

be instrumental in arranging something before I go. To assist at all in
promoting that object for which, with such exemplary patience and length
of view, you have struggled so long and so valiantly, and so judiciously,
would give me the heartiest satisfaction. In your whole course, you have shown
but a disposition both to believe and to command it, which will soon, I trust,

2 Elm Court Temple, 8 October 1825

My dear Sir,

I have just had an interview with Mr. Kemble
on the subject of your proposed engagement at Covent Garden Theatre, and
have now the pleasant office of writing to you at his desire. There is one
stipulation, however, in your letter to him, which if strictly insisted on by you,
would put an end at once to the negotiation, because it would set aside an
express rule by which the Managers have resolved invariably to act; — I mean
that your engagement should contain any condition giving you an absolute right to
refuse or require certain parts. This condition I trust you will withdraw, because it must
for ever prevent your engagement at Covent Garden, at least under the present
regime, and because I think you will, on consideration, agree with me that its
insertion would receive a principle injurious to the art you love so truly,
and so well, and that its absence cannot be prejudicial to you. I do not at
all wonder, nor does Mr. Kemble, that you, accustomed to the practice of the
County Theatre, where you have been no doubt often called on to act parts
with benefit and beside your pieces, should feel a horror at the idea of ever
a partial renewal of such miseries in that wide sphere where fame &
fortune are at stake; and, therefore, your anxiety on this point excites no
surprise. But the practice of enacting particular parts with the exclusive right to
perform certain parts and the absolute power to reject them, which is entirely
of recent origin, has not only displeased Managers, and disappointed audiences,
but it has laid authors prostrate at the feet of individual performers, and
made the art of Dramatic Poetry almost obsolete. If a Manager is not permitted
to exercise a discretion in casting plays, under the responsibility of his principal performer, he never can
be public and to the general feelings of his principal performer, he never can
hope to cast them strongly — they must become watched monstrosities — without
a chance of success except in securing the applause of some great actor, who chases
wherever he stays to himself and to show a favour except the ^{single} applause of
the conqueror has been in general pernicious to the art of acting — ^{it} has
almost ceased to be imitative & plastic & has become personal — it is for you I

L. J. Kemble Esq.
Theatre
Lincoln.

be not recorded. Your Father desires me to say that he & your Mother are very
anxious that, if possible, this arrangement for your appearance in London
should speedily be completed.

Believe me,
My dear Sir,
Ever most faithfully yours,
L. R. Salterne.

earnings & goodly hope to restore it to its proper dignity - to revive the time when
the town shall flock to see not Mr. Mearns, or Mr. Keen in one or the other
costume - but to see Hamlet, Anthony, Macbeth, and Lear - and to
see what effect these have embodied them. If you agree to sign
the Common Articles - these Articles which were formerly signed from the days
of Garrick to those of Keen - you may not expect that you will be requested to
act such parts and such only, speaking generally of course, in which your powers
will produce the greatest effect on the public, and that your wishes, reasonable & just
as I know they will be, will always be respected as far as possible. I am sure you
will see how much the allowance of any other guarantee would militate against
yourself. At Dury Lane, there is Mr. Mearns, who has I should not a trumpet
of parts - and who is so absolute withal that he thinks it high commendation
to play Mearns - what chance would you have, ^{you} surpassing him permanently
engaged, of playing any of the best parts of tragedy? At Covent Garden Mr. Keen
has appeared in Hamlet; - surpassing him where an exclusive range - where
would be the opening for you? But he has more - he has as fair play as you will
have - and he who plays best (and I do not entertain a moment's doubt who
that will be) will, of course, take the highest range and keep it. Besides this,
Mr. Kemble, Capt. Forbes, and Mr. Willett, have all assured me that you never
will be required to do any thing which can justify the thought of degrading you,
and I may perhaps without scruple think that my own intimacy with them is
no more equal for you is, if it were necessary, an additional pledge that they
will do you justice. The abandonment of this any stipulation is a mere
trifling - but I think I have said enough - not perhaps more than enough
to induce you to abandon it, and that I can only say your merits to give you your proper
station. I understand distinctly that all parts are open to you, and that you shall just
appear in Hamlet; whether Anthony & Cleopatra can be played next must depend
on the circumstances of the Theatre, or that I can see nothing, & it did not
occur to me to mention it in my interview with the Committee.

Thus much for official matters - now for my Deference. Mr. Kemble will
bring you an engagement for one season or for three seasons as you prefer at once,
if you make an offer which he can accept as to salary. The scale of salary is now
reduced - as he was highest to actor or singer is £20 per week. Before an
appearance, he could not give more than a moderate engagement; but he

declares that, in case of distinct success, he would evidently cancel it or
give another on proportionate terms, as was done with Miss & Mrs. Keen.
Keen. No sum was named expressly between us; you should not feel authorized
to mention any; but certainly £6. 12. 6 & £8. you might have secured
himself - I sent for your father as soon as I returned, & learned from him
that you - I have no doubt very well - expect about £8. - £10 & £12
per week. I will you yourself to write some distinctly & return of part (as it is
a matter which must often have engaged your thoughts) what offer I may make
you in the Committee, in case you abandon the (express) stipulation as to parts,
I will give I think I am a very bad bargainer in these matters) I will give
you all that I can. Of course, I should not have you lose or miss you can justify
in seen in the present stage of the negotiation - when unfortunately
Mr. Keen has cut you - but, in case of genuine success, you
know the salary is not the chief concern; as counts engagements
of the best kind, and a benefit, which would be applied to
your respectable connections and high personal character, must
I am certainly anxious that you should not let this
opportunity slip, because I don't think whether you will soon
find again a stage so clear a stage or such fair play, as you
have at this moment - when Keen is about - your disengagement
- Mearns unpopular - and Covent Garden, which opens to
receive you, the Bashaw's & peopled Theatre, under the
chief management of a man of so much taste and soundness
of judgment as Mr. Charles Kemble.

And now, in the hope that I shall soon have the pleasure of the perusal of
see you in your proper sphere, with you suffer me to offer one little piece of
advice, which a long acquaintance with the London stage and a pretty intimate
knowledge of the London Critics impell me to venture - do not breathe a syllable
of your claims as an actor till you are established as an actor. There is nothing
the world at large is so unwilling to admit as verities of talent - and the
Restrictive-critical world is yet more full of prejudice against various claims.
Once established, you may add the feather to the cap of your fortune when you
will mean it in your assistance of ourselves.

I am the more anxious for an immediate answer because I am obliged
to leave town early next week for several days; and should be very glad to