

Dreads and Drolls

Arthur Machen

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Dreads and Drolls

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Note

All these "Dreads" and "Drolls" appeared in "The Graphic". They were gathered from all sorts of sources. Most of them are strictly veridical, but it may be confessed that here and there imagination plays a small part.

My favourite in the collection is, decidedly, the story of Grimaldi the Clown and his long-lost brother. It is an enigma of a tale. On the one hand, there is nothing improbable in the bare plot. Many lads, I have no doubt, went to sea in the adventurous times of the Napoleonic Wars, and were unheard of by their families for long years, often enough they were never heard of again. They were killed in one fight or another, they perished in African swamps, they became Archimandrites in Russia, or confidential advisers to the Dey of Algiers or to Prester John. And again there is nothing improbable in the adventurer's return with a heavy bag of gold,

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nothing improbable in the final disappearance of a young man who flourishes this bag of gold in the purlieus of Drury Lane as the chimes are ringing midnight.

That is the bare plot of the tale, and as I say, it is all probable enough; and yet I defy anybody to read Grimaldi's story without lifting an incredulous eyebrow. And I have come to the conclusion that this impression is due to Grimaldi's unconscious art, I have no doubt that the Clown spoke the truth; but he had within him that love of mystery and wonder which (as I have said till people are sick of hearing me say it) is the sure foundation, the only foundation of Art. Again and again in his odd book this note of mysteriousness occurs. Take, for example, the incident, of the man with the silver staff. Grimaldi always declared that he never knew who this personage was. He didn't want to know. If he had made enquiries, I suppose he would have found that the mysterious stranger was Chief Bow Street Runner, or, as we should say, something big at Scotland Yard. And so, I daresay that the affair of Mr. Mackintosh and his twelve friends—a tale absolutely Arabian, as Grimaldi tells it—would have seemed tiresome enough to a man without his admirable capacity for mystery and capacity of creating it.

And thus in the business of the long-lost brother. It all happened, and there is nothing very remarkable in it—save for the wonderful though unconscious art which has made a plain tale of plain facts read like a subtle study in mysterious suggestion, a ghost story of the rarest kind.

This is a great gift: to be able so to tell the bare truth that it seems a magnificent lie. To many of us, it is rather given to invent elaborate fictions which are plainer (and duller) than the plainest facts.

A. M.

The Man With The Silver Staff

Joe Grimaldi, the famous clown, whose life was edited by Dickens, had many strange adventures, and among them is the affair of the Man with the Silver Staff. This happened in the year 1798. Grimaldi had become engaged to his manager's daughter, and had settled in Penton Street, off Pentonville. He was employed at famous Sadler's Wells Theatre, and he was accustomed to pass from his house to the theatre by going across some pleasant pastures called Sadler's Wells Fields. These fields have long been covered by squares, the names of which are unfamiliar to most Londoners: Claremont, Myddleton, Lloyd, and Wilmington; and I will only say that he who is desirous of experiencing the sense of penetrating into outland and unknown territory cannot do better than explore this region, before the leases fall in and the great red flats go up.

One day, then, Grimaldi, on his peaceful way to rehearsal at the Wells, found the Fields occupied by a mob of about a thousand people, all of them scoundrels, engaged in a popular sport of the day. They were hunting an overdriven ox, and they were so densely packed and so extremely ruffianly that Grimaldi wondered whether he would not do better to turn back and go round by the Angel, Islington. Whereupon a young gentleman, looking at him attentively, came up to him and said.

“Is not your name Grimaldi, sir?”

“Yes, sir, it is,” replied Grimaldi. “Pray may I enquire why you ask the question?”

“Because,” answered the stranger, pointing to a man who stood among a little group of people hard by, “because I just now heard that gentleman mention it to a companion.”

Grimaldi looked round, saw “the gentleman,” and was not at all flattered to hear that he was being noted by him. The gentleman was “Old Lucas”, a “desperate villain”—we should say, an infernal scoundrel—and Parish Constable of Clerkenwell. The fact is Mr. Lucas was in the habit of taking advantage of his official

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position. He made a practice of accusing innocent people of this, that, or the other crime, of perjuring himself freely and of engaging other perjurers in the necessary quantities, and of pocketing certain small sums due to him on the conviction of the supposed guilty person. And so Grimaldi was not pleased to hear that Lucas had mentioned him, and still less pleased when he heard what came next. He asked the polite young gentleman if he were quite sure that Old Lucas had mentioned his name.

“Quite certain,” was the reply. “I can't have made any mistake upon the subject, because he wrote it down in his book.”

“Wrote it down in his book?” exclaimed Grimaldi.

“Yes, he did, indeed,” replied the other, “and more than that, I heard him say to another man beside him that he could lay hold of you whenever he wanted you.”

Grimaldi was not at all pleased to hear this. However, he took the long way round to the Wells, avoiding the mad ox, and bad Lucas, and the worse mob, and forgot all about the matter in the business of rehearsal. In the evening, however, he recollected it and told the tale to his friends in the green-room, soon before the curtain went up. And Dubois, the comedian, and another actor named Davis, and Richer, the renowned rope-dancer, all roared with laughter, after the good custom of green-rooms everywhere. Dubois remarked that Old Lucas would stick at nothing, not even at Joe's life, to gain a few pounds, perhaps even a few shillings. Then they speculated as to whether the charge would be murder or only forgery, though, as one remarked, that made little difference, since it was a hanging matter either way. And poor Joe tried to laugh, too, but did not feel really happy; and then a theatre messenger came in and said that Mr. Grimaldi was wanted directly at the stage-door.

“Who wants me?” enquired Grimaldi, turning rather pale.

“Old Lucas,” answered the messenger, with something between a smile and a gasp. Whereupon the green-room howled with laughter, the messenger joining in, till Mr. Dubois perceived that Grimaldi looked very unhappy indeed. Whereupon Mr. Dubois and the others said—again according to players' custom everywhere and always—that having had their laugh they would back up their friend to the uttermost of their power. The whole party trooped out to the stage-door and defied Lucas, who told Grimaldi that he must come with him directly to the police office in Hatton Garden; the actors asked for the constable's warrant, told him, one rather gathers, to go to hell, mentioning as, an alternative, a ducking in the adjacent waters of the New River. A joyous mob gathered at the sound of strife, and began to shout execrations against Lucas, who confessed at last that he had no warrant; “because people generally knows that I'm in authority, and thinks that sufficient.” Whereupon the happy mob shouted again, derisively, and perhaps with a little threatening note, too. So Mr. Lucas said that if Mr. Grimaldi would promise to come to the police office in Hatton Garden the next morning, that would do; and Mr. Lucas turned to go on his way. But the news became general that the villain of a constable was trying to arrest the great Grimaldi, the favourite of all London, and in a moment the whole quarter rang with whoops and yells. Here was better sport than ox-hunting. Mr. Lucas ran for his life with a volley of rotten apples, mud, and so forth following after him—and the curtain went up at Sadler's Wells Theatre.

The next morning Grimaldi, accompanied by the famous rope-dancer and the two comedians, attended before Mr. Blamire, the magistrate of Hatton Garden. Old Lucas forthwith charged Grimaldi with hunting, and inciting and inducing other persons to hunt an overdriven ox in the fields of Pentonville, to the irritation of the ox and the hazard and danger of his Majesty's subjects. In confirmation of this, Lucas summoned a few friends, who confirmed him in every particular. On the other hand, Grimaldi told the truth, and called the young gentleman who had first given him warning of the threatening attitude of Lucas. The magistrate said, finally, that he was quite sure that Grimaldi's story was the true story and that Lucas and his friends were liars;

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still he was bound to act upon the deposition of the constable and his witnesses, and so he fined Grimaldi five shillings. As for Lucas, Mr. Blamire told him to be careful. In great delight the actors bowed to the magistrate, paid the five shillings fine, with a mysterious extra shilling “for the discharge,” and, oddly enough, it was proposed and unanimously agreed that the party should adjourn to the King of Prussia (afterwards the Clown), a tavern opposite the Wells. Here they had a little lunch and made merry over the small profits accruing to Lucas on a five shilling fine. And in the middle of their mirth a man ran into the room and cried: “Joe! Joe! here's Old Lucas again.” More roars of laughter. Grimaldi and his friends thought this was a capital joke—when in walked Old Lucas. He was, really, a surprising fellow, this Constable of Clerkenwell. He declared that Grimaldi had not paid the five shillings or the aforementioned one shilling, and that he must either pay or “come along.”

“Not paid?” said the unfortunate clown. “Why, I paid the six shillings before I left the office.”

Old Lucas only grinned, and said: “Pay the money, or come on with me.”

Grimaldi swore he would not pay another farthing. The constable advanced to seize him and tore his shirt and waistcoat to ribbons. Whereupon, the mild Grimaldi was roused to anger and knocked Lucas down, causing the “porochial” nose to bleed grievously. But he got up again and produced his staff, and the fight was just going to begin again when a Mysterious Stranger rose from his place in the tavern room. He rose and drew from his pocket a Silver Staff, which he shook at Lucas; and, at the sight of that Staff, Lucas withered and collapsed. At the command of him of the Staff, the whole party returned to the police office, where Mr. Blamire remarked with amazement the change that had taken place in the shape of the constable's nose. And Mr. Blamire seemed to know the Mysterious Stranger very well indeed, and greeted him cordially. The matter was heard, the Silver Staff corroborated Grimaldi's story, and Old Lucas was fined five pounds, the money to go to the poor of the parish. Whereupon Old Lucas foamed at the mouth, like the hunted ox, and swore with frightful oaths and “great expressions of disrespect” that he would pay nothing. Then the worthy magistrate ordered Old Lucas to the cells, where he remained for five or six hours, devoting the whole time to howlings and imprecations, and at last paid up and wrote a penitent letter to Grimaldi.

And the Man with the Silver Staff? “Who,” said Grimaldi, with profound respect and an air of great mystery: “Who this gentleman was, I never could ascertain; but that he was a person possessing a somewhat high degree of authority was evident to me from the great respect paid to him at the police office.”

And here is another queer business in which Grimaldi was engaged, a few years later. He had a professional friend named Bologna, and Bologna knew a wealthy country gentleman, a Mr. Mackintosh, who lived down in Kent. Now Mr. Mackintosh had often pressed Bologna to come down to his place for the shooting and bring a friend; and so one October Grimaldi and Bologna hired a gig (the date is 1804) and drove in the direction of Bromley. Here they met a man in a fustian jacket, driving a lame horse in a taxed cart; and greatly to Grimaldi's amazement, this was Mr. Mackintosh the wealthy. And the magnificent house was a small roadside tavern, kept by Mr. Mackintosh's mother; and Bologna was mortified, and Grimaldi was inclined to laugh. However, the two actors had a good plain dinner, and in a day or two were taken out for the shooting.

“Now's your time,” said Mackintosh, pointing to a field where a great number of pigeons were feeding.

The actors were cross. They said they had come to shoot birds. Mr. Mackintosh said that pigeons were birds, and the two comedians fired in a rage and slew twenty-five of them.

“And now,” said Mackintosh, “if you will take my advice, you will cut away at once.”

They were the squire's pigeons. Grimaldi and Bologna were chased to the Lane by the squire's gamekeeper, on Mr. Mackintosh's information, but that difficulty was surmounted by a moderate payment on account of the

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pigeons, a rumpsteak dinner and a bottle of wine.

And so, you will say, the end of Mr. Mackintosh and his odd sense of humour. Not at all. In three years' time a much smartened, spruced-up Mackintosh calls on Grimaldi, hopes his little joke has been forgiven, and trusts that Grimaldi and his wife will accept the hospitality offered by some friends in Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square. Grimaldi drives round one night after the play, finds a splendid mansion, splendidly furnished, a blaze of light, luxurious furniture, and noble meats and nobler wines for supper. There were just twelve people present besides Mackintosh and Grimaldi: Mr. and Mrs. Farmer, host and hostess, and five other married couples, all exquisitely dressed. The jewellery of the ladies was superb, the liveries of the servants were gorgeous. Again and again the Grimaldis partook of this Arabian hospitality; and always the party was the same; the six ladies, the six gentlemen, and Mr. Mackintosh. Mr. Grimaldi was a little perplexed; he thought that there was something peculiar about the manners of these people, but he could not quite say what it was. He puzzled his head, he felt that the Charlotte Street ways were different from the ways of the noblemen and gentlemen he met in the green-rooms of the Lane and the Wells; but he could not make out what the difference was.

And now for the solution of the puzzle. Alas! Mr. Mackintosh and his friends were all “desperate characters.” Mr. Farmer had been reprieved while he stood on the drop under the gallows; they were a pack of burglars, forgers, passers of forged notes. And what did they want with Mr. Grimaldi? Simply to be amused; that was all.

The Adventure Of The Long-Lost Brother

In the second week of November, 1803, a play called “A Bold Stroke for a Wife” was running at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. Miss Mellor was playing Anne; Bannister, Highwell; Atkin was Simon Pure; and Grimaldi, Aminadab. One night the prompter, otherwise the assistant stage manager, had put his head in at the green-room door and had summoned Mr. Grimaldi, and as the actor was going on the stage a messenger told him that two gentlemen were waiting to see him at the stage door. The stage must never wait, so Grimaldi sent a message to the gentlemen, to the effect that he would come down to them as soon as the business of the scene was over. Accordingly, he went to the stage door and found there two gentlemanly young men.

