

DAVID GARRICK AT THE ADELPHI

BY SAMUEL J. ROGAL

Dr. Rogal is an associate professor of English at the State University of New York at Oswego. Rutgers Library houses several of Garrick's "altered" versions of the works of English playwrights in addition to his own plays.

ON 20 JANUARY 1779, at No. 5 Royal Terrace, the Adelphi, David Garrick died. Four months later, Saturday, 24 April 1779, Dr. Johnson remarked to James Boswell, "Garrick was a very good man, the cheerfullest man of his age; a decent liver in a profession which is supposed to give indulgence to licentiousness; and a man who gave away, freely, money acquired by himself. He began the world with a great hunger for money; the son of a half-pay officer, bred in a family whose study was to make four-pence do as much as others made four-pence halfpenny do. But when he had got money, he was very liberal."¹ Perhaps the best occasions upon which to examine the actor-manager's financial liberality are first his occupancy of No. 5 (later numbered "4") Royal Terrace and second his dealings with the outfitter of this residence, Thomas Chippendale (1718-1779)—the celebrated cabinetmaker, designer, and decorator.

In July 1749, the initial year of his marriage to Eva Marie Veigel (1724-1822), Garrick purchased the first of his three residences—a house at No. 27 Southampton Street, London; the couple assumed occupancy on 14 October.² Four and one-half years later (January 1754), he leased—and then purchased on 30 August—the Fuller House in Hampton, which Mrs. Garrick maintained until her death. The third (or second London) residence came to being in March 1772, when the Garricks moved from Southampton Street to the Adelphi. True to the manner of eighteenth-century gentility, which demanded balance between the country and the town, the Garricks continued to move back and forth, with the seasons, between Hamp-

¹ James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, ed. R. W. Chapman (London, 1960), p. 1021.

² *The Letters of David Garrick*, ed. David M. Little, George M. Kahrl, and Phoebe deK. Wilson (London, 1963), I, xxxviii; all references to this edition.

ton and London. Only during the actor's last six years, when increasing complications from gout and gall-stones forced him to be closer to his physicians, did he spend more of his time at the Adelphi residence.

The move from Southampton Street to the Adelphi was certainly not born out of necessity. In terms of access, No. 27 existed in a genteel quarter of the city, but five minutes' walk from Garrick's theatre. ". . . from the bottom of the street came up the buzz and hum of London traffic hurrying through the great artery of the Strand. As we now [c. 1868] walk up the street, we can see on the left, within a few doors of the top, one of the good chocolate-coloured houses, built of sound old brick, its long, thin windows very close together, and with a more architectural pretense than any house in the street. Within there is plenty of the old panelling, and beyond the study, the little room where Mr. and Mrs. Garrick used to breakfast."³ Because of its proximity to Covent Garden, No. 27 became a convenient—if not sometimes overly hectic—place from which to conduct business, especially to calm the tempers of distraught actors and playwrights. Certainly the house was large enough to accommodate the two Garricks and sufficiently fashionable for their situation; yet, by 1770, the impresario yearned for something on a higher scale—something more in line with his (or was it others'?) rank and wealth. Guided in part by the Scottish architect Robert Adam (1728-1792), he turned his eyes toward the Thames, to what was then the Old Durham Yard. Of more than passing interest, this was the same Durham Yard where, in 1741, Peter and David Garrick, as young wine merchants, established their vaults and offices at the bottom of (what was to become) John Street, leading out of the Strand. Unfortunately, the aspirant to the stage did not take to selling wine, and he wrote to his brother on 20 October 1741,

I have made an Extract Estimate of my Stock of wine & What Money I have out at Interest & find that Since I have been a Wine Merchant I have run out near four hundred pounds & trade not

³ Percy Fitzgerald, *The Life of David Garrick; from Original Family Papers, and Numerous Published and Unpublished Sources* (London, 1868), I, 243; all references to this edition.

