CHARLES MATHEWS' "AT HOMES": THE TEXTUAL MORASS

When Richard Klepac's monograph on Charles Mathews' "At Homes" appeared a few years ago, it addressed a glaring need in early nineteenth-century British theatre history. Mathews, one of the lions of the stage in his era, had been too long neglected, and existing biographies, aside from the two-volume memoir assembled by his wife, consisted of no more than a few puffing pamphlets.

But Klepac's book also served to point up a problem that attends any scholarly examination of paradramatic popular entertainments: how are we truly to know what any given performance was like without a reliable record either of the material performed or of the specific production? Klepac attempts to rectify this situation by reprinting selected publishers' editions of two of the "At Homes," so that we may have a basis for appreciating his analysis of the form. But rather than solving the problem, the choice of these two texts accentuates it. How are we to know how reliable any such unauthorized reproduction of the material of a one-man entertainer actually is? Can we accept any text as authoritative? And if not, of what value, ultimately, are the printed texts of such non-literary popular entertainments?

The "At Homes," which were the central feature of Mathews' distinguished career and which he produced annually from 1818 to 1834, the year before his death, were one-man entertainments tailored precisely to suit his particular talents. A gifted mimic with a remarkably flexible voice, an adept dialectician, a ventriloquist, and an actor with a finely developed sense of comic timing, Mathews' mobility was limited by a broken hip which had left him with a decided limp since 1814. Thus he needed an entertainment which capitalized on the range of his vocal abilities, but which did not require great physical
agility. The “At Homes” were essentially a collection of monologues and dialogues featuring a wide range of eccentric characters, all of them played by Mathews, who narrated the piece and introduced each of the characters in his own persona. The characters included men and women, young and old, native and exotic, many of them with wide-ranging dialects and all designed to display the breadth of Mathews’ talents. The performance, which might last in excess of three hours, was divided into three parts. The first two parts consisted of an episodic progression of monologues and scenes as Mathews encountered each of the characters he would play; each of these sections also included several long comic songs, between the verses of which Mathews inserted spoken interludes of character and comment. The final part of the evening was a farcical set-piece featuring several of the characters introduced in the first two parts. It was designed so that each character would appear in turn, describe his or her situation, and then be called off-stage by another character; after that character’s exit, the next would enter, and so on until the full range of characters had appeared. In this section, which was called a “monopolylogue,” Mathews still played all the characters, and it was a remarkable tour de force. As each character was called away (remember Mathews’ facility with ventriloquism), the performer would leave the stage, adopt a new persona, make an adjustment to his costume, and return as the next character; several reports state that he was never absent from the stage for more than thirty seconds.

Klepac’s book provided a fuller treatment of these “At Homes” than had hitherto been available, and after reading it, I set out to compare the texts he had chosen to reproduce against other editions of Mathews’ pieces. In doing so, I found myself wallowing in a textual morass, the dimensions of which I had never realized. The multiple editions of the “At Homes” are so different from one another that attempts to pin down an accurate edition are ultimately doomed to failure, especially since the “At Homes,” as one-man entertainments rather than plays per se, were not submitted for licensing to the Lord Chamberlain’s Examiner of Plays, and thus we have no “official” manuscript copies to examine.

The first problem lies in the fact that none of the published editions of the “At Homes” pretends to be a complete “script” in the usual sense. All combine, to a greater or lesser extent, descriptive third-person narrative with what purports to be the actual words spoken in the performance. Actually, a thorough narrative account of the production would be particularly valuable in such an instance as this, in which the versatility of the performer is of equal, if not greater concern than the material itself. But unfortunately, these accounts leave us with more questions than answers as to how Mathews managed to perform by himself some of the things described.
Let us take as examples a few instances from one of the published editions which Klepac reprints, the J. Duncombe edition of the 1825 "At Home," *Mr. Mathews' Trip to America.* This edition is one of the fullest of the accounts using primarily third-person description, and so the extent to which it fails to provide sufficient detail should be less than in the case of its more cursory brethren. A glance at three scenes should enable us to see the inadequacy of the text in fully describing the performance.

In Part I, Mathews visits a Negro theatre in New York, arriving as the black tragedian is in the midst of Hamlet's "To be, or not to be" soliloquy and is intoning, "Whether 'tis nobler in de mind to suffer, or tak' up arms against a sea of troubles, and by oppossum [sic] end 'em."

