing upon suicide. Beyond this central and believable situation, the story of the attempt appears to fall neatly into the category of sentimental tales already discussed. There is much reason to suspect that it is largely developed by exaggeration and by the addition of fictional elements. The careful detail with which the scene is elaborated, the Gothic mood, the pictorial quality of the description of Mrs. Bellamy's "pensive posture" are perhaps legitimate and artistic means of communication, but they are also very much in the tradition of the sentimental novel. They become suspect only when we consider other parts of the scene. Two things are particularly striking: the conventional sentimentality of the situation which interrupts the attempt and the extreme importance of coincidence to the story. That Mrs. Bellamy should happen to be interrupted by a destitute woman with a starving child and sick husband, that this woman should happen to utter exactly those pious words most applicable to the authoress's plight, that almost miraculously, the means should appear for a benevolent act, and finally that this beneficence should be rewarded
by a second miracle upon Mrs. Bellamy's return to her home seems so unlikely that we scarcely need to consider the equally improbably words of the poor woman ("My God! my God! what wretchedness can compare to mine! But Thy all-mighty will be done.") before concluding that we are concerned with a highly stylized piece of sentimental fiction.

It is now quite clear, I think, that the Apology is a mixed form. Obviously factual and vivid accounts, such as that of the Dublin riots, are juxtaposed to stories strongly stamped with invention. Acute and convincing self-analysis is accompanied by high-flown characterization in accord with stereotyped standards. The resulting mélange makes possible a variety of interpretations of the text, and probably prevents even the most careful student from sifting out a total impression of Mrs. Bellamy in which he can feel any real confidence. A half-reading, in which the questionable sentimental passages are disregarded, cannot be counted upon to clarify the picture. It is to be feared that, to some extent at least, this was Stauffer's method of approach to the Apology, for only by entirely discounting large sections of the work could he have arrived at a final estimate of the actress's character that would permit the unmodified use of such adjectives as "selfish."

\[35\text{v, 61.}\]
"heartless," "brassy," or the positive statement that "she prefers the hard road of common sense to the tundras of the heart." Such an analysis assumes that no shred of truth lies beneath the many passages paying tribute to Mrs. Bellamy's sensitivity and kindness, an assumption forcibly opposed by the testimony of her own contemporaries. One of the earliest writers upon the actress, Chetwood, said of her in 1749, "She has a liberal open heart, to feel and ease, the distresses of the wretched." Two decades later, Hugh Kelly, author of a theatrical commentary in verse entitled Thespis, agreed in his judgment of the sadly declining actress, exclaiming

O that the charmer never had possess'd
That wide, that boundless, tenderness of breast;
Which, with a mad benevolence alone,
Can feel all wants sublimely but its own:
Ne'er turns from woe the pity-giving ear,
But still bestows a bounty or a tear.

We must conclude that a genuine and admirable part of Mrs. Bellamy's nature is to all intents concealed by painting it as such unalloyed perfection that the inevitable inconsistencies destroy the whole picture. In this and other areas we are left to speculate upon the truth, sure only that both Stauffer and the sympathetic reviewers missed

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36 Pages 42 and 47.
37 Page 44.
38 General History of the Stage, p. 113.
39 Page 44.
a part of it by their unequivocal acceptance of conflicting tendencies of the Apology.

In essence, the conflict seems to be the result of a clash between autobiography and fiction. Yet mixture of the two forms does not inevitably result in confusion and contradiction. In fact, the fictionalized biography is generally more capable of fusing disparate aspects of a life than is that which accepts the awkward limitations of the truth. The direction and tone of the factual narrative tends to be supported and confirmed by the fictional embellishments. That this has not taken place in the Apology argues a strange duality of orientation in the writer which challenges explanation, and to meet that challenge will be the task of the ensuing section of this paper. Accordingly, we shall turn now to a study of the probable genesis and development of the Apology, with a view to determining, in so far as possible, the causes of its inconsistencies.
VIII.

THE QUESTION OF AUTHORSHIP:
SOME PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

At intervals in previous sections of this paper we have fleetingly touched upon or implied the possibility of another hand in the *Apolo*gy than that of Mrs. Bellamy. If, as is generally supposed, one Alexander Bicknell had a greater or lesser part in its composition, the extent of his influence will be an important consideration in any attempt to understand the *Apolo*gy. We now approach the moment when serious study must be made of his contribution. But, before turning directly to Mr. Bicknell, we will need to examine a few more aspects of the *Apolo*gy bearing in some degree upon the question of authorship.

It is important, in the first place, to estimate the purposes of the work which would of necessity guide the author or authors. If much of the *Apolo*gy is ambiguous, its motivation is clear beyond question. That is not to say that it is given simple expression by Mrs. Bellamy but rather that the real reason for writing the book stands out plainly in contrast to the formally stated purposes. It must be remembered that Mrs. Bellamy was writing within an autobiographical tradition of female memoirs which pro-
vided her with accepted motives perfectly suited to her endeavor. Stauffer has noted the start of this tradition as early as 1715 when Madame D'Aulnoys based her memoirs upon the "conviction that the world is wrong and that the outcast autobiographer is suffering unjustly after impeccable conduct." Her purpose, he adds, is "to furnish a cautionary tale as to how to preserve one's reputation." Although Mrs. Bellamy is reduced to a somewhat lower plane by the fact that she cannot possibly represent her conduct as impeccable, her stated purposes closely follow this pattern. She establishes the first point immediately in her dedication to the Duke of Montague, declaring,

I have not the presumption to impose myself as an authoress: nor should I ever have attempted to appear in print, had I not been stimulated by repeated calumnies, which have been heaped upon me, and which would not suffer me to rest, even in indigence and obscurity.

Repeatedly she speaks of this desire to clear her reputation. Of the initial letter in the Apology, the first lines read, "In compliance with the solicitations of yourself and many other friends; and at the same time to rescue my character from the numerous falsehoods which have been industriously propagated against it; I sit down to begin an Apology for

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2 I, x.
Within a few pages she cites a specific attack upon her, "a wretched production, published in the year 1761," which "among innumerable falshoods concerning myself, presumed to mention my mother in terms of disrespect." Similar references to the injustices done her recur at intervals throughout the Apology.

On the whole, however, she places her greatest emphasis upon the formal purpose stated by Madame D'Aulnoys, saying over and over that she intends the Apology to serve as a warning to young women who may fall into the same bad ways as she. She begins her story with the hope that it will serve as "a beacon to warn the young and thoughtless"; on the last page of her fifth volume the same wish that her book may be a manual of conduct is recorded:

Should the relation of my errors and their consequences prove a document to my own sex; warn them to shun the paths I have pursued; and inspire them to a greater degree of prudence and reflection than I have been possessed of; I shall have employed my time to some good purpose.

These are only the first and last of many similar passages in the original five volumes. Nor does she allow this purpose to be fulfilled by the bare example of her misfortunes, but, as we have seen, introduces at frequent inter-

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3 I, 1.
4 I, 3.
5 I, 2.
6 V, 135.
vals moralizing comments upon her adventures.

These then are the two stated purposes of the *Apology*.

Indeed they may have been sincere, if traditional, goals. But the ruling motive, never stated, cannot be missed by the most casual reader. It is found in the actress's desperate financial straits. It may well be noted that Mrs. Bellamy had waited twenty-four years to clear up aspersions on the name of her mother that received no reply in the days of prosperity. And as we progress through the volumes of the book we come to recognize more and more clearly the cry for help of a distressed woman. We notice increasingly frequent references to the generosity of Mrs. Bellamy's patrons and patronesses. Her flattery is effusive, her public gratitude for past favors well calculated to encourage repetition. Sometimes these passages, were it not for the many comments about the "goodness" and generosity of her famous friends, might seem to express no more than a great pride in being able to claim the esteem of a wide and fashionable acquaintance. The following, which relates to her seasons in Edinburgh, is typical:

The first among my patrons was the present first Baron, the worthy Mr. Montgomery; a gentleman as well known for his goodness as his great knowledge. He not only extricated me from the persecuting spirit of an insatiable creditor . . ., but introduced me to the ladies of his family, who were the most amiable of women. One of these is the present Viscountess Townshend, whose goodness excels her beauty, though
that is so acknowledged. 7

In the later sections of the Apology, which are almost wholly taken up with descriptions of her financial struggles, the appeal to generosity becomes more emphatic. Her fifth volume even incites the prospective giver by presenting a complete letter to illustrate the art of gracious beneficence. The letter, from a benefactor whom she is not permitted to name, mentions an enclosed draft for one hundred pounds, begs her to accept it without any idea of repayment, and asks that, in any future distress, she turn again to him, since he finds no greater pleasure "than in giving ease to heart like your's." 8 Mrs. Bellamy expatiates upon the kindness of the writer, with appropriate quotation from Timon of Athens, and concludes,

Real disinterested friendship, is the rara avis of this age; and to me, the writer of the foregoing letter appears to be that phoenix. There may be, however, I make no doubt, many of the same generous disposition; but as I have outlived all my other friends, and have had more than came to my share, or than I merited, I ought to be thankful that I retain the good wishes of one. 9

The challenge to those "of the same generous disposition" to appear and prove themselves is unmistakable.

Similarly the Apology dwells at inordinate length upon the theme of ingratitude, plainly with the intention

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7 IV, 72.
8 V, 126.
9 V, 127.
of shaming former friends into rescuing their now impoverished benefactor. Only one person she says, with considerable exaggeration, has ever made return for favors of the past, and she has found persons whom she had thought "endowed with the most refined and liberal sentiments, to be as ready to avoid the person they once affected to admire... as the servile herd."\(^{10}\)

Her begging for assistance becomes overt in the extended section of the *Apology* dealing with the legal entanglements surrounding Woodward's will. Here she does not hesitate to sacrifice the interest of the reader to her immediate purpose of attracting some "gentleman of the law" to her defense. A great part of some twenty pages is devoted to explaining in detail the unfair legal complications which have stood in her way and to printing at length the text of the will in question.\(^{11}\) All this is dull for the reader but necessary for her purposes, as she explains:

I mention these circumstances, in hopes that some gentleman of the law, who is possessed of knowledge, joined with humanity, will favour me with his assistance upon this occasion, and endeavour to rescue a distressed and ill-treated woman out of such hands. That there are gentlemen of the law, who are as conspicuous for their probity and philanthropy as for their abilities, I am well assured, notwithstanding my severe strictures on one branch of the profession in a former letter. To such I beg leave to recommend my case; and,

\(^{10}\) IV, 29.

\(^{11}\) V, 31-50.
for their perusal, shall insert a copy of Mr. Woodward's will, from which they will be able to form a judgment of my claims; and I flatter myself, that some mode of redress might be found out and pursued.12

The urgency of her purpose, we note, seems in this section to have led Mrs. Bellamy to disrupt the careful epistolary form of her book by inserting into a supposedly personal letter a direct appeal to a portion of the reading public. Her eagerness has, indeed, caused her to introduce her wrongs too soon, and the fact that the details of his will have been extensively dwelt upon before we reach the death-scene of Mr. Woodward decidedly detracts from the effectiveness of that account.

Whether her desperation drove George Anne Bellamy to more unethical means of obtaining assistance is not so clear. Stauffer sees in the Apology definite evidence of blackmail. He notes the comment of the Monthly Review in 1787 comparing the life of Sophia Baddeley to the Apology. In both, the review says, "many are the names introduced, and many the reputations that are 'hack'd and hew'd, past all mending.'"13 And he adds,

To give the last turn of the knife, some of these biographies (such as Letitia Pilkington's and George Anne Bellamy's) were issued serially or in successive parts or volumes, so that veiled threats in early issues might later become open slander, unless the

12v, 34.

guilty or innocent person crossed the proper palms with the proper silver in order to keep his name out of print.\textsuperscript{14}

Stauffer gives no examples from the Apology. As a matter of fact, it is doubtful that Mrs. Bellamy intended the publication of her sixth volume when the first edition of her life appeared. Yet there are occasional passages into which it is easy to read an attempt at blackmail. Most suspicious, for example, is a reference to a mysterious gentleman who was among the actress's admirers at the height of her fame:

Among the competitors for my favour, which were numerous, there was one who actually offered me ten thousand pounds to be admitted as a favoured lover. As the gentleman is now happily married, I will not mention his name; there are, however, living vouchers to the truth of this assertion.\textsuperscript{15}

To prove that the intent of such passages was criminal, however, we would need evidence from the sixth volume of the carrying out of veiled threats; yet there seems to be no slanderous amplification in that book. We are left to believe either that Mrs. Bellamy merely enjoyed making uneasy those who had fawned upon her in good days and deserted her in bad, or that in every case the "proper silver" was handed over. I am inclined to favor the former hypothesis. George Anne Bellamy certainly enjoyed sticking pins in her enemies through the medium of the Apology—informing the gossip "Mrs. Bluemantle" that she holds "her calumny in

\textsuperscript{14}Page 485.

\textsuperscript{15}IV, 25.
the most sovereign contempt," reminding a former friend now blocking the payment of a claim that only through Mrs. Bellamy's aid in patching up a quarrel is she a wealthy woman, even obliquely accusing an acquaintance of the theft of a lost pocketbook:

I am, however, not without any suspicions, that another person found an advantage in my loss. But as this is only conjecture, I shall drop all thoughts of my loss forever; not doubting, but that even-handed justice will return the ingredients of the poisoned chalice.

Perhaps this occasional impulse toward petty revenge gives parts of the Apology a sinister air, but actual blackmail by autobiography has yet to be proved against George Anne Bellamy.

It remains obvious that the Apology was designed primarily as an instrument for obtaining financial rewards. These could be expected to be of two kinds, immediate profits of the sale of the volumes and contributions from readers whose generous instincts might be aroused. Our last two chapters have shown some of the ways in which the Apology appears to have been shaped by the desire to arouse maximum admiration and sympathy for the distressed actress. In considering its fictional elements, Chapter VII has also

16 V, 74.
17 V, 124.
18 IV, 143.
19 Nothing in her book compares with Laetitia Pilkinson's frank declaration: "And if every married Man,
touched upon some methods of popularizing the book itself and promoting its sale. We have not, however, yet examined the plan and construction of the Apology as a whole, in relation either to the writer's dominant purposes or to any literary values the work may claim.

The choice of the popular epistolary form for the Apology is of course a part of the attempt to catch the favor of the public. Its significance becomes more striking as we study the pattern of the letters composing the work, and as we realize increasingly the factitious nature of the epistolary framework. One hundred and two letters to a friend identified only as "The Hon. Miss____" make up the original five volumes. They are occupied exclusively with the narrative of the actress's life and this unusual use of the personal letter is accounted for by the correspondent's alleged desire to learn all about Mrs. Bellamy's career. The letters are carefully dated throughout, although the number of the year is never given, with Letter I dated Sept. 20, 17__ and Letter CII, March 23, 17__. Intermediate dates indicate a period of composition of more than two and one half years, during which time the rate of production is curiously steady, with from three to five letters appearing each month, usually at intervals of from eight to twelve days. Just once, the interval is longer, and a reference appears to illness which prevented composition. From Mrs. Bellamy's own account of the confusion and trouble of her last years, we would expect a much more irregular rate of production with many gaps in periods of illness or arrest. As a matter

who has ever attacked me does not subscribe to my Memoirs, I will without the least Ceremony insert their Names, be their Rank ever so high or their Profession ever so holy." (Memoirs, I, 245)
month, usually at intervals of from eight to twelve days. Just once, the interval is longer, and a reference appears to illness which prevented composition. From Mrs. Bellamy's own account of the confusion and trouble of her last years, we would expect a much more irregular rate of production with many gaps in periods of illness or arrest. As a matter of fact, there is no reason to give serious consideration to the possibility that the Apology was originally written as a series of genuine letters. Superficial observation immediately dispels such a thought. The vagueness of the friend's identity and of the dates alone imply that the form is artificial. There is nothing to indicate that the letters are more than a literary device and little likelihood that Mrs. Bellamy expected them to be accepted as anything but an artful means of presenting her story. Still the reader is undoubtedly called upon to believe that the memoirs were written directly in letter form by the actress over a period of years and were the result of vast industry and careful composition on her part. At one point she claims the praise of her correspondent for her application, saying "A reference to the dates of my letters will convince you, that I have devoted almost every hour, since I first began the task, to the employment." Anyone who chooses to

20 II, 183.

21 V, 13.
accept her challenge will find that the dates of her first fifteen letters indicate that she produced, on the average, about three-fifths of a page, the equivalent of one fairly long paragraph, daily during the first five months of this "indefatigable application." Such slight researches would seem to suggest not only that the epistolary form is artificial but that it may very likely have been superimposed upon the completed narrative. Any writer who dated sections of his work as he went along would fully realize the relation of output to the represented intervals of time and would presumably avoid so obviously fatuous a statement as the above.

A closer look at the letters gives us no reason to reject this possibility, for we find that the epistolary form is superficial in the extreme and, as the Apology progresses, is almost disregarded for many pages at a time. The first two letters use a formal salutation, "Madam," and the first six have at least a suggestion of a complimentary close. The rest begin abruptly and are simply signed "G. A. B." For a while, it is true, there is continued effort to acknowledge the correspondent at the conclusion of each letter, by directing a remark or a request to her, asking, for example, for permission "to give a little respite to my aching fingers." 22 This practice con-

22 I, 42.
tinues for about fifteen letters. Beyond that point, the writer occasionally rounds off an epistle with a statement of her reasons for concluding but just as frequently breaks off at a convenient point in the narrative, picking it up at the start of the next letter. In some sections little remains to mark the epistolary form as distinct from that of the novel, but the realization that these are letters is never quite allowed to escape the reader. At intervals the imaginary correspondent is brought back to the foreground. Sometimes she is demanding more details of Mrs. Bellamy's lofty thoughts; sometimes she is called upon for her reaction to the amazing events of the *Apology*:

> Could you have formed any conception that there had been men of his Lordship's cast? of those who break their marriage vows so soon after they have been made; ere they had well reached Heaven's portals? Yet such you see there are. But from such false ones may Hymen preserve you and every other worthy woman.

She is never completely lost to sight, but she is never more than a useful device.

The impression of the epistolary form is thus artfully maintained with a minimum of distracting apparatus, and the writer is left free to concentrate upon the effective construction of the letters themselves. The events of the *Apology* march along in vaguely chronological order,

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23 *I*, 138.

24 *II*, 16.
apparently as they emerge from the memory of the author. Without careful handling of the letter device, they would be in danger of seeming to wander formlessly, but by the placing of events within the individual letters they are made to take on a definite pattern. The repeated practice of ending a letter immediately after the recounting of an unusually dramatic (or unusually ridiculous) happening, for example, makes each such section seem to build to a climax, although the events chronicled in the whole letter may appear to have been recollected more or less haphazardly. We also notice that Mrs. Bellamy is in the habit of supplying at the end of her more dramatic letters a brief commentary--sage, rhapsodic, or heavily moral--upon the occurrence she has just described, thus highlighting the event and at the same time bringing the letter to a close on a note of inspiration. Many letters could be cited to show this pattern, but a single sample selected at random must suffice here. Letter LVII is typical. It begins abruptly with an account of Mrs. Bellamy's negotiations with the management before a season at Covent Garden; proceeds to recount a minor triumph over her arch-rival of the stage, Peg Woffington; shifts to a description of an unpleasant scene between the writer and her protector, John Calcrafter, over money matters; and at last launches into the pitiful tale

of Lady Lindsay. At the end of the letter the widow's "idiot" son, restored to normal by the assistance of Mrs. Bellamy and Henry Fox, pays a visit to his benefactress and kneels to kiss her hand in gratitude. This scene forms a natural end for the section and is followed only by Mrs. Bellamy's commentary:

Never did I feel more real happiness, than in being the means of relieving this amiable woman and her family from the extreme distress in which they were involved. The same pleasing reward attended, I doubt not, the great and good man, to whose noble beneficence that relief principally owed its furtherance. How supremely blest are those who possess, as he did, the power, as well as the inclination, to relieve the distresses of the unfortunate!

