

of the new building and all its arrangements that he would not permit his wife to accept the box which had been offered for her use by the committee, and it was a long time before he could be persuaded so much as to enter the theatre with which his whole life had been connected. It was for the opening of this new Drury Lane that the competition of Opening Addresses was called for by the new proprietors, which has been made memorable by the "Rejected Addresses" of Horace and James Smith, one of the few burlesques which have taken a prominent place in literature. It was a tradesmanlike idea to propose such a competition to English poets, and the reader will willingly excuse the touch of bitterness in Sheridan's witty description of the Ode contributed by Whitbread himself, which, like most of the addresses, "turned chiefly on allusions to the phoenix." "But Whitbread made more of the bird than any of them," Sheridan said; "he entered into particulars and described its wings, beak, tail, etc.; in short, it was a poulterer's description."

It was while he was involved in these painful controversies and struggles that Sheridan lost his seat in Parliament. This was the finishing blow. His person, so long as he was a member of Parliament, was at least safe. He could not be arrested for debt; everything else that could be done had been attempted, but this last indignity was impossible. Now, however, that safeguard was removed; and for this among other reasons his exclusion from Parliament was to Sheridan the end of all things. His *prestige* was gone, his power over. It would seem to be certain that the Prince of Wales offered to bring him in for a Government borough; but Sheridan had not fallen so low as that. Once out of Parliament, however, the old lion was important to nobody. He could neither help to

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