

The John Lane Albums (NC Archives PA/LAN 1-4)

In 1983 the eminent surgeon Sir John Nicholson (who matriculated from New College in 1923) gave us four albums of letters and photographs compiled by the Victorian lithographer and sculptor Richard James Lane (1800-1872) and his daughter Emily. The albums had been given by Emily and her sister to Sir John B. Nicholson, the architect Sir Charles Nicholson (matriculated 1886), and uncle, the organist Sir Sydney Nicholson (matriculated 1893). Thus their link with New College is via the donors rather than the creators or subjects of the albums.

Richard James Lane

particular interest, as they throw light on acting practices of the time. He seems to have won the confidence of the actor Charles Kean well enough to have advised him how to play Caliban in *Caliban*, which premiered at the Drury Lane Theatre, London, in July 1857: Kean was extremely nervous of the part, writing to Lane at present I have no voice for Caliban! but will be glad to hear of your advice? You had better play Caliban rather than Prospero; as he has the finest words in the play, and has never been thoughtfully and seriously studied? You might say that Prospero does not sing. He howls! The advice was given by Lane and Kean ran for eighty-seven performances that season.

The actor Charles Kemble wrote several times in the mid-1850s to Lane about the plays which he had lent to the actor only to find when they were returned after Kean's death that Fanny had edited and marked up the text to better reflect her own reading. Lane had edited and published the speeches of Charles Kemble from his own set of the relevant plays, which he had lent to the actor only to find when they were returned after Kean's death that Fanny had edited and marked up the text to better reflect her own reading. Lane had edited and published the speeches of Charles Kemble from his own set of the relevant plays, which he had lent to the actor only to find when they were returned after Kean's death that Fanny had edited and marked up the text to better reflect her own reading. Lane had edited and published the speeches of Charles Kemble from his own set of the relevant plays, which he had lent to the actor only to find when they were returned after Kean's death that Fanny had edited and marked up the text to better reflect her own reading.



7\UFYg? YubfjU[cb]gbl['cj Yf hYfc'Y'cZ7U]Vubz
) + 'UbX'@UbYfjUxj]W

New College Archives, Oxford, PA/LAN 1, p. 46

¹ New College Archives, Oxford, PA/LAN 1, p. 46.
² Ibid., pp. 33, 36.

But Richard Lane had already effected his own quiet revenge, by placing in the album not only U`YhYf Zfca : Ubbm? Ya V`YžXUHX`%&A Um% *' žVYk Uj]b[h\Uhg\Y\UX`DuhUbX`gncX`Zcf`a m Daguerrotype & photograph certainly many more than twenty times and once a likeness was taken cZa Y`""Vi h\]gk UjcbY`g Wgg]La cb[`]bbi a YfU`Y`ZU]i fYg] but also placing opposite it one of the EU]i fYg]P

Wilkie Collins was similarly averse to having his photograph taken, which posed problems for Lane who often did his preliminary work on sculptures or lithographs from photographs of his sitters. Collins complained in a letter to Lane in December 1861⁴ h\Ud`Uj`Y`cc`YX`cb`a m own face in the light of an enemy, ever since seventy negatives were taken of me to supply portraits Ybci [\ `Zcf`h\Y`WYUd`YX]h]cb`cZĪ H\Y`K ca Ub`]b`K \]hĪ "": fca`h\Uih]a`Y`fYi`Wdh]b[`cbY`gd`WYU` W]gYĒ = \Uj`Y`VYYb`fYgc`i`hY`mi]bgYbg]V`Y`hc`U`d\chc[fUd\]WUXj`UbWg] but he now makes an Yl`Wdh]cb`Zcf`F`]WUX`W` i`hY`Ybg` i

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