CHAPTER IX

PROPERTIES

THE Company had reassembled after the summer and was rehearsing for its winter season in London. Most of the players had just returned from rather an unsuccessful tour in the country. Two waggons with wheels painted coral pink picked out with leaf green, and most necessary nets of thick cords cast over their mountainous contents, waited in the yard outside the Theatre with their shafts let down into the muddy cobbles. A relief to be able to unpack and send into store all those tawdry drums and trumpets with which one marched in procession through provincial towns. At King's Lynn where they had given their last performances they had been obliged to pull a velvet cloak out of one of the property baskets to pay their bill at the tavern where they had got their food. No one was going back to King's Lynn again in a hurry and that was flat —like the landscape around that dead-live east coast town full of fine houses dropping into decay together with their wool trade. Even the sea was receding from the place, and nothing could have been more dispiriting than one's evening struggles along the windy shore, arm in arm with someone else who hissed into one's ear how he had never been so insulted in his life as during yesterday's performance and was going to walk straight off the stage if that happened again.

The Great Burbage had not gone with the Company. He rarely left London and seldom appeared on the

stage nowadays, only occasionally playing the part of a very dignified old King or a mythological deity invoked when the plot had got into a hopeless tangle. There was such a part in a play waiting on his table in Halliwell Street now, a magnificent part for a grand old player, the plot being all about an anceint king of Britain who thought it would be a good notion to divide his realm between his three daughters before he died, and ran mad when his discovered that it was not. It was a long piece, so it would be nearly dark in the winter by the time one had got to Act Five, appropriate, for the play got darker and darker, magnificent stuff, the poor old man lost on a blasted heath in a tempest, with white hair and beard flying, calling down curses on his unnatural brood, and the only other person on the stage Kempe the clown, who would play up so well, twisting and snivelling about in the background stark mad too.

But it was a heavy part; the king, as they said in the theatre, carried the whole play on's shoulders, and then it was so badly written. It lay now at the bottom of a pile waiting for consideration. Some of these masterpieces, written by authors who were still very much alive and hungry, had waited there for years and years. Will, call-boy and prompter at the Theatre, knew that even if the improbable happened and his play was read and liked and chosen for production, it might be seasons before it came to rehearsal. He ought to be thankful to find himself back in London, for the wage he got was only enough to pay his own shot on tour if the takings at the performances did not come up to expectation, and in small country towns there was often but one inn where the whole Company had to lodge and eat, no chance of fading away at dinner-time and pretending that one had an invitation elsewhere, as

one could in London. By going without a meal since breakfast yesterday he had just been able to scrape together the exact sum that he liked to send home every month. He had taken it down to the Carter Lane Inn where the Oxford carriers put up on Tuesdays and Saturdays, and then returning to the Theatre managed to slip in with the property waggons and lie the night there, a thing he frequently did towards quarter day when he dared not face his landlady.

The Company was rehearsing odd scenes from two valueless plays chosen for the new season, a comedy called *Fair Em* and a tragedy *Hardiknut*. Their names, the only fresh things about them, might draw audiences, but their matter would never hold them. Everyone seemed to know that they were wasting time on failures, and as if to make the winter season seem as far off as possible the weather was very warm, the stink of dust and garlic from the empty auditorium nearly unbearable. Kempe the chief clown, was in one of his worst tempers. He complained that he had twice been prompted while pausing for an effect. He was grand enough not to tour with the Company. He had gone off by himself, with two underlings to play the necessary music, and given one-man performances for the past three months—jig and tabor businesses interspersed with comic tales, wearing work and it could not have paid, he was in such a vile uncommunicative vein. The truth was that he had not yet the name to catch a town on his own merits. It had taken old Tarleton, the most famous clown in Europe and the Queen's own jester, all his time to carry off that manner of show.

"*Scene Eight. Hardiknut's camp. Set tent and get trap ready for ghost,*" read Will in the margin of his copy of

the play, and hurried down to see to that. The Great Burbage himself was watching the rehearsal from a stool set on the front of the stage this morning, but God be thanked this was the Theatre and not the Curtain, where the trap always stuck, and once Jonah being vomited by the whale had been forced to speak a triumphal speech with only an indignant head visible and legs kicking about so under the stage that one could neither shove him right up nor help him down for a fresh start.