I can scarcely refrain here from entering into a long eulogium on that first of virtues benevolence; but having done it in a former letter, I shall refer you to that for my sentiments on this noblest propensity of the mind.

G. A. B.

This is, of course, not a universal pattern. Where it is possible one letter contains a single long episode. In many letters no event lends itself to the dramatic prominence merited by Lady Lindsay's story, and Mrs. Bellamy must be content with a humorous conclusion—which may nevertheless become the subject of a final paragraph of musings on life and virtue. Sometimes these comments are inserted in the middle of a letter; rarely they occur at the be-

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26E. g. Letter XXXII (II, 24-29).
27Cf. III, 93.
28Cf. II, 77.
The prevalence of the pattern, however, indicates a deliberate and effective technique. It is a simple technique which could have resulted from the sure dramatic sense of an actress penning the letters, feeling instinctively the points at which her writing rose to natural climaxes. On the other hand, it is a technique which would admirably suit the purposes of an editor. Given a rambling chronological narrative and asked to turn it into an accepted literary form, he could with a minimum of alteration divide the whole into sections, placing the breaks wherever possible at the high points in the story; further intensify the effect of these climaxes by solemn reflections upon them; supply a slender epistolary framework containing some transitional elements; and thus produce a work bearing a great resemblance to the Apology.

The same effect could indeed be achieved by the autobiographer herself by revision and enlargements of her original text. What probably occurred in the case of the Apology we shall shortly discuss. For the moment it is enough to note that highly conscious art (or artifice) has gone into its organization. The reiteration of pattern may become monotonous. The transitional elements may at times be as awkward or obvious as the end of Letter XVIII, "as I am now about to enter on the beginning of my theatri-

29 Cf. III, 10.
cal existence on the Dublin stage, I shall here conclude."\(^{30}\)

Still we are aware of the operation of certain definite literary skills. The writer knew the value of suspense and used it to carry interest over from one letter to the next. Witness the last sentence of Letter XVI: "I welcomed in idea, all the gay scenes into which I was about to enter, together with their inseparable concomitants, noise, riot, dissipation, folly, and pain."\(^{31}\) He or she knew also the importance of changes of tone and mood in a lengthy work and was proud to display that knowledge. In Letter LVIII, the final episode, an account of the sufferings and death of Tate Wilkinson's father, is followed not by the usual philosophical paragraph but by a pretended slip of the pen, immediately corrected and explained:

A ridiculous circumstance.\(^{32}\)--The reflection of a moment tells me, that the ridiculous circumstance I am about to mention, will stand a better chance of having the desired effect, if it be not related immediately after the foregoing anecdote.--It will be necessary that the compassionate emotions excited by the latter should be permitted to subside, ... before the chords receive a quicker vibration from a laughable incident.\(^{33}\)--As in music, too sudden a transition from slow and solemn strains to quick and lively ones, rather bewilders the senses, than arouses the passion intended; so in writing. ... You see, as clearly as I do, that it will be proper to make a pause between the preceding sad incident and the succeeding merry one.\(^{34}\)

\(^{30}\)I, 117-118.

\(^{31}\)I, 99.

\(^{32}\)III, 49-50.
Such flaunting of techniques is seen frequently in the *Apology*. There are comments upon the habit of digression, remarks about the inadvisability of breaking up dramatic units even of immoderate length, discussions of the necessity for keeping episodes within the planned scope of the work. At no point is the literary discourse particularly profound, but, with the undeniably effective organization of the *Apology*, it identifies the author as one practiced in the manipulation of the written word.

The style of the *Apology* gives us a further insight which must not be neglected. Perhaps we should rather speak of its styles, for the observable variation is extreme. A large part of the book is written in a kind of middle style—plain and direct, sometimes a bit stiff and precise, but sufficiently unpretentious to give an easy flow to the narrative portions. It is in this style, for example, that Mrs. Bellamy begins her account of her first appearance at Covent-Garden:

The dreaded evening at length arrived. Previous to it, Mr. Quin having in all companies declared it as his opinion, that I should not succeed; and Mr. Rich, on the contrary, having been as lavish in my praise; the public curiosity was much more excited, than if there had been no contention

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33 E. g. II, 81; II, 103; VI, 80.
34 IV, 200.
35 IV, 47-48.
about me. The curtain drew up to a splendid audience, which seldom happened at Covent-Garden Theatre, except when a new or revived pantomime was represented.\footnote{36}

From this basic, workmanlike prose, the Apology departs at intervals into styles that differ amazingly from each other. One is thoroughly informal, simple, vigorous—sometimes to the point of vulgarity. It is characterized by apt and often colloquial turns of phrase, simple metaphors of unusual strength, and by plain, forceful words. Latinisms and circumlocutions are at a minimum. Usually this style accompanies Mrs. Bellamy's moments of wry humor or ridicule. It is the style which persuaded Stauffer of her preference for the "hard road of common sense."\footnote{37} Endless examples could be cited. Of her admirer Jebson she says, "Whilst I sat at cards, this youth was rivetted to the back of my chair";\footnote{38} of the Misses Mostyn, "They were named, out of pleasantry, as they were formed rather in a spiral than a direct line, Crimp, Crump, and Crumpling";\footnote{39} of George Metham, "Lest there should be a tinge of college rust remaining, he had completed his studies at the Academie Royal at Paris";\footnote{40} of her enemy Mrs. Douglas, "[she] bestowed on me every epithet that ran-
cour, malice, absurdity, or poor weak woman could invent." 41
She derides one woman's dress as "frippery genteel," 42
describes another who "appeared to be an old maid of about
sixty years of age, and looked as if she had been smoke-
dried. " 43 She gives a masterly thumb-nail sketch of a re-
hearsal, saying, "Mr. Hall mumbled over Castalia, and Mr.
Ryan whistled Polydore." 44 An extended example of this
humorous, forceful style is found in the story of the gouty
old knight, 45 in which Mrs. Bellamy gave full rein to her
tendencies toward bluntness and vulgarity. The climax of
the knight's discomfiture shows this mode of expression at
its peak:

... I had been heartily frightened at his
approach, yet to see the short squab skuttling
away as if he had crackers at his tail, presented
such a ridiculous scene, that I could not help
bursting into an immoderate fit of laughter. In
this I was joined by the very chairmen, who ... 
had reconnoitred my turtle-eater. 46

To this passage we may oppose another as an illus-
tration of the extremes of style in the Apology. Here is a
digression upon disappointed hopes:

41 V, 132.
42 V, 95.
43 IV, 42.
44 I, 52.
45 IV, 177-180.
46 IV, 179.
But fate decreed it otherwise. And I was reserved to suffer calamities, of which had it been possible for me to have acquired a foreknowledge the very apprehension would have broken my heart; and prevented the completion of them.--Happy is it for mortals that they are not endowed with a prescience of their future destiny.--The prospect in general would prove so gloomy, that it would make them wish for their dissolution, and too often tempt them to precipitate it. 47.

We might perhaps call this Mrs. Bellamy's ornate style. Its basic sentence structure is no more elaborate than that of the more unpretentious passages, but it is adorned with elegant clichés, Latinisms, and circumlocutions in an attempt to support adequately the more elevated content of the paragraph. This style is particularly characteristic of the numerous digressions of the Apology--so much so that we come to anticipate its appearance toward the close of each letter and can be almost certain of finding it in conjunction with any episode of serious or sentimental nature. Various critical compliments upon these digressions to the contrary, their content is generally unremarkable, tending toward sentiments of the stalest sort. A glance at the first volume, for example, shows us dissertations on the evils of imprudent marriage, 48 on the mystery of the ways of heaven, 49 on the contrasting charms of country and city, 50

47 II, 70-71.
48 I, 39.
49 I, 96.
50 I, 98.
on the merit of honoring parents, on the astonishing instances of the rise and fall of families. The last, as if to emphasize its lack of originality, uses as an illustration the varying fortunes of Adam and Eve—"from the never-ceasing and inexpressible joys of paradise . . . driven into a world of care, affliction, and uncertainty, there to earn, by a life of labour and toil, a precarious subsistence."

There is little attempt in the Apology to move smoothly from one style into another. Rather the writer appears to launch suddenly into a flight of rhetoric, and as suddenly return to earth. The abruptness of the transition may be disconcerting, and especially so in the process of departure from the elevated style. The placing of the "reflections" so often at the ends of chapters to some extent minimizes this effect without eliminating it. Of many examples that could be given, we may cite one paragraph, especially striking because it drops suddenly to ordinary narrative style in mid-sentence. Mrs. Bellamy is speaking of Miss Morris, a young actress with whom she shared some of her parts:

This fair flower, like the lily of the valley, reared a-while her head, displayed her beauties to the sun, and diffused around the sweetest odours—But transient

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51 I, 171.
52 I, 178-179.
as the lily was her fate—Like her lovely emblem surcharged with rain, she soon dropped, and charmed no more.—So eager was the grisly monster death to seize such perfection, and so hasty were his strides, that she was unable to appear at her own benefit in the character of Juliet. I was therefore solicited by her relations to perform that part, which I did with the greatest readiness.53

The opening lines of this paragraph show the commonplaces of thought, the devotion to cliché, the habit of sentence inversion which in part characterize the ornate style. To be completely typical, the passage should include even more generalized terms, a higher percentage of words of Latin derivation, and a circumlocution or two. Elsewhere, for instance, a jail becomes a "receptacle of misery,"54 an unidentified object in the hands of a laborer is "an implement of husbandry."55 She speaks of a stain upon her character which none of her merits "were sufficiently palliative to expunge,"56 or says of Calcraft that certain behavior on her part "would have impelled him to an act which would have prevented his dying a natural death."57 Even without these elements, however, the lines on Miss Morris show with the greatest vividness both the extravagance of the style and its incomplete assimilation into the whole fabric of

53IV, 153.
54III, 68.
55III, 53.
56II, 125.
57III, 56.
This affectedly "literary" manner is quite in keeping with the multiplicity of literary references contained in the Apology and with the unacknowledged but evident literary influences upon it. Studded as it is with quotations from the poets and novelists, the book plainly evidences wide, though possibly superficial, reading and a determination to impress the writer's erudition upon the public. The scope of literary acquaintance is somewhat surprising in one whose education ended, according to her own story, when she was eleven and who admitted that she found herself as enlightened by the conversations of the men of letters she knew as if she had read the books they discussed. We are surprised by quotations from Spenser, Dryden, and Beaumont and Fletcher. Even the range of quotations from more nearly contemporary authors and those whose dramas Mrs. Bellamy might have known is striking; including lines from Young, Thomson, Addison, Phillips, Pope, Rowe, Churchill, and Otway. The direct quotations from these writers are augmented by references to such others as Steele, Mason, Butler--even Scarron and Voltaire.

A much more dominating literary figure in the Apology than any of the above is Lawrence Sterne. In all, the book contains nine references to him, several of them lengthy

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58I, 58.
quotations or digressions upon his sentiments. He is twice spoken of as "my favourite Sterne," and in this role becomes a kind of presiding influence. The placing of references to Sterne is probably significant. Through him the story of Mrs. Bellamy's life is begun, with the words:

Though I shall not, as a celebrated author has done, write volumes before I bring myself into being, yet as I have reason to believe the calamities of my life originated from events which happened long before I was born, it will be necessary to recapitulate many circumstances relative to my family. . . .

The last words of the fifth volume again revert to him with the solemn close, "and may Sterne's Recording Angel drop the tear of pity and obliterate my faults." Between these points Sterne is most often invoked at climaxes in the narrative, and especially where a dramatic or sentimental situation calls forth a striving for literary effect. Characteristically, references to Sterne are associated with digressions and with the "ornate" style. Such a passage is the commentary on Mrs. Bellamy's vow to reject Metham, which derives from the same reference to Tristram Shandy as the concluding words just mentioned:

O Sterne! had thy recording angel but obliterated with a tear of pity this vow, this hasty vow, and thereby erased it forever from the eternal register of mortals deeds, I might still have been happy.--

59III, 10; IV, 141.
60I, 3.
61V, 135.
But ah! it was not to be done.--The occasion deserved not the same sacred interference as that which thou hast so pathetically described.--The pure spirit saw from what a benign source the error of thy offending hero sprung.--He perceived it to be a virtue of the first water almost imperceptibly sullied by the frailty of human nature.--But mine had no such merit to plead in its favour, and excite the compassion of those discriminating beings.--It was a vow of passion and resentment; and as such claimed not an angel's pitying tear.

Four other references to Sterne in the Apology closely follow this pattern, and one of the remaining four, the valedictory sentence, ends a concluding paragraph very similar in tone to the above. His influence, moreover, cannot be measured by the number of references, for it is constantly seen in the frequent sentimental scenes and reflections. Once Mrs. Bellamy directly acknowledges that Sterne has been her model, complaining that in her story of Mrs. Montford she has been unable to equal his expression. In many passages a like striving is apparent.

Sterne's dominating position in the Apology may seem, however, to dwindle into insignificance when we consider the mass of quotation from Shakespeare that adorns its pages. Without taking into account the many incidental Shakespearean phrases, we can count more than fifty direct quotations from his plays. This habit is, of course, in

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62 II, 142.
63 I, 188; III, 82; III, 148; IV, 141.
64 I, 188.
keeping not only with the literary trends of the century but with Mrs. Bellamy's own background. Shakespeare's words come naturally and credibly from the pen of an actress, a point which she emphasizes in apologizing for the inclusion of so many "quotations from my favourite Shakspere, most of whose female characters I have filled." 65 In the same paragraph, she tries to convince her reader that these quotations are an integral part of her work—properly applied, "consonant to my own feeling, and expressed in a manner ... infinitely beyond the reach of my pen." The fact remains that the Shakespearean elements are less firmly connected to the body of the Apology than are the references to Sterne. They are largely used to ornament the text, often forming the major part of a digression 66 or an appendage to a characterization. 67 Mrs. Bellamy says that she will make use of Shakespeare's words "whenever they occur to my memory, and appear to be apropos." 68 This procedure is, of course, the standard practice in Shakespearean quotations, but her phraseology makes it evident that to her Shakespeare's words are an unlimited reservoir of fine expressions and sentiments which may be called upon to augment the beauties of her text.

65 II, 183.
66 E. g. IV, 116.
67 E. g. III, 80.
68 II, 183.
Sterne, on the other hand, is closer to her. Both his spirit and his style are more accessible. Since she can hope to approach him, his influence pervades other sections of the book than those specifically citing him. It would be possible to remove all Shakespearean quotations and to alter all Shakespearean phrases without changing considerably the form and tone of the Apology, which would be profoundly affected if Sterne were banished from its pages. This is not, however, to underestimate the importance of attention to the Shakespearean references, of which we will have more to say very shortly.

Thus far we have spoken only of the literary influences cited in the Apology. Equally evident, and on the whole more profound in their collective effect, are a variety of unacknowledged literary models. Yet it is difficult to point to any single production or tradition as a predominant influence upon the Apology. To be sure, its debt to An Apology for the Life of Colley Gibber (1741) is obvious, if only from the duplication of title and the mutual concern with theatrical matters. There is, moreover, a noticeable similarity in the form of the two books, both of which are supposedly written to an anonymous friend who is addressed in the first pages but soon becomes a piece of incidental machinery, only occasionally brought to the fore. Gibber dedicates his work to this mysterious person and in the life proper reminds us (but very rarely) of his existence by
addressing a sentence to him:

In this cause, Sir, I humbly conceive there are but two points. . . .

Cibber's Apology undoubtedly is responsible to a large extent for the strain of self-ridicule found in Mrs. Bellamy's autobiography. The disarming admission of vanity and other follies which so effectively countered the many attacks Cibber had suffered and was to suffer comes down to Mrs. Bellamy indeed in somewhat diminished form. She gives us no directly deprecatory statements as forceful as Cibber's introductory sentences:

But why make my Follies publick? Why not? I have passed my Time very pleasantly with them, and I don't recollect that they have ever been hurtful to any other Man living. . . . Really, Sir, my appetites were in too much haste to be happy, to throw away my Time in pursuit of a Name I was sure I could never arrive at.

Certainly it would be inconceivable for her to ask, as Cibber does of his critics, "Can you make me more ridiculous than Nature had made me?" But the spirit of humorous self-appraisal in the two books is similar. We have already noticed many instances of it in previous parts of this paper.

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69II, 199. Note that in this section Cibber seems to have recalled the plan of address and in pages 199-207 repeatedly uses the appellation "Sir." Note also that he is not entirely consistent in his address, at one point calling upon the "Gentle Reader" (II, 208), at another saying, "By your leave, Gentlemen . . .!" (II, 196)

70II, 2.

71II, 44.
The incident of the "chicken-gloves," for example, is thoroughly in the tradition begun by Colley Cibber.

In spite of these likenesses, the two autobiographies are essentially so different that Cibber cannot be considered a principal influence. His book, for one thing, puts so strong an emphasis upon his theatrical experiences that it comes close to being pure stage history. 72 Mrs. Bellamy could have found in it no model for her revelations concerning her private life or for the many sentimental tales and moral reflections. Cibber, indeed, claims the right to digress but apparently thinks of digression as something quite different from Mrs. Bellamy's solemn and weighty utterances as he writes, "I shall make no scruple of leaving my History when I think a Digression will make it lighter for my Reader's Digestion." 73 The digressions, when they come, are easy in thought and unpretentious, and so well integrated into the body of the narrative both in meaning and in style that they may extend to considerable length.

72 John C. Major, in his dissertation, The Role of Personal Memoirs in English Biography and Novel (1935), comments interestingly on this point: "Cibber . . . shows more plainly than later literary memorialists that he is conscious of the difference between memoirs and autobiography. He insists that he is writing, not only his own life, but the theatrical history of his own time. It is perhaps because of this attempt to write a literary memoirs, rather than an autobiography, that he preserved for posterity invaluable 'characters' and anecdotes of the theatre during his life-time." (p. 93)

73 I, 6.
without creating any feeling of disunity. The tone throughout is gay, forthright, and witty. Only those sections of Mrs. Bellamy's Apology which deal with her amusing theatrical experiences or her more inconsequential foibles bear much resemblance to Cibber's work. Others that concern themselves with delicate emotions, sensibilities, personal sorrows and injuries must find their inspiration elsewhere.

It seems likely that any similarity, except in superficial form, between the two Apologies results from the intermediary tradition stemming from Colley Cibber and developing in such works as the autobiography of his daughter Charlotte Charke. Mrs. Charke's memoirs are curious in the extreme and inferior in quality partly because of the clash between the tone of Colley Cibber and the introduction of incongruously serious subject matter. Her self-ridicule is certainly modeled upon that of Cibber's Apology but in an exaggerated form. The dedication of the book is headed "The Author to Herself" and begins,

If by your Approbation, the world may be persuaded into a tolerable Opinion of my Labours, I shall, for the novelty-sake, venture for once to call you, FRIEND; a Name, I own, I never as yet have known you by.