No sooner was the word oppossum out of his mouth, than the audience burst forth, in one general cry "oppossum! oppossum! oppossum!" and the tragedian came forward and informed them that he would sing them their favourite melody....(p. 106)

which is the cue for Mathews to sing, in Negro dialect, "Opossum Up A Gum Tree." After the song, the "tragedian" resumes his performance with "Now is the winter of our discontent,"

... upon which a person in the boxes exclaimed, "You should play Hamlet, and not King Richard." "Yes! yes!," says the man in black; "but I just thought of New-York then, and I couldn't help talking about it." (p. 107)

But what was the source of these exclamations from the audience? Were Mathews' remarks recorded here merely *ad libs* in response to audience reaction on a given night? Clearly not, as "Opossum Up A Gum Tree" is indicated in the bills for several different performances as a regular staple of *A Trip to America.* Then were there plants in the audience on a regular basis? If so, who were they, since Mathews typically worked alone? Certainly his skill as a ventriloquist was not sufficient for him to throw his voice to the distant reaches of a large theatre. The text, alas, offers no suggestion of the answer.

Mathews next goes to a military review, in which the officer walks up and down the line of soldiers, talking to several of them individually. The exchange of remarks is amusing—but unanswered is the question of how he did this all by himself. Did he physically shift position when he changed from the officer to one of the men in the line? Did he use his gifts for ventriloquism? We cannot tell from the account, which in this instance merely reproduces the dialogue.

In Part II, there is an exchange at the dinner table, involving Mathews, another diner, and a black waiter. At one point, the waiter, Maximilian, is bringing in a dish as Mathews, in his own persona and using his skill as a ventriloquist, has his snuff box on the table and is
imitating a child calling from within. Maximilian drops the dish, and laughs. When the joke is again repeated, the Negro is bringing in a tureen of soup, and just as Mr Mathews begins the conversation from the snuff-box, he pours all the soup down a gentleman’s back, and begins to laugh most immoderately. The gentleman, enraged, asks what he means by laughing? And Maximilian says, “Him only laughing to hear Mr Mathews’ child cry in de box.” (p. 117)

Now how he staged this by himself, embodying all three characters, I for one would certainly like to know. But the text fails to tell us, as do the newspaper accounts. One might be tempted to assume that he simply employed narrative for such moments as these, but the accounts in both the printed versions and the newspaper reviews speak of all the characters in the third person present, clearly implying that actual impersonation—and not merely the art of the oral interpreter—was involved. The descriptions do not say that “Mr. Mathews tells of,” but rather describe what the “characters” do. But while they describe what Mathews does as these characters, they rarely tell us how he does it.

The published versions of the “At Homes,” as these examples indicate, give us very little more understanding of the actual staging devices used by Mathews than do the engravings which accompany several of these “acting editions.” These engravings, which show Mathews in the guise of several of his characters from a particular “At Home,” testify that Mathews’ various characters were differentiated physically by costume pieces, expression and posture, in addition to the vocal differentiation which he gave them. This is supported by the scattered comments of several of his contemporaries, such as this one by the American actor James E. Murdoch:

By tying a handkerchief over his head in different ways, drawing up his coat-collar behind, or by brushing his hair back from his face or up in what was termed the “cock’s-comb style,” he presented a laughable portraiture [even] without the assistance of vocal idiosyncrasies. A working of the brows, a wink of the eye, a twist of the mouth, or dropping of the chin,—each or any of these tricks, variously adapted to his ever-changing modes and qualities of voice, was sure to start a laugh upon the most stony face.6

It has been frequently reported that off-stage, Mathews was, without costume or make-up but merely by changing his features, able to transform his appearance so thoroughly that even intimate friends failed to recognize him, and so it is not surprising that with the aid of costume accessories and a change of hair-style he could convincingly portray an entire gallery of characters. But such evidence as this tells us little about how he physically brought about the effects described in the published versions of the “At Homes.”

If the published editions of the “At Homes” do not serve to capture the full details of the performance, their remaining virtue should be to provide us with
Figure 1. Frontispiece to The London Mathews, Containing an account of this celebrated Comedian's Trip to America... London: Hodgson and Co., [1824]. Original is one fold-out strip, in color.

Courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington.
a reliable account of the material presented. But here the multiplicity of editions of each “At Home” leaves us with utter confusion. While the basic situation and even the “cast of characters” are relatively consistent, the ordering of the incidents, the placement and lyrics of the songs, and much of the specific dialogue vary from edition to edition, sometimes drastically.