encreasing I was very Sensible some way must be thought of to redeem it. My Mind (as You must know) has been always inclin'd to y^e Stage, nay so strongly that all my Illness & lowness of Spirits was owing to my want of resolution to tell You my thoughts when here, finding at last both my Inclination & Interest requir'd some New way of Life I have chose y^e most agreeable to my Self & tho I know You will bee much displeas'd at Me yet I hope when You shall find that I may have y^e genius of an Actor without y^e Vices, You will think Less Severe of Me & not be asham'd to own me for a Brother—

(*Letters*, I, 27-28)

Thirty years later the successful actor-manager would come back to Durham Yard, almost to the spot where, as a young man, he had experienced frustration and disappointment.

Obviously, Garrick's return to the vineyards was directed by influences far more tangible than mere chance. In 1768, the brothers Adam—John, Robert, James (1730-1794), and William—leased Durham Yard, between the Strand and the Thames, from the Duke of St. Albans; the next year they commenced to build the Adelphi (the name symbolizing their fraternal partnership)—conceived of as a vast construction of arches on which roads were to be laid and twenty-four houses built. The architects made provision for wharfage and storage on the shores of the Thames, with access from the Strand, completely separated from the streets and terraces above. From the brothers' native Scotland came masons and bricklayers, who labored to the monotonous drone of bagpipes. However, "this cheerful music made them, insensibly, give more work than was quite profitable: and with a spirit, in its own way as national as that of their employers, they presently struck work." (Fitzgerald, II, 267-268) Yet the construction went forward, although not to the point of completion. In 1771, the Adams obtained a bill to reclaim land from the Thames, in spite of opposition from the Corporation of London—who claimed a right to the soil and bed of the river. The event occasioned these lines in the 1771 volume of *The Foundling Hospital for Wits: Being a Collection of Several Curious Pieces in Verse and Prose* (London, 1768-1771):

On Some Encroachments on the River

Four Scotchmen, by the name of Adams,
 Who kept their coaches, and their madams,
 Quoth John, in sulky mood, to Thomas,
 Have stole the very river from us.

O Scotland! long it has been said,
 Thy teeth are sharp for English bread;
 What! seize our bread and water too,
 And use us worse than jailors do!
 'Tis true 'tis hard!—'tis hard 'tis true.

Ye friends of George, and friends of James,
 Envy us not our river Thames.
 The Pr-ss, fond of raw-bon'd faces,
 May give you all our posts and places;
 Take all—to gratify your pride,
 But dip your oatmeal in the Cylde.

Londinensis
 Liberty.

Eventually, this housing project for the wealthy failed commercially. The brothers Adam never saw the realization of their design for a completed Adelphi, and by 1773 they had obtained a bill sanctioning the disposal of the property by lottery. But a distinct part had been constructed, and to this fragment of a dream on behalf of splendor the Garricks moved in March 1772.

Certainly, ample evidence exists of a relationship between David Garrick and the Adam brothers prior to the former's removal from Southampton Street to Adelphi Terrace. In addition to their major emphasis on exterior architecture, the Adams customarily designed the furniture that would, hopefully, adorn the interiors of their buildings. Their skill in this medium brought them into contact with David Garrick when the actor determined, in 1755, to alter the rooms of his Hampton villa. Fitzgerald writes of an incident in 1759 when John Home (1722-1808)—the Scottish cleric and author of the tragedy *Douglas* (1756)—arrived at Hampton to instruct his host in the finer points of golf; accompanying him (among other

native Scots) were the brothers Adam.⁴ One of the brothers paid another visit to Hampton on 31 July 1765, in company with George Garrick.⁵ Finally, consider the tone and content of a brief note written by Garrick on Sunday, 8 December 1771, and addressed to "Mess^{rs} Adams, lower Grosvenor Street": "Mr. Garrick will always be ready to Obey the Commands of those unprincipled Gentlemen, & vile Architects the Adams. Mrs. Garrick sends her detestation to d^o." (*Letters*, II, 776) The "commands" most likely refer to matters involving the writer's impending move to the Adelphi, at this date only some three months from actuality.

