stock, that he "wouldn't buy anything to-day," feel that he had committed a grievous sin.

Her beauty captivated the hearts of the susceptible fish-boys in the market, and made them knights, ready to blacken each other's eyes and otherwise bruise their anatomy for the honor of being considered her favorite champion. A handsome, athletic young fishmonger after many encounters and many hard-earned victories was awarded the palm by the rollicking Nell. She became his companion, retiring from the market altogether.

But her restless spirit soon began to chafe under her new condition, and she bade adieu to her first love, and again entered upon an active life, this time as a barmaid in a famous inn a short distance from the Drury Lane Theatre, much frequented by the actors of that celebrated temple of the drama.

It was quite natural that her vavacity and beauty should attract the notice of Thespians, noted as they are for their susceptibility to female charms. A famous member of the Drury Lane company named Lacy offered to give her dramatic instruction, and then secure her a chance to make her appearance before the public as an actress.

Nell readily accepted his kind offer, and at seventeen years of age made her *debut* at the King's theatre in the character of "Cydaria" in the tragedy of the "Indian Emperor."

She made a failure also, and as dead a one as any herring she had ever vended from her scaly basket.

Tragedy was too serious for her temperament, and it was not until she assumed comic characters, stamped the smallest foot in England on the boards, and laughed with that peculiar laugh that, in the excess of it, her eyes almost disappeared, she fairly carried the town, and enslaved the hearts of the city and Charles Second's merry court. She spoke prologues and epilogues with wonderful effect, danced like a fairy, and in her peculiar way invested all she did with such naturalness that her auditors were enchanted. Dryden, the poet, gave her the best parts in his plays. After she tired of Lacy, another actor, Hart, became her tutor and soon made a star of her of the first magnitude.

In the green-room she was so fierce of repartee that those of her associates who, jealous of her success, were wont to allude sneeringly to her antecedents, never ventured to do so a second time.

Among those who came nightly to witness Nell's performances was Lord Buckhurst, a man, according to the chronicles of his time, "brave, truthful, gay, honest and universally beloved." Added to his other accomplishments were intellectual gifts of a high order. His poetry won the high compliment from Pope that he was "the grace of courts, the muses' pride."

While in the midst of her triumphs, the clever nobleman became enamored of Nell, and in obedience to his request she left the stage to preside as mistress of his house at Epsom.

The transition from a fish-boy's darling to that of a lord was enough to turn the head of any ordinary woman. But Nell accepted it as a matter of course, and carried herself with a grace that won encomiums of admiration from all the noble roysterers who were from time to time Lord Buckhurst's guests.

After a year's absence from the stage, she returned. Whether her desertion of Buckhurst was due to her fickleness or a desire to once more tread the boards, or whether the nobleman tired of her, is not known.

She was hailed with applause by the general public, but treated with contempt by a number of influential persons who had hitherto been valuable friends to her, and whose jealousy now made them enemies. But she found compensation for their scorn and enmity in the profitable friendship of Lord Dorset, and finally in the royal homage of Charles Stuart, the reigning king of England, himself.

Night after night he occupied his box, a delighted watcher of her pranks and oddities. She became his mistress in 1668, and soon after disappeared forever from the stage, and retired to a palatial residence in Lincoln's Inn Fields, provided for her by her royal lover.

Here in 1670 her first son, Charles, was born. A second son, James, born the following year, died when two years of age.

Appreciating, no doubt, the advantages which accrued to her from her relations with the king, Nell curbed her natural bent, and remained loyal to Charles for a number of years. She exerted all the blandishments of her nature on the profligate monarch. He became her slave, and readily complied with