

William Meredith collection of Philadelphia theatrical commentaries

Ms. Coll. 61

Finding aid prepared by Molly B. Hutt.

Last updated on July 18, 2019.

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2015 April 7

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Meredith, William M., 1799-1873
Creator	Meredith, William, 1919-2007
Title	William Meredith collection of Philadelphia theatrical commentaries
Call number	Ms. Coll. 61
Date [inclusive]	1852-1857
Extent	0.6 linear feet (2 boxes)
Language	English
Abstract	The William Meredith collection of Philadelphia theatrical commentaries dates from December 1852 to January 1957 and contains 119 longhand commentaries on theatrical performances written either by William Morris Meredith (1799-1873), a Philadelphia lawyer and politician, or his son, William Keppele Meredith.

Cite as:

William Meredith collection of Philadelphia theatrical commentaries, 1852-1857, Ms. Coll. 61, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

William Morris Meredith, Sr. (1799-1873) was a prominent Philadelphia lawyer and politician who briefly served as United States Secretary of the Treasury under the Taylor administration between March 1849 and July 1850. Meredith, Sr. graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1812, at the age of 13, and was admitted to the bar in 1817, where he eventually became President of the Philadelphia Bar Association. He served in several political positions, including a minority position in the Pennsylvania General Assembly, the president of the Philadelphia City Council, and the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, among others.

A note from the donor, Horace Howard Furness Jayne, (located in Box 1 Folder 1) suggests that the collection may also have been created by William Meredith, Sr.'s son, William Keppele Meredith, since the senior William Meredith was an active lawyer at the time and may not have been able to attend and comment on so many theatrical performances in such great detail due to his busy schedule.

Horace Howard Furness Jayne, the donor of this collection, was the grandson of the prominent Philadelphia Shakespeare scholar Horace Howard Furness.

Scope and Contents

The William Meredith collection of Philadelphia theatrical commentaries dates from December 1852 to January 1957 and contains 119 longhand commentaries on theatrical performances, some of which contain references to multiple performances and all of which are signed and dated. The commentaries are generally in chronological order, and most of the performances took place in Philadelphia, with the greatest number being at the Walnut Street Theatre; although several were at the Chestnut Street Theatre and the Arch Street Theatre. Through these commentaries Meredith offers his opinions on the performances and performers, many of whom were famous actors during their time. Meredith's reviews are often scathing, although they occasionally include verses of praise for Meredith's favorite actors, most notably a "Miss Gougenheim." The collection also includes a brief description of the history and contents of the collection, written in September 1974 by Horace Howard Furness Jayne, grandson of the Philadelphia Shakespeare scholar Horace Howard Furness, which is located in Box 1 Folder 1.

Administrative Information

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2015 April 7

Finding aid prepared by Molly B. Hutt.

Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research use.

Use Restrictions

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Source of Acquisition

Gift of Horace Howard Furness Jayne, 1974.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Historical Society of Philadelphia: Meredith Family Papers, 1756-1964

Library Company of Philadelphia: American Theatre Playbill Collection, 1826-1873

Washington University in St. Louis: William Meredith Collection, 1946-1961

Controlled Access Headings

CORPORATE NAME(S)

- Arch Street Theatre (Philadelphia, Pa.)
- Chestnut Street Theatre (Philadelphia, Pa.)
- Walnut Street Theatre (Philadelphia, Pa.)

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Commentaries

SUBJECT(S)

- Dramatic criticism
- Performing arts
- Theater
- Theater--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia--19th century

Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
History and description of the collection by Horace Howard Furness Jayne (donor), 1974 September.	1	1
<i>Lady of Lyons</i> , <i>The Jacobite</i> , and a violin performance, Walnut St. Theatre, 1852 December 4.	1	2
Unnamed comedy, <i>Naval Engagements</i> , <i>Two Grand Divertissements</i> , and <i>The Celebrated Troupe of French and Spanish Dancers</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 January 3.	1	3
<i>Satan in Paris</i> and <i>The Irish Emigrant</i> , Chestnut St. Theatre, 1853 January 4.	1	4
<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 January 5.	1	5
<i>She Stoops to Conquer</i> and "The Dancers", Walnut St. Theatre, 1853	1	6

January 6.