Garrick's social-business contacts with the Adams—especially Robert—did not end with the actor's move to the Adelphi. One Thomas Becket (1721-1813), bookseller, publisher, and importer of foreign books, as well as a recipient of Garrick's patronage—with a shop in the Strand—desired to move his residence and business to the Adelphi. On Monday, 8 February 1773, Garrick wrote to the Adams on behalf of "our friend Beckett": "We shall all break our hearts if he is not Bookseller to y^e Adelphi, & has not y^e corner house that is to be built [No. 73 Strand, on the northeast corner of Adam Street]—pray my dear & very good friends think a little of this Matter, & if you can make us happy, by Suiting all our Conveniences—We shall make his Shop, as old Jacob Tonson's was formerly, y^e rendezvous for y^e first people in England—" (*Letters*, II, 854) On 25 March Becket signed his lease, and by January 1774 he began to dispense bound culture from the Adelphi. He published the fifth part of James and Robert Adam's *The Works of Architecture* in 1778, but in general Becket's tenure at the Adelphi was marked by constant financial difficulty. In fact Garrick had to "beg" James Adam not to consider another publisher for the 1778 issue of *The Works*.⁶

Garrick's move to No. 5 Adelphi Terrace in March 1772 was not concluded without inconvenience or humor; nor was it done quickly. The first entry in the accounts of Chippendale, Haig and Company⁷ for furnishing the Adelphi house dates 16 January 1771; on 14 March 1772, Chippendale's men removed the beds from Southampton Street and transported them to the Adelphi. From a letter to Bennet Langton dated 14 March 1772, we learn that "Mrs. Garrick

⁴ Fitzgerald, I, 393-394.

⁵ *Letters*, II, 473-474.

⁶ *Letters*, II, 1202-1203.

⁷ These accounts are discussed in detail below.

is almost kill'd wth y^e fatigue of removing to y^e Adelphi, where we shall be fix'd in y^e next Week. . . ." (*Letters*, II, 792) Four days later (18 March) the Garricks were still not settled: "I am now writing [to Reverend Thomas Francklin] in the midst of removing, & have Scarce a Table to write upon or pen & Ink to finish this Scrawl." (*Letters*, II, 794) In fact, as late as 6 April, Garrick had to inform Philip Yorke, Second Earl of Hardwick, that "Mrs. Garrick & His [Lordship's] humble servant, will very soon do themselves the honour of paying their Duty to Lady Grey, & his Lordship—they are not yet Settled in their new house & are obliged to go into y^e Country for a few days. . . ." (*Letters*, II, 796) The humorous instance relating to this shift in London residences came about in the form of an epistle of 2 December 1771 by the eccentric physician Sir William Browne (1692-1774), who declared,

In the *Adelphi*, Garrick sinks his *Art*:
 By hoping There, to act a proper *Part*.
 He There, has ventur'd on a wat'ry *Stage*,
 That points an *Exit*, long before Old-age.
 Th' *Adelphi* had best met with his forbearance:
 He lives by *Shakespeare*,—but he'll die by *Terance*.
 (*Letters*, II, 775)

Garrick replied to Sir William on the same day:

The Answer to S^r W. B.
 In vain wise S^r William with horrors You'll fill me,
 And foretell if I move to th' *Adelphi* t'will kill me:
 Some friends somewhat Foolish have rung in my Ears
 The same Silly doubts, and possess'd me with fears,
 But Now I'll pack up & away in a trice,
 For there can be no doubt, when *You* give advice
 (*Letters*, II, 774)