“Here's Mr. Grimaldi—who wants him?” said the actor, and one of the young men turned swiftly about and accosted Grimaldi in a very cordial manner. Grimaldi looked at him. He was about, his own age and had the appearance of a man who had lived in some tropical climate. He wore the fashionable evening dress of 1803: a blue coat with gilt buttons, white waistcoat, and tight pantaloons, and a gold-headed dress cane was in his hand.

“Joe, my lad!” exclaimed this person, holding out his hand, with something of emotion in his manner, “how goes it with you now, old fellow?”

Grimaldi was confused. To the best of his belief he had never seen the young man before and, hesitating, he replied that he really had not the pleasure of his acquaintance. “Not the pleasure of my acquaintance!” repeated the stranger, with a loud laugh. “Well, Joe, that seems funny, anyhow!” He appealed to his companion, who agreed, and they both laughed heartily. Grimaldi grew perturbed and uneasy; he suspected that the two men were rather laughing at him than with him, and he was turning away offended, when the first young man said, in a tremulous voice:

“Joe, don't you know me now?”

Grimaldi looked at him again. The man had opened his shirt, and was pointing to a scar upon his breast. By this scar Grimaldi recognised the young man as his only brother, John, who had gone to sea, had not been

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heard of for many years, and was supposed to be dead. Grimaldi was very much moved. The two embraced again and again, and gave vent to their feelings in tears. Men embraced each other in Dickens' earlier books. It is odd; but in the days of the Napoleonic War, when John Bull is supposed to have been most John Bullish, he had ways which we should call "Continental."

"Come upstairs," said Grimaldi. "Mr. Wroughton is there—Mr. Wroughton, who was the means of your going to sea—he'll be delighted to see you." The two were hurrying off, when the other young man, who had been quite forgotten, said:

"Well, John, then I'll wish you good-night."

"Good-night, good-night," said John Grimaldi, shaking his friend's hand. "I shall see you in the morning."

"Yes," replied the other, "at ten, mind!"

"At ten precisely; I shall not forget," answered John.

So the friend went away, unIntroduced and unknown, so far as the actor was concerned. The brothers went first on the stage and then to the green-room; and the tale was told of this wonderful return, and the sailor was introduced to the actors. Still, the business of the stage continued, and the actor-brother had to leave the sailor-brother, gathering bits of his story between exits and entrances. The sailor said he had made a very successful trip.

"At this moment," he boasted, slapping his pocket, "I have six hundred pounds here."

"Why, John," said his brother, "it's very dangerous to carry so much money about with you."

"Dangerous!" replied John, "we sailors know nothing about danger. But, my lad, even if all this were gone, I should not be penniless."

Grimaldi was convinced by this and the knowing glance that the sailor gave him that he was, in fact, a wealthy man. But before he could get more exact information the prompter's voice was heard again, and the actor had to hurry away. In the meantime Mr. Wroughton talked to John, making kind enquiries as to his doings and his success. John replied as he had replied to his brother, and brought out a coarse canvas bag, stuffed full of coins. The comedy was over at last, and Grimaldi asked his brother how long he had been in town. He replied only two or three hours; that he had had his dinner and come on at once to the theatre. What did he intend to do? He had not considered the matter; his only object had been to see his brother and mother once more. The two had a long talk. Joe told his brother that he, his wife, and his mother all lived together. But there was plenty of room in the house; why should not the sailor come and live with them, and so they would all be happy together. John was delighted with the notion. But he said that he knew he would not be able to sleep unless he saw his mother that very night; what was her address? The address was given, but the actor suggested that they had better walk home together. He had finished for the night, and would be ready as soon as he had changed his dress. The sailor assented, and Joe went off to his dressing-room.

And then the strangeness of it all came with a sudden onset on Grimaldi. "The agitation of his feelings, the suddenness of his brother's return, the good fortune which had attended him in his absence, the gentility of his appearance, and his possession of so much money; all together confused him so that he could scarcely use his hands." He seems to have fallen into the state which the Scots call a "dwam," a manner of waking vision, in which actualities are taken for dreams and the man wonders when he will awake and recognise that he has been amongst the shadows of the night. "He stood still every now and then, quite lost in wonder, and then suddenly recollecting that his brother was waiting, looked over the room again and again for articles of dress

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that were lying before him.” In consequence, he took much more time than usual in getting off his make-up and changing his dress; but at last he was ready and ran down to the stage. On his way he met Powell, one of the Company. Powell congratulated him on his brother's return, and Grimaldi “asked him more from nervousness than for information if he had seen him lately.”

I think the phrase is curious. It must be remembered that Grimaldi wrote his own Memoirs—they were severely sub-edited, it is true—and, likely enough, the phrase in question is the old actor's own. Taking into account the odd things that came upon him in the dressing-room, I am inclined to think that he had begun to suspect that his brother had never returned, had never been introduced to the actors, had never spoken of his wealth; that the whole thing was an illusion, a phantasm of his mind. That, I believe, was what he meant by “nervousness”; he wished to be reassured by Powell, to be told that there was an actual brother waiting for him below, and that he would see him in a moment. But the events that were to come give this part of the story a very strange interest.

But Powell was reassuring enough.

“I saw him,” he replied, “but a moment ago; he is waiting for you on the stage. I won't detain you, for he complains that you have been longer away now than you said you would be.”

Grimaldi hurried down to the spot where he had left his brother—it must have been the green-room, surely, not the stage, since there was an after-piece to follow “A Bold Stroke for a Wife”—but he was not there.

“Who are you looking for, Joe?” inquired Bannister, as he saw him looking eagerly about.

“For my brother,” he answered. “I left him here a little while back.”

“Well, and I saw and spoke to him not a minute ago,” said Bannister. “When he left me, he went in that direction (pointing towards the passage that led towards the stage-door). I should think he had left the theatre.”

Grimaldi rushed to the stage-door, and asked the door-keeper whether his brother had gone out. The man said he had gone out not a minute before, he had not had time to get out of the street. Grimaldi ran out, and ran up and down the street; not a sign of his brother. He wondered what had happened. Then it struck him that John might have gone to look up some old friend or neighbour—the Grimaldis had been brought up close to the Lane. There was Mr. Bowley; he and John had been bosom friends when they were boys together. Forthwith Joe knocked at Mr. Bowley's door.

Mr. Bowley himself opened the door, and was evidently greatly surprised.

“I have, indeed, seen your brother,” said he. “Good God! I was never so amazed in all my life.”

“Is he here now?” was the anxious inquiry.

“No; but he has not been gone a minute; he cannot have gone many yards.”

“Which way?”

“That way—towards Duke Street.”

Grimaldi thought on this that his brother must have gone to call on Mr. Bailey, the Grimaldis' landlord, when they lived in Great Wild Street. Away to Mr. Bailey's house in that street; again he knocked at the door.

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No—one answered; he knocked and rang again With increased fury, and at length a girl put her head out of an upper window, and said in a voice both sulky and sleepy:

“I tell you again, he is not at home.”

“What are you talking about? Who is not at home?”

“Why, Mr. Bailey. I told you so before. What do you keep on knocking for at this time of night?”

In great bewilderment, Grimaldi begged the girl to come downstairs, as he wanted to speak to her, telling her his name. She came down after a short interval.

“I’m sure I beg your pardon, sir,” said the maid. “But there was a gentleman here knocking and ringing very violently not a minute before you came. I told him Mr. Bailey was not at home; and when I heard you at the door I thought It was him, and that he would not go away.”

Then Grimaldi asked the girl if she had seen the gentleman's face. She had not; she had looked out of the upper-window, and all that she noticed was that the gentleman had a white waistcoat, whence she inferred that he might have come to take her master out to a party.

Back went the amazed and frightened actor to the theatre. There nothing had been seen of the lost brother; and then Grimaldi began a sort of mad midnight tour of the houses of old friends round the Lane, knocking and ringing people out of their beds and enquiring after his brother. Some of the people thought Grimaldi was mad; and said so. His manner was wild, and nobody had heard of John Grimaldi for fourteen years. They had long given him up as dead.

One more call at the theatre; nothing had been seen of the missing man. Perhaps, Grimaldi thought, his brother had gone to the house in Pentonville. He had seemed so anxious to see his mother that very night; and between the calls of the prompter the two had been making plans of happiness of a family reunited after the passing of many years. But there was no brother at the house; but his mother sat in the supper-room, looking much paler than usual, so that Grimaldi thought she must have seen him.

“Well, mother,” he said, “has anything strange occurred here tonight?”

“No; nothing that I have heard of.”

“What! no stranger arrived! no long-lost relative recovered!” exclaimed Grimaldi.

“What do you mean?”

“Mean! Why, that John is come home safe and well, and with money enough to make all our fortunes.”

The mother screamed and fainted. John Grimaldi was never seen again, never heard of. A great noble, a frequenter of Drury Lane, used his influence at the Admiralty; some people thought that John had been pressed for the Navy. He was known to have gone under another name, and when no news came, it was suggested that he might well have fallen in one of the great sea fights of those great wars; it was two years before Trafalgar. Then a police officer, who had made enquiries in the neighbourhood of the Lane, had his theory of the boastful sailor with his bag of gold being decoyed into some black den, there to be robbed and murdered. And Grimaldi himself was inclined to suspect his brother's companion, the smart young man in the white waistcoat, who made the appointment with his brother for ten o'clock the next morning. Why had this man not come round to the theatre, to make enquiries after his vanished friend? But John Grimaldi was seen

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no more.

It is an extraordinary tale. It may be true in every particular. But there are strange circumstances in the history. For example: why should John knock up his old friend, Mr. Bowley, only to dart away from his door in a minute's time? Note that minute in advance all through the chase. It persisted up to Mr. Bailey's house. The servant-girl there said, "there was a gentleman here knocking and ringing very violently not a minute before you came." I do not quite know why; but this fixed period of a minute inspires me with distrust.

But if the story be an invention, I am sure it was not Joe Grimaldi's. The famous clown was a worthy, stolid, solid man outside of his clowning. The lie, if it be a lie, must be the work of Mr. Thomas Egerton Wilks, Grimaldi's friend during his life, editor of his Memoirs after the great clown's death.

But many of the actors at the theatre had seen John Grimaldi and talked to him on the night of his return? Possibly; but that was in 1808. Bannister died, I think, in the 'twenties; was anyone of the company alive when the Memoirs were published in 1838?

And yet, in spite of all, I incline to believe in the truth of the tale.

7B Coney Court

A good many years ago the late Stephen Phillips, the poet and dramatist, got himself into a very queer piece of trouble. He had just left his house somewhere on the south coast, I think at Littlehampton or near it, and rumours had got abroad that he had done so because the place was haunted. The rumours penetrated to Fleet Street, and some paper sent down a reporter to interview the poet. Stephen Phillips told the newspaper man his experiences in his late residence, and they were, indeed, most remarkable. I have forgotten the detail, and cannot recall the manner of the noises or voices or apparitions that had vexed the late tenant; but there was no doubt that the house was haunted, and haunted very badly. A sensational "story" appeared in the paper and then the landlord of the house sued everybody concerned for heavy damages. It had not occurred to Phillips or the newspaper that you could libel a house; but the owner of it pointed out that to call a house haunted made it unlettable, and that in consequence of the statements in the interview the place once occupied by the poet had been empty on his hands for the last eighteen months. How the matter ended has escaped my memory, but I believe somebody, the poet or the paper, had to pay, and I should think it was the paper. However, I am taking the affair as a warning, and so I declare that all names and places in the following history are fictitious. There is no such Inn of Court or Chancery as Curzon's Inn; there is no such square as Coney Court, though South Square, Gray's Inn, once bore that name. And therefore: no action will lie.

But assuming for the moment that names and places are as true as the tale, it may be said that Curzon's Inn lies somewhere between Fleet Street and Holborn. It is approached by a maze of crooked courts and paved alleys, guarded by iron posts, and it consists of a small hall—note the very odd and elaborate "sham Gothic" work about the principal doorway, date 1755—a huge and ancient and flourishing mulberry tree in a railed enclosure, a quadrangle called Assay Square, and another which is Coney Court. In Coney Court there are nine entrances in the buildings, which were rebuilt in 1670. All is of a dim red of ancient brickwork; the entrances are enriched with Corinthian pilasters, in the manner of the older doorways in King's Bench Walk in the Temple; and the carved wooden penthouses over these doorways have been attributed to Grinling Gibbons; somewhat doubtfully, as I am told, and on a misreading of an allusion in a contemporary diary. But, at all events, there are nine doors in Coney Court, and no more than nine, and hence the perplexity of Mr. Hemmings, the Steward, when he received a cheque for £20, with a note to this effect:

Dear Sir—

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Please receive the enclosed cheque for Twenty Pounds (£20 0 0), being the quarter's rent due to you for my chambers at 7B Coney Court, Curzon's Inn.