Will, who prompted, and the Great Burbage, were the sole persons in the house who had playbooks in their hands, that is to say full copies of the entire play. When the piece was an old one the book would be a book indeed, printed and bound, but new pieces like these were invariably in manuscript, the second copy having been transcribed by one of the pale Burbage daughters. They never missed a scene or made a blot, but by the time a piece had been cut to bits at rehearsal and patched together again, the prompter's copy was a labyrinth of corrections and erasions. Actors only got their own parts, also copied by the daughters. They had no idea of what happened in the rest of a play, and fortunately never cared. Julius Cæsar, slaughtered at the beginning of Act Three, had been known to go off and get his supper night after night, and at the end of a season be still in bland ignorance of what befell the Roman Empire after his death. No brain, do you say? Watch him play Cæsar. They had other characteristics as perplexing and universal. Unless you had been through it you would never believe the lengths a really good player would go to to prevent one under him from getting a chance.

"Gabriel's ill," murmurs Cuthbert Burbage to that poor young Sly, who has chin and no fortune of his own and is being threatened by a tyrant of a woman down in Cripplegate for the upkeep of a child. Stage-struck, that is what young Sly must have been to run away from any kind of a home to go as a player, he with his flaxen narrow poll, groom's shanks, and fish-like eyes. But he can act. The Theatre keeps no drones. Sly can act, only he has never got the part to suit him.

"Gabriel's not well. Be ready to play to-morrow," nods Cuthbert, and there sure enough on the stage writhes Gabriel speaking his part in a tortured whisper. "I'faith your throat seems to put you to pain. You had best make home and not stir out to-morrow, unless you are amended," says Cuthbert, and: "Indeed," groans Gabriel, "I fear you are right. I shall never be able to play to-morrow, my masters." So off goes big Gabriel, waving away offers of potions and salves, and on comes Sly for rehearsal. He does not need rehearsal after watching Gabriel in the part again and again during the past eight months, nevertheless he sits up half the night getting himself word perfect, and arrives at the Theatre to-morrow an hour before he need, trembling like a leashed greyhound. In the tiring-room the clothes for the part are laid out ready, but he must not get into them yet. His fingers itch to umber his face. By twenty minutes to the hour he thinks better let the dresser fix on that beard. Ten minutes later the room is filling up. "So you play Balthazar at length, old dog's-face! Prosperity be thy page! Gabriel's never ill."

And Gabriel never is, for at the very moment when the trumpeters are blowing their sennet from the turret

and the beginners have been called for the first scene, in reels Gabriel, not a whit better, he does not know how he will be able to fumble his way through the part, but sooner than disappoint the people and fail Master Burbage. . . . "Quick! Out of that beard, young man."

When he has stripped, Sly creeps up, shivering in vest and hose, to be alone for a moment on the staircase leading to the gallery. Will, who cannot help being there, since he is prompting, has but one hand free to thump on those heaving shoulders and in the first interval when the applause comes whispers: "One of these nights Gabriel will get his throat cut and then he won't come." And bully Gabriel will. Last year he killed a man in a duel and was lucky to be able to prove that he had been attacked. He is a staring ruffian, a shameless smell-smock, nobody likes him, yet the Company tolerates him, laughs at his jests, goes to his Hog Lane drinking parties. Will, whom one sometimes thinks must be nigh half-witted, he has such an art for finding something to praise in the worst of us, says that Gabriel may get into Heaven after all on his singing voice.

There are two dressing-rooms, one on either side of the curtained alcove at the back of the stage, and two corresponding bare draughty staircases with iron rails leading up to the gallery above. Better comedies and tragedies than any performed in the front have been played out here, whole histories tossed in a single word from one player washing his head in the souse-bucket to another sitting pulling faces while the dresser gives him two false eyebrows and a bald scalp. The staircases are full of whispers. "Then you would . . .?" "Ay, truly would I, in your place?" "And you think

she would . . .?" Pressed together, sweating and exhausted, drawn together every afternoon by the insatiable call of those trumpets, whatever other games they may be up to during the rest of the day, the actors, as they must, know far too much of one another's lives. Everyone knows that little Gilburne who plays the ladies' parts is going out into the yard as soon as he gets off the stage every act this season to spit blood. His parents ought to keep him at home, but next year anyway his voice will have broken and there are eight other children at home. Everyone knows that Pig who calls himself Pykke could tell Pope if he chose the whereabouts of that wench whom Pope looked to be courting in the honourable way of matrimony last year. Everyone knows that Will, who prompts and calls the players, was married at eighteen and has a wife and three children somewhere in the country. There is nothing remarkable in his story. Most of us here have married too soon. To stand at God's altar and swear an impossible vow to an impossible woman seems to be a situation that few of us have been able to resist. Of course there are exceptions. There are the Lowins, immense fat John and his little skipping piping dame, who is always running across the room to lay her head on Lowin's belly and call all to witness that Master Lowin and I have been wedded sweethearts these thirty ye-ee-ars. And we are not all sinners. Augustine Philips who wears a gold ring with the arms of Sir William Philips, Lord Bardolph, on it, keeps a widowed mother and goes to church with her every Holy Day at St. Mary's Aldermanbury, where he is one of those that show folks into pews; and that same Pope being left with a new-bought house and no bride to fill it, has adopted an orphan child, a little maid (no,