<i>She Would & She Would Not</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 January 14.	1	7
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[<i>She Would & She Would Not</i>] and <i>The Honey Moon</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 January 15.	1	8
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<i>King Henry IV</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 January 31.	1	9
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<i>The Kentuckian</i> and another unnamed comedy, Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 February 3.	1	10
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[<i>Henry IV</i>] and a comedy, Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 February 4.	1	11
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<i>The Advocate</i> and a performance by a "Chinese Troupe", Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 February 7.	1	12
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<i>Grand Equestrian Dramatic Spectacle</i> , Welsh's Circus, 1853 February 10.	1	13
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Unnamed play, Arch St. Theatre and <i>The Alarming Sacrifice</i> by the "Chinese Troupe", Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 February 11.	1	14
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<i>Lady of Lyons</i> and <i>Douglas</i> , Chestnut St. Theatre, 1853 February 17-18.	1	15
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Unnamed play, Chestnut St. Theatre, 1853 February 23.	1	16
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<i>Macbeth</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 February 26.	1	17
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<i>The School of Reform</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 March 1.	1	18
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<i>The Iron Chests</i> and <i>The Mysterious Family</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 March 3.	1	19
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<i>The Heir at Law</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 March 8.	1	20
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<i>Gossamer</i> , [<i>The New Fortman</i>],and <i>The Spectre Bridegroom</i> , Chestnut St. Theatre, 1853 March 10.	1	21
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<i>Henry IV</i> , Chestnut St. Theatre, 1853 March 11.	1	22
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<i>The Willow Copse</i> and a poem by Meredith entitled "Miss Gougenheim", Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 March 12.	1	23
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"The Star Company", <i>As You Like It</i> , Arch St. Theatre, 1853 March 15.	1	24
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<i>Evadne</i> , Chestnut St. Theatre, 1853 March 17.	1	25
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<i>Love's Sacrifice</i> , Chestnut St. Theatre, 1853 March 18.	1	26
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[<i>Fazio</i>], Chestnut St. Theatre, 1853 March 19.	1	27
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<i>Love</i> , Chestnut St. Theatre, 1853 March 21.	1	28
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<i>Ingomar</i> , Chestnut St. Theatre, 1853 March 22.	1	29
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<i>Ion</i> , Chestnut St. Theatre, 1853 March 23.	1	30
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Unnamed play, and poem by Meredith entitled "Coudock and Logan", Chestnut St. Theatre, 1853 March 24.	1	31
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Regarding Miss Eliza Logan et al., 1853 March 25.	1	32
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<i>Richard III</i> , Chestnut St. Theatre, 1853 March 26.	1	33
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<i>A New Mythological Mixture</i> and <i>All that Glitters is not Gold</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 March 28.	1	34
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<i>Macbeth</i> , Chestnut St. Theatre, 1853 March 29.	1	35
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Unnamed play and <i>The Wandering Minstrel</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 March 31.	1	36
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<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> and <i>Roller</i> , Chestnut St. Theatre, 1853 April 6.	1	37
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Unnamed play, Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 April 9.	1	38
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<i>Together with the Wonderful Dogs!</i> , Chestnut St. Theatre, 1853 April 13.	1	39
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<i>Ingomar</i> and <i>Washington, the Hero of Valley Forge</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 May 4.	1	40