A comparative reading of several published versions of any given “At Home” reveals the extent to which these supposedly exact accounts vary. Characters within the episodic framework appear and disappear with frequency, and the ordering of their appearance seems subject to infinite variation. What the characters say, when direct quotation is used, is rarely the same from text to text, nor is there any consistency in the extent to which the actual dialogue is reproduced. In the version which Klepac reprints of the 1821 “At Home,” *Travels in Air, on Earth, and on Water,* for instance, the monopolylogue is, for the most part, simply described—and the description is more puffery than substance, teeming with such remarks as this, which contribute virtually nothing to the account of the performance:

> Every character is so marked—so truly delineated—so different in speech and action, and so satirically humourous, that a being, sinking under the subduing power of the blue devils, would find his risible muscles enlisted in the cause of Mirth, and be obliged to yield to the prepossessing touches of Wit and unequalled mimicry of his acknowledged British favourite. (p. 96)

The characters are introduced superficially; some of the most telling descriptive phrases used by other texts (as when Mrs. Tulip is described as “a buxom widow and masculine beauty, in height about six feet”) are omitted; and only one character’s speech is actually quoted. In another edition, however, the monopolylogue is printed out as an actual script, with complete dialogue for all the characters.

Perhaps the best way to indicate the types of differences one meets among the editions is to look at the songs. As with the appearance of the characters, the songs are often in a different order in different editions of the same “At Home.” From time to time a song appears in one edition but in none of the others. An interesting example of this is the case of the elusive “American Jester’s Song” from the *Trip to America.* This song was certainly a part of the “At Home,” because it is mentioned in the newspaper summaries and it is advertised—often in bold-face type—as a part of the program of the entertainment on the cover of almost every printed edition; yet of all these editions, only one (London: J. Limbird, n.d.) actually includes it.

Even more striking is the fact that songs bearing the same title are often entirely different from edition to edition. For instance, a song entitled “The Boston Post Office” from the *Trip to America* has the following lyrics in the
Duncombe edition reprinted by Klepac (pp. 112-113), which are intended to be sung to the tune of "Oh, What a Day &c":

> All the folk of Boston crowd around the gay Post Office now,
> A governor they must elect to manage matters well;
> How they gaze and talk aloud; oh! there is a mighty row,
> For not a man his conscience nor a single vote will sell.

In the Limbird edition, however, the song is to be sung to the tune of "Tom Thumb," and the lyrics go like this:

> Huzza! Huzza! the letters they have just come in,
> Two to one there's one for me, another too for you.
> Let us to the office haste, ere they to give them out begin,
> What a crowd assembled, how the deuce shall we get through;
> I hope they'll bring a good man in, one who will not his conscience sell,
> But act with honor, spirit, and Columbia uphold.
> And that the voters will not sell their votes, but freely poll as well,
> Nor be bought off by interest, intrigue, or foreign gold. (p. 18)

Yet another version is provided in an indignant letter to the editor in the British Press (29 July 1824), the writer of which, condemning the inaccurate lyric "published by some nefarious person to impose upon the public," offers the following version of "the genuine song":

> The Boston Post Master, his work should do faster
> Or else some disaster the people will greet;
> The crowd of home fretters, that tread on their betters,
> To get at their letters, quite crowd up the street.
> Round the letter-box, what a rabble flocks,
> Each with his knuckle knocks, at the little wood pane;
> But the deuce a bit—the nearer they get,
> Till the time they hit—when 'tis open again.
> Run, run in a hurry
> Delay will but worry.
> I'm all in a flurry
> Home tidings to learn;
> Such moments as these in—don't talk about sneezing,
> Stand firm with your knees in—and wait for your turn.

(One might note, in passing, that the critic of The Times of London, in his review of the Trip to America [26 March 1824], was moved to comment, "The songs are none of them well-written; what effect they have belongs to the acting entirely.")

The profusion of lyrics for "The Boston Post Office" is hardly an isolated instance. In the four London editions which I was able to examine of the 1826
"At Home," *Invitations,* the songs are entirely different. Here, by way of example, are the first two lines of "Gipseying Excursion and Quadrilles," the second song in Part I of *Invitations,* as they appear in the four editions. The first, which is meant to be sung to the tune of "Drops of Brandy," begins:

The Barouche is now up at the door,
    The horses are snorting and neighing; (J. Duncombe, p. 10)

In the second, the tune is that of "Kinloch of Kinloch," and the words are:

What delightful enjoyment there's in a Pic Nic,
    We should relish our rural diversion, (E. Duncombe, p. 10)

while in the third, the air of which is "Russian Dance," they are:

Come prepare
    While it's fair,
A Gipseying let's go. (Limbird, p. 8)

And finally we have the fourth version, sung to the tune of "Let Us All Be Unhappy Together," which goes:

Our party for Norwood is ready
    And each as his moment approaches... (Cole, p. 11)

The same four editions of *Invitations* also serve to indicate the sort of variations that occur in the spoken sections, even when the ordering of the incidents is the same from text to text. *Invitations* is an account of a week's visits paid by Mathews to a variety of people who have issued him "invitations," and the general ordering of the events of these daily visits is relatively consistent among editions. Yet there are still differences. On Tuesday, Mathews visits Sir Donald Scrupleton; the Cole, E. Duncombe and Limbird editions all have two other guests there, but the J. Duncombe edition adds another, a Colonel O'Kelly, who does not appear in any of the other editions. Names are frequently imprecise. The Cole edition calls Mathews' Wednesday host Archibald McRumbold, while the others have him as Archibald McRhomboid; his servant is Robin Crankie in three of the editions, but Robert Cranky in J. Duncombe.

There is a good deal of variation in what is printed, too. Two of the texts print the lyrics (different lyrics, of course) of the off-key song sung by Thursday's host, while the other two editions merely say that he sings a song off-key. Two print the text (though not the same text) for the Irish orator's harangue featured between verses of the song "General Election," while the other two simply say that Mathews performed an Irish orator's harangue. All but the J. Duncombe edition have different parts of the finale sung by several
of the characters; Duncombe has the entire finale sung by Mathews in his own persona. And while both Cole and John Duncombe print the monopolylogue, "The City Barge," at length and in dialogue form, Limbird and E. Duncombe have descriptive narratives, the one in E. Duncombe extraordinarily brief, barely listing the characters appearing in it. When direct quotation of Mathews' words appears in the printed editions, the words are rarely exactly the same from text to text. Even when all the editions seem to recount the same thoughts and the same jokes, the wording—and the way in which the jokes are set up—differs.

How can all of these inconsistencies be explained? In the first place, there is the issue of piracy. The profusion of editions, both English and American, of each "At Home" testifies to the lack of any exclusive agreement with Mathews, and as Klepac says in the prefatory note to his bibliography (p. 64), "There is no indication that Charles Mathews, Sr. or his son ever authorized a single publication of one of the scripts.” Without such authorization, the quality of the text depended on the reliability of the scribe assigned by a publisher to write it down during performances.

Indeed, not only did Mathews refuse to authorize publication; he seems at first to have fought it. An edition of one of the earlier "At Homes," the Trip to Paris—"taken in Short-Hand" and published by Dean and Mundy of London in 1819—was reviewed in The British Stage and Literary Cabinet, and that review tells us both about the quality of the edition and about Mathews' reaction to it:

The fact is, that scarcely six words together are given correctly throughout the book; the whole being transformed into perfect nonsense . . . Mr. Mathews has, very properly, obtained an injunction from the Lord Chancellor against further sale of such a catch-penny. We are surprised that he has not commenced a prosecution for misrepresentation and defamation.

The injunction was, however, ultimately unsuccessful; by 1821, Dean and Mundy had published a new "Short-Hand" edition, which got around the English injunction by omitting the firm's name and bearing a Dublin title-page. The British Stage and Literary Cabinet, while admitting that this "well corrected" edition was much more accurate, lamented:

It is useless, however, to contend with the unprincipled pirates who issue these things. The laws of honour they know nothing of; and as the laws of the land are found inadequate to the suppression of their trade, they carry it on in triumphant defiance of them.

But the issue of piracy is not ultimately the core of the problem. Piracy was rampant too among acting editions of early nineteenth-century plays, and yet
competing editions of the same play are, for the most part, essentially the same text. The fact that there are no licensing copies in the office of the Lord Chamberlain may be a factor in the absence of a single printed version of any particular "At Home," but the fact that they were not licensed also points to another salient factor: that the "At Homes" are not—nor were they ever intended to be—literary works. They are performance pieces, for which the original text was merely a point of departure, to be altered and elaborated on as the performer tested his material before his audience. It was common knowledge at the time of their first performance that the "At Homes" were not, for the most part, written by Mathews, but by others, whose task was to craft basic material that would give free rein to his talents. Some of these men were significant dramatists and theatre practitioners of their day—John Poole, Richard Brinsley Peake, Mathews' son Charles James Mathews—yet they remained anonymous on playbills and in printed versions of the "At Homes." This is perfectly understandable, as it was Mathews' versatility and performance sense which made that basic material work. To suggest that merely reproducing the words of the basic situations of the "At Homes" can reflect the flavor of their performance is as foolish as to suggest that one can appreciate the art of a song-stylist merely by reading the lyrics of the songs he or she sings.