I remain, Yours faithfully,

Michael Carver.

That was all. There was no address. There was no date. The postmark bore the letter N. The letter was delivered by the first post of November 11, 1913, and by immemorial custom, of unknown origin, rents in Curzon's Inn are payable not on the English, but on the Scottish Quarter days. Now, November 11 is Martinmas, and so far everything was in order, But there is no such entrance in Coney Court as 7B, and there was no such name as Michael Carver on the books of the Inn. Mr. Hemmings was bothered, and nobody seemed to have heard of Mr. Carver. The porter, who had been employed at the Inn for upwards of forty years, was quite positive that no such name had been on the doorposts during the time of his service. Of course, the Steward made all possible enquiries. He went round to the various tenants at 6, 7, and 8, but could get no information whatever. As is usual in the old Inns, the tenants were miscellaneous. The main substratum—also as usual—was legal. There was a publisher in a very small and young way of business, who thought that poetry could be made to pay. There were the offices of a few shy and queer companies and syndicates, with names such as “Trexel Development Company, Ltd.,” “J.H.V.N. Syndicate,” “Sargasso Salvage: G. Nash, Secretary,” and so forth, and so forth. Then the private residents; some of these were initials on the doorposts, “A.D.S.,” “F.X.S.,” one “Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Sheldon”, and names that were little more than names to the inhabitants of the Inn, since the owners of them were never seen during the day, but crept out at night, after the gates were shut, and prowled from Assay Square to Coney Court and back again, stealthily, silently, not looking at one another, never speaking a word. Among all these folk the Steward made his quest, but not one of them had heard of such a person as Michael Carver, and one or two had occupied their chambers for thirty years. The next day, “St. Martin's Morrow,” being the day appointed for the quarterly meeting of the Society, the “Pension”. as they called it, the puzzled Hemmings laid the matter before the President and the Ancients, with the result that they decided that there was nothing to be done. And from that date onward, quarter after quarter came the cheque for twenty pounds, with the formal note accompanying it. No date, no address, and the postmark still bearing the N. of the northern district, The matter was regularly laid before the Society: the Society as regularly decided that there was nothing to be done.

This went on till the Martinmas of November, 1918. The usual cheque was received; but the formal letter varied. It ran thus:

Dear Sir—

Please receive the enclosed cheque for Twenty Pounds (£20 0 0), being the quarter's rent due to you for my Chambers at 7B Coney Court, Curzon's Inn.

There is a bad patch of damp on the ceiling of my sitting room; arising, I should think, from a defective tile.

I shall be obliged if you will have this seen to at once.

I remain, Yours faithfully,

Michael Carver.

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The Steward was stupefied. There was no such number in Coney Court, or the Inn, as 7B; how, then, could there be a leak in the roof! How could the Society see to a roof which did not exist? Next day, Mr. Hemmings laid the letter before the Pension in silence: there was nothing to say. The President read it attentively; the ten Ancients read it attentively. Then one of them, who happened to be a solicitor, suggested that enquiries should be made at Mr. Carver's bank. "Sometimes you can bluff a bank," he said hopefully. But Mr. Carver banked at Tellson's, and the ancient should have known better. Hemmings received the curtest of letters from the House, informing him that Messrs. Tellson were not in the habit of discussing their client's affairs with outsiders; and so, for the time being, the matter dropped. Next quarter day the usual Carver cheque was received, and with it an extremely stiff letter, pointing out that no notice had been taken of the writer's request, and that, in consequence the damp had spread all over the ceiling, and threatened to drip on the carpet. "I shall be obliged if you will remedy the defect immediately," the letter ended. The President and the Ancients again considered the matter. One suggested that the whole thing was the work of a practical joker, and another uttered the word "Mad," but these explanations were considered unsatisfactory, and the society, in the circumstances, resolved that there was nothing to be done.

The next quarter day brought no cheque. There was a letter, declaring that the tenant's furniture was covered with mould, and that in wet weather he was obliged to put a bowl on the floor to catch the water. Mr. Carver said finally that he had determined to cease all payment of rent until the necessary repairs were seen to. And then something still queerer happened, and this is the point at which the history would have become libellous if there were such a place as Curzon's Inn, or if there were such a court as Coney Court. The third pair chambers (right) of No. 7, Coney Court, had just been vacated by the tenants, solicitors or agents, and a widow lady and her daughter had moved in—"dingy, but so quiet", as the lady told her friends. And now she found her chambers very far from quiet. Night after night, at twelve, one, two, or three o'clock, she and her daughter were awoke by thunderous piano music, always the same music, which rendered sleep out of the question. The widow complained to the Steward, and he came round, with the Inn carpenter, and said he couldn't understand it at all.

"We never had any complaints from Jackson and Dowling," he declared, and the lady pointed out that Jackson and Dowling left the Inn every night at six.

The Steward went over the set carefully. He noticed a sort of crazy flight of steps, leading out of one of the rooms.

"What's that?" he asked the carpenter, and the man said it was a sort of lumber place, used by tenants for odds and ends.

They went up, and found themselves in a garret, lighted by one pane of glass in the roof. Here was a broken-down old piano with hardly a dozen notes sounding, a mouldy gladstone bag, two odd men's socks, a pair of trousers, and some ragged copies of Bach's Fugues, in paper wrappers. There was a leak in the roof, and all reeked with damp.

The rubbish was removed, the place was turned out and whitewashed. There were no more disturbances. But a year later, the widow lady, being at a concert with a friend, suddenly gasped and choked, and whispered to the friend:

"That is the awful music I told you about."

The distinguished pianist had just sounded the opening notes of John Sebastian Bach's Fugue in C Major.

Neither the Principal, the Ancients, nor the Steward heard any more of the tenant of 7B Coney Court.

The Strange Case Of Emily Weston

There are certain resemblances between the affair of Grimaldi's brother and the disappearance and reappearance of Emily Weston at Stafford in the years 1849–50. Emily Weston was the only child of Samuel Weston, a shopkeeper and dealer in that pleasant town, which differs so happily from those other Staffordshire towns which make up the Potteries. Weston's shop was somewhere in that back quarter of Stafford which is near the eighteenth century theatre; a very modest looking place, as I recollect seeing it about twenty–five years ago, with a bulging window divided into small squares of glass. Within the stock was various: sides of bacon, large cheeses, mops and brooms, clusters of tallow candles hanging from a beam in the ceiling, rat–traps, tea in canisters, and some sacks of flour; in fact, as the old man who was my informant described it, the characteristic general shop of small country places, where, oddly enough, very solid sums of money were once made. Here, then, behind the little dark shop in the narrow street, lived Weston, his daughter Emily, and an old servant, who had been in the family for forty years. In 1849, Emily was twenty–three years old, and was considered to be, not exactly handsome, but decidedly attractive. She bore the best of characters, sang in the choir of the parish church, and was supposed to look favourably on the addresses of the son of the principal chemist of the town, named Elgie. One night in December, 1849, she told her father that she was going to a choir practice that was to be held in the church at nine o'clock. There was to be a new anthem for Christmas Day, “Unto us a Child,” and the organist was rather anxious as to the solos. So the supper—bread, cheese, butter, and an openwork raspberry tart—was served at 8.30 instead of 9, the usual hour; and at five minutes to 9 Emily started for the church, which is about five minutes' walk from Weston's shop. Mary Williams, the old servant, was to call for her at 10 o'clock. But Mary was delayed by some household business at the last moment, and it was eight or ten minutes past ten when she got to the church. The windows were all dark, and the rector was locking the door. The servant said she supposed Miss Emily had gone home by the other way.

“Indeed,” said the rector, “she has not been at practice to–night. We feared she was ill. Do you say that she started from her home to come to practice?”....

Emily Weston did not come home that night. No trace of her was to be found. A woman said she thought that a person who passed her close to the church soon after nine was Emily; but the lighting of Stafford in those days was far from brilliant, and the veil that was then generally worn made identification difficult, if not impossible. Week after week went by; still no Emily. Her father offered a reward of £100 to anyone who would find the girl, living or dead: there was no result. The police seemed helpless in the matter.

It was almost a year—a year within three days, I believe—before Emily Weston returned, as her father always declared. It was late at night—for that household—actually about half–past ten, when old Weston, who had been sitting up over some accounts, heard a gentle tapping at the door. Mary Williams, the servant, had been in bed for half an hour or more, and Weston went to the shop door and slowly unbolted, unchained, and unlocked it. While he did so he had put down the candle on the counter. By the dim light he could see a woman standing on the doorstep. He took the candle and held it up, peering at the figure before him. He saw that the woman was richly dressed in silk and furs; but he did not recognise her.

“Who are you?” said the old man, “And what can I have the pleasure of doing for you? It's rather late at night.”

The woman raised her veil.

“Father,” she exclaimed, “don't you know me? It's Emily.”

“Even then,” the old man said afterwards, “I didn't recognise her for a moment. Everything she wore was so splendid, and pearls and diamonds and all, that I could scarcely believe it was my Emily. But then when she

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smiled at me, I knew her to be sure, and brought her in, and lit the other candle in the parlour, and began to ask her all the questions I could think of. And all she would say was: `Wait a bit, father, wait a bit. I'll tell you all about it; but I've come a very long way, and I feel tired.'" Samuel Weston was overwhelmed with joy at his daughter's return. He was so excited, as he said, that he did not know what to do with himself. He could "scarce believe his eyes," and insisted on knocking up Mr. and Mrs. Dales, neighbours and old friends, who lived two doors off. According to his account, when he at last brought Mr. Dales to his bedroom window, he called out that he and his wife must dress and come down at once, as Emily had come back. The two friends came down at length, heavy with sleep, and "mazed" as they said; and Mr. Weston opened a bottle of some very old sherry that he kept for great festivals, and the party sat together far into the night. At last the visitors went back to their beds, and Mr. Weston kissed his daughter good night at her bedroom door. She told him that he should hear everything in the morning.

Now it seems odd that Weston, who knocked up the Dales, should not have roused the old servant. So it was, however; and the next morning when the old man came down to breakfast, he found the table laid for one, as usual.

"What are you about, Mary?" he said. "Don't you know that Emily has come back? Lay her place, and tell her that breakfast is ready."

Old Mary Williams shrieked and fainted. Mr. Weston rushed upstairs, and knocked at his daughter's door. There was no answer, and when he went into the room it was empty. The bed had not been slept in. And Emily Weston was never seen again. And here is an odd circumstance. The Dales, the people who were roused from sleep by Weston, declared that to the best of their recollection, the old man did not mention his daughter. They thought he said, "I have got somebody you would like to see," but were not sure. They remembered going round and seeing a beautiful lady, beautifully dressed, who was very pleasant and talked about a wonderful country a long way off where she had been; but they didn't think it was Emily Weston, though as Mrs. Dales said, "There was a look of her."

That is all. There is an explanation, but I leave that to the ingenuity of the reader.

The Highbury Mystery

When Thomas Pinch and his sister Ruth, having accomplished their unpleasant discussion with the brass-and-copper founder of Camberwell, went into the wild of London to look for lodgings, Tom suggested Islington as a promising quarter for their search. It is needless to say that Tom knew nothing whatever about Islington—or any other part of London. But an old phrase was in his mind, and it tempted him.

"It used to be called Merry Islington, once upon a time," said Tom. "Perhaps it's merry now; if so, it's all the better. Eh?"

"If it's not too dear," said Tom's sister.

"Of course, if it's not too dear," assented Tom. "Well, where is Islington? We can't do better than go there, I should think. Let's go."

So far as I remember they did not find much mirth in Islington, though they did find two bedrooms and a triangular parlour which suited them very well. But the fact is that Tom Pinch went to Islington a little too late; just as I went to the old Fleet Street tavern in 1881, hoping to meet there the Principal Wits of the Town: a little too late. Islington was once a noted place for its houses of entertainment, for its bottled ale and skittles, its cakes, custard, stewed prunes, and so forth; and thus merry to seventeenth and eighteenth-century London. And in an Islington tavern just 160 years ago there was a meeting not devoid of mirth, or at least of

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cheerfulness, which yet linked itself on to a mysterious and terrible crime; the murder of Thomas Jenkyns, retired merchant, of Enfield Wash. The body of this Thomas Jenkyns was found on the night of September 23, 1765. It was lying in a pool of blood in a field near Highbury. The poor man's throat had been cut from ear to ear, as the two men who found the corpse declared. And as for these two men, Thomas Brown and Richard Staple, inhabitants of some festering maze of alleys between Holborn and Clerkenwell, I am afraid they did not bear the best of characters. Bow Street knew them and they were known also at the taproom of the Bell, where they met friends of the same way of thinking as themselves. There had been a little highway robbery and a little burglary in their stories, and they had just missed the gallows more than once. So it may be as well not to consider too curiously what the two were doing in Highbury Fields ten o'clock of this dark September night. Thomas Brown told of the horror of his friend and himself when they stumbled on the murdered man.