74 E. g. I, 11-27--a single digression.

75 A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Charlotte Charke (1755).

76 Page vii.
This note recurs in the body of the work many times. Mrs. Charke admits that as an oddity she may claim to be "among the Wonders of Ages past, and those to come," or states flatly, "There is none in the World MORE FIT THAN MYSELF TO BE LAUGHED AT." Such extreme self-deprecation, establishing the writer as thoroughly ludicrous, is a poor foundation for other motifs of the autobiography. It is significant that these other elements depart widely from the tone and subject matter of Gibber, but frequently bear close resemblance to those of Mrs. Bellamy. Mrs. Charke, for instance, insists upon her life-long misfortune and unhappiness, relieved only by the attentions of "a numerous Quantity of Friends"; she justifies herself as a wife by complaining of the injuries done her by her husband; and, in spite of all emphasis upon her foolishness, she seeks to portray the delicacy of her sensibilities on numerous occasions, often using a favorite word, "shock," to describe her sensations in trying situations. Thus she speaks of undergoing "the Shock of mingling with . . . servants." Perhaps the most obvious similarity to Mrs. Bellamy's Apology lies in the unabashedly mercenary motive of the life and the resultant

77Page 13.
78Page 86.
79Page 84.
80Page 78.
81Page 100.
Apology, but so apparently was another piece of female autobiography, already mentioned here in the comment of a skeptical reviewer. Although An Apology for the Conduct of Teresa Constantia Phillips (1748) lies outside the group of theatrical lives, its relationship to the memoirs of Mrs. Bellamy is very clear. Absorbed with the delineation of her problems, "Con" Phillips climaxes one section of her story with a detailed analysis of the debts owed her by her lover "Tartuffe," exactly as Mrs. Bellamy casts up accounts with John Calcraft. If, as seems evident, Mrs. Phillips' book was in the mind of the Apology's author, we may link some of its insistence upon "marital" difficulties to a group of intimate feminine confessions which includes, with Con Phillips' memoirs, those of Letitia Pilkington and Lady Vane. All of these ladies dwell upon the disorders of married life and the injustices of men. It is certainly beyond the scope of this paper to attempt to separate and analyze the interweaving relationships of the eighteenth-century scandalous memoirs; yet it is well to observe that George Anne Bellamy's Apology takes a definite position in the pattern of development, absorbing the various traditions and, as we shall see in considering the influence of the Apology upon the Memoirs

83See above, p. 77.
84II, 238-241.
of Mrs. Sophia Baddeley,\textsuperscript{86} passing them on to later biographies of a similar nature.

The influence of prevailing patterns of the novel upon the \textit{Apology} is equally obvious. The repeated references to Sterne were probably deliberately intended to show the reader that the memoirs are written to conform to the standards set up by Sterne but developed by the multitude of imitators. The ostentatious emotions of the \textit{Apology} are not, however, necessarily a direct inheritance from Sterne. They are part of a whole manner of thought, stemming from Richardson, building up through Sterne, and becoming so thoroughly accepted by Mrs. Bellamy's time that it is no longer possible to trace immediate influences. Before the \textit{Apology} was written, Henry MacKenzie had produced that epitome of the tradition of Sterne, \textit{A Man of Feeling} (1771), and a host of minor novelists, many of them women,\textsuperscript{87} had spun out their tales of the distresses attendant upon delicate feminine sensibility. The sentimental characteristics stressed in Mrs. Bellamy might, as we have said, have been transmitted from the autobiographical tradition, but the question is a fruitless one in the face of a trend so pervasive. Sterne's dominant position in the \textit{Apology} certainly links it closely to the sentimental novel.

\textsuperscript{86}See below, pp. 244-252.

\textsuperscript{87}E. g. Mrs. Sheridan, Mrs. Inchbald, Clara Reeve, Charlotte Smith.
The author of the *Apology* shows in other ways, too, the influence of various forms of the novel. Certain sections of the book strongly indicate that the writer knew well and adapted to his uses the work of other novelists than Sterne. It is certain, for instance, that some elements of the *Apology* follow the example of Defoe. Since the stylistic variation is so great, only certain sections of the book bear this stamp; yet they are numerous enough to stand out clearly in contrast to the sentimental passages. We have had occasion to refer to several of them in discussing Mrs. Bellamy's attitudes toward money, for Defoe's techniques seem to have been especially useful to the author in handling the multifarious financial transactions which are so important a concern of the memoirs. The possibility that Mrs. Bellamy actually retained in her memory over the decades a precise and itemized account of her expenditures and receipts, even while she was forgetting the sequence of her theatrical engagements, is so slight that we may assume in most instances the deliberate addition of specific but manufactured detail. The same is true of a number of passages which deal with physical environment, rather than with money. How close these passages, with their careful enumeration, their injection of realistic trivia, even their occasional claims of forgetfulness, are to Defoe may best be shown by considering an excerpt or two. In its crudest and least effective form the style may be seen in the accounts of Mrs.
Bellamy's trips on the continent. Part of her description of Antwerp follows:

There are thirty-three bells and two chimes in the cathedral, with a clock; together with a cross at the top. . . . The stadt-house is well worth viewing; as is Mere-street, wherein a brazen crucifix is placed upward of thirty feet high. There are twenty-two spacious squares in Antwerp. The number of streets I cannot recollect, but they are wide and numerous.88

Similar is this comment on Brussels: "There are seven parishes, seven capital streets, and they even descend to so minute a punctilio in this singularity, that there are but seven midwives in the place."89 Such exaggerated precision certainly defeats the writer's purpose of establishing Mrs. Bellamy's presence in those cities as an acute observer. But devices of the sort are not always employed with so little subtlety. An occasional paragraph suggests Defoe in his most convincing vein. For instance, certain circumstances which led to the robbery at Mrs. Moore's are presented in this fashion:

Mrs. Moore's butler had been sent into the city to receive a considerable sum of money, which he had deposited in a canvas bag. As the amount was all in gold, except one thirty pound note, it made a figure. Before he got home, he called at a public-house for a pint of porter.90

Such a touch as the gratuitous mention of the single thirty-pound note could come only from a writer familiar with the

88III, 159.
89III, 156.
90IV, 198. The italics are mine.
methods of Defoe.

The influence of the novels of Samuel Richardson upon the Apology is as clear as that of Defoe and at the same time much more difficult to assess. Mrs. Bellamy's use of the epistolary form is so obvious an inheritance from Richardson that it is natural to seek for further direct resemblances. For the most part only the effect of a generalized tradition will be found. The epistolary form had, by Mrs. Bellamy's time, become so popular that there is no reason why we should conclude that its use indicates familiarity with Richardson. A similarity of mood between certain parts of the Apology and, for example, Pamela may likewise be significant only of the absorption of his innovations into the pattern of biographical writing. As Stauffer puts it,

Pamela is in some ways a declaration of independence for feminine sensibility; although his influence here cannot be established precisely, Richardson must have been partially responsible for the unusual number of eighteenth century autobiographies by women, with their leisurely and delicate self-analysis, their elevated sentiments, and their tender emotions.91

In the case of Mrs. Bellamy's memoirs, however, there appears to be some reason to consider the possibility of an immediate debt to Pamela. It would be difficult to explain certain curious parallels between the two works except on the basis of a thorough familiarity with Pamela on the part of

91 Page 89.
the Apology's author. One of these is the episode, common to both, of near-suicide by drowning. Dissimilar as these two attempts are in some respects, there is an undeniable pictorial resemblance between the two scenes, with Mrs. Bellamy seated on the dark steps by the Thames, Pamela upon the bank of the pond in Mr. B___'s garden, both engaged in despairing rumination upon the desirability of death.92 Their thoughts run in paths that are very much alike as they list their reasons for the dreadful step:

Pamela:  
I then considered, and after I had cast about in my mind everything that could make me hope, and saw no probability; a wicked woman devoid of compassion! a horrid helper, just arrived in the dreadful Colbrand: an angry and resenting master, who now hated me, and threatened the most afflicting evils. . . . 93

Mrs. Bellamy:  
In this dreadful situation, . . . terrified with the gloomy prospect which presented itself to my view, I endeavored to persuade myself that suicide could not be a crime. I had no person to look up to. Everybody to whom I was united by the ties of blood, were abroad. . . . oppressed by debt; without the common necessaries of life; an useless member of society. . . . 94

From their despair (Pamela: "I tremble to think to it!"95--Mrs. Bellamy: "I shudder at the recollection." )96 both are

92 Apology, V, 57 ff.; Pamela, I, 149 ff.
93 Pamela, I, 150.
94 Apology, V, 57-58.
95 Pamela, I, 149.
96 Apology, V, 60.
saved by the realization that their planned act is a rejection of the will of God. 97

If these parallels may be explained as developments of a conventional attitude toward self-destruction, we may point to a much stronger likeness between the two books, for the Apology contains a scene clearly reminiscent of Pamela’s dilemma in attempting to escape from her captivity. In Richardson’s work, the heroine’s fright at encountering a bull in the pasture and, later, what she takes to be two bulls, one on either side, 98 is an integral part of the plot development. In the Apology, the episode is entirely independent of the main narrative and seems to have been included as an interesting incidental happening. Young George Anne Bellamy, in retreat in the country, is walking through the fields, admiring the “rural scene.” In her words,

Before I had got far, I observed something gliding towards me which appeared to be shining; and what should it be but a serpent, which my fear magnified to an enormous size. I ran to avoid it, and in my fright leaped over a stile; which I had no sooner done, than a boy, who stood near it, desired I would not proceed, as there was a very vicious bull in the adjacent pasture. Thus situated between Scylla and Charybdis, I knew not which to run the risk of, the beast or the reptile. 99

97 A related scene will be found in the Memoirs of Mrs. Laetitia Pilkington, II, 209. It is, however, much less fully developed than the suicide scenes here discussed.

98 Pamela, I, 132.

99 Apology, I, 88.
Since Miss Bellamy escapes easily with the help of the boy, and since the occurrence has so little significance in her narrative, it is hard to explain its inclusion except as conscious capitalizing upon the success of its prototype in Richardson's book.

Perhaps it is meaningful to add here that at least one important piece of phraseology in the Apology seems to stem from Pamela. We have previously quoted this expression as an illustration of the apologetic tone by which Mrs. Bellamy seeks to appear humble while extolling her own virtue.100 The fact that it is used twice in slightly different form seems to show the writer's pride in an apt phrase. Here are the pertinent passages:

Pamela (replying to Mr. B--'s thanks for her kindness):
I had the less merit in this my return, being driven by an irresistible impulse to it; and could not help it, if I would.101

Mrs. Bellamy (on her penchant for benevolence):
I claim, however, no merit for the little assistance I have been enabled to bestow on others.
It was an impulse of nature that I could not resist.
It was an impulse of nature that I wished not to resist.102

Mrs. Bellamy (returning to the same subject):
... some trifling instances of humanity,
from which I could not arrogate to myself any merit

100 See above, p. 130.

101 Pamela, I, 240.

102 Apology, II, 90.
If there is a direct relationship between the first passages and the two following, the imitative process may to some extent explain the false ring of Mrs. Bellamy's sentiments. Pamela, after all, was describing an attraction to her master which she could neither overcome nor approve. Mrs. Bellamy's application of the same words to generalized benevolence, which she knows to be meritorious, serves to create only a confusion of meaning. The imperfect effect of the phraseology in the later book appears to support the theory that it is derivative rather than original.

With this last suggestion of literary influence upon the *Apology*, we are ready to approach the problem of its authorship. Almost all the areas we have reviewed in preceding parts of this paper will have some bearing upon the question. We have seen that the book is a fascinating conglomeration of fact and fancy, sometimes vivid and true, sometimes confusing and evasive, sometimes far removed from reality. We have noted the underlying motive of financial gain, the superficial skill of the book's composition, its peculiar stylistic variation. We have become aware that a surprisingly extensive literary acquaintance has been brought to bear upon the writing of the memoirs. How all this

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103 *Apology*, II, 137.
accords with the simple claim of Mrs. Bellamy's title-page, "Written by Herself," must now be determined.
IX.

THE EDITORSHIP OF ALEXANDER BICKNELL

The assumption that Mrs. Bellamy had been assisted in the composition of the Apology appears to have been made very shortly after the publication of the first volumes. It is implied by The Critical Review's reference, in June, 1785, to having conversed with the lady "at a humble distance, with the assistance of an interpreter."¹ Within two years after that date The General Magazine is speaking without reservation of "Mrs. Bellamy and her amanuensis" and comparing them with "Mrs. Steele and her goose-quill friend," writers of the Memoirs of Mrs. Sophia Baddeley.² The certainty of such statements seems to imply that the reputed collaborator was known. Mrs. Bellamy, however, was then still living, and only after her death in 1788 do we find evidence of his identity. In that year was published an unacted drama by Alexander Bicknell, The Patriot King; or Alfred and Elvida. On its title page, Bicknell styled himself "The editor of An Apology for the Life of George Anne Bellamy." Apparently no one rose to challenge

¹Critical Review, IX (June, 1785), 478. See above, p. 79.
²General Magazine, I (June, 1787), 20.
his assertion, for in 1790 when he published an epistolary novel called *Doncaster Races, or the History of Miss Maid-land*, its title-page repeated the claim.

Subsequent discussions of the *Apology* occasionally make reference to Bicknell, generally acknowledging that he probably had some part in the composition and sometimes speculating about the extent of his influence. John Galt, for instance, writes of the memoirs:

They are generally believed to have been written by Alexander Bicknell. . . . They are not, however, spurious; she is supposed to have furnished the material, and must be held responsible for the chronological errors which impair their merit.3

Later he expresses his theory about their composition:

In the *Apology* for her Life are several shrewd remarks, which partake of the vivacity of her character; I am, therefore, notwithstanding the cloud that hangs upon the thorough authenticity of the work, much inclined to believe the narrative genuine, and that it was dictated by herself.4

Percy Fitzgerald seems to have been less sure of the integrity of the volumes. He writes, "These accounts [the memoirs of Bellamy, Baddeley, Robinson, and Charke] are not unenter-taining, though written in a rather valet style by some literary hack, in their inspiration."5 Genest,6 Lowe,7

3 *Lives of the Players*, II, 75.
4 II, 107.
5 *Actors and Actresses*, ed. Matthews and Hutton, I, 211.
6 IV, 343.
7 Page 17.
and Knight, the last writing in the Dictionary of National Biography, all content themselves with stating that Bicknell arranged and edited materials supplied by Mrs. Bellamy to Bell the bookseller. Fyvie in his Comedy Queens of the Georgian Era echoes Galt with even greater conviction, saying that

although Bicknell may perhaps have supplied some of the sufficiently obvious moralizing, and have given here and there a Johnsonian turn to a period, the greater part of the narrative bears indubitable evidence of having been merely taken down from the vivacious actress's own lips.8

Least receptive of them all to Bicknell's claim is Stauffer, whose thinking on the matter is perhaps influenced by his enthusiasm for Mrs. Bellamy's work. He makes no reference whatever to Bicknell in his section on the Apology, but brings him into his consideration of the memoirs of Sophia Baddeley, which he says "have been attributed to Alexander Bicknell, who is alleged to have had a share in the fashioning of Mrs. Bellamy's Apology." He then adds, "To hold that Bicknell created these Memoirs is to believe him an unacknowledged imaginative writer of the first rank, for the stamp of life as it is lived is on every page."9 Stauffer is, of course, referring to the Baddeley life, but the application of his remark to the Apology is sufficiently clear in view of his similar enthusiasm for that work.

8 Page 141.

9 Page 47.
With this single dissenting voice, the consensus of those who troubled to consider the matter at all seems to be that Bicknell did have something to do with the creation of the Apology. Any presentation of evidence tending to prove this fact or any consideration of his influence beyond the most superficial is, however, entirely lacking—a gap which it is now our task to attempt to fill.

Virtually nothing is known of Bicknell as a person. He is dimly remembered only as a name attached to an astonishingly varied group of publications now largely unread. A biographical dictionary of 1812 which included material on writers for the theatre has only this to say of him, "A gentleman who published in 1792, an entertaining volume called Instances of the Mutability of Fortune, selected from Ancient and Modern History; and also wrote one drama, entitled The Patriot King."\[^10]\ The Dictionary of National Biography article by Charles William Sutton does much better in recognizing his works but finds very little to add to our knowledge of him as a man. He remains

an industrious litterateur of the last quarter of the 18th Cent., whose writings received their due meed of ridicule or faint praise in the 'Monthly Review' and are now forgotten. He died 22 Aug. 1796 in St. Thomas's Hospital, London.

Appended is a list of thirteen publications, the books that are now the remaining record of his life. The titles

\[^10]\textit{Biographia Dramatica}, p. 41.
are so revealing of his character as a writer that it will be well to list them here as they are given by Sutton:

1. History of Edward Prince of Wales, commonly termed the Black Prince, 8vo, 1777.
2. Life of Alfred the Great, King of the Anglo-Saxons, 8vo, 1777.
3. The Putrid Soul, a Poetical Epistle to Joseph Priestly, LLD, 40, 1780.
4. The Patriot King, or Alfred and Elvida, an Historical Tragedy, 8vo, 1788.
5. History of Lady Anne Neville.
6. Isabella, or the Rewards of Good Nature.
10. A History of England and the British Empire, 12mo, 1791.
12. Instances of the Mutability of Fortune, selected from Ancient and Modern History, 8vo, 1792.
13. Philosophical Disquisitions on the Christian Religion, addressed to Soames Jenyns, Esq., and Dr. Kenrick.

Sutton adds that the title-page of Doncaster Races mentions Bicknell's editorship of Carver's Travels through the Interior Parts of North America (1778) and of the Apology. Even this roster is not complete. A list of previous publications printed at the end of The Patriot King includes, in addition to the works given above as appearing before 1788, two more "poetical" works, in very different veins, "A Monody (After the Manner of Milton's Lycidas) on the Death of Mr. Linley, Junior" and "More Odes upon Odes; or

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11 He should have noted that the same claim appears in The Patriot King.
Undoubtedly the Bicknell bibliography, if the necessary research were warranted, could be much further extended, for he seems to have turned his hand to almost any kind of literary work and may be assumed to have done a good deal that has never been recognized. We shall shortly consider his possible authorship of the *Memoirs of Sophia Baddeley* and see him in the role of ghost-writer for speeches upon public occasions. The wide range of his subject matter and his inveterate tendency to borrow the material and style of other writers have, in fact, led to at least one definitely mistaken attribution which has gained remarkably wide acceptance. *The English Hermit, or the Surprising Adventures of Philip Quarll* is frequently attributed to him, ¹² apparently upon the authority of a definite identification in William Cushing's *Initials and Pseudonyms* (1888), which states without explanation that the name of Edward Dorrington, the alleged author, is a pseudonym for Alexander Bicknell. In actuality the book, which is a third-rate imitation of Defoe, first appeared in 1727, probably from the pen of an earlier hack writer, Peter Longueville. ¹³

¹² For example, by the Boston Public Library. The catalogue of the Harvard University Library attributes the work to "Defoe or Bicknell."

¹³ This identity is established by Arundell Esdaile in
Bicknell was certainly undaunted by any field of literary endeavor which might be calculated to catch the favor of the public. History, grammar, metaphysics, romance, satire, drama, occasional poetry, and the novel—all were included in his repertoire. The quality of the product is another question. If the notices in the Monthly Review, mentioned by the Dictionary of National Biography, may be taken as representative, his reputation among his contemporaries was unenviable. In December, 1780, the magazine's reviewer, lighting upon Bicknell's *Putrid Soul*, found difficulty in assessing him as a poet, philosopher, and theologian, saying,

> In all three he is so completely deficient, that we are unable to determine in which character he disgraces himself most. His system . . . is a compound of the most crude and heterogeneous principles that ever were jumbled together by ignorance and vanity. . . . We are at a loss whether most to despise or detest it. ¹⁴

The same publication dismissed *The Life of Alfred the Great* with equal firmness, if less venom, as "a subject that might have claimed the pen of a Robertson or a Hume . . . here occupied by a writer who is not even an Oldmixon, or a Guthrie." ¹⁵ *The Patriot King* only roused the critic's sense of humor. It was planned, he writes, for the stage in

Author and Publisher in 1727; The *English Hermit*. The Library of Congress attributes the book to Longueville upon this authority.

¹⁴ *LXIII* (December, 1780), 467-468.

¹⁵ *LVIII* (May, 1778), 402.
1778, when invasion was expected, "but the managers, it seems, thought that this country might be defended by other means."\(^{16}\)

The works of so little known and so little esteemed a writer are, of course, difficult to come by in this country. It is, however, possible to examine several productions known to be his. Fortunately, these, with some excerpts from contemporary publications, give illustration of Bicknell's work in history, romance, the drama, the novel, and occasional poetry, forming a fairly comprehensive background against which to judge his contribution to the *Apology*.