not eight years, take shame to yourself), and is having her trained up to sew and read and dress meat, so that she shall be able to take the place of old Goody Clerk who cleans and cooks for him these sad days. And we are not all low born like Grymes and Hole and Knagges and Parsely (who calls himself Sebastian Scarlett!) Stokedale has a father owns a manor in Yorkshire, and Heminge and Condell, our David and Jonathan, are sons of flourishing merchants. Heminge's sire seems to have decided to make the best of a bad business and brings all the brothers and sisters to the tuppenny gallery to watch our Jack strutting and stammering through his part.

"*Scene Five. Em's bed-chamber. Bed thrust in, wine and cup,*" reads Will in his book, and this is the moment chosen by the Great Burbage to crook a finger for the fellow that has written a play. Without raising his head the manager utters to the consternated apparition called suddenly before him: "Be ready to come with me to the Revels Office after dinner to-day. We will—hum—choose some clothes for that comedy of yours. It needs dressing." Looking up: "Get on! get on! May not a man take his attention from ye for the space of a flash of lightning but ye all fall asleep?" For though Will has come tantivvy from the gallery nearly oversetting the young gentleman who is Em and waiting for his bed, the whole Company has come to a standstill to watch our manager addressing someone unusual.

Perhaps Will is getting the basket. Why dismissal and a week's wages should be called the basket, nobody knows. Perhaps it is to put the bird in. A player who has got the bird generally gets the basket double quick. The bird is when the galleries yawn and hiss and the groundlings jeer and throw rotten eggs and nut-

shells at you. There are even stories of dead cats and sequent faints. (Horrible!) London is full of players who have got the bird and the basket. Some of them have names that were once household words. Now and then they hang themselves, but they mostly sit about in taverns giving with exalted gesture good reasons for their unemployment. Managers are fighting for their services, but they haven't cared for the parts offered or the pay suggested was so insultingly low. . . . Any story rather than the truth, which is that they're out, out in the cold, and straining, dying to get back to that dog's life which is the only one in the world worth living. No courtier at Whitehall threatened with the confiscation of his titles and estates and imprisonment in the Tower is facing a greater horror than the player expecting the basket. Some Circean magic, such as enslaves Londoners to London, there must be in the life of the theatre. Outsiders can only catch a whiff of it now and then—when they enter the house late, for instance, and behold a thousand pink faces turned towards a single figure on the stage. . . .

"Please you, sir, we lack our properties," squeaks that spiteful young Jeffes. "To-day, sir?" murmurs Will. "To-day, to-day. Have I not spoken? Get on, get on, for the love of God!" cries the Great Burbage shaking a fist at his rooted players. Will rushes away to summon Em's bed, young Jeffes making a scurvy face at him as he passes, and the rehearsal flows on.

After dinner to-day means three o'clock at latest. Has he time to run out and get a shave after clearing up here, wonders Will, hanging over the gallery stairs and glaring down unseeing at the small shifting figures posturing about, in and out of the dust-moted beams of sunshine that light the shrouded theatre this

September morning? The manager will go off to his own house directly the last couplet of Act Five has been left superstitiously unspoken, but Will who must stay on here until every soul has departed, knows that he will not be able to manage both dinner and a shave. And then he remembers that there is a stitch fallen in his black hose. Nothing looks worse than a strip of white flesh shining through a ladder in a black stocking. Either he must catch Lowin's wife and go on his knees to her for the use of her needle (with which he is no craftsman) or else he must beg Heminge for the loan of a pair of hose out of the property baskets which are still in those waggons out in the yard. . . .