“We were hard put to it to know what to do,” he declared. “It seemed as if the poor man's head was almost cut away from his body, and I said to my friend, Richard Staple, who was with me, ‘Why, Dick,’ said I, ‘this is a villainous to-do. For if we shift to raise the body, ‘tis a great chance that the man's head will fall apart, and I cannot abide the thought of it.’ ‘Why, Tom,’ said he, ‘I am much of your mind in the business. What if we leave ill work as it lies, and go home peaceably by another way.’ But I would not have that neither, lest, as I said, we should both be nabbed for the fact and come to Tyburn at last. And so we made shift to raise the dead man tenderly, I holding his head to his shoulders and trembling a great deal, and in this way bore him as far as Islington, without any misadventure, it being late of a dark night, with a cold wind rising, and very black clouds, and scarce anyone abroad.”

This is, certainly, not a very merry opening, and, indeed, mirth is only a brief interlude in the tale. The cheerful relief is afforded by the evidence of Simon Murchison, who kept a snuff-shop in Norton Folgate, of William Frost, a brass-founder, of Clerkenwell, and of Abraham Lewis, clock maker, of Devizes. It was largely on their evidence that Anthony Mullins, citizen and haberdasher, was arrested and charged with the murder, a week after the discovery of the crime by the dubious Brown and Staple. The three elderly tradesmen had met by chance—they had not known each other before—at the Bowl and Sword tavern at Islington on the afternoon of September 23, and had got into conversation, all agreeing that things were not as they were in the reign of King George II.

“We all grew to be pretty dismal over the bad times,” said Abraham Lewis, “till at last I said, ‘Why, this will never end it or mend it. Come! let us go and bump it at Dog and Duck, and I will be surety for the first bowl of punch, the lowest notch of the three to be debtor for the second.’”

The three went out into the alley behind the tavern, and it is interesting to note that Mr. Murchison ordered pipes and a plate of tobacco, and that Mr. Frost paid for a bottle of brandy “to hearten the bowl,” and so they went to their match, which Mr. Frost won.

“And while we were in the garden-house at the side of the alley, drinking our punch, and smoking tobacco, and talking of the game, two men came out from the tavern and sat on a bench by the wall, speaking together very seriously, but not as we could hear what they said. They called for liquor and drank two glasses apiece and went out, and we saw no more of them.” The three identified the murderer and the murdered.

“I know him,” said Lewis, pointing to Mullins, “by his great beaked nose, and the dead man I could swear to any day, for as he lifted his glass I saw that his little finger was crooked back as if it had been broken, and I saw the body, and the little finger was crooked as I saw it on the live man.” Then Frost had seen the prisoner read a paper which Jenkyns had given to him, and Mullins had drawn out a tortoiseshell and gold spectacle-case of curious workmanship, and just such a spectacle-case was found on Mullins when he was taken. There were other witnesses who had seen Mullins and Jenkyns walking on the way to Highbury Fields a little later in the afternoon: there seemed no doubt as to the verdict which the jury would bring in.

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Then came the surprise of the case. The prisoner's two clerks, Mr. Osborne and Mr. Nichols, swore that their master had not stirred out of his counting-house from dinner time till eight o'clock in the evening. Osborne sat at a high desk facing Mr. Mullins's private counting-house, which was separated from the rest of the room by a glass partition. Nichols's stool was under a window and commanded a view of the door.

"I was busy with a great account," said Osborne, "but ever and again I looked up from my book, and there sat my master, as he was always accustomed, but very still."

Counsel: "Was he not used, then, to sit still in his counting-house?"

Osborne: "Why, not so. He would rise now and again commonly, and walk a little to and fro, and so sit down again. And twice or thrice in an hour he would come out and speak with us about the occasions of the day."

Counsel: "And did he not stir at all on this afternoon?"

Osborne: "He sat still at his desk and never moved till it was past eight in the evening."

And then a very curious point arose. Nichols, the other clerk, had been strangely overcome towards the end of the afternoon. He had come up to Osborne, looking very ill and pale, as Osborne said, and complaining that his heart was heavy, and that "he was sadly oppressed." Osborne, belonging to a pre-scientific age, advised his fellow-clerk to go to the Mitre and drink a little ale, and Nichols did so, "looking tearfully to the place where Mr Mullins sat, with no candle by him." A moment later, Mr. Mullins rose and came down to the general counting-house and asked Osborne where his fellow was. On hearing of his occupation, Mullins said, "Ah, poor child! He might do worse than drink a cup of ale." Then Nichols returned, and soon after the two clerks went on their way, one to his lodgings by Pedlar's Acre, the other to see the fireworks, at Marylebone Gardens. But when counsel for the Crown cross-examined Nichols as to the nature and cause of his seizure, the witness said:

"There came a great trembling upon me, and a dread on my heart and a sickness in my stomach...and I feared very much. And so I looked round on my stool to see if my fellow Osborne was in his place, and looking down on the floor of the counting-house I could have sworn that there was a great pool of blood there, with bubbles of blood in it, and I had almost swooned away."

Naturally, Mullins was acquitted on the evidence of his two clerks. But what is the solution of the puzzle? When I treated this curious case some time ago, I mentioned the theory that has been advanced by some occultists of our day. These persons hold that while the natural body of Anthony Mullins was committing murder at Highbury, his "astral" body appeared all the while in the counting-house in the City. I was unable to accept this tempting solution, and declared my opinion that the two clerks perjured themselves to save their master from the gallows. But there is this difficulty: Why should the clerk Nichols have invented the outrageous tale of the visionary pool of blood?

The Little People

I have been looking into a very odd book, and I am going to tell the story of the Asiki, or Little Beings, first observing that the singular is Isiki. Well, it is said that the Asiki were once ordinary, human children, but were caught, when young and defenceless, by wizards or witches, and were dragged into the black depths of the forest, where there was no help for them, where no one could hear their cries. The wizards cut off their tongues as a first measure; and so they never speak again, and cannot inform against the magicians. They are then carried away, and hidden in a secret place, where they are subjected to magical processes which change their whole nature, so that they are no longer mortal. They forget their homes, their fathers and mothers and all their kinsfolk. Even the hair of their heads changes. Instead of being crisp wool, it becomes long and

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straight and hangs down their backs. At the back of their heads they wear a curious comb-shaped ornament, made of some twisted fibre. This they value almost as part of their life, just as in another quarter of the world there are people who drive motorcars and cherish little images and idols and grotesque figures, which are believed to constitute a most powerful protection. These Asiki will sometimes be seen walking on dark nights, and are occasionally met on their walks. It is believed that if a person is either naturally fearless, or made fearless by charms and spells, and dares to seize an Isiki and snatch away the comb, the possession of this mascot will bring him great wealth. But he will not be allowed to remain in peaceful possession of it. The Isiki, in a state of misery and desolation, will be seen wandering about the place where the magic comb was taken from it, endeavouring to get it back. And as late as the year 1901 strange things were told of these Little People in Libreville, French Congo. A certain Frenchman, known to be a Freemason, returning from his restaurant dinner to his house one evening noticed a small figure keeping pace with him on the other side of the road. He called out, "Who are you?" There was no reply; the figure kept on walking, advancing and retreating before him.

A few nights later, a negro clerk in some trading house met the Isiki near the place where the Frenchman had encountered it. And the Little Being began to chase the negro. He ran for his life, and told his master, the trader, what had happened. He got laughed at for his pains, and the next night the trader told the tale to a select company of white men and black women, the Freemason being present. And he said, "Your clerk did not lie; he told the truth. I have myself met that Little Being, but I did not try to catch it." Then the black women spoke of the odd comb-ornament, and of how the Asiki treasured it, and of the good fortune it would bring to anybody who could capture it. Whereupon the Frenchman—otherwise the Freemason—said, "As the Little Being is so small, the very next time I see it I will try to catch it and bring it here, so that you can see it and know that this story is actually true."

Soon after, the Frenchman and the trader went out at night and tried to find the Isiki. No Little Being was to be found, but a few nights later the Frenchman met it near the place where it had been seen before. He ran forward and tried to catch it, but the Isiki eluded him. However, he succeeded in snatching the comb, and ran with it towards his house. The Little Being was displeased and ran after him to recover the charm. Having no tongue, it could not speak, but holding out one hand pleadingly and with the other motioning to the back of its head, it made pathetic sounds in its throat, thus pleading that its treasure should be given back to it. It followed the Frenchman till the lights of his house began to shine, and then it disappeared. The Frenchman showed the comb to his friends, both black and white, and all agreed that they had never seen anything like it before. From that night the Isiki was often seen by negroes, who were afraid to pass that way in the dark. It followed the Frenchman persistently, pleading with its hands in dumb show, and making a grunting noise in its throat. The Frenchman got tired of all this, and made up his mind that he would give the comb back. And so next night he took it with him; and also a pair of scissors. The Little Being appeared and followed him. He held out his hand, with the comb in it. The Isiki leapt forward and snatched at the talisman and secured it, and the Frenchman tried to catch the Isiki. The Little Being was too agile, however, and escaped; but the Frenchman snipped off a lock of the long straight hair with his scissors, and brought it home and showed it to his friends.

Such is the story told by Dr. Robert H. Nassau, an American missionary, who had worked for forty years in Africa. He seems to fear that his tale will be regarded as incredible. It seems to me, on the contrary, highly, probable. Naturally, one dismisses that part of it which relates to the process by which these Little Beings are made, and that part of it which ascribes to them immortality. The Little People were not made out of little woolly piccaninnies by the magic arts of the wizards; and probably, if one could be caught and examined, it would be found that it had a tongue in its mouth, like any other human being. The fact is that here, in all likelihood, we have a pretty exact parallel to the Little People of our own folk-lore: the Daione Sidhe of Ireland, the Tylwyth Teg of Wales. The substratum in both cases is the same: an aboriginal people of small stature overcome and sent into the dark by invaders. In Britain and Ireland the dark meant subterranean dwellings made under the hills in the wildest and most remote parts of the country; they will point you out the

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place of these dwellings in Antrim to this day, and tell you that they are Fairy Rathes. And in nine cases out of ten you may accept the statement with entire confidence; so long as you define "fairies" or "the People" as small, dark aborigines who hid from the invading Celt somewhere about 1500–1000 B.C. And in Africa the dark meant the blackness of the forest; places hidden in the thickest tangle of trees and undergrowth, protected, perhaps, from all outsiders, black or white, by a maze of narrow paths winding in and out of a foul swamp. And as to the legend of the torn–out tongues, of the guttural noises made by the Asiki; is it not the case that the Little People of the genuine Celtic tradition are also silent? I will not be sure; but I incline to think that this is so. They beckon, they gesticulate, they are seen by Irish countrymen playing at hurly: but they say nothing—the reason being that they do not speak the language of their conquerors. I have seen a monoglot Englishman in Touraine behaving much as the Isiki behaved to the Frenchman at Libreville, even to the making of unearthly sounds and the indulging in antic gestures. But he only wanted milk with his tea. And there is this further parallel between the Little Beings of Africa and the Little People of Ireland. Both are on a curious borderland between the natural and the supernatural. Both are able to "propagate procerity"—I use an elegant phrase of Dr. Johnson's. This is formally asserted of the Asiki; and in Celtdom we have the legends of the changeling, the little, dark creature found in the cradle of the big, red–haired Celtic baby. And both are material and capable of dealing with material things and of making use of them. Miss Somerville has strange tales of them which are of our own day. Miss Somerville herself had seen the shoe that was found on the lonely hill. It was of the size that a child of about a year old might use, but it was heavily made, in the fashion of a workman's brogue, and had seen hard wear. And, again, she tells the story of two servants sent on a sudden errand at night. They were driving a car, and at the entrance of a certain town, the harness broke. And there they found a little saddler's shop, open in the dead of night, and two little men within—described with a shudder as "quare"—to whom the servants told their trouble. They were terrified almost out of their senses; they would not stay in the shop: but the work was done, and done well.

We have here a state of mind which is very hard to understand. What can an Immortal want with a workman's leather shoe? And how should Beings of another order from that of man, Beings to be beheld with awe and dread of the spirit, undertake saddlery repairs on demand? One would say that the belief that such things are so is impossible; but yet it exists in Ireland, probably to this day; and it is much like the negro belief as to the Asiki.

It is interesting to note, by the way, that Fairyland in Ireland seems strongly associated with leather. There is the matter of the fairy brogue, there is the adventure of the fairy saddlers; and then there is the Leprechaun, who is a fairy cobbler. He is, clearly, a distant cousin of the Asiki. And if, in spite of all his efforts to distract you, you continue to regard him with a fixed gaze, your reward will be a crock of gold.

Madame Rachel

The other day, reading the paper, I came upon a half–column that interested me. It was headed: "Slimness–While–You–Wait," and a sub–heading ran: "The `Boiled Cyclist' Treatment." Who could resist such invitations as these! Not I.

I found that the article concerned a new "Beauty Parlour" in the Bond Street quarter. And how pleasant it is, by the way, to note the manner in which America is restoring to us the good old English word, "parlour," which we had lost awhile. Well, in this Beauty Parlour, the lady who would achieve perfection of form must undergo many severe trials; and, indeed, this is the way of perfection of every kind, and there is no escape from it. And the trials of Bond Street are hard to bear; they almost recall the terrors which, in popular tradition, are supposed to await him who would pass through the Third Degree of a venerable secret order. Thus I read:

"First she (the person to be initiated in these mysteries) has to strip herself of her clothing and sit for twenty minutes in the `reducycle bath.' The bath is surrounded by canvas which is fastened round her neck. In its

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interior a bicycle is fitted, and the client sits on the bicycle saddle and works the pedals as though she were actually riding quickly along a road.”