One of the most revealing of these volumes is the unappreciated "tragedy", *The Patriot King, or Alfred and Elvida* (1788). Everything about this book is curious, even to the impressive list of subscribers, which includes the name of Mr. Samuel Richardson, who had been dead for thirty years before the actual publication, side by side with that of "The Rev. Mr. Warton, Poet Laureate", whose appointment had occurred in 1785. The blank-verse tragedy itself must surely have appalled many of its distinguished subscribers, for it is a pastiche of incredible transparency. Far from resembling tragedy, it is a violent melodrama, in which the heroic Alfred and his queen Elvida battle and defeat the villainous invader Haldane and his wife Gunhilda. Replete

\(^{16}\text{LXXVIII (June, 1788), 523.}\)
with hand-to-hand fighting, female jealousies, poisoning, threats to the virtue of the heroine, it ends in unnatural felicity, with all the villains dead, all the virtuous alive, reunited, victorious, and, when applicable, betrothed.

In the telling of this tale, Bicknell borrows from any author whose work suits his purpose and scarcely attempts to disguise the fact. Some of these borrowings are brief reflections of a well known poem or drama. Dryden obviously inspires the lines:

'Tis thine, melodious Harp, to raise, or bind,
The various passions of the human mind,17

while Collins' Ode to Evening is clearly seen in the following poor paraphrase:

... about the hour
The solemn bird of night with tardy wing,
Skims o'er the fields to seek his vermin prey,
And the blind beetle, with his dismal hum,
Crosses the path of the belated traveler;
Expect my sure return.18

Such minor plagiarism, however, is insignificant in the face of massive borrowing from the major sources, Milton and Shakespeare. As we might expect, the latter is the predominant influence, but the Miltonic elements are numerous and essential to the whole construction of the drama. From Comus Bicknell has borrowed an Attendant Spirit, who follows Elvida's fortunes, appearing at intervals to protect her,

18 IV, 1, p. 36. Cf. Collins, "Ode to Evening,"
11. 11-14.
to break the spells of an evil magician, or merely to encourage her in holding fast to virtue. It is interesting to notice that, although the play is for the most part written in blank verse, the Attendant Spirit occasionally breaks into octosyllabic couplets of an undistinguished kind:

To Alfred, Haldane's fate shall yield;
Virtue alone can safely shield, etc. 19

Bicknell's close knowledge of Milton's minor poems is even more clearly shown in verbal echoes, such as the Attendant Spirit's statement that he comes to aid Elvida and to give

Admonitions sage and holy
To sanctify her melancholy. 20

Bicknell's Comus-character, a magician whose evil spells threaten the virtue of Elvida is, however, simultaneously a Prospero-character, able to force unwilling spirits to do his bidding. 21 The powers of darkness are further represented by one of Macbeth's witches, here operating solus but making plain her identity by reference to her "wrinkled wayward sisters." 22

To attempt any lengthy exposition of the Shakespearean

19 IV, 2, p. 38.

But hail thou goddess, sage and holy,
Hail divinest melancholy.

21 IV, 2, p. 37.

22 V, 4, p. 53.
element in *The Patriot King* would be to treat too seriously an imitation so obvious and extensive that it becomes amusing. Only a reading of the play can fully reveal the fantastic mingling of phrases, characters, ideas, and plot material derived from *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Lear*, *Othello*, *Twelfth Night*, *King John*, *Henry IV* (I and II), *Richard II*, *Antony and Cleopatra*. The Shakespearean sections of the plot derive mainly from *Macbeth* and *Lear*, twisted of course into the melodramatic pattern, and lead us through supernatural spells and through wanderings of the unfortunate king on the stormy plains to a denouement in which the hero Alfred encounters the villain Haldane and his henchman Gothrun in battle, only to hear that each is protected by a spell and cannot be harmed. When both spells fail, Haldane, dying, proclaims

> Yet 'tis too true—Now to my cost I find That all the sorcerer's flattering promises Are lighter far than air.²³

This passage illustrates a general tendency in Bicknell's use of Shakespeare. Exact verbal parallels exist but are usually limited to the repetition of one or two words in a passage. Although the Shakespearean source is in every case obvious, Bicknell paraphrases the original so completely that he often retains only the thought of a well-known passage and without exception loses its poetic quality. A few examples can be given here. They represent a mul-

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titude of lines in The Patriot King.

Haldane: Indulge not these tormenting phantasies
The progeny of a distemper'd brain.  

Macbeth: ... A dagger of the mind, a false création
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain ... 

Elvida: Ev'ry enjoyment now has lost its relish:
And life itself is grown insipid to me.

Hamlet: How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!

Attendant Spirit: ... when the smiling morn
Trips o'er the eastern Hills ...

Horatio: But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill.

Certain characteristics of Bicknell as an author are
suggested by a perusal of The Patriot King. Unquestionably
he was minutely familiar with the works of the great poets
and dramatists. The mass of Shakespearean borrowings and
their thoroughly heterogeneous nature makes it unthinkable
that he composed his play with the assistance of immediate
research. Clearly, the patterns he followed were provided

24Patriot King, III, 1, p. 23.
26Patriot King, II, 1, p. 16.
27Hamlet, I, 2, ll. 133-134.
28Patriot King, IV, 5, p. 48.
29Hamlet, I, 1, ll. 166-167.
by a retentive memory. The play suggests, furthermore, that Bicknell was markedly unoriginal in thought and expression, possessed only of a knack for inferior imitation. How well these impressions are borne out in his other works is our next question.

A look at a considerably earlier publication certainly supports one of our conclusions. The History of Edward, Prince of Wales, Commonly Termed the Black Prince, 1776, resembles The Patriot King only in the preoccupation with the early history of Britain and in its derivative nature. Bicknell's introduction refers to a previous life of the Black Prince by one Collins which "contains many interesting particulars" but "affords not that entertainment which the Readers of the Age expect to find." He adds, "I have attempted to compile it in a more regular and pleasing manner, making, as I proceed such reflections as naturally arise from the subject." The book in question is Arthur Collins' Life and Glorious Adventures of Edward Prince of Wales, published in 1740. A good deal more lengthy than Bicknell's book, it is a product of extensive research among records and manuscripts as well as early historical studies. A glance at the two books is sufficient to show that Bicknell's account is simply a condensation of the other, freely making use of Collins' words.

30Page vi.
but cutting out lengthy passages of genealogical and other
detail. There is occasional alteration in the order of
sentences or paragraphs, but for the most part Bicknell
follows along, reproducing word for word, skipping sec-
tions where he can and again picking up the words of the
original. Little, consequently, can be learned from this
book of Bicknell's own style. Yet there are a few passages
that seem to be original. Certainly they are interpolations
into the material taken from Collins. Perhaps Bicknell
thought of them as "reflections," although they are not
in that category. Rather they are sentimental or sensational
additions to the text. Not found in Collins, for instance,
is a lengthy paragraph devoted to the first separation of
the Black Prince and his bride. Even a partial quotation
will indicate the character of the passage and, incidentally,
will reveal a striking similarity of style to some of the
sentimental sections of Bellamy's Apology:

Her sighs however could not be suppressed, amidst all
her pomp anxious apprehensions would frequently in-
trude, and for a moment permit tenderness to triumph
over reason. The feelings of the Prince were no less
pungent, but engaged in the cause of Humanity . . .
he suffered not even the excitations of love to re-
tard the great purposes of his soul. Their adieu was
uncommonly tender; that of Hector and Andromache,
however elegantly described, could not proclaim with
greater energy the susceptible heart and the
exalted mind. 32

31 It will be recalled that "pungent" as applied to
the emotions is a favorite word of Mrs. Bellamy.
32 Page 259.
Again, near the end of the book, there is a significant addition. While Collins speaks only with great respect of King Edward III, Bicknell digresses into a description of the infatuation, riot, and indolence which marked his last years, leading finally to the indignity of a death witnessed only by his mistress, who "stript him of his rings and jewels, leaving him without one domestic to close his eyes, or do the last sad offices to his breathless coarse." We cannot help recalling the interest shown by Mrs. Bellamy in death-scenes involving degradation and neglect.

This book does not evidence the literary background shown by The Patriot King. Its similarity is in the plagiaristic pattern. By turning to one more of the works with "historical" titles, however, we find the two tendencies converging. Prince Arthur: An Allegorical Romance, published anonymously in 1779, was claimed by Bicknell in the list of works already mentioned and his authorship has not been disputed. This book is little more than a condensation and paraphrase of the first two books of Spenser's Faerie Queene. The debt is openly stated both on the title-page and in the introductions to the two volumes. The text closely follows that of Spenser, generally reducing several stanzas to one short paragraph, but frequently utilizing the words of the original. In the more dramatic sections Bicknell's prose is very

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33 Page 335.
heavily derivative, as in the following excerpt from the description of Error:

And as she lay upon the durtie ground, 
Her huge long taile her den all overspredd, 
Yet was in knots and many boughtes upwound, 
Pointed with mortal sting.

(Faerie Queene, I, 15)

As she lay upon the dirty ground, her huge long tail, pointed with a mortal sting, spread itself over the whole den, although rolled up in many winding folds.

(Prince Arthur, I, 12.)

It must be said at once that this is as Bicknell intended, for in his Introduction to the first volume, he explains his purpose as that of making the Faerie Queene more generally known, "preserving as many of the Beauties as possible, and keeping as near the Original as the different Nature of a Poem, and a Story in Prose, will allow."34 Bicknell has, as a matter of fact, been forced by the incomplete condition of the Faerie Queene to do a good deal of editing, to bring into the body of the tale material derived from portions of Spenser's work other than the first two books, and to add what he calls a "regular Conclusion," inevitably an account of the happy betrothal of Gloriana and Prince Arthur.35

For one concerned with An Apology for the Life of George Anne Bellamy certain aspects of Prince Arthur are especially interesting. It adds new support, of course,

34 I, vii.

35 II, 210 ff.
for a growing recognition of Bicknell's limited creativity. It confirms also an impression that he was an intent reader of the works of the literary great. We notice here, for instance, that in an "Explanatory Conclusion" appended to the second volume and in the opening portion of Volume I, he has made detailed use of Spenser's letter to Sir Walter Raleigh in order to explain and to fill out his narrative. An additional significance is probably found in Bicknell's choice of this particular task. *Prince Arthur* was published just three years before the appearance of Joseph Warton's *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, which placed Spenser with Shakespeare and Milton. There can be little doubt that Bicknell was extremely sensitive to trends in taste as to all forms of demand. If the *Patriot King* was designed to catch the public's interest in a time of threatened invasion, *Prince Arthur* capitalized upon a growing appetite for the antique and romantic in literature. Clearly Bicknell understood the literary market.

All of these points are meaningful in considering the authorship of the *Apology*, but none perhaps so immediately illuminating as one short quotation in *Prince Arthur*. In spite of many verbal parallels the book contains only one direct quotation from the *Faerie Queene*. The intro-

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36II, 227-238.

37See above, p. 220.
duction to the first volume ends with "The following beautiful lines of Spenser ... so expressive of the Moral:

Abroad in arms, at home in studious kind,
Who seeks with painful toil, shall honour soonest find.
In woods, in waves, in wars she's wont to dwell,
And will be found with peril or with pain,
Ne can the man that moulds in idle cell
Unto her happy mansion e'er attain:
Before her gate High God did sweat ordain,
And wakeful watches ever to abide:
But easy is the way, and passage plain
To Pleasure's palace, it may soon be spy'd,
And day and night her doors to all stand open wide."38

We quote at length to show the manner in which Stanza 41 is joined without a break to the final lines of Stanza 40.

In An Apology for the Life of George Anne Bellamy there is similarly a single quotation from Spenser, introduced as "The following beautiful lines of the inimitable Spenser."39

It is identical to that in Prince Arthur, except that Ne in the fifth line above becomes Nor in the Apology. Both contain in the sixth line the un-Spenserian e'er which regularizes the line to suit a newer pronunciation of mansion.

Prince Arthur gives us some indication of the wide variety of subject matter with which Bicknell felt himself competent to deal. Nevertheless, there is a marked tendency, especially in his early books, toward the historical and

38I, ix. See Faerie Queene, Booke II, Canto III, Stanzas 40-41.

39I, 118-119.
biographical. He appears to work by preference with historical subjects and with the lives of historical figures. Even in his first experiments with the novel this interest is evident. A curious example is his *History of Lady Anne Neville*, published in 1776. A strangely mixed form, mingling history, biography, and the novel, the book concerns itself principally with the political and amorous adventures of the nobility during the Wars of the Roses. The full title indicates its scope: *The History of Lady Anne Neville, Sister of the Great Earl of Warwick, in Which are Interspersed Memoirs of that Nobleman and the Principal Characters of the Age in Which She Lived*. The Earl of Warwick, indeed, seems to be the major concern of the volumes, with his sister appearing more and more infrequently as the story progresses. The narrative is disjointed, what with the attempt to move back and forth between two principal characters and with the necessity for occasional pauses to add clarifying details of the historical background. Although I have not been able to discover sources upon which Bicknell may have drawn, it is certainly the kind of book which could readily have been loosely patched together from old accounts.

While the tale itself is negligible, we are bound to notice certain elements which relate to our study. At the risk of a somewhat anachronistic effect, Bicknell occasionally succumbs to the temptation of Shakespearean
reference or quotation. These references remind us of Bellamy's *Apology*, but much more striking similarities are found in the style and in some portions of the characterization. We have previously noted that the *Apology* seems to have three styles, ranging from the vivacity and conciseness of its anecdotes through a plain narrative style to an ornate diction used in reflections and in sentimental situations. Lady Anne Neville, written some ten years before the *Apology*, seems to be related to it stylistically in the two latter areas only. There is nothing in it like the humorous, vivid, colloquial telling of Mrs. Bellamy's theatrical experiences. Indeed only one humorous anecdote appears in the whole book, and a weak one at that—a story of the Earl of Warwick's being accidentally soaked by a fountain during his first formal visit to his beloved Countess of Devonshire. With that single exception, the history is composed largely of straight narrative in stiff, unelaborate prose. There is almost no use of conversation. Here and there are inserted passages of more pretentious writing rather like the "ornate" style of the *Apology*, always to emphasize an affecting moment in the story. Even more markedly than in the *Apology*, these sentimental outbursts are trite in the extreme. In the

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40 E. g. I, 173, 234, 246.
41 See above, p. 188.
42 II, 47.
following description of a reunion between Lady Anne and a former lover, for example, there are at least eight clichés:

Unawed even by the Presence of Majesty itself, they murmur'd out their Love, and seemed insensible to all around them. A thousand unanswered Questions dropped from the tongue of the enraptured Edmund, who for a while unable to credit the Testimony of his Senses, believed it the Delusion of his Imagination, or the appearance of some heavenly Visitant.

The tendency to moralize is also found in these passages, which often conclude with some "truth" of distinct unoriginality, such as the observation "that without Virtue there is no real Happiness." The Apology is most strongly suggested, however, in certain comments on the character of Lady Anne. Bicknell speaks of "my heroine, Lady Anne, who impelled by ... Sensibility, and irresistible Circumstances, for a moment broke through the just Restraints of Discretion." Again he explains that "her Indiscretions had not proceeded from a Depravity of Mind but from a train of unhappy Circumstances." The effects of her succumbing to circumstances appear to forecast the fate of Mrs. Bellamy:

Without solicitation, she protected the Oppressed, relieved the Indigent, and discouraged Calumny and Detraction. But these virtues could not secure her from a dreadful Downfall; or the many good offices she had done to others, procure her one grateful Return when overwhelmed with Distresses.
Not only is the course of Lady Anne's fortunes parallel to that of Mrs. Bellamy's; their natures are in some ways similar. Lady Anne is susceptible to a degree. Bicknell writes of her reception of bad news, "On a Heart so susceptible of the tender Passions as hers, the Impression must be deep and lasting." He describes her as afflicted with "corroding thoughts."

She is, moreover, thoroughly high-minded and incapable of duplicity. Tempted to reveal certain court secrets, she showed "That Honour and Delicacy of Sentiment for which she was remarkable...; and she could not be persuaded to be guilty of a Breach of Confidence, even to her enemies." In other words, Bicknell has portrayed his heroine, in accordance with accepted biographical and novelistic patterns, as a sensitive, generous, and noble-souled woman, caught in the toils of inevitable circumstances and plagued by ingratitude and injustice. These same patterns were a few years later to influence important aspects of Mrs. Bellamy's self-portrait.

The works so far described are all products of a fairly prolific period covering the last few years of the decade of the 1770's. Of the books known to be Bicknell's the only other which I have been able to examine is of a

48I, 248.
49II, 121.
50I, 219.
considerably later date and indicates certain developments that are pertinent to our study. *Doncaster Races, or the History of Miss Maitland* was published in 1790. In the intervening decade Bicknell had almost surely been turning out literary products of one kind or another at a fairly rapid rate. He may very well have gone through a period of special emphasis upon the sentimental tale. The *Apology*’s preoccupation with sentimental themes would seem to support such a theory, and the titles of two novels listed among his works, *Isabella, or the Rewards of Good Nature*, and *The Benevolent Man*, suggest even greater concentration upon the type, perhaps during the period in question. At any rate by the time *Doncaster Races* was published, Bicknell’s work had taken a new, and probably a predictable, turn. Without discarding the sentimental apparatus nor the time-honored hackwriter’s devices, he was attempting to conform to the tastes of a public not long since enchanted by Fanny Burney’s first publications. His interest in excavating the past was not dead, for he was shortly to publish *Instances*

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51 Copies may be found at the Library of Congress and at Yale University Library. All other books by Bicknell discussed here are to be found in the collection of the Harvard University Library.

52 See above, pp. 217-218.

53 He very likely began work on *Doncaster Races* not long after the publication of *Evelina* in 1778. Dates of the letters in his novel indicate that the action takes place between 1779 and 1781.
of the Mutability of Fortune and later a History of England, but for the moment these concerns were laid aside, as he struggled to project himself into the world of society and its foibles and, even more difficult, to achieve an ease of style in keeping with his new subject-matter. Doncaster Races is an epistolary novel, but its form bears little relation to that of Bellamy's Apology except as it shows an interest in the form on Bicknell's part. Rather it follows the pattern of Humphry Clinker or of Evelina. Five principal pairs of correspondents exchange information upon the same series of events, each individual writing in the style considered most suited to his character. The story they tell, with considerable repetition, is a mixture of standard romantic situations. Miss Harriet Maitland, the admirable heroine, is betrothed to Charles Clayton. At a rout at Doncaster Races, Charles is violently attracted to a beautiful coquette, Arabella Burrell, and his obvious infatuation sends Harriet into a near-fatal illness. Her fiancé struggles to remain faithful, but a series of contretemps throw him into Arabella's company, until at last he happens to be on hand to rescue her from kidnapping by a loutish young squire. Wounded in the fray and thinking himself near death, he avows his love for Arabella and, when he recovers, marries her. Harriet, forgiving and loyal, gracefully withdraws but holds herself in readiness to assist him if need be. Soon the opportunity arrives, for, while Harriet has inherited
an immense fortune, Charles has been dragged by his wife to London, where she resumes her career as a coquette, sinking first into ruinous gaming and at last into adultery with Charles's patron, Lord G. Harriet's plan of assistance is to go to London in disguise as "Sir Harry Cloudesley, Bart.," win Arabella away from Lord G., and finally persuade her to a rendezvous where "Sir Harry" will settle all her gaming debts and attempt to reform her. The plan goes wrong when Charles appears to challenge Sir Harry—and discovers Harriet. All then return to the country, where Arabella, whose dissipation has led to consumption, speedily dies, leaving Charles, who long since has regretted his marriage, to wed Harriet after a decent interval of six months.

Neither the style nor the characterization of Doncaster Races is more distinguished than its plot. But for us the book is of real interest in its revelation of Bicknell's magpie literary techniques. If the epistolary form has recently proved its popularity, he will adopt it. If social criticism is assuming importance, he will present his readers with a portrait of a coquette and an exposition of the evils that may result from her self-love. If a lighter touch is coming into favor, he will forego some of his pleasure in sententious passages and will even add touches of humor. There is no hint of laughter in any other of Bicknell's books I have seen, and indeed such a work as The Patriot King could scarcely have been composed by a man with real
appreciation of the ridiculous. Yet here, especially though the letters of Windham, Clayton's friend and confidant, an attempt is made upon the reader's risibilities. None of Bicknell's humor is any more laughable than the post-script appended to a letter by Arabella:

P. S. I was just going to add something else in a postscript, but am prevented by the arrival of company, so must bid you adieu. 54

Most of it is little more than wry commentary upon romantic emotion--references, for example, to Cupid as "the little urchin" 55 or to matrimony as "that bourn from which there is no return." 56 Nevertheless it represents an element we have not previously seen in this writer.