He decided upon the shave and the loan. The rehearsal lasted until after two, but kindly Jack Heminge waited on to help uncord those waggons and drag out the topmost dress-baskets. The first that they carried into the tire-room was full of nothing but false noses and beards, and they both fell a'laughing fool-happy; the next contained one pair of mulberry wool hose fearfully crushed and covered with white hairs off a coneyskin cloak. The barber who shaved Will told him that he was getting thin on the top. He doubted the sobriety of this player who seemed unable to keep his eyes shut even as he sat on that stool in the open window of that little bleached shop, with his head tilted back and a murderous knife glinting over his bared throat. Men and women were passing up and down the sunlit street of the little suburb, gay and busy like figures in a comedy. . . .

He had been right in pitching upon three o'clock as the Great Burbage's notion of after dinner, for at five minutes past that hour a wheeled vehicle drew up outside the entrance to the Theatre yard, and in it sat

my master in his black velure robe furred round the neck and armholes, a pair of gloves lying on his knee and his eyes half closed, giving him a tortoise-like aspect. When the Great Burbage went to haggle for new dresses for his Company at the Revels Office he arrived in a caroche like a gentleman. Since he was the owner of a stable this impressive luxury cost him nothing. He waved Will in to sit beside him, because there was only one seat in the open caroche which possessed a canvas awning, leather curtains, silvered door-knobs but no springs, and they set off jolting horribly over the cobbled lane between the two theatres, Will sitting erect with his hands on his knees and the Great Burbage sunk into his fur collar, his fists closed on an ebony stick and his heavy cheeks shaking like two pudding bags.

There were three streets of Shoreditch to be traversed, then with a change of note their wheels took the dusty country road leading westwards just beyond the uttermost northern suburbs of London, and the Great Burbage, after having looked around to see that they were not observed, opened: "Your comedy—hum —will not please the general." It was his habit to serve you your pap off a hatchet. Will did not plead that there was love at first sight and five distinct types of clown in his play. He waited, and the voice proceeded: "Nevertheless Mistress Burbage favours it. It is, she says, free of offence and as crisp as a curd cake. He can give you a gentlewoman, says she. Whence got you your plot?"

"It was mine own device, sir."

"Hum. We guessed that. Never put yourself to such labour again. There are only two plots in the world—but that's not here. Plots are no matter." Master Burbage raised his chin out of his collar and looked

with disfavour at the wisps of straw hanging on the whitened hedges on either side of this rustic road. He was not a country lover, and his sight was not good enough for him to perceive beyond these sloping fields groups of new little houses dotting pastures that had once belonged to a wealthy religious establishment. It was the same on whichever side of London you travelled nowadays. Gentlemen were going further and further out of town for their hunting and hawking, and letting their old suburban estates to the builders of tenements. Soon there would be as much London without the City walls as within, a prospect grateful to the owner of a theatre. It was in more cheerful tones that Master Burbage proceeded. "Your Spaniard will pass. Every-one of worship in the town will recognize him and those that don't will ever laugh to hear a foreigner speak English. We will get him up to like the Monarcho that he will fetch a roar the moment he steps on the scene. . . . But Godamercy! a King, a Princess, three lords and three ladies! Your duddery will cost me a fortune."

"There are no properties, sir."

"Hum. And then your songs. You give but words for one and no music. That means that I must go to Ferrabosco or the Bassano brothers, and either will charge. Your Constable and your Schoolmaster we will keep, but your Woman Clown must go. There was never a Woman Clown after her manner seen in a play yet, and this piece must be all in the fashion, punning at known tricks and current instances."

The Revels Office, like the offices of Works, Armoury, Ordnance and the Mint was lodged outside the Palace of Whitehall, although it was classed under the House-hold and its Master was responsible to the Lord Cham-berlain. It occupied the ancient Priory of St. John of

Jerusalem in Clerkenwell, and had a fine gateway and towers adorned with many coats of arms. The Great Burbage's coachmen knew too much about its management to draw up at the front entrance. The caroche turned down to a small door in the south side of the building, and Master Burbage for Master Buggin was announced in a hollow whisper as if some malpractice was afoot. The Office of Revels sold cast garments and properties to players, but not openly. Its Master who was a gentleman and a near relative of the Lord Admiral knew nothing of such business. From the Clerk Controller downwards, however, everyone else employed in the building hired masks and costumes on the sly throughout the year, and since the annual airing of the wardrobe took place between March and May, by September it was perfectly safe for almost anyone to dispose of stock to approved customers.