If the primary purpose of Garrick's move to the *Adelphi* was to place himself in the midst of select high company, he certainly found the proper location. Topham Beauclerk (1739-1780), great-grandson of Charles II and Nell Gwynne and a favorite of Samuel Johnson, occupied No. 3 *Adelphi* Terrace. His library, said to have

contained 30,000 volumes, specialized in English history, travel, science, and dramatic literature. At No. 7 lived Dr. John Turton (1735-1806), physician to the Queen's household, whose real property amounted (at his death) to £9,000 per year, in addition to £60,000 in funds. Another neighbor, Henry Hoare (1744-1845), was a junior partner and heir to a great London banking house, while the planner of the project—Robert Adam—installed himself at No. 4. Garrick's relationship with Beauclerk and Dr. Turton dated from at least 1764 and, of course, he knew Robert Adam well before the brothers had conceived of the Adelphi project. Thus, this move upward among families of affluence and position did not require much in the way of social adjustment on the part of the actor-manager.

However, the climb must have taxed, for the moment, Garrick's financial resources. In late March 1772 he wrote to his sister, Merriam Docksey, obviously in reply to her request for a loan: "I am in the same Situation with M^r Docksey, I have built a New house & furnish'd it from top to bottom, & moreover having lately purchas'd an Estate in Essex, not a large one indeed, all my ready money is Exhausted. . . ." (*Letters*, II, 795) Fortunately, information on exactly how much—and for what—Garrick exhausted in outfitting No. 5 Adelphi Terrace is readily and specifically available in the form of the accounts made out to him by Thomas Chippendale.⁸ According to this account, Garrick amassed, between 16 January 1771 and 1 April 1772, a debt to Chippendale, Haig and Company to the amount of £931 9s 3½d for furnishing his house in the Adelphi. The sum had been reduced only by cash payments of £15 7s 11d, £100, and £200 respectively on 27 June 1771, 10 January 1772, and 23 January 1772—and by a credit (in September 1771) of £10 10s for returning a set of dining tables. Thus, when he moved to the new house, he still owed Chippendale and Haig £605 11s 4½d. No doubt Garrick's attempt to keep pace with his new neighbors of rank and wealth proved, in this instance, to be more expensive than he could actually afford at the time.

Before examining the specifics of the Adelphi house expenditures, it is of certain value to consider first the circumstances that brought Garrick into contact with Thomas Chippendale. Again, the Adam

⁸ The manuscripts of these accounts are housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and are reproduced in Oliver Brackett, *Thomas Chippendale. A Study of His Life, Work, and Influence* (London, 1925), pp. 122-130; all references to this edition.

brothers enter into the situation, for in addition to his work as architect and planner, Robert Adam held a fair reputation as a designer of furniture. Yet, though possessed of extensive knowledge in art, history, and antiquity—all broadened by considerable travel and firsthand observation—he appeared little interested in matters of craftsmanship and general technical skill. Therefore, he required the services of an expert craftsman to execute his designs. Through manuscripts of financial transactions, we discover that the Adams employed Chippendale in furnishing houses restored or built by them: Lord Mansfield's house at Kenwood (1769); Nostell Priory, Yorkshire (1766-1770); Corsham House, Wiltshire (1767-1772); Harewood House, Yorkshire (1772-1775).⁹ Therefore, knowing of the relationship between Robert Adam and Chippendale, we can readily see how the firm of Chippendale, Haig and Company came to complete the decoration and furnishing of No. 5 Adelphi Terrace. Yet we should also note that—although he and his firm stood to gain considerably from their associations with the brothers Adam—Thomas Chippendale was not a mere laborer whose imagination went no further than carrying out the designs of others. Indeed, he had secured the utmost respect and had established his own reputation for designing furniture as far back as 1754, with the publication of *The Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director: Being a large Collection of the Most Elegant and Useful Designs of Household Furniture, In the Most Fashionable Taste* (2nd ed., 1755; 3rd ed., 1762)—the most ambitious and comprehensive venture of its kind, as well as the first collection of furniture designs to be published in England. And, it is extremely important to realize that Chippendale addressed his accounts for work done directly to Garrick, not to Robert Adam or to the architect's firm. Therefore, the strong possibility exists that, although Chippendale came into contact with Garrick through the Adams, the decorator and the actor dealt directly with each other; for, the billing accounts—in addition to containing references to furniture and furnishing materials—refer to repairs, cleaning, maintenance, and general work done throughout the house.

