

"That of all that he had ever heard, all that he had ever read, when compared with it, dwindled into nothing, and vanished like vapour before the sun;" and William Pitt, "That it surpassed all the eloquence of ancient or modern times, and possessed every thing that genius or art could furnish to agitate and control the human mind." Mr. Logan (who was present at the delivery of it, and had determined before-hand to oppose the impeachment) thus described its effects upon him: "The first hour," (said he,) "I called it mere declamation; the second, I said, this is wondrous eloquence; the third hour, Hastings is unjustifiable; the fourth, Hastings is an atrocious criminal; the fifth, Hastings is the greatest monster of iniquity ever heard of in the records of crime." In fact, as Pitt said, "All parties were brought under the wand of the enchanter," and, gentlemen, that enchanter was Brinsley Sheridan.

In 1788 he delivered his great speech at the trial of Warren Hastings, in Westminster Hall; which lasted four days, and is mentioned by Gibbon as "that display of genius which blazed for four successive days;" and on which occasion he exhibited a curious trait in his disposition, viz., that of wishing to appear to be an orator without preparation; for referring in his speech to certain minutes which the Chancellor desired to be produced, he sent Taylor, his clerk, for his bag, which he pretended to have mislaid, "in which," said he, "these minutes were," and meanwhile went on speaking. Fox, getting uneasy at the non-appearance of the bag, asked Taylor for an explanation, who whispered—"Lord bless you, the man neither has nor had any bag!" Yet with all this desire to affect inspiration, (so to speak,) it is well known that Sheridan passed many days and weeks in laborious preparation for this oration; in fact, he "worked," (as he wrote in a private letter which has since come to light,) "until he had motes before his eyes."

In 1792 Sheridan lost his wife by consumption, and from this date the star of his prosperity, which burst forth in such splendour, and was destined to set in such gloom, began