<i>Rule a Wife and Have a Wife</i> , Arch St. Theatre, 1853 May 5.	1	41
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<i>Harvest</i> and <i>Box and Cox</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 May 6.	1	42
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<i>The Betrothal</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 May 7.	1	43
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<i>The Hunchback</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 May 9.	1	44
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<i>Love</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 May 10.	1	45
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<i>Evadne</i> and <i>The [illegible] Dog</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 May 11.	1	46
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<i>The Lady of Lyons</i> , <i>Ingomar</i> , and <i>Madelaine</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 May 14.	1	47
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<i>The Love Chase</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 May 18.	1	48
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<i>The Popular American Comedian</i> , W. Charles Burke, Chestnut St. Theatre, 1854 February 6.	1	49
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<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , <i>The Lady of Lyons</i> , <i>Ingomar</i> , <i>Ion</i> , and <i>Armand</i> , Chestnut St. Theatre, 1854 March 13-18.	1	50
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<i>The Hunchback</i> and <i>The Jacobite</i> , Chestnut St. Theatre, 1853 August 25.	1	51
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<i>The fate of a Coquette</i> , <i>The Wife</i> , and <i>The Gamester</i> , Chestnut St. Theatre, 1854 April 8.	1	52
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Unnamed play(s), Chestnut St. Theatre, 1854 April 10.	1	53
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Unnamed dance(s), [<i>Mazulm</i>], and [<i>The Farce of Waggles</i>], Chestnut St. Theatre, 1854 April 12.	1	54
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<i>The [Poor] Gentlemen</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1854 May 2.	1	55
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<i>The Duke's Wager</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 May 20.	1	56
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<i>Lady [illegible]</i> , Chestnut St. Theatre, 1853 May 21.	1	57
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<i>Mr. Riching's Complimentary and Farewell Benefit</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 May 25.	1	58
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<i>Comedy of John Bull</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1854 May 26.	1	59
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<i>Othello</i> and <i>A New Way to Pay Old Debts</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1853 June 2.	1	60
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"W. Brougham's New Comedy", Walnut St. Theatre, 1854 June 26.	1	61
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<i>The Love-Chase</i> and <i>The Married Rake</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1854 August 28.	1	62
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<i>Who's Your Friend?</i> , unnamed song, <i>Delicate Ground</i> , and <i>Lover by Proxy</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1854 August 29.	1	63
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<i>As You Like It</i> , unnamed dance, and <i>Grandfather Whitehead</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1854 August 30.	1	64
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<i>The Clandestine Marriage</i> and <i>Ganem</i> ("The Fairy Extravaganza", Walnut St. Theatre, 1854 August 31.	1	65
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<i>London Assurance</i> and <i>Ganem</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1854 September 1-2.	1	66
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Letter to the editor of the <i>Evening Register</i> , published 1854 September 4, 1854 September 3.	1	67
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<i>Othello</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1854 September 4-5.	1	68
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<i>Bertram</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1854 September 5.	1	69
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[<i>The Wife</i>], Walnut St. Theatre, 1854 September 6.	1	70
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Unnamed play, Walnut St. Theatre, 1854 September 9.	1	71
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<i>St. Marc or A Soldier of Fortune</i> , <i>Othello</i> , <i>Hamlet</i> , <i>The Wife</i> , <i>Black-Eyed Susan</i> , and <i>Brutus</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1854 September 26-1854 October 7.	1	72
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<i>Damon and Pythias</i> , <i>Pizzaro</i> , <i>Richelieu</i> <i>Hamlet</i> , <i>Macbeth</i> "with alterations", and <i>Richard III</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1854 October 9-29.	1	73
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1854 October 16-26.	1	74
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<i>Jane Shore</i> , Chestnut St. Theatre, 1854 October 18.	1	75
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<i>The Comedy of Errors</i> and <i>Serious Family</i> , Arch St. Theatre, 1854 November 13.	1	76
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<i>The Provoked Husband</i> , Arch St. Theatre, 1854 November 15.	1	77
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<i>The Beggar's Opera</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1854 November 18-19.	1	78
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<i>Margery</i> , <i>Apollo in New York</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1854 December 5-6.	1	79
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<i>The Hunchback</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1854 December 25.	1	80
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<i>I Puritani</i> , <i>Lucrezia Borgia</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1855 January 1-7.	2	1
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<i>Fazio</i> and <i>Jane Shore</i> , City Museum, 1855 January 18-24.	2	2
<i>The Hunchback</i> and <i>The Rough Diamond</i> , Chestnut St. Theatre, 1855 January 20.	2	3
<i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1855 January 13 - 1855 February 12.	2	4
<i>Hamlet</i> and <i>King Lear</i> , Chestnut St. Theatre, 1855 February 12-15.	2	5
List of productions taking place between 1855 February 17 and 1855 February 20, Chestnut St. Theatre, fragmentary, [1855 February 16].	2	6
<i>The Castle Spectre</i> , Arch St. Theatre, 1855 February 26.	2	7
<i>The Hunchback</i> and several plays that Meredith did not attend, Walnut St. Theatre, includes list of productions from 1855 February 19-1855 March 23,	2	8