That Mathews did not necessarily work from an original script is suggested by several manuscript copies of portions of the "At Homes" now in the Harvard Theatre Collection, manuscripts not by the original authors or an amanuensis, but in Mathews' own hand, which suggest that he may himself have reworked sections of the entertainments. A comparison between the manuscript selection and the parallel passages in the printed editions also serves to demonstrate the difficulty in establishing the reliability of any of these editions.

Two published versions of the "At Home" for 1822, Youthful Days, follow the usual pattern of similarities and differences. Initially, they are nearly identical, although each has an entirely different first song. One text (the Limbird edition) has a song called "School Orators," while the second (the Metford edition) has "Trade Choosing," which calls for a different tune. The reviews of the first-night performance indicate that "Trade Choosing" was the song sung at this point, suggesting that the Metford text is more reliable. This impression is furthered by the fact that the Limbird text cuts to Part II immediately after the second song, while the Metford version includes another scene and another lengthy song in Part I. But mid-way through Part II, the Metford edition, the one we might have thought more reliable, goes off on a wild tangent, interpolating scenes, songs and a monopolylogue from earlier "At Homes," while the Limbird text follows the progression of incidents described in the newspaper summaries and includes a monopolylogue which
follows the usual pattern of featuring characters from this "At Home."

One of the manuscripts in Mathews' hand is of Part II of Youthful Days, and so we might look to it to validate either of these texts. The progression of incidents is, in fact, the same as in the Limbird text, but the words are not the same—and the puns are much cleverer in the manuscript. Both the manuscript and the Limbird text end Part II with a song entitled "London Green Rooms," which accords with the newspaper summaries—but the title is all that these two songs have in common; both lyrics and meter are different. Not much at all can be said of the Metford text in relation to the manuscript, for it is in Part II that the Metford text goes off on its radical departure, a departure I cannot explain unless the scribe who was taking it down was discovered and removed from the theatre half-way through the performance.

I have been able to compare the manuscript of the 1829 "At Home," Spring Meeting, which contains Part I of that piece, with only one published edition, but that comparison reveals a familiar pattern: the progression of incidents is the same in both published text and manuscript, but the songs and the actual dialogue, while similar, are not the same. The comparison also indicates the way in which the published editions condensed and impoverished the language of the performance. Compare, for instance, the following excerpt from the publisher's edition:

As I was arranging my departure, I was interrupted by a knock at the door, softly, or as a publican would designate, a mild tap (p. 5),

with the comparable passage from the manuscript:

But to return to my friends, the first that announced himself was through the medium of a gentle demisemiquaver on the knocker of the street door—or in the phrase of the Publican—a mild tap. . . .

Clearly the stenographer sent by the publisher caught the punning punch-line and missed the charm of the rest of the line—or, if the stenographer was accurate, Mathews had improved on the original line.

This is, of course, the possibility that makes any claim to an authoritative text meaningless—and ultimately irrelevant. Mathews clearly adjusted, rearranged and rewrote the "At Homes" as he continued to perform them. This is particularly evident in comparing two playbills in the Harvard Theatre Collection for different performances of the Trip to America at the English Opera House, the first from the Spring of 1824 and the second from the Winter of 1826. The two bills clearly show a rearrangement of both songs and incidents. In 1824, for example, the scene in the Negro theatre and the song "Opossum Up A Gum Tree" appear in the first part, while the "Ode to General Jackson" is the first song in Part II; in 1826, these two segments were
transposed. The performances of the “At Homes” were probably never fixed, and so it is at least possible that some of the differences among the songs in the various editions of the same “At Home” reflect an actual change of songs in performance, much as songs in a musical today are liable to be changed during tryouts.\textsuperscript{13}

Despite the profusion of “acting editions” which pretend, with such self-aggrandizing puffery as “the only correct edition,” to offer an accurate record of Charles Mathews’ performances, it is clear that we will never be able to reconstruct an authentic text of one of the “At Homes.” Regardless of the pretensions of nineteenth-century publishers, a “correct edition” is an impossibility. The multiplicity of divergent publishers’ editions is evidence that the “At Homes” were living, constantly evolving organisms which refused to be consigned to the printed page. Mathews’ performances were governed not by a text, but by spontaneity and flexibility; they were never wholly fixed. In this regard, the multiple published versions of each of the “At Homes” do provide the historian of these non-literary popular entertainments with a useful resource. In some instances, to be sure, the editions are clearly the work of “unprincipled pirates,” but some of the vagaries of the printed texts certainly reflect actual changes in Mathews’ performance of a given “At Home.” Thus an isolated edition of one of the “At Homes” may or may not be a valid historical document, but an examination of several editions of a given “At Home” will, despite their inaccuracies and their lack of specificity, give us a better understanding of Mathews’ development of his most famous vehicles.