In invading new areas, however, Bicknell did not throw away the habits of past writing. The swelling sentimental style recurs as Harriet writes, "Alas, poor Clayton! --What will vermil-tinctured lips, love-darting eyes, or golden tresses, avail, when the derangement of thy fortune shall have robbed thee of thy peace of mind." 57 The fund of appropriate literary quotations is again called into service, and we note with interest how similar is the roster of authors cited to that of the Apology. Shakespeare once more is most prominent, with the largest number of quotations

54I, 33.
55I, 18.
56I, 2.
57II, 184.
coming from Hamlet. With him are Sterne, Milton, Thomson, Pope, and (with one reference) Butler. This last parallels almost exactly the Apology's reference to "Butler's story of the Bear and the Fiddle."\textsuperscript{58} The method of presentation indicates that Bicknell's experience as an editor may have led him to adopt the time-honored pretense of merely editing what was surely a piece of outright fiction. The advertisement of Doncaster Races claims that the book is made up of letters from persons "of elevated understandings, probably known to many." This correspondence has been "put into the hands of the Editor who has made "such embellishing additions, as should appear to him to be needful."\textsuperscript{59} Except as we shall shortly note, there is no evidence of embellishment, and, in any case, nothing in the book supports the contention that the correspondence is genuine.

One of the most curious elements of Doncaster Races recalls to us Bicknell's penchant for padding his writing with material from reading or casual research. We have seen that Prince Arthur and the Black Prince are almost entirely composed of such material and that The History of Lady Anne Neville is filled out with digressions into the history of the Wars of the Roses. Progressing into pure fiction, Bicknell still relies upon such additions to make up his volumes. In Doncaster Races they are inserted into

\textsuperscript{58}Apology, IV, 200. Cf. Doncaster Races, I, 114.
\textsuperscript{59}Advertisement (no pagination).
the letters of Windham. At the peak of suspense, as Clayton is in the emotional throes preceding his marriage to Arabella, Windham decides that his friend needs diversion and proceeds to supply it by a discussion of his recent travels in Egypt. Carried on through five long letters this account goes far beyond the expected amusing travelogue and actually deals with Egyptian geography, history, food, dress, manners and customs, preponderantly of ancient times. In all, more than one hundred pages are devoted to this extraneous "embellishment." Its strange effect may be imagined when we say that after Clayton has dramatically informed his friend of his "death-bed" betrothal to Arabella, Windham replies with a brief congratulation upon his impending marriage, followed immediately by fifteen pages of information about Egyptian food, costume, and customs. Readers of the Apology will notice with interest the similarity between many passages in these sections and those accounts of Mrs. Bellamy's travels already mentioned for their wealth of detail.

Windham writes, for instance,

Ancient Alexandria . . . was at least twelve miles in circumference.--The streets were wide and airy. . . . One of the streets intersected another of the same breadth and composed at their junction a square, which was half a league in circumference.

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62 I, 259.
These interpolations are indicative of a principal characteristic of *Doncaster Races*—its markedly inferior construction. We have glimpsed in Lady Anne Neville Bicknell’s seeming inability to build a coherent, well-proportioned tale. *Doncaster Races* leaves no doubt in our minds as to this weakness. Even such a summary of the plot as has been given shows how little the author knew what to do with his characters once he had brought them to the confrontation of "Sir Harry Cloudesley" by Clayton. At that point the story collapses completely, and Bicknell resorts to a hasty and ineffectual conclusion. Unquestionably he recognized the failure and strove only to reach the end as expeditiously as possible. Just at the moment when all the principal characters have returned to the country, a footnote is inserted stating that the loss of many letters has produced "a chasm in the correspondence" which fortunately does not interrupt the history.63 Before long another footnote appears to say that after this date only such letters as "immediately tend to forward the conclusion" will be included.64 Thus the story can slide quickly through the time required to complete the little action that remains. But this purpose is all too evident, and there is no concealing the fact that the tale, having nowhere to go, is being hurried and

63II, 185.
64II, 250.
huddled to an end. One is left with the feeling that Bicknell lacked not only the ability to construct well but any real interest in the artistic balance of his work. If a tale could serve as a vehicle for various popular themes and situations, calculated to interest the public, he apparently thought it unnecessary to attend very much to such matters as unity or proportion.

We should not leave Doncaster Races without noticing one or two items which directly relate to Bicknell's connection with the Apology. In the Advertisement he unmistakably addresses himself to those who may doubt that his role as editor of Mrs. Bellamy's Apology and Captain Carver's Travels has been an important one. He flatters himself, he says, that the reception of these letters "will not be less favourable than that of some other works, which have been indebted to his pen, in no inconsiderable degree, for, the universal approbation shown them."65 The urgency of his underlining is, however, no proof that he ever worked with the Apology. Much more persuasive is the way in which he has unobtrusively drawn upon it for material. In one letter, Mrs. Selwyn is writing to Miss Maitland a dissertation upon romantic love, with many illustrations from Romeo and Juliet. Incidentally she remarks, "This tragedy ... was played about thirty years ago, at both the theatres in

65Advertisement (no pagination).
London, . . . for upwards of forty nights successively." In this instance Bicknell is treating the Apology just as he does other volumes that are surely his, making casual references to material contained in them, as if to remind either the reader or himself of his previous literary achievements. In the same vein is another reference in Doncaster Races, this time to "the lady that was seen by the gallantest of heroes, Prince Arthur, in his dream."67

In discussing Alexander Bicknell's works, we have postponed mention of a biography elsewhere mentioned which would seem most important in a study of Bellamy's Apology. This is the life of another actress, Sophia Baddeley, published in 1787 as the work of Mrs. Baddeley's friend and companion, Mrs. Elizabeth Steele.68 Considered by Stauffer a great biographical work,69 the book has often been scorned by critics and especially by those whose opinion of Mrs. Bellamy's memoirs is equally low. Dutton Cook, for instance, says of it:

In the last century books of this class were only too numerous, and it has been suggested that the Life of Mrs. Baddeley was published by way of rivalling the shameless Autobiography of Mrs.

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66I, 225.
67I, 231.
68The Memoirs of Mrs. Sophia Baddeley.
69See pp. 48-55.
George Anne Bellamy, of Covent Garden Theatre.  

Others, equally critical, go a step farther than Dutton Cook and assume a common authorship. Lowe, who attributed the Apology to Bicknell, writes of Sophia Baddeley: "Her memoirs, which are stated to be written by Mrs. Elizabeth Steele, were, I believe really compiled by A. Bicknell. They are neither well done nor improving in tone, but are now rather scarce."  

The Dictionary of National Biography in its article on Mrs. Baddeley, echoes this opinion, saying, "The discredit of the publication has been assigned to Alexander Bicknell."  

The many similarities between the two works prove the inescapable truth of Dutton Cook's suggestion and certainly lend some support to the theory of common authorship. While it is not our business to devote to Mrs. Baddeley's life the attention it challenges, we must notice at least some of these parallels. The Baddeley Memoirs compare with only part of the Apology—that relating to the social and personal life of the actress. Very little reference is made to Mrs. Baddeley's theatrical ventures. Within the area covered by the book, however, the resemblances to the Apology are striking. We find a villain so like John Calcraft that it is hard to differentiate between them. Mr. Hanger, later

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70 Hours with the Players, II, 14.

71 Bibliographical Account, p. 11.

72 Joseph Knight, s.v. "Sophia Baddeley."
Lord Coleraine, pursues Mrs. Baddeley, mistreats her, but manages to keep her in subjection by a constantly unfulfilled promise to pay her debts. She, like Mrs. Bellamy, lives with this man, whom she detests, in continuing optimistic expectation of his financial assistance.73 She is like Mrs. Bellamy in other ways as well. Her extreme sensibility is often described in terms thoroughly familiar to the reader of the Apology. A shocking declaration, for instance, "harrowed up her feelings and suspended the vital current of life for some moments."74 Again it is said that "her mind was ... oppressed with the pungent recollection of lost happiness."75 Her extravagance is equal to Mrs. Bellamy's and is only more forthrightly stated, probably because she herself was not alive to direct the trend and tone of her Memoirs. This description of Mrs. Baddeley might well have been applied to Mrs. Bellamy:

Had she had discretion and sufficient steadiness to husband what she received, she might have saved a comfortable resource for a future day; but given up, as she was, to profuseness and extravagance, she thoughtlessly squandered, what would have made her happy when her friends deserted her.76

Even certain definite actions of the two women are strangely similar. Both, upon occasion, throw bank-notes into the

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73I, 119-120.
74I, 31-32.
75I, 48.
76I, 132.
fire in fits of petulance. Both are represented as fainting upon the stage in terror at the horrifying appearance of another member of the cast.

Mrs. Baddeley's memoirs also resemble those of Mrs. Bellamy in motivation and in technique of presentation. Mrs. Elizabeth Steele we know to have been a desperate woman who sank into extreme poverty and drug addiction before her death less than a year after the publication of the Memoirs. The mercenary purpose of the book is evident in its careful attention to names. Diligently it tells over the roll of Sophia's admirers and friends, even to those who merely came to call:

... Lord Melbourne called, and finding company, left word he would call again the next day. Lord Grosvenor also called, and left his name, saying he would take another opportunity to pay his respects to her; as did also the Honourable Robert Conway. ... Lord March (now Duke of Queensberry) also called, and on being told we were indisposed and could not see company, sent in word that he had something of importance to communicate. He was on this shown up stairs; and this matter of importance turned out only to be an invitation to dine with him next day, which we accepted.

No wonder the Dictionary of National Biography notes that the life "has the air of having been written for the purpose of extorting money from the men of rank implicated

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77 Apology, V, 15-16; Memoirs, III, 64.
78 Apology, III, 30; Memoirs, I, 11.
79 Wilkinson, Wandering Patentee, II, 151.
80 I, 128.
in the adventures it describes." One can well imagine the consternation of some of the men so casually named lest more be printed of their attentions to the notorious actress. One can also imagine the appeal to the reading public of such intimations of scandal in high places. Mrs. Bellamy never applied this technique quite so crudely, but it is most unlikely that the writer of the Memoirs was not fully aware of the sales gained by the Apology through the use of many personal allusions. Probably he or she was also impressed by the Apology's success in pleading a nobler motive than desire for financial gain, for the Memoirs similarly claims an instructive function:

Let the fate of Mrs. Baddeley be a lesson to all young minds not to stray from the paths of virtue. . . . Let them learn from the heroine of these memoirs, to be wary and circumspect, and stand upon their guard against the seduction of men.81

All this certainly seems to be modeled upon the Apology, but none of these resemblances is so striking as that shown in the handling of detail, and especially of financial detail. Here we find an obvious imitation and exaggeration of the Apology's methods. Mrs. Bellamy seems to possess a very retentive memory; Mrs. Steele's is phenomenal. Throughout the book precise detail is piled upon detail. In social matters, she is able to recall after many years, the exact order of persons met in a single day, what each did and even

81v, 208.
what each said. This characteristic is mentioned by Stauffer, who speaks approvingly of a scene "in which the talk, the callers, and the situations of a single day . . . are recalled in eleven pages."82 In areas involving money, she can be even more circumstantial. Exact sums given, borrowed, or paid are constantly cited. Careful itemized lists are presented of amounts given to Mrs. Baddeley in a subscription83 or of jewels to be pawned.84 Mrs. Steele, moreover, does not fail to note shillings as well as pounds in her transactions. Mrs. Bellamy's accounts strike an especially convincing note now and then with the inclusion of an odd number of pounds among many fine round figures.85 Mrs. Steele states that a jewel cost ninety-four pounds, ten shillings,86 or that expenses of a stay in prison came to eight pounds, fifteen shillings.87 Examination of the whole last volume of Mrs. Baddeley's life shows its adherence to, and exaggeration of, the pattern of the Apology in its total preoccupation with debts, bonds, writs, arrests, detainers, and costs, and in its manner of dwelling interminably upon

82 Page 52.
83 VI, 13-14.
84 VI, 146.
85 E. g. V, 192.
86 VI, 142.
87 VI, 21.
the minutiae of these matters. Typical is such a passage as the following:

The sheriff's officer said that the detainers against Mrs. Baddeley, not being paid, he should be ruined, if they were not settled, and, under this pretense, got from her a bond for six hundred pounds, to discharge them; that being the amount he said of the whole, and which, afterwards we found to be false, for Mr. Sayer, when Sheriff, searched the office back to that period and found the amount of the writs to be no more than two hundred and thirty-nine pounds.88

There can be little question that the Baddeley Memoirs were composed according to the formula established as successful by the popularity of the Apology. If one accepts Alexander Bicknell's editorship of Mrs. Bellamy's life, it is easy to assume that, after one success in popularizing material from the scandalous life of an actress, he would be alert to seize an opportunity for repeating his accomplishment. It would likewise be quite natural for a publisher to seek him out as one qualified by experience to transform Mrs. Steele's memories into a coherent biography. The exaggeration of detail, the increased emphasis upon scandal, the hardness of tone, and the slackening of interest in the moral and the sentimental might be explained by the nature of Bicknell's informant and by his freedom, as a biographer of the dead, to arouse public curiosity by the most direct means. There are, however, some reasons for hesitation in ascribing the Memoirs to Bicknell. They

88vi, 51.
completely lack, for one thing, the literary interests and references so characteristic of Bicknell's known works. Not only do they make no use of the sententious "reflections" so well received in the Apology, but they take a firm stand against them in a passage that seems to refer to Mrs. Bellamy's work. We must credit Bicknell with considerable humor and subtlety if we assume that he directed against himself this passage in the last volume of the Memoirs:

... as I do not write merely to entertain, but to state facts, as they occur, my readers may rely on the authenticity of all I have related. I could have embellished this work, as other writers of memoirs have done, and fitted them with observations and reflections, as I passed; a scheme which others have often recourse to, to swell their volumes. ... I have ... given my readers a plain narrative of fact, and shall leave them to make such reflections on them as they please.89

Such a jibe would seem more likely from the pen of a rival hack-writer, willing to capitalize by imitation upon the Apology's success, yet determined to assert his individuality. The comments in The General Magazine, already mentioned here, about "Mrs. Bellamy and her amanuensis" and "Mrs. Steele and her goose-quill friend"90 seem to take for granted the separate identities of the two writers. Whether the knowing air of the magazine's reviewer results from any real knowledge as to the authorship of the two

89VI, 5.
90General Magazine, I (June, 1787), 20. See above, p. 214.
books is, of course, impossible to determine. The likelihood that Bicknell had no hand in the Baddeley volumes, however, is strongly supported by one more fact. Bicknell apparently never laid claim to the book. We have noticed that he was very quick to assert his editorship of Mrs. Bellamy's *Apology* after her death. 91 The Memoirs of Mrs. Baddeley had been published before *The Patriot King* appeared with its list of Bicknell's works, yet neither there nor on the title-page of *Doncaster Races*, which proclaims him editor of both the *Apology* and Captain Carver's *Travels*, is there any mention of the Memoirs. This is not, indeed, conclusive proof, but the evidence as a whole certainly indicates that the Memoirs should, in the absence of further argument, be related to the *Apology* only as a sedulous imitation.

We do not, as a matter of fact, need any evidence that might have been supplied by the life of Sophia Baddeley. To read only those books of Bicknell's which we have discussed is to recognize beyond question the important part he played in the composition of the *Apology*. It is enough to notice the undeniable cross-references between the *Apology* and the other works—the exact repetition in the memoirs of a Spenserian quotation used in *Prince Arthur* and the backward glance at Mrs. Bellamy's life found in

91 See above, p. 214.
Doncaster Races--to be sure that Bicknell's claim is just. And having accepted that fact a whole series of significant parallels are apparent. The literary background so prominently displayed in the actress's memoirs is found to be identical to that of his known works. There remains no reason to believe that Mrs. Bellamy was well-acquainted with the works of Shakespeare, Milton, Thomson, Spenser, Dryden, Pope, and the rest, for they are cited in Bicknell's books in the same manner and proportion as in the Apology. It is at first difficult to believe that an actress who played many Shakespearean parts cannot be credited at least with the ability to cite apt quotations from those roles. A little study of the quotations themselves, and a comparison with Mrs. Bellamy's theatrical record, however, reveals a curious situation. There is no correlation between the lines chosen for her book and the plays she must have known best. *Hamlet* is the source of at least one-third of the Apology's quotations; yet Mrs. Bellamy is not shown in Genest's theatrical records as ever having appeared in it. The book refers only once to *Romeo and Juliet*, which was her greatest Shakespearean success. Ranking after *Hamlet* as favorite sources in the Apology are *As You Like It*, *Henry IV, Part 2*, and *Timon of Athens*. These, like *Hamlet*, are plays in which Mrs. Bellamy apparently never took part. On the other hand, *Hamlet* was certainly Bicknell's favorite. It is the principal source of quotation in *Lady Anne Neville*.
and Doncaster Races, and, even in the Patriot King, which depended heavily upon Macbeth and Lear, the inspiration for many lines. It is little wonder that the Shakespearean references never seem to become a natural part of the text.

We have seen other patterns in Bicknell's works which occur again in the Apology. His tendency to borrow material and techniques is consistent with the curious variety of influences upon the Apology and the appearance in it of scenes and devices reminiscent of such widely separated sources as Pamela and the memoirs of "Con" Phillips. The concept of the ill-fated and injured heroine, which might perhaps have come down to Mrs. Bellamy through her reading of such lives as that of Charlotte Charke, appears clearly in Lady Anne Neville, expressed in language that forecasts the Apology. Bicknell's addiction to embellishments and digressions, seen most strongly in Lady Anne Neville, but claimed also as an attraction of the Black Prince and Doncaster Races, suggests his hand in the Apology's many "reflections". When these additions make use of literary references, as they often do, the pen of Bicknell is unmistakable. Such, for instance, are the address to Duplicity already mentioned, with its evident imitation of the invocations of Il Penseroso and L'Allegro, and the rhapsodic claim of Mrs. Bellamy that for one with

92 Apology, V, 133. See above, p. 137.
"soul of fire and thoughts that outstripped the wind" a happy union with a being such as Calcraff "was a consummation not to be hoped for." Even the triteness of thought and expression so often found in these passages is recognizable in the stale truths of Lady Anne Neville and the near-plagiaristic rant of the Patriot King. We have seen, too, plenty of evidence of Bicknell's utilization of the sentimental and the sensational, appearing as far back as his interpolations into the Black Prince and extending to parts of Doncaster Races.

Everything, in short, testifies to Bicknell's influence upon many parts of Mrs. Bellamy's autobiography. Scarcely needed to complete the case is evidence of connection between the hack-writer and the actress at the period of the book's composition. But that evidence as well is given us by a periodical of the day. When, on May 27, 1785, some months after the publication of the Apology, Mrs. Bellamy was honored with a benefit performance, it was planned that she be presented to the audience with an introductory address by Miss Farren and that she reply with an address expressing her thanks. The Gentleman's Magazine for June reproduces both of these speeches in full. Miss Farren's is marked, "Written by Mr. Bicknell, Author of the Life of King Alfred, The History of Edward the Black Prince, 93

93 Apology, II, 186. See above, p. 146.
and Compiler of Capt. Carver's Travels, etc." Mrs. Bellamy's reply is labeled "An address, written for Mrs. Bellamy to speak at her Benefit. By Mr. Bicknell." In undistinguished couplets Miss Farren recalls the downfall of the once popular actress, carefully including a reference to her autobiography in the final section:

... reversed has been her fate;
The day of affluence past, she finds too late
That fortune's gayest wreaths, neglected, fade--
But her Apology's already made...