Then follows the Shower. To it succeeds the Roller, painted a pale mauve, “with kinks in it.” Then the Candidate is vested in a bathing costume, and there ensues the Ceremony of the Exercises on Coloured Mats to the music of the gramophone. Altogether, it strikes me as a strange but gorgeous rite; and I trust and believe that She renews her youth, in the fashion of that other She of Sir Rider Haggard's invention.

In the bad old days, there were beauty parlours in Bond Street, though they did not call them then by that name. But there was no science then; only a great deal of wickedness. Listen, therefore, to the story of Sarah Rachel Levenson, called Madame Rachel, who lived at the corner of New Bond Street and Maddox Street, and said that she could make ladies beautiful for ever. Madame Rachel drove, on the face of it, much the same trade as that plied by Dickens's famous Miss Mowcher. She sold all sorts of cosmetics, enamels, paints, powders, rouges, unguents. She constantly proclaimed that she could make women beautiful for ever, and she came at last to Marlborough Street police station and to the Court of the Recorder of London, in the year 1868. The complainant was a Mrs. Borradaile, widow of a Colonel, who said that Madame Rachel had swindled her, one way and another, of £3000.

“On my first visit”—testifies Mrs. Borradaile—“I spent £10, and in the course of two or three days I had invested £170 with her. I paid her various sums of money for cosmetics, and so forth, during the latter part of 1864 and the commencement of 1865. Before purchasing these articles I asked her to do something for my skin, and she promised that if I would follow out her course of treatment in every particular she would succeed in making me beautiful for ever.”

Poor Mrs. Borradaile! Serjeant Ballantine was retained for the prosecution—with him Mr. Straight and Mr. Montague Williams—and the last testifies that Mrs. Borradaile was “a sparse, thin, scraggy-looking woman, wholly devoid of figure; her hair was dyed a bright yellow; her face was raddled with paint.” The matter went far beyond selling creams and powders, and Arabian herbs and nonsense of every sort in boxes and bottles and baths.

“On one occasion,” said the witness, “I called on Madame Rachel, who told me that she had had an interview with the gentleman who had fallen in love with me. On asking his name, I was informed that it was Lord Ranelagh. I asked when he had met me, and the reply was, both before and after my marriage... Madame Rachel said that she would introduce me to him the next day... I called at Maddox Street, where the prisoner lived. Madame Rachel opened the door and said, ‘I will now introduce you to the man who loves you.’ She then introduced me to a man whom I believed, and still believe to be Lord Ranelagh. I said to him, ‘Are you Lord Ranelagh?’ and he answered, ‘Yes; here is my card.’ He then handed me a card, which I returned to him. The gentleman who gave me the card is the gentleman I now see in Court.” This gentleman in Court, thus identified, was undoubtedly Lord Ranelagh. He gave evidence. He said he had often been in Madame Rachel's shop. He thought he had seen Mrs. Borradaile once at the shop, but he had no recollection of being introduced to her. He was asked, it would appear, what business he had in Madame Rachel's shop at all. He answered, “You don't suppose I went there to be enamelled.”

Which reminds me of “Charley Pyegrave, the duke's son.”

“He goes into a perfumer's shop, and wants to buy a bottle of the Madagascar Liquid.”

“Charley does?” said Steerforth.

“Charley does. But they haven't got any of the Madagascar Liquid.”

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“What is it? Something to drink?” asked Steerforth.

“To drink?” returned Miss Mowcher, stopping to slap his cheek. “To doctor his own mustachios with, you know.”

Well, the elderly woman in the shop said to Charley:

“Begging pardon, sir, it's not—not—not ROUGE, is it?”

“Rouge,” said Charley. “What the unmentionable to ears polite do you think I want with rouge?”

But what was Lord Ranelagh doing at Madame Rachel's? Well, the curious are advised to consult the rumours of the time.

Madame Rachel, then, quite persuaded Mrs. Borradaile that Lord Ranelagh was desirous of marrying her. And, at Lord Ranelagh's express desire, Mrs. Borradaile was to go through an extra process of being made beautiful for ever. The poor, silly woman accordingly sold out securities and paid Madame Rachel £800 on account of £1000 “for bath preparations, spices, powders, sponges, perfumes, and attendance, to be continued till I (Mrs. Borradaile) am finished by the process.” And from this moment the story surpasses the very bounds of extravagance. Madame Rachel said she was going to marry this happy couple “by proxy,” otherwise “by letter writings.” There were plenty of letter-writings handed over by Madame Rachel to Mrs. Borradaile. Sometimes they were signed “William,” sometimes “Edward,” Lord Ranelagh's name being Thomas; but, as Madame sagely observed, this was a wise precaution since letters are apt to be left about. They were odd letters. They all dwelt on the importance of keeping “Granny” (Madame Rachel) in good temper. They warned “Darling love, Mary, my sweet one,” not to hold any communication with her family or with Lewis and Lewis—suspicious and untrustful tribes, both of them. The letters were in different handwritings, but, as “Granny” explained, Lord Ranelagh had hurt his arm, and sometimes made his servant write for him. Affectionate letters these: “I shall be at your feet—those pretty feet that I love—and you may kick your ugly old donkey”; “I would rather be shot like a dog than leave England without you”; “I heard you were insulted by a cabman in Oxford Street, yesterday. I wish I had been there”; “Mary, my heart's love, is it your wish to drive me mad? Granny has my instructions. Do as she tells you.... What is the meaning of the delay, at the eleventh hour? Granny lent me the money. You shall pay her, my own sweet one. Get the lace to-day and fear nothing. It will be £35.” Clothes and lace and jewellery were necessary for the wedding, said Granny, and Mrs. Borradaile bought them—and Granny took care of them. Presumably, suspicion began to rise in the foolish woman's heart; she said she could not get any of these articles back. “You must ask the man who loves you for them back,” said Madame, and she brought her victim a lighted cigar, “saying that Lord Ranelagh's love for me was as warm as that.” That must have reassured Mrs. Borradaile, since soon after she executed a bond for £1600. This was for Lord Ranelagh, but Granny took care of it, and I suppose Granny also took care of a carriage which Mrs. Borradaile bought for her wedding.

And the end of the story? Five years' penal servitude for Granny.

Sir Benjamin The “Baron”

It was with considerable delight that I read the other day an article “sticking up” very bravely for Harrison Ainsworth, and Dick Turpin, and the Ride to York, and the Tower of London, and all that world of brave things. I was pleased, because a man likes to have his opinions confirmed by high authority; and I have always had a very tender feeling for Harrison Ainsworth, recollecting how he made my ten-years'-old blood run cold by his description of the Subterranean Temple of the Demon in the “Lancashire Witches.” And it was of Harrison Ainsworth that I was chiefly thinking when I once observed that, though the Victorians did not always write well, they always wrote with a relish.

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Things happened in those old Victorian story-books. There were lonely inns in which travellers were apt to be murdered. And these travellers were not always what they seemed. The names they gave were not always their own names. The apparent merchant sometimes turned out to be something very different. Sometimes they shuddered as they dismounted from their coaches. Sometimes they wrote vehemently as soon as they entered; sometimes they consigned papers to the fire and watched these papers burn to the last ember. Now and then the (apparently) faithful attendant of the Mysterious Stranger was not what he seemed. There were cases in which the traveller was seen one moment in the inn yard, and then had vanished in the twinkling of an eye, and had vanished for ever. Perhaps years afterwards a skeleton was discovered, buried deeply not far from the inn yard; and wife or sister, grown old and sick with vain waiting, came and gazed doubtfully with dim eyes upon the relics—and wondered.

There! Can you imagine what would happen if one submitted the above as an outline or sketch of a possible plot to our really modern writers, the veritable Georgians? I don't think that they would be cross, or snap your head off, or wonder audibly what theatre put on transpontine melodrama in these days, or say it was interesting to find that Sue still found readers. There would be nothing violent of this kind; only the slight movement of a weary brow, before the conversation flowed back to its proper channel of "complexes" and skin-disease. Because you see, the Georgian novelist knows that the stuff of which we have been talking is not Life, has no relation to Life, and in a word, doesn't happen. Exactly. And it all happened on the twenty-fifth of November, 1809, at Perleberg, a small Prussian town between Berlin and Hamburg. A coach and four drew up at the White Swan, and a tall, handsomely dressed man, wrapped up in a fur cloak lined with purple velvet, got down. He said he was in a hurry and wanted his lunch at once, and so, accompanied by his secretary and his servant, he entered the White Swan. It was noon when he arrived, and when he had finished his lunch he began to ask questions. Were there many soldiers stationed at Perleberg; who was in command? Captain Klitzing, of the Brandenburg Cuirassiers. Very good; where did he live? The stranger got the captain's address, and ordered his horses to be put in at once. He did not seem to notice two Jew dealers who came into the inn as he was lunching. He went to Captain Klitzing's house and found the captain with so bad a cold that he could hardly speak. The stranger said that he was Baron de Koch, that he was a merchant, and that he was now on a business journey to Hamburg. But, he added, trembling, he had seen something at the White Swan that frightened him, something that made him fear for his life; finally, that he would be grateful if Captain Klitzing would give him a guard during the few hours that he was at Perleberg. Captain Klitzing laughed at the request for a guard, whereon the stranger's nerves got worse and worse. So the Captain said he should have two of his cuirassiers, and as the Baron trembled with cold—or terror—he was given a cup of hot tea, and he drank it gratefully, his hands shaking so that some of the tea was spilt. Then he put on the fur cloak with the velvet lining and went back to the White Swan. He ordered the horses to be taken out of the carriage, and sat down with a pile of papers about him, and began to write at top speed.

Seven o'clock in the evening. The Baron finished writing, burnt some documents, and once more ordered the horses to be put in. The soldiers were told that they could go, and as some of the witnesses declared, the Baron strolled into the inn kitchen and hung about there among the stablemen and postboys. It was said that some of these fellows must have seen him drawing out a full, fat purse and dangling a handsome watch in an absentminded sort of way. In the street a dim oil lamp hung up high in the air, and a stableman with a horn lantern was helping the postboy to harness the horses. The Baron stood there in the street, watching the horses being put in. On the steps of the inn, the Baron's secretary, having paid the bill, was talking to the landlord. Everything was ready. The postillion was standing with his hand on the saddle, waiting for the word to mount and away... when it suddenly became evident that the Baron had vanished.

And the mystery was never solved; it remains a mystery to this day. No time was lost on that dark and bitter night of November 25, 1809. The White Swan was searched, the posting-house was searched in vain; there was no trace of the traveller in the stables, in the outhouses, or in the street. The secretary sent a messenger to Captain Klitzing; no news of the Baron there, since his afternoon call. Then more ransacking of all the houses of the quarter, everybody joining in— except the two Jew tradesmen, who got into their carriage and resumed

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their journey. People remarked that they were the only persons present who took no interest in the quest for the lost Baron. Captain Klitzing remembered that his visitor appeared to be in mortal terror, to anticipate some dreadful fate. The Captain had laughed at the time; but now he began to wonder. He sent some of his men to seize the vanished stranger's travelling carriage; he gave orders that the Baron's secretary and his servant should be detained at an inn at the other end of the town; soldiers are posted at the White Swan; the civil magistracy is dragged out of bed to lend its aid, and the civil magistracy beats up Perleberg all through the night; and finds nothing. Meanwhile, the active Klitzing examines the Baron's secretary, and makes some strange discoveries. To begin with; the secretary confessed that though he had been known as Fisher, he was really Krouse. And as for the "Baron de Koch, merchant," he wasn't a baron, and he wasn't a merchant. He was Sir Benjamin Bathurst, late English Ambassador Extraordinary to Vienna. His mission to Vienna had failed, and he was making his way to England, via Hamburg. He had with him papers supposed to be of the highest importance. His false name, his lack of ambassadorial state were due to his desire to avoid the attentions of the French soldiers, who were then patrolling all Germany. Fisher, or Krouse, had been for some time a courier at the British Embassy at Vienna. The servant's name was Nicolaus Hilbert. Captain Klitzing left Perleberg, as he said, for a short journey of the utmost consequence. In reality, he consulted his military superior, who told him all about Sir Benjamin, the enormous importance of his mission, and the fury of Napoleon over the part which England had tried to play. But it was not known till later that before Sir Benjamin Bathurst left Vienna the Prussian Government had warned him: to keep a sharp look-out on Krouse.

