1831), English actress, makes his intense interest in the production of *Macbeth* clear in this recollection.

1. Sheridan was sometimes a stickler for stage conventions, but Mrs Siddons stuck to her point and acted the scene to her own taste.

Meets Fox*

LORD JOHN TOWNSHEND

I made the first dinner-party at which they met; having told Fox that all the notions he might have conceived of Sheridan's talents and genius from the comedy of *The Rivals*, etc. would fall infinitely short of the admiration of his astonishing powers, which I was sure he would entertain at the first interview. The first interview between them . . . I shall never forget. Fox told me, after breaking up from dinner, that he had always thought Hare,¹ after my uncle, Charles Townshend, the wittiest man he ever met with, but that Sheridan surpassed them both infinitely; and Sheridan told me next day that he was quite lost in admiration of Fox, and that it was a puzzle to him to say what he admired most, his commanding superiority of talents and universal knowledge, or his playful fancy, artless manners, and benevolence of heart, which showed itself in every word he uttered.

NOTES

For a decade Sheridan had been dabbling in political journalism, and had also come to know many of the leading politicians of the day at Devonshire House, the bastion of Whiggism presided over by the Duchess of Devonshire. The most important meeting, however, was with Charles James Fox (1749–1806), by now clearly destined to play a leading role in any prospective Whig administration. Lord John Townshend describes their first encounter but does not give it a date.

1. James Hare, a member of the Whig Party in the House of Commons.

* From Margaret Oliphant, *Sheridan*, English Men of Letters series (London: Macmillan, 1883) p. 120. Editor's title.