The Great Burbage dealt with the Clerk Controller. It was September, so the yeomen were wearing their summer liveries, scarlet cloth tunics embroidered in Venice gold and spangles with the rose and crown and the Queen's initials on breast and back. The Clerk Controller alone wore a sober suit of black taffeta. He was a curiously fox-faced and fox-coloured little man, giving the impression that everything about him was pointed—ears, ruff, beard and doublet. He bowed to Will, who was vaguely introduced as a young gentleman that had written a play, and moved off ahead with the owner of the Theatre, who must have sent word of his intended visit, for all the stuff for sale had been ranged round three sides of a disused cloister enclosing a quadrangle of green lawn across which the tower of the gateway was laying a cool shadow.

The Office of Revels provided regular entertainments

for the Queen and Court at Christmas and Easter, though they might always be called upon at other times out of the season to furnish a pageant for an important foreign guest or some special occasion at one of the country palaces. The same show could never be repeated to the same small elect audience, so they had mountains of belongings varying from light trash almost new but ruined by a performance on a wet day, to really valuable costumes apparently spoilt by long storage, but actually capable of being restored to almost their original splendour. The crumbling cloister on a close late summer afternoon formed a strange background for heaps of dashed frippery dyed every colour of the rainbow, and towards it across that little lawn of a verdance that can only be achieved after hundreds of years of patient tending, padded the dark figures of two worthy gentlemen, masters of the incalculable art of amusement. Again an outsider might have been conscious of a thrill in the air, a whiff of the theatre.

Footwear composed the first pile to which they came, footwear of all sorts stacked high as if for a bonfire, and from the forlorn look of these buskins lacking laces, single great boots, broken choppines and split satin slippers, to put a light to the lot really seemed the best thing that anyone could have done. The Great Burbage did not vouchsafe them a glance. He knew the necessity of keeping his Company well shod, and had an advantageous arrangement of his own with a poor buskin-maker in the City. His companion, saying that he did not know why these had been put out, drew him on to the armour, always interesting to the producer of popular historical plays. There it lay, real and sham, unbelievably ponderous steel cuirasses of antique design leaning contemptuously against buckram suits, whose

silver paint was flaking off in the creases. "This was worn at Agincourt, sir," whispered one of the scarlet-clad yeomen to Will who had lifted a helmet in his hands and was fiddling with the sweat darkened leather cap inside it. "Ay, sir," as Will looked up at him quickly, "—take heed of your doublet, all our stuff is well greased—we have a mort of old harness here could tell a tale if it could speak."

James Burbage, poking the pieces apart with his ebony stick, chose a quantity of armour which was set aside for his further consideration. Turning to Will he grunted "I have a Chronicle play or two in my desk, I must get someone refurbish. With some of this stuff under your nose you should be able to put together the death of a king, heh?"

Beyond the armour came cloaks, and the very thing for the Princess of France in the new comedy was found. Of popinjay-blue velvet strewn with fleur-de-lis, it had been used in a show got up in compliment to the Duke of Alençon when he came a-wooing, and since he was now dead and the Queen sixty, was little likely to be called for again. A black damask mantle, missing only about a dozen of the little buttons which fastened it round a figure from chin to heel, was pounced upon for a Prologue's use; some modern gallants' cloaks of tuft taffeta trimmed with spotted fur gone sad-looking round the upstanding collars, would have done for Will's lords, but his master turned away. They would be a great price. "Never think of it between friends," breathed the Clerk Controller and nodded to his underlings to put those aside too.

The women's garb held them not so long as might have been expected, since most of it also was highly embroidered and laced, and would be costly, besides

as the owner of the Theatre shrewdly said, a great splash of colour or a plain white robe were ever the most effective women's wear on a stage, and he had already in his wardrobe quantities of old patterned skirts and bodices sewn with good silk work which could always be re-made in the last fashion if needed. Three vermilion silk kirtles with spreading skirts he took for the damsels attendant on the princess, and then turning from the hump of wired and brocaded stuff glittering with false jewels, sniffed and said he had seen enough of what went to make a woman these days. Well (poking carelessly at the finest farthingale in the pile, a pale satin covered with raised bullion embroidery of pomegranates) he might think of that, save that he did not favour the colour. "Dead Spaniard," the yeoman said that it was called. The merry-cheeked old fellow, ripe for a gossip, was longing to show Will his old wound got in the Low Countries, and was soon doing so in the shelter afforded by a lath and plaster drinking fountain painted to resemble pure gold. Real wine had run in it on the day of the Queen's coronation, and from its basin still hung latten mugs covered with gilt paint, but there must be something amiss with them, for when one of our fellows here had used one of them to get himself a drink from the pump in the backyard this morning, he had been vomiting before you could cry "knife."