Mrs. Bellamy replies in ten lines, ending:

Fain, fain I would my duteous tribute pay;
Tell that your kind indulgence, deep impress
In liveliest tints is glowing in this breast--
But overwhelm'd by gratitude and fears--
Accept th'attempt--accept these speaking tears.

These lines show Bicknell in typical vein—conventional, rather dull, a bit mawkish. They become important only in their establishment of the fact that he was supplying Mrs. Bellamy's public utterances just after the publication of her first five volumes and just before the appearance of the sixth and last. The implication must not have entirely escaped her contemporaries, and it may explain the Critical Review's assumption that Mrs. Bellamy used "an interpreter." Perhaps because Bicknell's connection with her was so well known, Mrs. Bellamy named him openly in her fourth edition of the Apology as the author of the benefit speeches,

94 LV (June, 1785), 449-450. The two speeches are reproduced in full in Appendix D of this paper.
saying, "The beautiful Miss Farren spoke an occasional Epilogue, written by Mr. Bicknell."95

The foregoing paragraphs certainly suggest that Bicknell did a great deal more for the Apology than merely add some "sufficiently obvious moralizings" or give "a Johnsonian turn to a period."96 The question now arises of how much remains to be credited to Mrs. Bellamy. Was the story of her life perhaps dictated, or set down in illiterate notes, to be completely transformed by the pen of Bicknell? We may quite confidently answer that this was not the case. For a number of reasons we may consider Mrs. Bellamy the co-author of the book. We may first look to her qualifications as a person for contributing anything of worth to a literary project. The Apology certainly intends to prove that she was a woman of both wit and learning. She was "tremblingly alive to every rational enjoyment";97 she attended lectures on natural philosophy and studied the causes of earthquakes;98 she "long languished for the opportunity to visit Voltaire."99 Unfortunately, these and other statements of her intellectual stature are frequently embedded in passages so strongly marked by the manner of Bicknell that it is quite possible they are part of his embellishment of

95 Fourth ed., p. 235.
96 Fyvie, Comedy Queens, p. 141.
97 II, 14.
98 VI, 57.
99 II, 223.
the character of his heroine. She was probably less of a "blue-stocking" than her memoirs would lead us to believe, but there is no doubt that she was a witty and charming person. Only such a woman would have been admitted so frequently by James Quin to the society of his literary friends or would have been admired by the lively Tate Wilkinson. Tate and Mrs. Bellamy were undoubtedly congenial because of a similarity of temperament. In Edinburgh, he says, he was always "certain of an agreeable party with Mrs. Bellamy."100 The quality that entertained him was no doubt that mentioned by the writer in The Critical Review, who says of the Apology, "The anecdotes lose much of their zest, because unaccompanied with the lively manner which once distinguished Mrs. Bellamy."101 Everyone seems to have been similarly impressed by George Anne Bellamy. Boswell's friend Andrew Erskine wrote to him of a dinner engagement with the actress and Mr. Digges during their Edinburgh visit and called them "the most agreeable couple I ever saw."102 Even before that time young Boswell noted in his journal that he had gone out of his way to call upon Mrs. Bellamy and had been disappointed at finding her absent from home.103 Without

100Memoirs, III, 222.
101LIX (April, 1785), 271.
103Private Papers of James Boswell from Malahide Castle, xiii, (1779), 212.
doubt she was delightful to talk with, and The Critical Review's comment suggests that she was especially effective as a raconteur.

Whether she was capable of expressing herself adequately in writing is another question. The Apology seeks to persuade us that she was talented as a writer, one who composed poetry for publication and who felt herself capable of turning out a full comedy. Edward Willett gives a very different impression of her literary qualifications in his reply to the Apology's attack. He describes a visit to the actress, who had apparently concluded that her end was near. Dramatically she presented him with a draft of her will, a set of "well-spelt grammatical instructions" which he jeeringly reproduces:

My Cloaths, except my mourning, with all my laces and body lining to Polly pit. - My theatrical set of jewels to be sold by raffle at 2 guineas a-piece, twenty for the use of Sarah Hambden now residing at Madam Greffiers in case of her absence from that Residance where I placed her to go, with my small diamond ring equally divided between the Magdalane and Lock. My Shakespear tea-chest to David Garrick, Esq. --To Mrs. Bromfield wife of Willm Bromfield Esq. my philligree tea-chest too.

But Willett was, after all, an enemy of Mrs. Bellamy. Moreover the above sample of her writing, if accurate, scarcely does more than to display a weakness in spelling

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104 See above, p. 71.

105 Letters, p. 15. The underlinings are obviously Willett's.
not unexpected in a woman of so little formal education. Opposed to these few lines are the half dozen full letters which Tate Wilkinson gives us. They tell a very different story. It is, of course, quite possible that Tate, as a friendly gesture, cleared up any little slips in orthography found in the original letters. The question need not concern us greatly, for the epistles contain much more significant information. They show, for one thing, that Wilkinson, who knew Mrs. Bellamy well, readily accepted her claim that she was composing her own memoirs. In the first letter she promises to send him a part of an unpublished manuscript, which she has just finished. Unfortunately, Wilkinson gives the letters out of chronological order. The first letter cited refers to work upon the fourth edition, since it speaks of the address to the Duchess of Devonshire which appears only in the last letter of that edition. The references in the same letter to Mrs. Bellamy's lameness also indicate that she was writing some time after the publication of Volume Six, which the second letter speaks of as in the process of composition. The second letter, dated "April 12," is therefore the earlier and can be con-

106Memoirs, IV, 186.
107Fourth ed., V, 244.
108In the 4th ed., V, 237, she explains that she sprained her ankle some time after her benefit in May, 1785, and later fell, breaking her leg.
fidently placed in 1785. Its opening lines are most important as showing Mrs. Bellamy's active authorship:

I should immediately have thanked you for your last favour, but have been so afflicted with the rheumatism in my right arm I can hardly hold a pen, which impedes my sixth volume. Were I to make so many alterations as you point out necessary as to facts, I must write the whole over again, as I wrote merely from memory. . . .

Wilkinson, by reprinting these letters without comment, shows that he took for granted Mrs. Bellamy's authorship of the Apology and that he accepted her as a dabbler in other literary matters. She speaks casually to him of her abandonment of her comedy and of a "polemical controversy" in which she is engaged; later she says she has begun "a great undertaking, The Characters of My Own Times."

The best evidence for Mrs. Bellamy's case, however, comes from the Apology itself. In an earlier section of this paper we considered at some length the "sense of life" in the memoirs, noticing especially a number of passages showing the keen observation, emotional penetration, vigorous expression, humor, and air of candor which seem to produce that quality. Nowhere in Bicknell's works have we observed anything comparable. We have spoken of his seeming lack of a sense of humor in connection with Doncaster Races.

109 Memoirs, IV, 188.
110 Memoirs, IV, 186 (undated letter).
111 Memoirs, IV, 190 (letter dated May 4, 1786).
112 See above, Chapter VI.
Surely there, where he plainly tried to lighten his style and even to create a few comic characters, the fine sense of the ridiculous shown in the Apology would have showed itself, had it been his. Similarly there is great opportunity in the same book for augmentation by amusing anecdotes. Several of the characters could suitably tell them, but Windham, the most whimsical of them all, resorts instead to a discussion of ancient Egypt to adorn his pages. Nor can we point in any of Bicknell's books to a style as vigorous or construction as dramatic as that found in scattered portions of the autobiography. Lady Anne Neville would have been vastly improved by some crisp dialogue. Direct discourse is not even attempted. Doncaster Races shows, too, a disregard for unity of the kind that distinguishes such episodes in the Apology as the story of Mr. Crump's proposal. Bicknell's writing is sententious, pseudo-learned, flatly conventional. Knowledgeable in many tricks of the writer's trade, he nevertheless has not in any of the books here examined been able to inform his subject with a sense of life. With that fact in mind we may glance again at Mrs. Bellamy's letters to Wilkinson. Informal and disorganized as they are, the style is plain, the manner concise. A wry and vigorous humour appears again and again amid the recounting of her woes, from her gossipy comment in the first

113See above, p. 242.
letter, "Your friend, Mrs.______, has kicked down the pail, I find," to the merry remark in the letter written six months before her death, "I hope the races will bring you a good harvest." In the third letter she gives Wilkinson a half-laughing description of her sorry living-quarters:

I am obliged to give sixteen shillings a week for an apartment—a chandler's shop in front, backwards a carpenter's; and what with the sawing of boards, the screaming of three ill-natured brats, the sweet voice of the lady of the mansion, who is particularly vociferous with all the gossips who owe her a penny, with a coffee-mill which is often in use, and is as noisy as London-bridge when the tide is coming in, makes such unpleasing sounds, it is impossible to think of anything.

These lines are hastily written. Had they been part of the Apology they would have required the services of an editor with a surer grammatical sense than Mrs. Bellamy's. But the writer of them could well have penned the description of the old knight: "The short squab skuttling away as if he had crackers at his tail." We cannot think that Bicknell could have done so. Nor can we recognize his work in the many delightful anecdotes of the stage, the explorations of the actress's foibles, the tart portraits of contemporaries, or the concise and characteristic dialogue which accompanies all these.

114Memoirs, IV, 187 (undated letter).
115Page 193 (letter dated August 11).
116Page 189 (letter dated May 4, 1786).
117See above, p. 190.
The obvious conclusion that Mrs. Bellamy did write her memoirs and that her original contribution is visible in the published book leaves us to form some kind of hypothesis as to the manner in which the work was put together by its two writers. All the facts that we have drawn together in this paper would seem to give a fairly clear picture of what probably happened. The extreme superficiality of the epistolary form indicates that it is a late addition. Probably Mrs. Bellamy simply put her reminiscences on paper without any particular organization. The rambling order of its episodes and the many errors both attest to rather careless informality in the original composition. Her principal motive was, of course, a financial one. Monetary distresses as a cause of memoir-writing produce an almost inevitable pattern in the resulting autobiography. It must picture the successful years of the writer's life to hold the interest of the reader; it must dwell upon her decline to arouse his pity; and it must justify her conduct to call forth sympathetic aid. A pattern for female autobiography thus establishes itself almost automatically among hard-pressed memoirists. It is quite possible, for example, that Mrs. Bellamy knew Mrs. Charke's Narrative, but it is probable that in any case her account of her life would have followed similar lines. Bicknell, whose Lady Anne Neville revealed his familiarity with the type of the distressed female, need only have emphasized a basic tendency of the manuscript.
Apparently Mrs. Bellamy's work was quite short and simple. Bell, whose anxiety for financial success was equal to hers, must have felt that it needed amplification as well as emendation before it could impress the public. Alexander Bicknell was called in as one who well understood popular demand in literature and could be counted upon to cater to it. His work on the Apology was surely extensive, although it would be injudicious to say that we can at all times distinguish between what is his and what is Mrs. Bellamy's. It seems evident, at least, that he supplied the epistolary form, along with any transitional sections that appear at the beginnings or ends of the letters. As the reader becomes accustomed to Bicknell's highly conscious style, it is quite easy to recognize these elements. Occasionally, where they are completely lacking, the first lines of a new letter fit so perfectly into the conclusion of the one previous that their original form is still obvious. Letters XXII and XXIII show this plainly, as do many others. In other places the original continuity can be clearly traced in spite of interpolations. The break between Letters XVIII and XIX is a good example.

Mrs. Bellamy, recounting the start of her first engagement in Dublin and her friendly reception by Mrs. Butler, seems to have written in sequence the paragraph ending, "When

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118, 152-153.
I took leave, she obligingly requested, that I would pass every hour not appropriated to the business of the theatre, at her house; which you may be assured I did not fail readily to promise,\textsuperscript{119} and that beginning, "The theatre opened with eclat. And what was very fortunate for me, the Earl of Chesterfield was at that time Viceroy.\textsuperscript{120} Between the two paragraphs we now find the conclusion of Letter XVIII, stating the writer's plan for chapter arrangement, and a long digression introductory to Letter XIX, part of which is the tell-tale quotation from Spenser already shown to be Bicknell's.

In addition to the letter form Bicknell obviously added the frequent digressions of the Apology. They are marked throughout with his ornate style. Moreover, it is very significant that the great majority of them occur at the end or the beginning of a letter, where they serve to reinforce the divisions he has created. They are characterized by the same kind of common-place thought found in all his other books. Frequently they are abruptly inserted, so that the line of demarcation between the original and the addition is noticeable. Consider the sequence of these sentences on Calcraft's seeming respect for Mrs. Bellamy:

But his behavior afterwards proved, that the con-

\textsuperscript{119}I, 117.

\textsuperscript{120}I, 119.
cession was only designed as a masque to hide his intentions from me, and to free himself from my future jobations.

The seeds of that foulest of the mental imperfections, ingratitude, were thickly sown in his heart. — As Timon says of his friends, "The fellow had his ingratitude in him hereditary." 121

Here we have a typical inserted digression. The narrative halts; the simpler style shifts suddenly to the ornate; literary quotations appear; elementary moral concepts are elaborated. Even the punctuation tends to reveal such passages, for they are generally characterized by a liberal sprinkling of dashes.

Along with these digressions, Bicknell added other decorative elements to the Apology. We have said that the literary references may be assumed to be his addition. This supposition we now find to be strongly supported by the frequency with which these references occur in digressions that are unmistakably Bicknell's. Even the favorite Sterne, who seems to have exercised such an influence over Mrs. Bellamy's life, will be found to be in this position. The rhapsody on the joys of susceptibility already quoted in another section 122 illustrates this fact perfectly. Sterne is cited in a paragraph that by position in the letter, by thought, by language, even by punctuation is marked as one of the typical interpolations. The appearance of references

121 II, 175.

122 See above, p. 149.
to Sterne in both the introduction and the conclusion of the book now becomes clearer in its meaning. These are, of course, parts of the Apology which the editor must have revised or supplemented with great care. If Sterne is a dominating influence, it is because Bicknell made him so. Another sort of ornamentation is found in the parts of the Apology which devote themselves to expounding facts of geography or describing natural phenomena. No one who has read the Egyptian discourses of Doncaster Races can fail to recognize the same method of padding in the accounts of Mrs. Bellamy's continental travels, the obviously spurious letter from Lisbon, or the learned discussions of the causes of earthquakes.

Bicknell's insertions become particularly important where they affect the characterization of the heroine. Beyond doubt, he considered himself free to shade the portrait as he found it, in the interests of winning popular approval for the book. Throughout Chapter VI of this paper we pointed out many passages that serve so to heighten the impression of Mrs. Bellamy's virtues that they come to seem inconsistent with the events of her life. Examination of any one of the passages then quoted will reveal the style and thought of Bicknell. That quoted at length on page 131 is worthy of reconsideration at this time.123 A rereading will show

123 Apology, II, 89-90.
exactly how Bicknell worked, and how baneful was the effect upon the central portrait. The first paragraph, which we spoke of as "forthright reporting" of extravagance, is written in simple language very like that of Mrs. Bellamy's letters to Wilkinson. The second paragraph, which rationalizes the extravagance to the point of hypocrisy, is Bicknell's beyond doubt. The sentimental style, the Shakespearean reference, the peculiar punctuation, the shallow thinking are all here, and in addition the curious echo of Pamela which reveals his plagiaristic impulses. It is unnecessary similarly to reconsider the multitude of passages that exalt Mrs. Bellamy's hatred of duplicity, her tender sensibilities, her respect for purity, her admiration for the refinements of love, her violent benevolence. They are now readily recognizable as an obscuring and confusing element which Mrs. Bellamy probably had no part in creating.

Bicknell was, of course, doing just what he had been hired to do in refurbishing the memoirs to appeal to popular taste. He seems to have thrown into the Apology something for every reader, culled from his wide reading and varied literary practice. The style of the seemingly fictional sentimental tales suggests that they are his and their lack of integration into the main narrative further supports the assumption. The realistic detail of the financial passages, mentioned as following the tradition of Defoe, may reasonably, though not so surely, be attributed to him. Certainly it
was, by this time, an old device of the hack-writer. Undoubtedly many pieces of editing in the Apology are too unobtrusive for detection. Much of the narrative is couched in a style so unremarkable that it is difficult to distinguish in it the most characteristic manner of either author. Yet without knowing the full extent of Bicknell's changes, we may be sure that he wrote or contributed to major areas of the book, that he set the tone for the whole and developed many of its principal themes.

But much remains. There is no reason to think that Mrs. Bellamy could not have written the portraits of Quin, Garrick, Pitt, Fox, the Duchess of Queensberry, and so on, and no evidence that Bicknell has substantially altered them. The feud with Peg Woffington, the Dublin riots, the visit to Pope are taken directly from her experience and told in language that differs from Bicknell's but could well be hers. The same is true of the humorous accounts of her follies--the "chicken gloves" story, the dreams of being admired by King Louis. There is nothing like them in Bicknell's work, and their spirit is consistent with everything we know of the vivacious, witty Mrs. Bellamy. No doubt her editor corrected obvious flaws of grammar and spelling. He may have altered a phrase here and there. But substantially they may be accepted as part of the original manuscript and their success may be credited to the actress.
We now see Mrs. Bellamy's *Apology* as a curious, and in many ways regrettable, example of autobiography by collaboration. We can be sure that two writers had a hand in it. We can form a hypothesis concerning its composition that enables us to attribute certain parts to one or the other author. But without the original account that passed from Mrs. Bellamy to Bell to Bicknell we can never be positive of the Apologist's literary stature. Further researches would undoubtedly reveal much that has not been discovered in the course of this present study. Other books of Bicknell's might alter our assessment of his talents, and bits of writing by Mrs. Bellamy might be unearthed to support or discredit her claim to distinction. 124 We have, however, arrived at the point where we can say with some confidence that Mrs. Bellamy's claim on the title-page of the *Apology* was far from true of the published volumes, but that many parts of the *Apology* which today most please the reader and satisfy the critic were indeed "Written by Herself."

124 Joseph Knight in his DNB article on Mrs. Bellamy speaks of having before him a series of original letters written by her. Unknown to me, they might present further evidence. By Knight's account, however, they are begging letters written in her last years, and they probably do not differ significantly from those given by Wilkinson.
CONCLUSION

Each major section of this paper has led to its own particular conclusion as to the nature and the significance of *An Apology for the Life of George Anne Bellamy*. We therefore need not go to great length in reviewing and correlating the results of our investigations.

Our curiosity aroused by the evidently controversial nature of a book which could be condemned as inaccurate, fraudulent, or "low", yet later receive encomiums as a great biography, and by the elusive character of its subject, whose personality seemed capable of a wide variety of interpretations, we have set out to establish a basis upon which the *Apology* and its authoress might be judged with better understanding. Our preoccupation throughout the paper has been with contradiction. It confronts the student of the *Apology* at every turn: in the factual inaccuracies of its technical history juxtaposed to its protestations of truth, in the inconsistencies of the portrait of Mrs. Bellamy, in the extreme stylistic variation, in the obvious bits of sentimental fiction presented as fact. We have sought an explanation for these divergences through close analysis of the *Apology* itself and of the works of its reputed editor, Alexander Bicknell. Through this analysis and through evi-
dence presented in other publications of the period we have been led to conclude that the contradictions of the Apology are the almost inevitable result of dual authorship. With the hypothesis that a basic narrative by Mrs. Bellamy was supplemented and adorned quite arbitrarily by Bicknell we can understand why one passage may, both by its content and its style, convey quite a different impression of the actress and her life from that given clearly in other parts of the book. We have found reason to believe that the two authors were diametrically opposed to each other in personality traits. Mrs. Bellamy is everywhere spoken of as charming, impetuous, witty. Bicknell's works show him to have been a serious, pedantic, and conventional seeker after literary success according to established patterns. The Apology's dual nature plainly shows the schism between the two personalities, and its contradictions may readily be seen to face each other across the same gulf.