Careful examination of the accounts of Chippendale, Haig and Company for furnishing David Garrick's house in the Adelphi opens several doors to an extremely interesting and not often discussed

⁹ Brackett, pp. 68-76.

aspect of high life in eighteenth-century London: namely, interior decoration, the content and cost thereof. Because of the firm's clear and exact method of bookkeeping, the account identifies not only specific items and their costs, but also notes the exact rooms where work was done and where furniture was placed. Thus, we can form a fairly accurate image of the interior of No. 5 Adelphi Terrace. For instance, in the drawing-room, the firm outfitted the Garricks with 12 Carbreole armchairs, 2 large armchairs, a matching sofa, 3 commodes, 2 Pembroke tables, 3 large green Venetian sunblinds, and fringed curtains of green silk damask. The back room (or the main bedroom) contained a large bedstead, 2 small mahogany night-tables, 4 Carbreole arm-chairs, and 2 large arm-chairs. In the dining parlor could be found 12 mahogany parlor-chairs, a mahogany sideboard table, and 2 mahogany pedestals (one for use as a plate warmer, the other intended to contain bottles). Significantly, the cost of furnishing and decorating this single room amounted to £430. 5s.—or, approximately forty-six per-cent of the cost (£931. 9s. 3½d.) of outfitting the entire residence. Certainly not all of the items listed above or mentioned in the accounts were made by Chippendale and Haig expressly for the new house in the Adelphi, for by no means did Garrick install only new furniture in his rooms. Indeed, the accounts reveal that between January 1771 and March 1772, there was considerable movement of smaller articles from Southampton Street to 60 St. Martin's Lane (the location of Chippendale and Haig) for restoration or repair—mostly chairs, firescreens, and small picture frames. These then went from St. Martin's Lane to the Adelphi. However, Garrick certainly had directed the firm to manufacture the larger items of furniture specifically for his new house: a large covered sofa for the drawing room, a mahogany sideboard table for the dining parlor, and a large silverwood commode—again for the drawing room. Also, Chippendale and Haig took on the task of decorating the house; in addition to supplying the materials for curtains and furniture coverings, their workmen hung pictures and mirrors, stuffed mattresses, pillows and cushions, and hung the wallpaper. Finally, the billing accounts indicate that the firm's workmen moved most—if not all—of the Garricks' household items from Southampton Street to the Adelphi, taking them first to St. Martin's Lane for cleaning and repair. On 5 March 1772, for example, laborers hauled a total

of thirty horse-loads of "Sundry Goods"—at one shilling per load—from Southampton Street to the Adelphi, by way of St. Martin's Lane.

In terms of the overall financial considerations and arrangements, it is impossible to determine if Garrick was treated fairly or not by Chippendale, Haig and Company. This can be determined only by examining the latter's costs for materials and labor; unfortunately, no such evidence exists. Important questions present themselves if we are to understand fully the economics of interior decorating in late eighteenth-century London: How much value is to be placed on Thomas Chippendale's art and labor? Who is to say how much profit the firm could realize from a large carved sofa (lacquered, stuffed, covered, nailed, and complete with cushion) for which Garrick paid £17? Further, Chippendale died, in 1779, without leaving a will; thus we see no real evidence for judging the condition of his financial affairs—either at his death or during the seven years (1772-1779) in which he and Thomas Haig were partners. Apparently, however, the designer—both prior to and during his association with Haig—operated his business with severely limited capital. Simply, those for whom he worked proved extremely tardy in settling their debts. Chippendale and Haig began furnishing Harewood House, Yorkshire, in December 1772; yet the accounts (Brackett, pp. 131-133) show that Edwin Lascelles still owed £3024. 19s. 3d. from previous years. The accounts for Nostell Priory (Brackett, pp. 111-117) reveal a past-due balance of £557. 11s. 9d., while the amount owed Chippendale for furnishing Madame Teresa Cornelys' Carlisle House (1767-1772) had to be obtained, in part, from the Court of Bankruptcy in March 1773. Undoubtedly, Garrick, in spite of the letter to his sister cited above, presented no such problem. In the absence of information that would prove otherwise, we must assume that Garrick discharged his debt to Chippendale and Haig (the former's son having assumed his father's share of the firm after 1779) and that neither he or Mrs. Garrick had occasion to complain about the terms or the quality of the work carried out by their decorators.