The elaborate properties made for dead and gone masques were the least saleable of the effects displayed. A form of turves made of dyed green straw stuck with imitation cotton flowers all broken-stalked and faded to a greyish tint, was dubiously selected by the owner of the Theatre, but life-size dragons with tin scales, and white satin shells large enough to contain a naked

goddess, raised no more than a shrug from him. There was the complete outfit for a Masque called "Beware the Cat"—black fur cat's costume and half a dozen birds' dresses made from real feathers, with horn beaks and glass eyes. The birds were moulting frightfully, and when one of the yeomen began to shake out the owl's dress he raised a coughing from all present which echoed so greatly in the vaulted roof that the Clerk Controller signalled to him sharply to stop that. The Great Burbage, holding his handkercher ostentatiously to his nose, moved on alone, and the Clerk encouraged as everyone was apt to be by Will's quiet pleasant manner, fell to persuading him. "A Masque of Blackamoors for your Comedy now, you could not do better. We have the whole makings here. Or what about a Mouth of Hell, perfect with device for thunder and lightning?" Will said gently "There is no Masque in my Comedy." "No Masque!" The Controller's pointed eyebrows flew up, he twirled his moustachios and struck an attitude.

"What's here?" came in the welcome growl of the Great Burbage, who pottering ahead had brought himself to a pause in front of a corner heaped with costumes untidily flung together as if not much accounted, but flatteringly lit by the flaring rays of the westering sun.

"The Russian habits!" Master Buggin minced forwards and motioning to the attendant yeomen to do their duty, began to tell the story of these accoutrements. There were complete suits for sixteen noblemen made in the manner of Muscovy, more, they were actually of Muscovite material and manufacture, having been brought over by the Ambassador Pissemsky as a gift from his master to the English sovereign twelve years ago. The pity was that the English sovereign

was a lady, and these were all gentlemen's dresses and so far from the fashion of anything but a mummer in England that she had been unable to pass them on even as presents to deserving courtiers. She had considered having them cut up into cushions or curtains. Her tailors had come to her in despair when she had ordered petticoats to be made from them. In the end the whole set had drifted into the possession of the Revels Office who had never yet been able to find a use for them.

They were indeed unlike anything ever seen in this country, both in their colours which were furious and their cut which was outlandish. Long inner robes of diamond-shaped wedges made of the thickest satin, turquoise, malachite, pimpernel and peagreen were sewn together and encrusted with gold braid. Their weight and bulk were difficult to explain until you had looked inside and seen that they were mounted on quilted linen with a wadded interlining. Their hems had been deeply bordered by fur of value, which had been stripped off, and over them went mantles, as heavy, of the best three piled velvet but plastered with patterns in tinsel thread, encircling pieces of looking glass. Incredible white hats of shaggy long-haired fur, with brims of black lambs' wool turned fiercely up and secured by rosettes of gilt-edged ribbon completed a Russian nobleman's attire. A heavy musky odour arose from them as they were lifted apart.

The Great Burbage, with a light in his eye, pointed at the yeoman who had lost the use of an arm in the Netherlands and asked that that fellow might be told to assume one of the hats. When he had seen the effect of those martial features peering out from that shock of fur, he laid his finger alongside his heavy nose and to

Will's speechless horror announced. "Here is speech of force! We will have these to your comedy—a Muscovite interlude! It will be a riot. Let me alone, I know."

During the haggle for the whole day's purchase which followed, Will stole into the grassy plat surrounded by the cloister. He had looked for a wrangle, but nothing like the pelt-rage which shook both the sober-coated masters of pageantry when they came to their bargain. The Great Burbage, as good as he had ever been in the part of an outraged monarch on his own stage, twice had to be held back by the skirts from shaking the dust of Clerkenwell from his feet. Twice he put down his head and charged like a bull for the exit, twice was driven back again to the wall, shaking his ebony stick aloft and making passes with it at the gesticulating Buggin. As for the Clerk Controller, he rushed up and down the cloister hanging on to his client with both arms, talking without ceasing and nothing to the point. In the middle of a great soliloquy by Burbage he seized the opportunity to rush away and returning to wave a pair of Grecian masks in the manager's surprised face, shrieked, look at the condition in which some young lords of Gray's Inn had sent back these!

Although both gentlemen shouted at once the whole time, they must have been able to hear what one another said, and a sum agreeable to both must at some moment have been reached, for gradually the storm died down and presently Will peeping in through a window beheld a solemn pacification with much counterfeit kindness on both sides taking place.