And after? Very little of consequence. The two Jew dealers were tracked to their abode. They were well-known people with the best of characters. The dubious Krouse and the servant pass out of the story. A week after the disappearance of Bathurst, his trousers were found in a thicket by two poor women gathering sticks. That thicket had been searched before without result. There were two bullet holes in one leg; but experts declared that the trousers had been held up, empty, to be fired at. In one pocket there was a letter, written, no doubt, at the White Swan. It was from Sir Benjamin to his wife. He told her of his fears. He was afraid, he said, that he would never see her or England any more. He added that if he were murdered it would be the doing of d'Entraigues, then the agent of Russia; a secret man, d'Entraigues, who had served all nations, and betrayed them all. And nothing more was ever known certainly. It was rumoured that Sir Benjamin was alive and a prisoner at Magdeburg, in French hands. Mrs. Bathurst—perhaps a wife, perhaps a widow—resolved to follow up this clue. Nothing came of her journey, save this: that she found that her intention of making it was known in Paris before it was suspected in London. She returned to London, and there the secret man, d'Entraigues, called on her. He said that her husband was dead, that the Governor of Magdeburg had been his gaoler till, on the order of Napoleon, the prisoner had been "put out of the Emperor's way." And d'Entraigues promised to tell Mrs. Bathurst the whole story. But soon afterwards he was assassinated by a dismissed servant, who immediately committed suicide. People said that at last the secret man had paid the penalty of knowing too much. Years later, in 1852, Mrs. Thistlethwayte, Sir Benjamin Bathurst's sister, was told that a skeleton had been found buried under a stable in Perleberg. The skull had been fractured by a blow of a hatchet; there were circumstances which linked the former owner of the house with Sir Benjamin's visit to Perleberg; this man, named Mertens, had been a servant at the White Swan. But Mrs. Thistlethwayte looked closely at the skull, and said that she was sure, from the shape, that it could not be her brother's.

But she may have been mistaken.

The Campden Wonder

Mr. William Harrison was steward to the Viscountess Campden, of Campden, in Gloucestershire. One afternoon—to be precise, on the 16th of August, 1660—he walked out from Campden to Charringworth, a place about two miles off, to receive some rent due to the Viscountess. He was late getting back, and between eight and nine in the evening his wife, feeling a little uneasy, sent the man, John Perry, to meet his master and

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bring him home. That night neither master nor man returned. Early the next morning Mr. Harrison's son, Edward, went towards Charringworth to enquire after his father. He met Perry coming from Charringworth, and was told by him that his father was not there. Then Edward Harrison and Perry went together to a village called Ebrington, between Charringworth and Campden, and at Ebrington a man named Daniel told them that Mr. Harrison had called on him on his way home from Charringworth the night before, but had not stayed. On this, the younger Harrison and the man turned back home, and on their way heard something of a hat, a band, and a comb found on the road between Ebrington and Campden by a poor woman, who was harvesting. They sought out the woman, they identified the hat, comb, and band as being the property of Mr. William Harrison. The hat and comb were hacked and cut, and the band—the broad round collar, ancestor of the legal bands of today, for which the bandbox was designed—bloody. Crowds came to look for the body of Mr. Harrison—his properties were found by a great brake of gorse—but no body was found. Mrs. Harrison was grievously alarmed. It struck her as highly suspicious that Perry, the manservant, had stayed out the whole night, instead of coming back, with news or without news. So Perry was haled before a justice of the peace, and told a very odd story. He said he set out for Charringworth, but soon met one William Reed, of Campden. It was getting dark, and Perry told Reed that he was afraid to go to Charringworth afoot, and so he would turn back and get his young master's horse, and ride to Charringworth. So Perry turned back, Reed being in his company, and came to the gate of the Harrison demesne. Reed went on his way, Perry stayed still by the gate. Then one Pierce came by, and Perry went with Pierce “a bow's shot into the fields,” and again returned, Pierce being of his company; and so Pierce went on his way. And then Perry went and lay about an hour in the henroost, but could not sleep. Then the clock struck twelve and for the third time Perry sallied forth on his errand. But a great mist arose, and he lost his way, and lay the rest of the night under a hedge. At daybreak the next morning he at last ended his journey and came to Charringworth. Here he heard from William Plaisterer that Mr. Harrison had called the afternoon before and had received three—and—twenty pounds. And William Curtis had heard that Mr. Harrison had called at his house; but he was out and did not see him. And so Perry turned back and met young Edward Harrison, as we have heard already. Reed, Pierce, Plaisterer and Curtis were called and confirmed Perry's story so far as it concerned them.

The justice asked the man why he was afraid to go to Charringworth at nine, and not afraid at twelve. The answer was that it was dark at nine, but moonlight at twelve. Then he was asked why he did not inquire whether his master had come back after his first return and his second return. He said he saw light in his master's bedroom window, “which never used to be there so late when he was at home.” It was considered wise to keep Perry in custody, and so he was held at Campden, sometimes in the prison, sometimes in an inn—a genial age—and there he told all sorts of stories. He told some people that Mr. Harrison had been murdered by a tinker, others that he had been robbed and murdered by a gentleman's servant, others that he had been killed and his body hidden in a bean-rick. The bean-rick was searched and nothing found. Finally, Perry confessed that William Harrison had been murdered by his mother and his brother. He declared that the two had “lain at him”—note the nearness of the seventeenth century idiom to our “had been at him”—ever since he entered the service of Mr. Harrison. They had pointed out how poor they were, and how simple it would be for John to tell them when Mr. Harrison was going to receive rents, so that they could waylay and rob him. These pleadings won at last upon John Perry's filial and fraternal heart, as he said, and on the Thursday morning—the day of Mr. Harrison's disappearance—he met his brother in the street of Campden and told him where his master was going in the afternoon, amiably remarking to brother Richard that if he cared to waylay Mr. Harrison he might have his money. That evening, Mrs. Harrison sent John Perry to meet his master, as we have heard, the time being about half—past eight. He met his brother Richard close at hand, and the two prowled about in the dusk of the evening till they came to some private grounds of Lady Campden's, called the Conygree. Certain persons were allowed to have a key which gave them passage through these grounds. Mr. Harrison, the agent, was, naturally, one of these persons, and he was accustomed to use the Conygree as a short cut to his house. Good son and brother John Perry saw a figure going into the Conygree, and told Richard Perry that this figure was probably his master, and that he could have his money. For his part, John observed, he would take a short walk in the fields. So John communes with nature, and then strolls into the Conygree. He finds his master on the ground, brother Richard upon him, and his mother

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standing by. William Harrison then cried out, "Ah, rogues, will you kill me?" John Perry, shocked, observed to Richard that he hoped he would not kill his master. Whereupon Richard, exclaiming briefly, "Peace, peace, you are a fool," strangled old Mr. Harrison—the agent was a man of seventy. The prudent Richard then took a bag of money out of Mr. Harrison's pocket and threw it into his mother's lap. The two Perrys carried the dead body into the garden adjoining the Conygree, and consulted what they should do with it. It was finally determined that it should be thrown into "the great sink by Wallington's mill, behind the garden." At this point John left the little family party, taking with him his master's hat, band, and comb, which he laid for the moment in the henroost. He then mooned about, in the manner described by him at his first examination, meeting Reed and Pierce. Finally, he took the hat, band, and comb, and after slashing them a little, laid them on the high-road, where the harvesting woman found them. And as to his master's body, said John, if it were not in the great sink, he did not know where it was.

The great sink was searched, the fishponds of Campden were searched, the ruins of Campden House, burnt in the Great Rebellion, were searched, but the body of William Harrison was not found. Nevertheless, Joan and Richard Perry, the mother and brother of John, were arrested; and the whole three charged with the murder of Mr. Harrison. Joan and Richard denied the fact with imprecations on themselves if they had any share in the deed alleged against them: John persisted in his accusations and declared he would maintain them to his death. All three prisoners were committed. On their way to prison, Richard, at the end of the procession, "pulling a clout out of his pocket, dropped a ball of inkle, which one of his guard taking up, he desired him to restore, saying it was only his wife's hair lace." But the guard showed it to John, who said sorrowfully that he knew it very well; his brother had strangled his master with it. Next day, being Sunday, the prisoners were taken to church. On their way, they passed Richard's house, and two of his children ran out to meet him. He took the smaller child on his arm, and led the other by the hand; whereupon both the children's noses began to bleed. This was thought to look badly for Richard.

There was another point. The year before Mr. Harrison's house had been broken into while he was at "lecture"—the Puritans were still in power in 1659—and £140 had been taken. The justice of the peace, finding John in a confessing mood, asked him whether he knew about the robbery. Certainly, John knew. Richard had taken the money and hidden it in his garden. The garden was searched; nothing was found.

At the September assizes, the three were indicted for robbery and for robbery and murder. The Judge, Sir Christopher Turner, refused to try the latter charge, for the very good reason that no body had been found. On the charge of robbery—the robbery of 1659—they at first pleaded Not Guilty, but on advice altered the plea to Guilty, and enjoyed the benefit of the King's pardon and Act of Oblivion. Later, they denied any part in the robbery.

At the spring assizes of 1661, the three were tried again for murder, Sir Robert Hyde being the Judge. John's confession was put in evidence. Whereupon John said that he was mad when he uttered it, and knew not what he said. All three were found guilty of murdering William Harrison, condemned, and executed on Broadway Hill, in sight of Campden. Joan Perry, the mother, was hanged first. It was thought that she was a witch, and had cast a spell upon her sons, so that they could not confess while she lived. Richard then took his turn on the ladder, and died, protesting his innocence, and imploring his brother to tell all he knew about Mr. Harrison. John, the last to climb, wore "a dogged and surly carriage," and told the people he was not bound to confess to them. But at the last he said he knew nothing about his master's death; but, he added, they might, possibly, hear hereafter.

They did. In a little under two years Mr. Harrison came back to Campden.

He told the story of his adventures, in a letter addressed to Sir Thomas Overbury, Knight, of Bourton (near Campden), in Gloucestershire. He begins from the beginning.

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“One Thursday in the afternoon, in the time of harvest, I went to Charringworth to demand rents, due to my lady Campden; at which time the tenants were bus in the fields, and late ere they came home, which occasioned my stay there till the close of the evening. I expected a considerable sum, but received only three-and-twenty pounds and no more. In my return home (in the narrow passage, amongst Ebrington Furzes), there met me one horseman, and said, `Art thou there?’ And I, fearing that he would have rid over me, struck his horse over the nose, whereupon he struck at me with his sword, several blows, and run it into my side; while I (with my little cane) made my defence as well as I could; at last another came behind me, run me into the thigh, laid hold on the collar of my doublet, and drew me to a hedge near to the place. Then came in another; they did not take my money, but mounted me behind one of them, drew my arms about his middle, and fastened my wrists together with something that had a spring lock to it as I conceived, by hearing it give a snap as they put it on; then they threw a great cloak over me, and carried me away. In the night they alighted at a hayrick which stood near unto a stone pit by a wall-side, where they took away my money, about two hours before day (as I heard one of them tell the other he thought it to be then). They tumbled me into the stone pit, they staid (as I thought) about an hour at the hayrick. When they took horse again, one of them bade me come out of the pit; I answered they had my money already, and asked what they would do with me; whereupon he struck me again, drew me out and put a great quantity of money to my pockets, and mounted me again after the same manner. And on the Friday night, about sun-setting, they brought me to a house... where they took me down almost dead, being sorely bruised with the carriage of the money. When the woman of the house saw I could neither stand nor speak, she asked them whether or no they had brought a dead man? They answered no, but a friend that was hurt, and they carrying him to a chirurgeon. She answered that if they did not make haste their friend would be dead before they could bring him to one. There they laid me on cushions, and suffered none to come into the room, but a little girl; there we stayed all night, they giving me some broth and strong waters. In the morning, very early, they mounted me as before, and on Saturday night they brought me to a place where were two or three houses, in one of which I lay all night on cushions, by their bedside. On Sunday morning they carried me from thence, and about three or four o'clock they brought me to a place by the seaside, called Deal, where they laid me down on the ground; and one of them staying by me, the other two walked a little off, to meet a man, with whom they talked; and in their discourse I heard them mention seven pounds, after which they went away together, and about half an hour after returned.

“The man (whose name, as I after heard, was Wrenshaw) said he feared I would die before he could get me on board; then presently they put me into a boat, and carried me on shipboard, where my wounds were dressed. I remained in the ship (as near as I could reckon) about six weeks, in which time I was indifferently recovered of my wounds and weakness. Then the master of the ship came and told me (and the rest who were in the same condition) that he discovered three Turkish ships; we all offered to fight in the defence of the ship and ourselves, but he commanded us to keep close, and said he could deal with them well enough. A little while after he called us up, and when we came on the deck we saw two Turkish ships close by us. Into one of them we were put, and placed in a dark hole, where how long we continued before we were landed, I know not. When we were landed they led us two days' journey, and put us into a great house or prison, where we remained four days and a half. And then came to us eight men to view us, who seemed to be officers; they called us and examined us of our trades and callings, which everyone answered; one said he was a chirurgeon, another that he was a broadcloth weaver, and I (after two or three demands) said I had some skill in physic. We three were set by and I was chosen by a grave physician of 87 years of age, who lived near to Smyrna, who had formerly been in England and knew Crowland, in Lincolnshire, which he preferred before all other places in England. He employed me to keep his still house, and gave me a silver bowl, double gilt, to drink in; my business was most in that place; but once he set me to gather cotton wool, which I not doing to his mind, he struck me down to the ground, and after drew his stiletto to stab me; but I, holding up my hands to him, he gave a stamp, and turned from me.... I was there about a year and three-quarters, and then my master fell sick on a Thursday, and sent for me, and calling me as he used by the name of Boll told me he should die, and bade me shift for myself. He died on Saturday following, and I presently hastened with my bowl to a port about a day's journey distant.... When I came thither, I addressed myself to two men who came out of a ship of Hamborough, which (as they said) was bound for Portugal within three or four days. I enquired of them for an

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English ship, they answered there was none. I entreated them to take me into their ship; they answered they durst not for fear of being discovered by the searchers.”