David Garrick's will, dated 24 September 1778, furnishes the facts for the final chapter on the matter of the Adelphi residence and its furnishings. This document reads, in part:

And also all that my Dwelling House in the Adelphi with the Appurtenances And also all and every the Pictures Household Goods and Furniture of and in both the said Houses at Hampton and Adelphi at the time of my Decease (of which an Inventory shall be taken) To hold to the said Charles Lord Camden Richard Rigby John Paterson and Albany Wallis their Heirs Executors Administrators and Assigns In trust for and to the use of my Wife Eva Maria Garrick for and during the Term of her natural life for her own Residence She keeping the houses and Premises in Good repair and paying all the Quit Rent Taxes and other Rents and outgoings for the same I give to my said Wife all my Household Linen Silver Plate and China Ware which I shall die possessed of or entitled unto both in Town and Country together with my Carriages and Horses and all the Stock in my Cellars at both Houses to and for her own use and benefit

(*Letters*, III, 1363)

To receive these goods, Eva Marie Garrick was not to leave England for residence in Scotland, Ireland, or on the Continent. Thus, she maintained the Adelphi house and the Hampton villa until her death in 1822, at the age of ninety-seven. The actual dispensation of the furnishings both at Hampton and the Adelphi after 1822 remains a question, for Garrick further states in his will that after his wife's death

I direct my said Trustees and the Survivors and Survivor or the Heirs Executors or Administrators of the Survivor to sell dispose of and Convey my said Houses Gardens and Lands at Hampton and the Adelphi with their respective appurtenances and the Pictures Household Goods and Furniture herein before given (except the Statue of Shakespear) by publick or private Sale as they shall think proper for the best price that can reasonably be got for the same and turn the same into Money upon the Trusts and for the Purposes hereinafter mentioned

(*Letters*, III, 1364)

There does exist (in the Victoria and Albert Museum) a catalogue of the sale of furniture from Garrick's Hampton villa on 22 June

1864, yet it fails to identify those pieces (if any) that may have been transported from Adelphi Terrace after 1779 or 1822.

While the entire matter of Garrick's relations with the Adam brothers and with Thomas Chippendale comprises but a small period in the actor-manager's hectic life, it nevertheless accurately represents his complete character and attitude toward life. At age fifty-five (but seven years from death), suffering from poor health, he appears willing—even anxious—to seek out the newest surrounding and to adorn it with the splendid accoutrements of fashion. But then, why not? He had the funds, and certainly there was every reason to live in the style dictated by his station and profession. Garrick, as far as we know, never professed or expressed the fondness for the Adelphi Terrace that he did for the natural beauty of rural Hampton—his real tribute to life. In every sense, London was David Garrick's stage; No. 5 Adelphi Terrace and its innards were only so many more props. Yet, in studying ages and societies, we observe how props become almost as valuable as the men they support. Thus we have much to learn from the likes of Robert Adam and Thomas Chippendale—their buildings, sofas, draperies, and commodes—holding David Garrick upright in full view of his urban audience. It certainly must have been a magnificent sight!