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books dealing with the drama in provincial towns such as Kelly's *Notices of Leicester*, Penley's *Bath Stage*, and Dibdin's *Annals of the Edinburgh Stage* revealed many facts which had been ignored by the general historians of the stage. It also showed that, with the exception of Kelly, Penley, and Dibdin, no attempt had been made by the authors of the various town histories, etc., to collect all the references to the stage in the records they were treating. To do so was naturally outside their purpose, for they only wished to show by the quotation of a few items, that the drama played some part in the social life of the town in which they were interested. Consequently it was imperative that the records of these towns be re-examined and the references to the drama more exhaustively collected. The records of other towns not hitherto investigated had also to be searched.

It soon became evident that several lifetimes would be required if one person were to thoroughly examine all the records of even a few of the more important towns, as in many of these the records have been carefully preserved and are most voluminous. So it was necessary to select for examination only the more promising records in each town. This selection was not difficult, as it was clear that references to the drama usually occurred in the account books, the Mayors' Court books, or the letter-books of the corporations. The cause of this was not far to seek, for when a dramatic company visited a provincial town their first duty was to present their