To abbreviate Mr. Harrison a little: he at length prevailed on another man of the same ship to take him on board; the effective argument being a sight of the gilt bowl. He was placed below in the vessel “in a very uneasy place,” and so well hidden that he escaped the Turkish searchers and was finally landed at Lisbon, free but moneyless. Here he fortunately fell in with an Englishman, a native of Wisbech, who paid for his passage to Dover, and so, with some pious and becoming expression of gratitude, Mr. William Harrison ends the story of his adventures, perils and deliverances.

Now, it may or may not have been noted, that I have told the whole story without comment or expression of opinion of any kind. And I have not commented, because I have no notion whether there is a single word of truth in the story. My authority is the State Trials, and one might think, on the face of it, that no more solid foundation of fact could be desired. But this is not so. The account in the State Trials is merely a reprint of a pamphlet issued in London in the year 1676:

“A True and Perfect Account of the Examination, Confession, Trial, Condemnation and Execution of Joan Perry, and her two sons, John and Richard Perry, for the Supposed Murder of William Harrison, Gent. London, printed for Rowland Reynolds, next Arundel Gate, over against St. Clement's Church in the Strand, 1676.”

The pamphlet gives as its authority a letter sent by Sir T. O. (Thomas Overbury) to T. S. (T. Shirley), a London physician; but as both these gentlemen are far beyond all cross-examination, nothing is established thereby. Of course, the story reeks with improbabilities. At first sight, the most improbable circumstance of all is the conduct of John Perry in swearing away, not only the life of his mother and his brother, but his own life as well. But his conduct is not without precedent. To this day, people give themselves up for murders which they have not committed, and in John Perry's day women confessed freely to having shared in the monstrous horrors of the Witches' Sabbath. If the story be true, John Perry was a hysterical madman. And there is another point: the condemnation and execution of these people for murder, there being no *corpus delicti*—otherwise the body of the dead man or some identifiable part of it—producing; was such a thing possible? Unfortunately, it was. It was against all legal principle. The Civil Law forbade it. Lord Hale said: “I would never convict any person of murder or manslaughter unless the fact were proved to be done, or at least the body found dead.” But, apparently, this was a matter left to the taste and fancy of the judge, for Lord Hale supports his principle by citing two cases in which men were hanged for the murder of persons who proved afterwards to be alive. So there is no improbability in this part of the story. As we have seen, the judge at the first assize, Sir Christopher Turner, held with Lord Hale and refused to try the Perrys, “because the body was not found.” At the next assizes, the judge, Sir Robert Hyde, made no difficulties on the ground of the lacking body.

The big difficulty lies in Mr. Harrison's story. Why was he abducted, and who were his abductors? He speaks of other people on the ship as being in the same condition as himself. Was there a Little Syndicate which operated in old gentlemen, selling them to master mariners at seven pounds apiece? This seems unlikely. And could you transport this sort of goods from Campden, Gloucestershire, to Deal, Kent, without fear of interruption? I do not know; the tale must remain the Campden Wonder, so far as I am concerned.

The Man From Nowhere

In that highly picturesque, but quite un-Dickensian book, “A Tale of Two Cities,” there is a curious chapter describing the reception at the house of Monseigneur—Monseigneur being a great nobleman, high in favour and power at Court. Dickens describes the company:

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“Military officers destitute of military knowledge; naval officers with no idea of a ship; civil officers without a notion of affairs; brazen ecclesiastics of the worst world worldly, with sensual eyes, loose tongues, and looser lives; all totally unfit for their several callings, all lying horribly in pretending to belong to them, but all nearly or remotely of the order of Monseigneur, and therefore foisted on all public employments from which any living was to be got; these were to be told off by the score and the score.”

But there were still more remarkable people present at Monseigneur's reception.

“In the outermost room were half a dozen exceptional people who had had, for a few years, some vague misgiving in them that things in general were going rather wrong. As a promising way of setting them right, half of the half dozen had become members of a fantastic sect of Convulsionists, and were even then considering within themselves whether they should foam, rage, roar, and turn cataleptic on the spot, thereby setting up a highly intelligible finger-post to the future, for Monseigneur's guidance. Besides these Dervishes, were the other three who had rushed into another sect, which mended matters with a jargon about 'the Centre of Truth,' holding that man had got out of the Centre of Truth—which did not need much demonstration—but had not got out of the Circumference, and that he was to be kept from flying out of the Circumference, and was even to be shoved back into the Centre by fasting and seeing of spirits. Among these, accordingly, much discoursing with spirits went on, and it did a world of good which never became manifest.”

Dickens was thinking of a very curious sect, or occult fraternity, which existed in France in the later years of Louis XV. The founder of this fraternity or order (oddly enough, called “The Elect Cohens,” Cohen being taken in its Hebrew significance of priest) was a mysterious person called Don Martines de Pasqually de la Tour, otherwise known as Martinez de Pasquales. Mr. A. E. Waite, from whose most curious and most interesting “Life of Louis Claude de St. Martin” I gather these particulars, says that Martinez was probably of Spanish origin; but that nothing is known of his early life or of the sources of the occult knowledge which he professed, truly or falsely, to hold in his keeping. He said that he was a transfigured disciple of Swedenborg, “and an initiate of the Rose Cross;” and one is tempted to infer from this latter claim that Martinez was either foolish or knavish, since all the story of the Rosicrucians is a dream about an order which never existed. However that may be, the evidence goes to show that Martinez, the Man from Nowhere, was in Paris in 1754, founding the Lodge—there was a Masonic connection—of the Elect Cohens. Later, the centre of the Elect Cohens was moved to Bordeaux, and here Martinez met Saint Martin, a young Tourainian of noble family, then a lieutenant in the regiment of Foix. Saint Martin became an enthusiastic admirer and disciple, and was initiated into the mysteries of the order. He was a valuable adherent; as a man of race he had access to the receptions of Monseigneur, and could propagate there the doctrines of his master. But the order of the Elect Cohens came to an abrupt end. It was understood by the faithful that Martinez had still certain secrets in reserve, that they had not yet attained to the highest grades of the order, when in 1772, the Grand Sovereign of the Elect Cohens was called by private affairs to the island of St. Domingo.

He never returned—in the body—dying there in 1774. And from that time Saint Martin gradually withdrew himself more and more from the world of occultism—which is a world where visible and sensible marvels happen or are supposed to happen—and attached himself to the teaching of Jacob Behmen, to the world of mysticism, where the signs and wonders are of the spirit, not of the body. Saint Martin ended as a Catholic Quaker, if one may use such a term. He accepted all the doctrines of the Church, and denied the efficacy of all its Sacraments.

But there was another disciple of Martinez de Pasquales, the Man from Nowhere, to whom very strange things happened. This was the Abbé Fournié, who wrote a book called “Ce que nous avons été, ce que nous sommes, et ce que nous viendrons,” published in London in 1801, and now very rare. Fournié states that at an early age he conceived “an intense desire for a demonstration of the reality of another life and the truth of the central doctrines of Christianity.”

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After eighteen months of profound agitation—I quote from Mr. Waite's life of Saint Martin—he met an unknown personage who promised a solution of his doubts, and pointing to the throng of a crowded thoroughfare observed: “They know not whither they are going, but thou shalt know.”

This personage was Martinez. The Abbé speaks oddly of him. “He left the disciples often in suspense as to whether he himself were true or false, good or bad, angel of light or fiend. This uncertainty kindled so strongly within me, that night and day I cried out on God to help me, if He really existed. But the more I appealed the more I sank into the abyss, and my only interior answer was the desolating feeling— there is no God, there is no life to come, there is only death and nothingness.” In spite of these desolations the Abbé continued in fervent prayer. He says that light came to him, but only in flashes, and now and then there were visions of things to come, which were afterwards fulfilled. In this manner he continued for five years “full of agitation and darkness, consumed by the desire of God and the contradiction of that desire. At length, on a certain day towards ten o'clock in the evening, I, being prostrated in my chamber, calling on God to assist me, heard suddenly the voice of M. de Pasqually, my director, who had died in the body more than two years previously. I heard him speaking distinctly outside my chamber, the door being closed and the windows in like manner, the shutters also being secured. I turned in the direction of the voice, being that of the long garden belonging to the house, and thereupon I beheld M. de Pasqually with my eyes, who began speaking, and with him: were my father and my mother, both also dead in the body. God knows the terrible night which I passed.”

As Mr. Waite observes, it is clear that this proof of the life to come, so long and so fervently desired by the Abbé Fournié, almost frightened him to death. He describes an extraordinary sensation which accompanied the vision, “as of a hand passing through his body and smiting his soul, leaving an impression of pain which could not be described in words, and seemed to belong rather to eternity than time.” The terror remained in the Abbé's soul as he wrote his story many years after the event; though he declares that he held with the figures of the vision an ordinary conversation, such as he might have held with the living. Then there was added to the ghostly assembly the appearance of his sister, who had been dead for twenty years, and, finally, there came “another being who was not of the nature of men.” The vision returned again and again and became persistent.

It is an extraordinary tale. As Mr. Waite notes, there can be no doubt of the Abbé's sincerity or honesty. There is one mark which distinguishes these apparitions from the apparitions of our modern spiritualistic séance. That is the mark of awe and terror even to the point of agony; of a dread so great that it could be described as a Hand piercing body and spirit. So Job spoke of his vision:

“Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof.

“In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men,

“Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake,

“Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up.”

But, as I understand, the frequenters of the séance experience nothing of the dread of Job, nothing of the awful fear of the Abbé Fournié. They converse easily, familiarly, cosily with the spirits of the dead, and that Hand of Terror does not smite them.

And our conclusion? It is quite impossible to form any conclusion. Probably, I suppose, the long spiritual conflict through which the Abbé had passed had broken down the wall between perception and hallucination. There are all sorts of ways of breaking down this wall, one of them being brandy, the resulting visions being known as delirium tremens. Opium and haschisch also do the work in their manner; staring at a bright object

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such as a pool of ink or a crystal can induce visions in some subjects. And intense fatigue will now and then bring about like results. Amongst the nonsense and lies that gathered about the “Angels of Mons” legend, there were certain veridical stories, which no doubt gave a true account of the experiences of those concerned. Worn-out men on that terrible retreat of August, 1914, found their way barred by spectral chairs and burning candles that were not there. A distinguished officer wrote to me, telling me how he, several of his officers, and several of his men watched for twenty minutes a ghostly army.

“As we rode along I became conscious of the fact that, in the fields on both sides of the road along which we were marching, I could see a very large body of horsemen. These horsemen had the appearance of squadrons of cavalry, and they seemed to be riding across the fields and going in the same direction as we ourselves, and keeping level with us.” A party was sent out to investigate. They found nothing. “We were all dog tired and overtaxed,” said my correspondent; but he notes, very acutely, that all the observers saw the same appearance.

And so the Abbé Fournié may have hallucinated himself into that seeing of visions. Or perhaps not.

Morduck The Witch

The belief in witchcraft died very hard. Indeed, it is not dead yet; but we call the thing and our belief in it by other names. It is not difficult, if you are so disposed, to consult both men and women who have a familiar spirit, in the year 1926.

Richard Hathaway was the defendant in an odd trial in this matter of witchcraft in the first year of Queen Anne. He said he had been bewitched by Sarah Morduck, and twenty years or so earlier, Sarah Morduck would, no doubt, have been hanged for the fact. But it was getting a little late, and so Richard was convicted of being a cheat and impostor, and pilloried in Southwark and Cornhill and at Temple Bar, and imprisoned for six months, and handsomely flogged—for being too late. Indeed Sarah Morduck had a narrow escape. Richard had vomited nails and pins, he could not speak nor open his eyes, great noises were heard in his house; all these troubles being due, as he said, to the spells of Sarah. Accordingly he went to the woman's house and scratched her savagely, and immediately experienced great relief. But there was a clever clergyman then at Southwark, where the persons of the story lived. It seemed that Hathaway, after the relief brought about by his scratchings, had relapsed, and Dr. Martin, rector of St. George's, calling on the man, found that he could neither speak nor see. So Dr. Martin told Hathaway that he had heard of his troubles, and had brought Sarah Morduck with him that she might be scratched again, and another cure effected. But in the background Dr. Martin had another woman, not visible to Hathaway, and when a hand was held out to be scratched, the Doctor had seen to it that it was the other woman's hand. Hathaway's eyes opened, and he began to talk, but, of course, the believers in witchcraft said that proved nothing. It has been laid down by high spiritualist authority that if a ghost is seized at a séance, and is found to be the medium swathed in white muslin, that proves nothing. Consequently, Sarah Morduck was haled from Southwark to the City, and set upon by the rabble, and scratched again in full court, but as luck and the turn of the tide of opinion would have it, acquitted in the end. Hathaway should have taken the hint. But he still persisted that he was bewitched, and now a spell had been laid upon him which prevented him from eating. He was consigned to the care and observation of a surgeon and in public kept up a tremendous fast. But crafty holes had been bored in the walls of his room, and through these holes he was observed to eat and drink most heartily. And so he was put upon his trial as a cheat and an impostor; whereupon the “prayers of the congregation” were asked for him in many churches, and good people collected money to support him in his trials. And poor Sarah, as counsel observed, was in grave danger of being torn in pieces by the mob. Dr. Martin, the Rector of Southwark, told the Court how he managed his ingenious device. There had been some difficulty, he said, in getting a woman who was willing to be scratched.

