

Accession number: 1992-24/5b

Description: Large sheet of paper [taken from notebook? Has been folded] written on both sides. Scribal transcript of prologue, with last eight lines added by Garrick.

Transcript: Prologue

I who am now a Vet'ran of the Stage
And Counsel for infirmity and Age,
Must plead their Cause – feel it in heart and mind;
A fellow feeling makes one wondrous kind!
 Might we —I'm sure we may, & with Success
Hope for Your smiles, to patronise distress;
That hope obtain'd, the wish'd for end secures,
To sooth their Cares, who oft have lightened yours.
Shall the great Heroes of Celestial line,
Who drank full bowls of Greek, & Roman Wine,
Caesar & Brutus, Agamemnon, Hector,
Nay Jove himself, who here has quaff'd his Nectar,
Shall they who Govern'ed Fortune, Cringe & court her
Thirst in their age, and call in vain for porter?
Like Bellisarius – tax the pitying Street,
With *Date Obolum*— to all they meet.
Shan't I, who here have Murder'd many a score,
Stab'd many, poison'd some, beheaded more;
Who numbers Slew in Battle on this plain,
Shan't I the slayer, try to feed the slain?
Brother to all, with equal Love I view,
The Men who Slew me, and the Men I slew.
I must, I will, this happy Project Seize, —
That those too Old to die, may live with ease;
Verso Should the Sweet Babes, I smother'd in the Tower,
By chance or Sickness, lose their acting pow'r,
Shall they once princes, worse than all be serv'd!
In Childhood Murder'd, & when Murder'd Starv'd?
Matrons half-ravish'd, for Your Recreation
In Age should never want some Consolation.
Can I, *Young Hamlet* once, to nature last,
Behold – o horrible! – My Father's Ghost,
With Grizly Bear – pale Cheek – Stalk up and down,
And He –the Royal Dane – want half a Crown?
Forbid it, ladies, Gentlemen forbid it,
Give joy to age, & let 'em say You did it.

“For you indeed can *judge*, as well as *feel*.

When these lines had produced the Clapping He expected, he immediately subjoined ‘Olymps Shakes’, which in Speaking had an amazing Effect. — Yet *my Heart ach’d* for the Depredations Time is beginning to make in his Face, which was not visible, till He appear’d in His own form in the Epilogue; & of which He affectingly reminded us in these Words ‘I was *young Hamlet* once’. (Letters, Appendix 5, p. 1358)

After his retirement, Garrick used his influence in parliament to get the Fund legalized

[Note]

The Hereford version of the epilogue was delivered at Garrick’s last performance of the season when he appeared as Archer in *The Beaux’ Stratagem* on 18 May...’

Bellisarius: The emperor Justinian’s general, accused of conspiracy and imprisoned in 562. Brewer says that the later story that his eyes were put out and he was reduced to begging is without foundation.

Date Obolum: Give alms. An obolus was a small Greek coin (Brewer)