NOTES

1 Richard L. Klepac, Mr Mathews At Home (London: The Society for Theatre Research, 1979). All further references from this work will be cited parenthetically in the text.


3 See, for example, History of the Private and Public Life of Mr. C. Mathews, Comedian; from his Birth to his Decease, including a Variety of Anecdotes (London: J.V. Quick, n.d.). Despite the ambitious promise of the title, the work is twelve pages long.

4 The Larpent Catalogue, covering the years up to 1824, lists none of the “At Homes” at all. An examination of the British Library’s Daybooks Indexing the Lord Chamberlain’s Plays, 1824-1903, reveals that from 1824 until the end of the series of “At Homes” in 1834, there are only
three references to any of the "At Homes." An entry for 1826 shows that the monopolylogue from *Invitations* was entered on 10 March—but only the monopolylogue. Two of Mathews' last three original "At Homes," a series which was entitled "Comick Annuals," are also registered, but the entries show that what was registered was only a "description of" *Mathews' Comick Annuals for 1830* (entered on 20 April 1830) and for 1832 (entered on 25 April 1832). No other "At Homes" are mentioned at all in the daybooks, and the three entries cited above list only title and date, with nothing entered into the columns for number of acts, type of play, theatre, etc. I am indebted to N.J. Stanley of Indiana University for help in obtaining this information.

5 *Mr Mathew's Trip to America* (London: J. Duncombe, n.d.), as reprinted in Klepac, pp. 98-120. Page references to this version are made parenthetically in my text and refer to the pagination in Klepac's reprint, which is, incidentally, mistaken in dating the Duncombe edition from 1821, before the piece was written.


7 *Mathews At Home; or, Travels in Air, on Earth, and on Water (etc.)* (New York: S. King, 1822), reprinted in Klepac, pp. 70-98. In the actual reprinting of the text in Klepac's book, the title is incorrectly rendered as *Mathews At Home: or Travels in Air, on Earth and Water*, although the citation in his bibliography (p. 65) is accurate. Klepac never justified his selection of this obscure American edition ("Corrected from the Last London Edition, with Additions"), which is strikingly different from virtually all of the major London editions.

8 *Mathews At Home; or, Travels in Air, on Earth, and On Water, with all the Comic Songs (A Corrected Edition.)* (New York: E.M. Murden, 1822). The "Polly Packet" monopolylogue is much fuller in this edition than in an earlier edition by the same publisher. None of the Murden editions are listed in Klepac's bibliography.


10 Both this quotation from *The British Stage and Literary Cabinet* (vol. 3, 1819) and the subsequent one from the same journal (July, 1821) were taken from clippings in "Public Criticism &c. &c. upon the Performances of Charles Mathews, Comedian, collected since his death by Anne Mathews" (1837), an unpublished scrapbook in the Harvard Theatre Collection, vol. 2, pp. 82, 163.

11 *Mr Mathews at Home! in his Youthful Days (etc.)* (Holborn: M. Metford, n.d.) and *Memoirs of the Youthful Days of Mr. Mathews, the Celebrated Comedian (etc.*) (London: J. Limbird, n.d.).

12 *Mathews and Yates at Home. Mr. Mathews' New Lecture on Peculiarities and Manners, entitled, Spring Meeting (etc.)* (London: J. Duncombe, n.d.). This was the first of two of the later
“At Homes” in which Mathews, needing a respite from carrying the responsibility for the entire evening, shared the bill with Edmund Yates, who performed his own one-person entertainments as part of the evening’s program.

Mathews was never troubled by interpolating songs if they suited his talents, even in the performance of regular drama. An undated playbill in the Harvard Theatre Collection for a production at St. Mary’s Hall, Coventry, of Holcroft’s *Road to Ruin*, in which Mathews played Goldfinch, clearly indicates that he interpolated into it comic songs both from the “At Homes” and from Pocock’s *Hit or Miss*, in which he had made an earlier success at the Lyceum.