1855 March 21.

<i>The Stranger</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1855 May 10.	2	9
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<i>A Serious Family</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1855 November 7.	2	11
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<i>Othello</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1855 December 10.	2	12
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<i>Richard III</i> , Arch St. Theatre, 1855 December 18.	2	13
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<i>Shandy Maguire</i> , City Museum, 1855 December 31.	2	14
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<i>Richard III</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1856 March 14.	2	15
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<i>Barber of Seville</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1856 March 8.	2	16
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Mr. Collins, Walnut St. Theatre, 1856 May 24.	2	17
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Two unnamed plays, National Theatre, 1856 May 15.	2	18
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<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1856 May 26.	2	19
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<i>Entertainment</i> (possibly a variety show), Walnut St. Theatre, 1856 July 29.	2	20
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<i>The Man of the World</i> , Arch St. Theatre, 1856 August 21.	2	21
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<i>The Rivals</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1856 September 1.	2	22
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<i>The Stranger</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1856 September 27.	2	23
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<i>King Lear</i> and <i>Going to the Races</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1856 October 1-2.	2	24
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King John and *Deliberate Ground*, Arch St. Theatre, 1856 October 20. 2 25

Much Ado About Nothing and *Heaven for God*, Walnut St. Theatre, 1856
October 21. 2 26

King John and *Sweethearts and Wives*, Arch St. Theatre, 1856 November 7. 2 27

Damon and Pythias and *The Wonder*, Arch St. Theatre, 1856 November 18. 2 28

Lurline, Walnut St. Theatre, 1856 November 20. 2 29

The Jealous Wife and *The French Spy*, Arch St. Theatre, 1856 November
22. 2 30

Self, Arch St. Theatre, 1856 November 28. 2 31

<i>Revels, John Dobbs, and Double-Bedded Room</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1856 December 1-3.	2	32
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<i>Revels and [M. Blondin's] Benefit</i> , Walnut St. Theatre, 1856 December 12-15.	2	33
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<i>Know Your Own Mind and Shocking Events</i> , Arch St. Theatre, 1856 December 17.	2	34
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<i>Revels</i> , Walnut St. Theatre; includes note re: death of his uncle J. D. Meredith, buried 1856 December 31, 1856 December 20-27.	2	35
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<i>Hamlet and Box and Cox</i> , Walnut St. theatre, 1857 January 5.	2	36
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<i>Young New York</i> , Arch St. theatre, 1857 January 15.	2	37
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<i>The Hunchback and All that Glitters is not Gold</i> , Arch St. theatre, 1857	2	38
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January 16.

School for Scandal and *The Irish Lion*, Walnut St. Theatre, 1857 January 21. 2 39

Love and Loyalty and *The Two Queens*, Arch St. Theatre, 1857 January 22. 2 40

Belphegor the Mountebank, Walnut St. Theatre, 1857 January 23. 2 41

John Bull and *Miseries of Human Life*, Walnut St. Theatre, 1857 January 26. 2 42