

which was continued with such violence, that the Actor, after discovering due astonishment in his countenance, very readily spoke the whole speech over again, which was most remarkably applauded by the audience. The fine scenes of Zaphna and Palmira, which are the most remarkable in the play, and performed by their principal and usually applauded actors, this night passed unnoticed, and all the applause fell on the character of Alcanor. The partial conduct of this audience plainly discovered that they were only influenced by the spirit of party.

Although it would have been more prudent, from the appearances then exhibited, to have laid aside the play for the present, yet the manager unfortunately yielded to a request made him to perform Mahomet a second time, and contented himself with ordering a general summons to all the company to meet him in the Green room on the Friday morning, the day before the play was to be acted.

When the company were all assembled, he entered the room with a paper in his hand, and read them a lecture on the duties of an actor, particularly respecting his conduct to the public; and to shew, in the most glaring colours, that the actor who prostituted himself to the wanton humour of an audience, brought inevitable disgrace not only on himself but on all his brethren.

Mr Digges rose up and said, it was obvious that this lecture on the duties of an actor was levelled at him; that he was the person who had brought that disgrace upon himself and his brethren; but as the same play was to be performed the following night, and the same demand from the audience was likely to fall upon him, he desired to know what were the manager's commands in regard to his conduct. Mr Sheridan's reply was, that he should give him no directions, but leave him to do as he thought proper. Digges then said, 'Sir if I should comply with the demand of the audience, and repeat the speech as I did before, am I to incur your censure for doing it?' The manager replied, 'Not at all, I leave you to act in that matter as you think proper.'

The night following, (the 2d of March,) was the performance. The pit was full as soon as the doors were open, the house crowded, and this remarkable speech in the first scene, as soon as ever it was out of the mouth of the actor, he was called upon to repeat with the same vehemence as on the first night. The actor seemed startled, and stood some time motionless; at last, at the continued fierceness of the criers, he made a motion to be heard, and

when silence was obtained, he said, 'I would give him the highest pleasure imaginable to comply with the request of the audience, but he had his private reasons for begging they would be so good as to excuse him, as his compliance would be greatly injurious to him.'

On his saying that they immediately called out, *Sheridan! Sheridan! the Manager! the Manager!* and this cry soon became universal throughout all parts of the house. After some short time Mr Digges left the stage; and the uproar continuing, Mr. Sheridan (who stood behind the scenes) ordered the curtain down, and sent on the prompter to acquaint the audience, that they were ready to perform the play, if they were suffered to go on in quiet; if not, that they were at liberty to take their money again. The prompter was not heard, but obliged to withdraw.

Mr. Sheridan then said with some agitation, 'They have no right to call upon me, I'll not obey their call; I'll go up to my room, and undress myself;' and up he went. Some of his best friends left the pit and boxes, and went to his dressing room after him, and intreated him not to undress, but to go down and endeavour to pacify an audience that knew he was there, and must be enraged at his refusal to appear before them. But at these reasons and these entreaties of his friends he remained unmoved; and being strongly possessed with the notion that personal mischief was intended him, he got into a chair, went home, and left the house in that uproar and confusion.

Mrs. Woffington was then persuaded to appear before them, to see if a fine woman could alluage the fury of the many-headed monster; but she was not heard. Digges was the seeming favourite; and reigning orator. He was desired to go on, and to assure the audience Mr Sheridan had laid him under no injunction not to repeat the speech, and therefore could not on that account have incurred their displeasure. Digges went on, moved to be heard, and a profound silence ensued; he repeated what he had been desired, but in vain; as they had called so long for Sheridan, they would insist on having him before them, and his answering for himself. At last, when they were told he was positively gone home, they insisted on his being sent for, and added, they would wait patiently an hour, as he was known to live at some distance; and accordingly they sat down quietly to amuse themselves.

Messengers were dispatched to the manager's to acquaint him with the resolution of the house, but no argument could prevail on him to return back; and when the