

## Nova-Scotia Magazine,

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## MEMOIRS OF THE LATE THOMAS SHERIDAN, Esq.

*(Continued from Page 286.)*

THE various means by which the manager of a theatre may accumulate odium upon himself in a course of years, and acquire enemies to his person, are here unnecessary to be detailed. Mr. Sheridan, in one of his pamphlets, has enumerated the principal causes which contributed to render him unpopular in Ireland. Most of these were such as ought to have obtained for him the approbation of the public at large; and however obnoxious they might make him to individuals, would have been insufficient to drive him from his situation, had not the Demon of Politics added his assistance to crush the devoted manager.

For some time before this period, Mr. Sheridan had instituted a club, the members of which were in number about fifty or sixty persons, chiefly Lords and Members of Parliament, who were invited to dine together in the manager's apartment at the theatre; no female being admitted but Mrs. Woffington, who was placed in a great chair at the head of the table, and elected president for the season. This club was begun without any party intention on the side of the manager, but by means of Mrs. Woffington was, in 1753, metamorphosed from its original design into one of a political nature; and the conversation and general toast of this weekly assembly, which were what might be called anti-patriotic, soon became the common talk of the town; and the manager, of course was severely abused for being the supporter of the society, as he most certainly and effectually was, when he was the person who paid for all.

At this critical and dangerous juncture, it is not to be wondered at, that this as-

sembly of courtiers, publicly supported by the manager, who being also the principal actor, was consequently, at all times within the immediate resentment of the provoked party, should become the object of revenge. The patriots of the day resolved to watch for the first opportunity to destroy him, and an occasion soon offered.

Of this important event in the history of Mr. Sheridan's life, we have a particular account by Mr. Victor, from whom we shall on the present occasion transcribe. The tragedy of Mahomet had been some time singled out by the manager to be revived; the parts were written out and cast the winter preceeding in the following manner: Palmira, - Mrs. Woffington; Zaphna, Mr. Sheridan; and Alcanor, Mr. Digges:

During the rehearsal of this play, several passages were talked of by the anti-courtiers, as pleasing to them, and which they would not fail to distinguish.

On Feb. 23, 1754, the night of performance, the pit was filled very soon with the leaders and chiefs of the country party, and when Digges spoke the following speech:

—If, ye powers divine;  
Ye mark the moyements of this nether world,  
And bring them to account! crush,  
crush those vipers,  
Who, singl'd out by the community  
To guard the rights, shall, for a grasp  
of ore,  
Or paultry office, sell them to the foe.

The moment he had finished it, all the party in the pit roared out *encore*, which