We have stressed particularly the varying interpretations of the portrayal of Mrs. Bellamy, noting that the critical writings in the periodicals of 1785 saw her as a sensitive, tender, if erring woman, a victim of her own impulses and the injustices of others, while Donald Stauffer, the only modern critic to make any equivalent comment upon the autobiography, confidently assessed her as spirited, hard-headed, conceited, and opportunistic. In concluding Chapter VI of this paper we have said that these differing
opinions seem to arise from the portions of the book especially impressive to the particular critic, that Stauffer, alienated by time from eighteenth century literary tastes, has chosen largely to disregard the sentimental adornments of the *Apology*, which in great part are responsible for creating the impression accepted by the periodical critics.

We now may amplify that conclusion by noting that the areas disregarded by Stauffer are generally those which can most surely be attributed to Bicknell. It should be remembered that Stauffer's study of the *Apology* is part of a survey of biographical writing over a period of two centuries. We may assume that in his extensive reading of life-writing, Stauffer had become surfeited with the conventional trappings of female memoirs. Perhaps he took these for granted, seeking beyond them for what was new and significant in the developing art of biography. This he found in the vigor and humor of those parts of the memoirs which we believe originated with the actress herself. His comments upon these portions have much validity, as we have seen. We would generally agree with his analysis of the "sense of life" imparted by Mrs. Bellamy's writings and concur in his estimate of the skills that produce the admirable effect. If we are correct in assuming that his conception of Mrs. Bellamy springs from her own sections of the book, we are bound to regard his interpretation as closer to the truth than those so strongly influenced by Bicknell's strokes of portraiture.
The fact remains that without an understanding of Bicknell's part in the *Apology* no estimate of Mrs. Bellamy or of her literary efforts can be more than partially valid. Stauffer's enthusiasm for the apparently unedited sections of the book prevents him from recognizing the softer elements of the actress's personality, which we have seen were recognized by her associates but which are obscured by Bicknell's attempt to paint them in the glowing colors appropriate to the portrayal of a heroine of sentimental fiction. The necessary result of this gap in our knowledge of Mrs. Bellamy is that the valued "sense of life" probably emanates from an intriguing but still fragmentary self-portrait. Mrs. Bellamy as she lived may now be seen only in part by Stauffer—or by any reader of the *Apology*. In the same way, it is very dangerous to pronounce judgment upon the literary values of the *Apology* as a whole without taking Bicknell into account. When Stauffer, in summarizing the merits of Mrs. Bellamy's life-story, speaks of "this pure expression of her spirit: 'An Apology for the Life of George Anne Bellamy,'"¹ he has been tricked by his own enthusiasm into a statement which is as far as possible from the truth. Pure expression may be in isolated areas of the book. The *Apology* as a whole is thoroughly adulterated expression, sometimes of Mrs. Bellamy's spirit but often of the traditional fictional

¹Page 47.
concepts cherished by Bicknell.

In the first pages of this paper we set down two major purposes to be accomplished. We aimed, first, to study An Apology for the Life of George Anne Bellamy in both of its two important aspects, as theatrical history and as autobiographical art. On the basis of our findings we proposed to estimate the values and significance of the work in both fields. In succeeding sections of the paper we attempted to establish certain facts about the Apology's contribution to the history of the stage, about its achievements and its failures as life-writing. Our ultimate insistence upon the importance of its dual authorship, however, is now seen to bear directly upon much that has been said in the early parts of the dissertation, and it becomes essential to review briefly our findings in the light of our stated hypothesis concerning the book's composition.

In our chapters on the Apology as stage history we pointed out the contrast between the many errors, mostly chronological, found in the theatrical records and the accuracy and clarity of theatrical portraiture and anecdotes. We especially stressed the quality of intimate knowledge and first-hand observation which makes Mrs. Bellamy's accounts valuable to the historian who is interested primarily in the personalities and customs of the eighteenth century theatre, rather than in the sequence of its productions. These observations take on new meaning from our
discoveries regarding the *Apology*'s authorship. The area of theatrical experience is one into which Bicknell would feel least able to intrude. Moreover, certain characteristics of the passages indicate that they came mainly from the pen of Mrs. Bellamy. The style is generally very simple and often marked by the colloquial expressions natural to an accomplished raconteur. Almost without exception the passages are lighted by the sense of the ridiculous so characteristic of the actress. Effortlessly these episodes maintain a point of view that lends much to their air of truth. Each scene is viewed from the situation of the actress herself and is made vivid by her reaction to the events in question. The result is so unquestionably a record of real experience that it can only have come directly from the observer and seems clearly to have suffered little, if any, alteration. We notice also that the theatrical descriptions and anecdotes are rarely made the basis for "reflections." Where such digressions do occur in connection with accounts of the stage, we usually find that a bit of the actress's private life or character has intruded itself and has been seized upon for elaboration. Such, for instance, is the digression at the end of Letter XLV, occasioned by a chance remark of Quin upon Mrs. Bellamy's benevolence. The remark is made during a rehearsal, but the material utilized for the digression is not really concerned with the theatrical situation.

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2II, 136-137.
As a result of this freedom from serious alteration by the editor, the anecdotes of the stage stand out clearly from the rest of the book, seeming to possess unusual uniformity and authority of thought and style. Any of the passages mentioned in the first three chapters of this paper will illustrate the qualities we are speaking of: the natural point of view, the easy expression, the consistency of style, the humor, the clarity of observation which indicates vivid memories. Of many other passages to which we have not referred, it may be well to recall at least one here as a kind of epitome of what we believe to be the "pure expression" of Mrs. Bellamy. She is describing a ridiculous event which occurred while Garrick and she were playing Chamont and Monimia in The Orphan for the benefit of Mr. Snowden, an actor favored by the lower elements of London's populace.

In the fourth act, whilst ... I was informing Chamont of all my distress, I heard a voice uttering somewhat aloud; but what it was I could not distinguish. ... Whilst Chamont was replying to me, as I was then more at liberty to attend, I heard the same voice articulate the words, "Rumps and burr! rumps and burr!" Roscius, who was the most tenacious man alive of a due observance of theatrical order and regularity ... exclaimed in a quick manner, "What is that?" He was at the same time so disconcerted by the incident, that losing entirely the powers of recollection, he repeated different passages out of different plays, till I was as much bewildered as himself, and totally unprepared to give a connected answer. We had, therefore, nothing else to do, than to put an end to our embarrassment by bringing the scene to an abrupt conclusion.
It seems the exclamation proceeded from the balcony, where one of the lower ranks of city ladies, an admirer of Mr. Snowden's theatrical talents, had placed herself. . . . During the preceding scene, which, though interesting, was not much to her mind, she had indulged herself with a nap. In this short nap she was conveyed in idea back to her stall in the city; and the duties of her business . . . being uppermost in her mind, she was crying her rumps and burrs, as if she had been standing at her own door. 3

This anecdote is not one particularly revealing of stage practice, but it catches a moment in the theatre and presents it to us so simply and vividly that we feel briefly the reality of the eighteenth century stage. As the immediacy and truth of Mrs. Bellamy's theatrical portraits and anecdotes is increasingly recognized to be distinct from her fumbling with dates and sequences, we will not be surprised to find that the Apology serves more and more frequently as an illuminating source for the historian of the stage.

The theatrical portions of the book, cannot, of course, be isolated from the remainder of the work when we consider it as autobiographical art. Yet, as we have said, the Apology does not lend itself to evaluation as a unit, and with the accounts of stage life we can group only those passages which seem equally undiluted by the literary zeal of Alexander Bicknell. The humorous revelations of Mrs. Bellamy's oddities and extravagances; the sharply-etched

3 II, 127-128.
portraits of persons from the political or social world; the lively reporting of quarrels, arrests, and domestic difficulties--these, with the theatrical accounts, probably make up the principal part of the work in which we must judge Mrs. Bellamy's personal achievement. In Chapter VI of this paper we have given at length instances of the frank self-analysis, the blunt self-revelation, the vigorous and dramatic episodes, which we now accept as -- in great part, at least -- hers. We have acknowledged that these passages are not always unshaded by the embellishments provided by Bicknell. They are, however, sufficiently distinct in many parts to allow us to estimate Mrs. Bellamy's position in the developing biographical tradition of the century.

She was not, after all, a writer, and it would be surprising indeed if we were to find in her work any newly created contribution to the art of biography. There is even some doubt that she was particularly well acquainted with the literature of her time. It must, however, be remembered that the eighteenth century was the great age of the spoken word, when coffee-house conversations were part of the intellectual exercise of men of letters and the dramatic conversations of the stage cast influence increasingly upon other literary forms. It was the age of the anecdote, of -ana. It delighted in gossip, in idiosyncratic action or speech. The world of eighteenth-century conversation Mrs. Bellamy knew well. She claimed as friends wits and
litterateurs and spent many hours in their company, entranced, as we have noticed, with their scintillating talk. She admired Dr. Johnson, was visited by Boswell and his friends. She was acknowledged as a charming hostess. No doubt her beauty assisted her in gaining the attention of the witty Quin and the worldly Tyrawley, but we must remember that she was already visibly decaying when she attracted that model of gallantry, West Digges; and that Tate Wilkinson enjoyed her correspondence to the time of her death. Beauty alone would not have made her acceptable to the political gatherings around Henry Fox. Evidently she thoroughly absorbed the tastes and acquired the verbal skills of the society in which she moved. It is these that we may expect to find most clearly reflected in her autobiographical writing. And since these were influences common to many biographies of the time, we should not expect that Mrs. Bellamy's work would do more than emphasize the trends in biography that were resulting from the increased regard for effective conversation.

The evidences of her background are clear enough in the Apology. Her careful attention to the isolated and amusing incident and the conversational style in which she presents her tales are at once reflections of her own habits of speech and illustrations of the increasingly important role of the anecdote in biography. Her reproduction of characteristic speech (of her mother, of the Duchess of
Queensberry, of Quin, of Garrick) is part, too of an important trend, and is closely linked to her recognition of the interest and literary value resident in personal oddities. As we read her descriptions of her own indiscretions and vanities, we may well reflect upon the development which has taken place since Colley Cibber penned his Apology and set the pattern for self-ridicule. We will at once be aware that what was largely a clever protective device for Cibber has become a method of real value in character revelation. Cibber protested that he was laughable, but his book does not really develop that theme. His private life remains private, his idiosyncrasies are admitted but not displayed one by one for his reader's amusement. His book remains, on the whole, a fairly dignified, if informal, account of theatrical transactions. Perhaps on this score, for all its originality, it misses some of the warmth imparted by certain passages in the Bellamy memoirs. Between the two apologies lay a period in which satire had gradually waned in popularity and the follies it had so vigorously attacked had come to seem an acceptable part of the personality, often a distinctive and delightful part. The new feeling certainly was intensified, as well as illustrated, by the subsequent spate of anecdotes in which amusement replaced malice and by which the subjects were, as often as not, only made more interesting and understandable to the hearers of the stories. By the time Mrs. Bellamy wrote, biographers were well imbued
with the knowledge that both light and shade were needed in a compelling portrait and that both would be expected and well received by their readers.

As we would expect, the influence of the theatre so marked in the biographies of the century is clear in Mrs. Bellamy's writing. By the mere fact of her successful authorship she makes evident the intense interest taken by her contemporaries in the events and personalities of the stage and the continuing demand for information about the actors and actresses. More important, however, is the effect upon her literary techniques of her experience in the theatre. Probably this influence supports her practice of reproducing effective dialogue; certainly it appears in her skillful handling of "scenes." Her anecdotes usually set the stage deftly, advance the action swiftly, and end with a flourish as if the curtain had fallen. It is unnecessary to review again all the episodes which reveal this dramatic sense. We have spoken of the story of Crump's proposal. 4 The account of Peg Woffington in the Green Room is perhaps even more thoroughly theatrical, with its climactic tableau and the clean perfection of the contrasting speeches of Mrs. Woffington and the Duchess of Queensberry. 5

The significance of all these characteristics of

4See above, p. 103.

5See above, p. 29.
Mrs. Bellamy's *Apology* may be emphasized by considering its relationship to the work of the supreme life-writer of the century. The publication of the *Apology* occurred only some weeks after the death of Samuel Johnson in December, 1784. It therefore immediately preceded the appearance of Boswell's *Tour of the Hebrides*, 1785, and the inception of the great labor that led to *The Life of Johnson* in 1791. Wide as is the gulf between Mrs. Bellamy and James Boswell, the closeness of their works in time brings sharply to our attention some similarities in their methods and attitudes. All the characteristics we have just noticed in the *Apology* are found, developed and perfected, in the *Life of Johnson*—the reproduction of characteristic speech, the utilization of dramatic form, the anecdotal skill, the acceptance and enjoyment of the many odd facets of personality, the frankness of communication with the reader, the constant play of humor. To cite parallels in the two books, would be dangerous temerity, tending to imply that Mrs. Bellamy somehow rivalled or even influenced Boswell; yet the common approach to life-writing will be evident to any thoughtful reader of the *Apology*. So inexperienced in literary practice that she needed the help of an "editor," completely

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6 The development of all the qualities mentioned in Boswell's earlier autobiographical writing is sufficient evidence of the existence of a common tradition. Any consideration of this mass of papers is, of course, impossible within the scope of this study.
incapable of Boswell's assiduous research and conscientious recording, Mrs. Bellamy, as a member of the same society, nevertheless absorbed many of the attitudes and some of the manner of expression which were simultaneously becoming part of Boswell's equipment as a biographer. To read the Apology is to realize anew that Boswell's achievement grew in part from the literary and social traditions of an age uniquely favorable to the development of biographical art. With other minor life-writers, Mrs. Bellamy profited by the atmosphere and accomplishments of that time. Her Apology, at least in those sections which we believe to be hers, suggests the stage to which eighteenth-century biographical tradition had progressed by the time Boswell was ready to add his culminating contribution.

In what we have just said, we have, of course, been considering only a part of the Apology. In the whole work, the values of which we have spoken must be discerned amid much fuzzy emotionalism, fraudulent embellishment, trite and sentimental fictionalizing which is not properly biographical writing. At the same time, the Apology, taken as a unit, has much of interest to offer the student of literature. Unquestionably it shows the eighteenth-century hack-writer at work, and, if the conclusions reached in this paper are accurate, illustrates in some detail the way he operated. That the hack-writer may have had no inconsiderable part in the development of eighteenth-century
theatrical biography is not a new idea. As long ago as 1900 Percy Fitzgerald grouped together four of the most notable lives of actresses (those of Bellamy, Baddeley, Robinson, and Charke) and stated without qualification that they were "written in rather a valet style by some literary hack." He added, "These productions are remarkable in their unbounded variety, absence of dates, and high-flown exaggeration." Fitzgerald attempted no proof of his suggestion that these four lives are linked as the work of "ghost-writers," and in this paper it is impossible to pursue the line of investigation he suggests beyond the work which is our immediate concern. He has noted, however, a similarity among the four which we have partially corroborated in our remarks upon the Baddeley and Charke lives and has thus indicated the possibility of a consistent tradition of the hack-written theatrical life. It may well be that the characteristics of Alexander Bicknell's work in the Apology, which we have examined in some detail, would fit into and elucidate a general literary pattern. With this thought in mind we may recall the outstanding tendencies of Bicknell as an editor. He is, first of all, completely hidden from the public eye. Literary conventions of the time did not demand that he be honestly acknowledged on the title-page by some such attribution as "Mrs. George Anne Bellamy with

7 Actors and Actresses, ed. Matthews and Hutton, I, 211.
Alexander Bicknell. His influence (and probably that of others like him) is accordingly difficult to detect. His method of "editing" the *Apology* should also be noted. Whatever may have been necessary in the way of correcting grammar and spelling, his principal aim seems not to have been correction. Certainly he made no effort to check and alter the book's many factual errors. Nor did he apparently undertake to rewrite the material given him. His task was mainly to improve upon the original by addition, to reorganize and to decorate without major revision. In this task, he worked always toward adding to the popular appeal of the book and in so doing tended to borrow from every literary tradition that might enhance the memoirs. The resulting potpourri of material and techniques is perhaps what Fitzgerald meant when he mentioned the "unbounded variety" of the actresses' lives. Bicknell surely did not dedicate himself to careful and creative work. There is every reason to think that his additions to the *Apology* were hastily constructed and carelessly integrated into the original narrative. The superficiality of the epistolary machinery, the failure to correct the construction of the life-story to avoid the dreary monotony of the last volume, the inattention to unity of portrayal in the central character all show haste and lack of concern. We are struck, however, by the evident feeling of the hack-writer that he was free to manipulate his subject as he would in the process of
popularizing the memoirs—to reinterpret her actions, to fill out her story with fictional experiences, to ascribe to her thoughts and sentiments manifestly not her own. Finally, he seems to have considered himself the agent of refinement and elevation, whose job it was (probably at the command of Bell) to surround Mrs. Bellamy with an aura of culture and lofty sentiment. In other words, he was hired to make the book "literary."

How much Bicknell's methods resembled those of his fellow-hacks is not for us to determine here. If they are at all typical and if hack-written biography was more prevalent than has so far been recognized, some important implications immediately are suggested. Work of this kind in any quantity would contribute markedly to the cross-fertilization of the genres, would accelerate, for example, the absorption into life-writing of the developing traditions of the novel. By its derivative nature it would at the same time tend to produce greater uniformity among biographical works. In these and other ways its influence upon the whole field of life-writing might be considerable. The marked similarities we have noticed in referring to other female memoirs than Mrs. Bellamy's--their close adherence to biographical tradition, their borrowing from each other and from the fiction of the period--point, perhaps, to an interesting area for further investigation. Until such a study is made, the role of the hack-writer in the history
of biographical writing must remain conjectural. It is hoped, however, that we have taken a step in the direction of understanding it in our discussion of Alexander Bicknell.

This paper has by no means exhausted the mine of information, both theatrical and literary, found in An Apology for the Life of George Anne Bellamy. Further veins remain to be worked by other students. Our present research will have served its purpose if it suggests a new way of studying the Apology—not as a single failure or triumph of autobiographical art, but as the disunified work of two authors, each of whom has something to offer to the reader. Viewed in this way, the book can assume new significance for the scholar. Mrs. Bellamy's particular merits as a reporter of herself and her times stand out more distinctly, freed from the confusions of conflicting content and style, while the work as a whole becomes both a record of the interplay of literary trends in the eighteenth century and an illustration of the manner in which the hack-writer may have affected that interplay. The Apology remains, as Alexander Bicknell indicated on its title page with unconscious truth, "a mingled yarn, good and ill together"—a despair to the searcher after absolute literary values but a delight to the curious student of literary history.

