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MEMOIRS OF THE LATE THOMAS SHERIDAN, Esq.

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THE event of this season was hardly wanting to disgust Mr. Sheridan with the Irish theatre. He had at this juncture to contend with opponents who possessed the popularity he wanted, and superior powers even in his own profession. During Mr. Barry's residence in Dublin he had been prevailed upon to undertake the erecting and managing a new theatre on a larger and more expensive scale, in the execution of which scheme he had prevailed on Mr. Woodward, then a performer of great reputation in Drury-lane, to unite with him. A second theatre in Dublin Mr. Sheridan foresaw would end in the ruin of both, and of those who were involved in either. He therefore made overtures to Mr. Barry to part with his theatrical interest to him, that the new plan might be rendered unnecessary. Mr. Barry had however engaged too far to recede, or to accept the overtures made him, and the new theatre in Crow-street was begun. This appears to have been the most busy, and, as far as regarded the Theatre, the weakest part of Mr. Sheridan's life. Though the prejudice of the public ran very much to support the new adventurers, he opposed them with weapons very little likely to have any effect. He applied to Parliament to stop his opponent, by granting him a monopoly; he recommended a wild idea of grafting his plan of education upon the management of the theatre; and he proposed to give up his interest to the public upon certain terms—that it might be conducted for the public benefit, something like the French stage. These proposals, though enforced with warmth, and not without

argument, made no impression; they were neglected by the majority, the new theatre was proceeded upon, was finished, and, as Mr. Sheridan had predicted, all the parties concerned in it were ruined.

In the season which began in October 1757, Mr. Sheridan was obliged to continue, as before, both actor and manager; but having the assistance of Mrs. Fitzhenry in the capital female characters, he was more prosperous than the preceding year. He also met with much encouragement from the Duke of Bedford, then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. The favour he experienced from this nobleman encouraged him to hope for success in his application to Parliament. But finding at length that he was to expect nothing from his solicitations, he determined to oppose his enemies on their own ground, with the best company that could be collected against them.

On Dec. 6, 1757, he summoned together a very respectable and numerous audience of the nobility and gentry of Ireland at the Music-Hall in Fishamble-street, before whom he pronounced an oration, in which he, with considerable address and ability, set forth the defects of the then modes of education, the advantages which would attend the adopting his proposed improvements to individuals and to the community at large. Many of the first characters in the kingdom for rank and learning were present. He was heard with respect and attention, and received the plaudits which were due to the novelty of his plan and the intrinsic merits of it.

Fruitless though his efforts were to sup-