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8All's Well That Ends Well, IV, 3, ll. 68-71.
APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF EVENTS
IN THE LIFE OF GEORGE ANNE BELLAMY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1727</td>
<td>Birth (according to Chetwood)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1731</td>
<td>Birth (according to the Apology)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1742</td>
<td>Appearance as Miss Prue in <em>Love for Love</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1744</td>
<td>Appearance as Monimia in <em>The Orphan</em> (official debut)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1745</td>
<td>Abduction by Lord Byron</td>
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<tr>
<td>1745-1748</td>
<td>Engagement at Aungier-Street Theatre, Dublin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1747</td>
<td>The Dublin riots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1748</td>
<td>Engagement at Covent-Garden renewed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1749</td>
<td>Elopement with Sir George Metham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1750</td>
<td>Return to Covent-Garden in <em>Venice Preserved</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engagement at Drury-Lane Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appearance as Juliet with David Garrick during the famous <em>Romeo and Juliet</em> contest of the theatres</td>
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<tr>
<td>1753</td>
<td>Separation from Sir George Metham</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beginning of liaison with John Calcraft</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resumption of Covent-Garden contract</td>
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<tr>
<td>1754</td>
<td>Birth of Caroline Elizabeth Calcraft</td>
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<tr>
<td>1756</td>
<td>Quarrel with Mrs. Woffington during performance of <em>The Rival Queens</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Sept. 4)* Birth of Henry Fox Calcraft; beginning of long illness

1757 (Mar. 31) Only professional appearance of this season (Autumn) Return to full activity at Covent-Garden

1758 (Dec. 2) Great success in title role of Dodsley's Cleone

1760 * Separation from John Calcraft (Autumn) Start of second engagement in Dublin

1760-1761* Beginning of liaison with West Digges

1761 (Autumn) Re-engagement at Covent-Garden

1762 (Feb. 3) Last appearance of this season in London (Spring)* Elopement to Scotland with Digges; introduction on Edinburgh stage

1762-1764 Engagement at Cannongate Theatre, Edinburgh

1764 (Summer)* Return to London; separation from Digges

1764-1770 Continuous but decreasing employment at Covent-Garden

1765-1766* Friendship with Henry Woodward increasing

1767 (Oct. 5?) Advertisement of letter to Calcraft

1768 (Oct. 1) Appearance in Jane Shore before the King of Denmark

1770 End of theatrical employment

1772 Death of John Calcraft

1776 Death of father, Lord Tyrawley

1777 Death of Henry Woodward

1780 (June 1) Appearance at Covent-Garden in Jane Shore, her own benefit

1785 Publication of An Apology for the Life of George Anne Bellamy
(May 24) Drury-Lane benefit (Braganza)

1788 (Feb. 16) Death

* Dates marked by asterisk are based upon material in the Apology but are supported by known theatrical chronology.
APPENDIX B

THE MERETRICIAD (LONDON, 1761)

An anonymous publication appearing in the same year as The Rosciad, The Meretriciad attacks in verse a number of actors and actresses, concentrating upon their moral character rather than their talents. The lines on Mrs. Bellamy are reproduced here both because they have direct application to the credibility of her account of the separation from John Calcraft and because they represent the kind of criticism which forced her into self-justification.

ll. 351-381:

But here observe the Juliet of her days,
Fall'n from the pinnacle of public praise,
Oft' with encomiums has the Playhouse rung,
Enraptured with the music of thy tongue,
Oft' has the Virgin sympathized thy doom
And wept for Juliet in the silent tomb;
Nor grieved we less when Bellamy withdrew,
Yet we forgave thee for the golden view.
How did the Town applaud thy happy choice,
Although in thee she lost the sweetest voice?
But if the ties of mother will not bind,
How weak are women, ignorant, and blind!
Not all the rhet'ric of a Courtier's tongue,
Or that of mother from thy tender young,
Were found sufficient to subdue thy lust,
Tho' quite corroded, by corrosive rust.
When M*** had thee, such a deed as this
Were merely modish, and became a Miss;
But yet his tenderness could not subdue,
That thirst of dear variety in you;
All he could say that itch could not destroy,
To bind the Mother to the loveliest Boy.
But since Old Time had worn the dimple sleek,
And furrow'd wrinkles o'er the blushing cheek,
Who would imagine you would play the whore,
And fly in raptures to the Irish Shore?
But women crave while man's a drop to give,
Nor cease to lust, until they cease to live;
If e'er these lines should reach thy flinty heart,
Fly to thy babes— and act the mother's part;
But if they'll not induce thee to return,
Disgrace, and shame, must seal a Juliet's urn.

A copy of the Meretriciad in the Houghton Library at Harvard University is from the library of Horace Walpole and contains his annotations. For "M**" above, Walpole has supplied "Metham".
APPENDIX C

MRS. BELLAMY THE ACTRESS

The concern of this paper being exclusively with Mrs. Bellamy as an authoress, it has been possible only at certain points to draw upon a body of fascinating source material which relates to her as a dramatic artist. We must not fail to indicate, however, the existence of this material, which seems never to have been brought together in any comprehensive consideration of the actress. It is made up largely of small, but often significant, references to Mrs. Bellamy in one rôle or another, or of more general characterization included in contemporary criticism of actors and actresses. In combination with the accounts given in the Apology, however, these references form an illuminating picture of a career, which, in and of itself, was not without influence in the theatre and in the world of theatre-goers. Without attempting to discuss that career and without suggesting that what follows is by any means complete, it may be well to indicate here sources which would aid the student or the interested reader of the Apology in broadening his knowledge of Mrs. Bellamy and her professional life.
At least four fellow-workers in the theatre have written books which refer to her. The first was *A General History of the Stage*, published in London in 1749 and written by William Chetwood, who had for many years served as prompter at Drury Lane. Since he was a member of the rival house, Chetwood's unrestricted enthusiasm for the youthful Miss Bellamy's "most improving genius" is perhaps a fair indication of the popularity of the rising actress. The *History of the Theatres of London and Dublin*, which appeared in London in 1761-71, was from the pen of Benjamin Victor, the treasurer of the company in Dublin during Mrs. Bellamy's engagement there in 1745-1748. Victor too was able to give a picture of the early years of success. In our many references to Tate Wilkinson's *Memoirs* we have had little to say about his many references to Mrs. Bellamy's stage appearances. They are quite frequent, and range from his report of the first play he ever saw at Drury Lane (when he was little more than ten years old but already enough of a critic to pronounce "Miss Bellamy very inferior indeed to Mrs. Cibber") to the years of her decline when he acted with her in Edinburgh. In the company at that same time was an actor named John Jackson, whose *History of the Scottish Stage*, published in Edinburgh in 1793, recalls

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1 Page 113.

2 I, 38.
many details of Mrs. Bellamy's engagement—not only of her success but of her temperamentental demands as well.

Memoirs of persons somewhat more distant from the theatre itself do not supply so much information, but the glimpses contained in them are in their own way valuable. John O'Keeffe's Recollections (1826) give an admiring description of the young Mrs. Bellamy's beauty, while the Life and Times of Frederick Reynolds, published in the same year, offers the unique account of Mrs. Bellamy's pitiful farewell appearance at her 1785 benefit. Her association with David Garrick brings occasional reference to her acting into biographies of the actor. Both Thomas Davies in his Memoirs of the Life of Garrick (1780) and Arthur Murphy in his Life of David Garrick (1801) give brief summaries of her qualifications as an actress in their discussions of the Romeo and Juliet contest. Davies, by the way, gives in his Dramatic Miscellanies (1785) an interesting description of the dramatic training to which Mrs. Bellamy was exposed when she played with Colley Cibber in one of his last appearances and was persuaded to practice the "unnatural swelling" of words which marked the old man's acting style.

For contemporary comment upon her talents we may

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3 I, 107.
4 Page 282.
5 I, 40.
turn to a number of publications, some in verse, some in prose, but all on the order of Churchill's *Rosciad*. These make it their business to analyze and criticize the current theatrical performances and personalities. Among those that contain interesting comments on Mrs. Bellamy are Sir John Hill's *The Actor: a Treatise on the Art of Playing* (1755); David Erskine Baker's *Companion to the Playhouse* (1764); *The Theatrical Review for the year 1757* (1758); Francis Gentleman's *Dramatic Censor or Critical Companion* (1770); Hugh Kelly's *Thespis* (1767); and the *Rosciad of Covent-Garden* (1762). Among various remarks about Mrs. Bellamy, these publications join in appreciation for her talent in expressing the tender emotions of love, pity, and sorrow. *The Theatrical Review* concludes with a rating scale of tragedians which awards each performer points for "genius," "judgment," "expression," "action," and "voice." Among the actresses Mrs. Bellamy is rated second only to Mrs. Cibber.

Certain stage histories other than those of Chetwood, Victor, and Jackson are of some importance. Robert Hitchcock's *An Historical View of the Irish Stage* (1788) James Dibdin's *Annals of the Edinburgh Stage* (1888) contain a good deal of helpful information about the actress. An elder Dibdin, Charles, in his *History of the English Stage* (1800) gave a lukewarm commendation of the acting of
Mrs. Bellamy, who "highly pleased and never offended." Essential to the comprehension of the events of her theatrical career is, of course, John Genest's *Some Account of the English Stage* (1832), to which we have so frequently referred in the course of this paper.

The ultimate tribute to Mrs. Bellamy's acting is probably the single sentence in a letter of Dr. Johnson to Bennet Langton: "Cleone was well acted by all the characters, but Bellamy left nothing to be desired." An interesting aspect of her influence in the same play, however, is given by Montague Summers in *The Gothic Quest* (1938). Speaking of the boyhood of "Monk" Lewis, he reports Mrs. Lewis's tale of "how on their return one evening from Covent Garden, where the lovely George Ann Bellamy had sustained the title-role of Dodsley's *Cleone*, not only did the boy repeat with the utmost verve nearly the whole of the celebrated scene which concludes the fourth act where Cleone in the wood discovers her child murdered, but he imitated the actress's shriek with such thrilling accuracy that she could never forget her feelings at the moment."  

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6V, 209.  
8Page 204.
Alexander Bicknell's Occasional Poetry

The two addresses said to have been written by Alexander Bicknell for Mrs. Bellamy's benefit performance in 1785 are reproduced below. They are given as they appear in the Gentleman's Magazine, LV (June, 1785), 449-450, where they are included in a letter to "Mr. Urban," signed "C. D."

"An Introductory Address, spoken by Miss Farren at the Benefit of Mrs. Bellamy, May 24, 1785. Written by Mr. Bicknell, Author of the Life of King Alfred, the History of Edward the Black Prince, and Compiler of Capt. Carver's Travels, etc., etc.

That various are the turns of fortune's wheel
All records tell us, and still thousands feel:
Now on the top the favour'd mortal stands,
Gaily bedeck'd with wreaths from both her hands;
Profusely kind, her bounty she bestows;
And lasting seems the spring from whence it flows--
Anon the ever-circling wheel moves round,
And lays her favourite prostrate on the ground;
Of every good as suddenly bereft,
And not a trace of all her favours left;
Her boon appears but like a flatt'ring dream,
The pang more poignant for the wide extreme.
On fortune's scroll imperial Rome of old
Once saw her Belisarius high enroll'd;
Wealth pour'd her stores; loud rang the trump of fame;
And every votive honour grac'd his name:
Yet the same Romans saw their hero poor;
Sad, sad reverse! sit cheerless at his door,
Oppress'd by penury, and forc'd to live
On what the charitable hand would give--
Thus the deluding deity beguiles,
Thus transient and unsteady are her smiles.

A female Belisarius of the stage
Presumes tonight your notice to engage:
One whom your favour, whilom rais'd to wield
A heroine's truncheon in our bloodless field;
Who oft in scenic armor bright has shone,
And bravely led theatriic squadrons on:
High in the list of our dramatic band,
As the first Juliet will she ever stand.
Alas! like his, revers'd has been her fate;
The day of affluence past, she finds too late
That fortune's gayest wreaths, neglected, fade--
But her Apology's already made--
Already, by your smiles, her hopes revive;
And this gay scene will keep those hopes alive.
To such a gen'rous circle, ne'er, in vain,
Can Error sigh, or can Distress complain:
Complete the work your goodness has begun,
And give new lustre to her setting sun--
But see, oppress'd with gratitude and tears,
To pay her duteous tribute she appears.

"An Address, written for Mrs. Bellamy to speak at her Benefit. By Mr. Bicknell.

Long absent from these boards, alarm'd, I find
Unusual tremors agitate my mind.
In vain I strive my feelings to impart,
And speak the grateful dictates of my heart.
Yet, tho' thus trembling, something would I say;
Fain, fain I would my duteous tribute pay:
Tell that your kind indulgence, deep imprest
In liveliest tints, is glowing in this breast--
But overwhelm'd by gratitude and fears--
Accept th'attempt--accept these speaking tears."
APPENDIX E

SUGGESTED AREAS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION

This study has suggested certain areas in which research should prove to be rewarding. The following subjects are listed for the consideration of other students interested in the field of eighteenth-century biography:

1. The influence of the hack writer in the development of eighteenth-century biographical tradition.

2. Common patterns in female memoirs from Mary Manley to Mary Robinson.

3. The autobiographical writing of Tate Wilkinson.

4. The conflict of sentiment and realism in the biographical writing of the late eighteenth century.
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ABSTRACT

An Apology for the Life of George Anne Bellamy was chosen for this study because it is representative both of a group of eighteenth-century theatrical lives and of minor autobiography generally in the peak years of biographical writing and because it has been brought sharply to the fore as a work of intrinsic merit by a favorable appraisal in Donald A. Stauffer's *Art of Biography in Eighteenth Century England* (1941).

The epistolary *Apology*, which recounts the adventures of Mrs. Bellamy through her years of success at Covent-Garden Theatre and through her decline into poverty and neglect, was published in 1785, gained immediate popularity, and appeared in four editions by 1786. Critics praised it highly, but its fame was short. It dropped into semi-obscurity and for a century and a half was considered interesting principally as a work of theatrical history. The assertion of Stauffer that the *Apology* is an important biography of its century has directed attention to it once more, challenging us to a re-evaluation of the work, both as theatrical history and as literary art. This paper aims to gather and relate information concerning the *Apology*'s accomplishments in both these fields and
to estimate its permanent value and significance.

In considering the work as theatrical history, we find at once that it is extremely faulty in its chronology. It avoids definite statements of time, but a comparison with an accurate theatrical record reveals many errors in sequence and associations. Because of these inaccuracies certain values in the book appear to have been underestimated. Mrs. Bellamy includes numerous descriptions of her contemporaries which deserve attention. Her extended portraits of actors and actresses, notably those of David Garrick, James Quin, and Margaret Woffington, are accompanied by many short sketches of less important but interesting people. Most of these passages offer unique glimpses of her fellow thespians. The same quality is found in her record of stage practices. Her observations of theatrical disorders, of the rôle of the eighteenth-century audience, of the development of theatrical costuming are acute and illuminating. They seem, moreover, to be generally reliable. A survey of the uses to which the Apology has been put by theatrical historians shows that it has been given more credence than the judgments of some of its critics would indicate. Over the years it has supplied material for a series of biographical sketches of Mrs. Bellamy in collections of theatrical lives. These, it is true, are for the most part quite superficial in their treatment of the actress's life. More scholarly works,
however, have trusted to her for source material. Her testimony has been cited in a number of reputable stage histories, and recently certain scholarly studies of eighteenth-century literature have likewise relied upon evidence she presents.

Criticism of the *Apology* as a literary work has taken a curious and conflicting course. In the months immediately following its publication London reviewers hailed its anecdotal wealth, its lively style, its tender emotions, and its moral influence. Increasingly, however, Mrs. Bellamy's inaccuracies were noticed. Suspicions of misrepresentation grew, and the initial enthusiasm faded into confusion and distrust. Stauffer's critical comments reopened the question of the *Apology* 's merits but in so doing revealed a surprising divergence of interpretation. Praising the autobiography for its objectivity, its psychological penetration, its "sense of life," Stauffer connected these characteristics with the personality of the actress, whom he saw as lively, frank, and impulsive, but essentially cold, selfish, and calculating. The contemporary reviewers had seen quite a different person in the pages of the *Apology*--a woman of sensibility, whose errors were excused by her benevolence and by the fineness of her sentiments. This duality of interpretation suggests either inaccurate reading on the part of the critics or marked ambiguity in the *Apology* itself. To determine the cause of the disagreement, a thorough investigation of the text is needed, with special attention
to the unity of the central portrait.

We note that the "sense of life" mentioned by Stauffer is by no means a consistent attribute of the *Apology*. Many passages are strikingly dull or unconvincing. This is especially true of the frequent sentimental episodes and of the trite and wordy digressions. The sections of the book that do produce an illusion of reality are notable for their keen observation, vivid expression, frank self-analysis, psychological insight, and dramatic effect. In the characterization of Mrs. Bellamy, the inconsistency is striking. She presents herself as vain, impetuous, and extravagant, but possessed of the utmost sincerity, elevated moral principles, and great sensibility of soul. Unfortunately, reasons for doubting her statements are to be found in abundance within the *Apology* itself. Accounts of her double-dealing are opposed to protestations of absolute honesty; instances of calculating hardness offset rhapsodies upon her benevolence and softness of emotion. So exaggerated is the presentation of her virtues that it prevents any reconciliation with the human fallibility elsewhere revealed. The paltering with the truth indicated in these passages is even more evident in other parts of the *Apology*. A number of episodes are flagrant fabrications, and many others are so strongly marked by the conventional patterns of the sentimental novel that they may be assumed to be fictional decoration. Without question the *Apology* is a
mixed form and therefore has become confusing to its critics.

But, we may ask, what lies behind the failure of the fictional elements to fuse with the basic narrative? The answer is probably to be found in the fact that the book is not the work of Mrs. Bellamy alone. Alexander Bicknell, the author of a variety of works now little known, claimed to have been its editor and is generally assumed to have had a hand in its composition. Certain characteristics of the book tend to support his claim: its obvious financial motivation might have prompted the employment of an editor to increase the salability of the memoirs; the epistolary structure is clearly artificial and could easily have been added in the process of editing; the stylistic variation is so extreme as to suggest more than one author; the evidence of borrowings from many literary traditions is strangely out of keeping with Mrs. Bellamy's limited background.

A survey of certain of Bicknell's known works is extremely revealing. The *Patriot King*, *Prince Arthur*, The *Black Prince*, *Lady Anne Neville*, and *Doncaster Races* show his employment of conventional sentimental patterns, his extensive literary acquaintance, his trite digressiveness, his ornate style, and his tendency to cater to the popular demand of the moment—all of which parallel characteristics of the *Apology*. His books also contain links with the *Apology* that prove beyond doubt his connection with Mrs. Bellamy's work. At the same time, such a survey reveals
that much of the actress's autobiography could not have originated with Bicknell, since his work lacks entirely the vigorous and humorous expression noted in the best parts of the *Apology*. Mrs. Bellamy was apparently quite capable of writing these passages. Both her reputation as a lively raconteur and a series of her letters preserved in Tate Wilkinson's *Memoirs* testify to her powers of expression.

We may therefore hypothecate a dual authorship for the *Apology*. Bicknell appears to have worked over a simple narrative provided by Mrs. Bellamy, adding the epistolary form, the "literary" decorations, the fictional elements, and the digressive comment—and in the process rounding out the portrait of Mrs. Bellamy to conform to conventional standards. The resulting ambiguity has produced varying interpretations of her character, dependent upon whether the reader attended more closely to her writing or to that of Bicknell.

This hypothesis serves to throw light on several matters. By attributing to Mrs. Bellamy a distinct and characteristic form of expression, it helps us to assess her position in the biographical tradition of the eighteenth century. She now appears as a product of the great age of conversation, who, without formal literary training, absorbed from the varied social groups she knew well the informal verbal skill and the sense of the amusing and dramatic which mark her work. In that same atmosphere, at
the same period, biography was coming into its own in the writings of James Boswell. The study of Mrs. Bellamy's book shows us that both major and minor writers profited from the influence of an age uniquely favorable to the art of life-writing. The recognition of Bicknell's connection with the Apology, too, has real significance, since it suggests that hack-writers may have played a more important part in the development of biographical writing than is generally realized. Incidental observations of other female memoirs seem to indicate the existence of a tradition of the hack-written theatrical life. If Bicknell's methods resembled those of his fellows, this group may well have contributed to the cross-fertilization of the genres by their use of novelistic devices in life-writing and to the development of biographical patterns by their adherence to the conventional and the derivative.

If our hypothesis is correct, then, Mrs. Bellamy's merits as an autobiographer stand more clearly revealed, while the Apology as a whole illustrates the interplay of literary traditions in the eighteenth century, especially as they were affected by the work of the hack-writer.
Dorothy Gillette Dissell was born on April 11, 1914, in Indianapolis, Indiana, the daughter of Edward Everett and Dorothy (Geer) Dissell. Her early years were spent in West Hartford, Connecticut, where she attended the public schools, graduating in 1931 from the William H. Hall High School. She then entered Wellesley College, where her major interest was in English Composition. After receiving the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1935, she taught English, first in the Putnam, Connecticut, High School and then at her own high school in West Hartford. During this period she studied English Literature at the University of New Hampshire, receiving the degree of Master of Arts in 1940. In 1942 she enlisted in the Women's Army Corps. She saw
more than three years of service, largely in the capacity of company officer, before her return to civilian life. Since the war, she has been occupied in student personnel work, serving as student counselor at the Massachusetts General Hospital School of Nursing and, after an interval of graduate study at Boston University, as dean at the Bouvé-Boston School in Medford, Massachusetts.