“I had before met with a poor woman, whom I ordered to follow me, who received alms of the parish, designing she should be the person the experiment should be tried on.... I told her I would give her a shilling if

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she would let this man scratch her. She flew off, and said she would not suffer it for all the world. At last somebody said, `Here is a woman who will suffer herself to be scratched'; and this was one Johnson.”

The Doctor goes on with his story; tells how his plain demonstration that Hathaway was a humbug, a cheat, and a liar did not demonstrate anything to the people who had made up their minds. Nay; the man himself had the impudence to speak to his parish priest in this style:

“Do you not believe,” he said to Dr. Martin, “that I am bewitched?”

“No, I do not.”

“Then,” says he, “I may as well not believe what you say in the pulpit; I may say to you as our Saviour said to the Jews: `Though you see miracles you will not believe.’“

The logic is almost modern.

The good Rector went down to Guildford Assizes, where Sarah Morduck was charged with the capital offence of witchcraft. He gave his evidence, and Sarah was acquitted. And the result to the Doctor?

“When I came to town, I was abused by many people, both openly and privately: `You have the blood of that innocent man to be at your door; the woman had been hanged if you had not saved her; the judgments of God will fall on you.’“

And the general opinion was, added Dr. Martin, that he had been bribed, and the judge had been bribed, and the jury had been bribed, and that on the whole, mercy, and truth, and justice were fled out of the land since Sarah Morduck was not hanged, and oh! what must the feelings of poor Mr Hathaway be in this dreadful trial?

Mr. Bateman, of Pembrokeshire, gave an entertaining account of Hathaway's great performance of vomiting pins.

“I said to him, `I hear you vomit pins!' `Yes,' says he. Says I, `Prithee let me see thee.' So he sat on a low seat, and they gave him something in a cup, and by drinking this I was to see him vomit pins; and he took some drink; but, as far as I could perceive, he did not swallow any. He pretended then to be in an agony and vomited several times, and there were pins on the ground. I had the room swept very clean, and gave him the same again. He vomited again, and there were abundance of pins on the ground again. I believe he vomited fourteen or fifteen times, and I believe there were some hundreds of pins on the ground; but I thought the pins were dropt from one or other; and I took up some of them, and they were dry.”

Mr. Bateman searched Hathaway, and found pins by the parcel in his pockets. The man from Pembrokeshire concludes, sanely enough, that rascal Hathaway had some trick of dropping the pins on the ground, but he confesses that he could not catch him in the act, though he observed him keenly and closely. Then one Hearne, brother of the supposed witch, told how his sister was set upon and grievously used by the mob. Hearne applied for protection to Sir Thomas Lane, a magistrate, and that wise Solomon of a judge said there had been grievous provocation; and all the satisfaction Morduck and her brother received from the Court was that Sir Thomas ordered the witch to be scratched again. This done, Hathaway, supposed to be fasting under an evil spell, fell on some bread and cheese with enormous appetite, and “brustled about like a cock sparrow.” Nobody could resist this, so poor Sarah Morduck was committed by Sir Thomas Lane to take her trial for witchcraft. Mr. Kensy, the surgeon to whose care Hathaway was entrusted, then told, with much liveliness, how he had laid traps for the impostor, how he had feigned a furious quarrel with his servant in Hathaway's presence; and how this servant, instructed by him, arranged to bring the man food and drink in secret; and how the doctor viewed, through a secret hole in the wall, Mr. Hathaway consuming fish, oysters, strong beer

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and brandy with immense relish, with so much relish, indeed, that he became extremely unwell. The maid—servant who was in the plot gave an example of the abusive language used by her master in the course of the sham quarrel: he called her “presbyterian jade”; a phrase that shows that people had not yet forgotten Oliver's days in the first year of the reign of Queen Anne. And the maid relates how she gave Hathaway a bottle of stout—I did not know that strong porter was called so as far back as this—and this drink was so stout that the cheat became very merry, and danced about, and took the tongs and played upon them. But after that he was mighty sick—details omitted. Strange noises were heard every night in the house where Hathaway slept. A psychical researcher, named Hunt, told how he had observed this side of the mystery. Hathaway was put to bed, “three little things in black bags” called “the charms” were sewed on his shirt, and Mr. Hunt presently observed the man moving his hands about. Hunt struck the fellow's hands and told him to keep them still or put them out of the bed.

“Then I and the company sitting still about the bed, Welling (Hathaway's master) said, ‘Hearken, you will not believe; hear what a noise there is; the like is heard here almost every night.’ Whereupon all were silent. At last I heard a small scratching or rubbing at the bed's feet; and putting my head close to the bed's feet, listening, I heard something shriek; and perceiving the bed—clothes stir, I took hold of the fellow's foot, and said, ‘I have caught the witch that made the noise.’ I thought it had been mice at first, but seeing the clothes move, I caught his foot.”

And so on, and so on. The defence called their witnesses who were sure, or almost sure, that Hathaway was bewitched. One of these, Mrs. Willoughby, gives curious evidence.

L. C. J. “Do you think he was bewitched?”

Willoughby. “I believe he was, my lord.”

L. C. J. “I suppose you have some skill in witchcraft. Did you ever see anybody that was bewitched before?”

Willoughby. “My lord, I have been under the same circumstances myself, when I was a girl...I flew over them all ...one held me by one arm, another by the other, and another behind, and I flew sheer over their heads.”

L. C. J. “Woman, can you produce any of these women that saw you fly?”

But they were dead. After the Lord Chief Justice had summed up, the jury found Hathaway guilty with all convenient speed, and he received the sentence that his crimes deserved.

And the odd thing is that when I began to unbury this old tale, I thought it might interest because it was so hopelessly obsolete. But it seems to me now that there are modern applications in it; enough and to spare.

“Characters”

I am wondering as I look through my book of “Characters” whether the number of queer people in the world has actually diminished in the last hundred years, or whether they are simply neglected, suffered to go about dressing oddly, behaving oddly, talking oddly, and dying oddly, without the tribute of more than a brief paragraph in the newspapers. On the whole, I am inclined to think this latter the true explanation of the case. For, as I remember, I once tried to draw a pale outline of a truly remarkable character who lived in our day; say some fourteen or fifteen years ago. In those days I was connected with a daily paper, and in the routine of the office I was sent down one fine day to Reigate, to make enquiries about a certain Mr. Campo Tosto, who had lived near that town, and had left his wealth—wealth of a curious kind—in a somewhat curious manner. At Reigate, I found that Mr. Campo Tosto's house was about four miles away, and that it was situated in a hamlet called Burnt Green. I began to be entertained. Decidedly, there was to be something odd about this

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tale. Here was the late Campo Tosto living at Burnt Green; which was to all intents and purposes a translation of his name into English. Very good; elated, I hired a trap at Reigate, and we drove on our way. I asked the driver if he knew anything about Campo Tosto, deceased. Not much; he was a queer old gentleman; he didn't like people about his grounds, and sometimes he would shoot at trespassers.

“Shoot!” said I. “Shoot at them with a gun!”

“Yes, with a gun now and then; but mostly with a bow and arrows!”

Now there were two oddities mentioned in the paragraph on which my enquiries were based. The wealth of Campo Tosto consisted almost wholly in antiquities and objects of art. The late fifteenth century had been the queer old gentleman's favourite period; and his collection contained all sorts of pieces of that age: pictures, chests, spike candlesticks, statues; valued, I believe, at two thousand pounds or thereabouts. And all this property he had left to a man who, with his wife, had looked after him for some time. This man had been a farm labourer, and his name was Turk; an odd sort of name for an English labourer. We drew near the residence of the late Campo Tosto; a house removed a little way from the road on a slight hillside; a place rather pretentious in a small way without being in the least interesting; about fifty or sixty years old, I suppose. And just then we ran into Mr. Turk, the happy heir of mediæval art. He seemed worried. Men with cameras and long sticks buzzed about him. They wanted him to be photographed in the interests of the public, but he denied them, and did so with considerable irritation. I jumped out of the trap, and put my business before him. He stood still for a moment; and that was enough. Four cameras clicked at once, as Mr. Turk firmly declined to have anything to do with me. Turk declared that he would tell me nothing, show me nothing. “This is the only thing I'll do for you,” he said. “Give me that paper,” I gave him my paper, open at the “leader page.” He deliberately turned it upside down, and read out nine or ten lines of inverted type with the greatest ease, and with absolute correctness.

“You see,” said Turk, cunningly, “I used to be a farm labourer, but of late I've had a lot to do with fuller's earth.”

He was evidently convinced that he had furnished me with a complete and lucid explanation of his singular feat; a matter which is no feat at all to those engaged in the technical side of newspaper production, but not an accomplishment of the ordinary man.

I walked beside him on the path leading to his hall door. I was endeavouring to wheedle and persuade; without the faintest result. Now and again, he would stop to emphasise his denial with a blow of his fist on his open palm; and again the cameras went click, click. Finally, we got to the hall door, which was half glass. I had just caught a glimpse of a huddle of strange things within; Madonnas dim and rich, in curious frames of carven gold, great brass candlesticks that had stood before Flemish altars and had heard the holy mutter of the Mass, carved chests with linen-fold panels, saints in oak, grey with age—when Mrs. Turk appeared, terrible as an army with banners. Not even the men of the cameras could abide her onset. We all fled, as sheep before the wolf.

And then I went home and set down everything, just as it had happened. But it never got into print. People in authority at the newspaper office sidled into my room and looked at me quietly, keenly. They took counsel together over the matter. I think it was lucky that my engagements for the next few weeks were of an entirely ordinary kind, for if I had lit on anything remotely resembling the wonder world that had been disclosed to me at Burnt Green, I feel sure that I should have had an interview with a specialist; a specialist in the affairs of the mind.

The moral is obvious. We do not hear of “Characters” now, because men are not suffered to write about them. They have become incredible, owing, as I believe, to a certain grossness and thickening of the power of

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apprehension. I have known many characters myself: there was the case of the lady, a member of a wandering company of entertainers, whose sentimental and pathetic ballad usually touched all hearts at the seaside. One afternoon she perceived to her amazement and indignation that the ballad was not going at all well. She heard some gasps of horrified wonder, then chuckles, then open mirth. Furious, and rightly so, for she was a most delightful and accomplished singer, she turned to leave the stage, and, turning, she saw the cause of this altered reception. On the floor, against the backcloth depicting a happy valley, bowered in roses, there crawled on his stomach another member of the company. One eye was upturned, and it was bloodshot. Between his teeth he held a gigantic carving knife. Years afterwards, this same gentleman caused some little commotion in Holborn, between two and three in the morning. He was reposing on his back in a horse-trough, calling loudly for his solicitor, declining to move till his legal adviser should attend. And the resident in a southern suburb who demanded in a formal and serious letter that his next door neighbour should chain up the bees in his hive, "because your bee has stung my baby's bottom"—he deserved fame, but the age denies it him.

It was otherwise of old. "Characters" were once a literary genre; and I have often wondered as to those who compiled these chronicles of odd and whimsical lives. There is a certain style which was evidently considered appropriate to the matter; for the manner of these biographies never varies. The stranger the tale, the more stolid, flat and insipid does the chronicler become. I feel sure that every word is true; no liar could write with such dulness. Take the case of Betty Bolaine, born at Canterbury, in the year 1723. She was of "a covetous turn." She smiled on many suitors for the sake of the presents they gave her.

"At an assembly at Canterbury, when large hoop-petticoats were universally worn, the ladies, complaining of the inconvenience of the fashion, agreed to lay aside their hoops for awhile. Miss Bolaine objected to this proposal, fearing her saving contrivances would make her laughed at. However, her objections were overcome by her companions, and instead of a cane hoop she exhibited a straw one stitched with pack-thread and red tape and covered by an old dirty apron of her father's."

Miss Bolaine found a man after her own heart, a Mr. Box, with whom she set up house-keeping on the most economical principles.

"With this man she could eat a mouldy crust, with frowsy or stinking meat, sometimes picked up in the road, and cooked on cabbage stalks, burnt with turf, which was constantly stolen from the commons by night. These, with dried furze bushes, and dead stalks from their garden, constantly supplied fuel all the year round.... At this time, she was sometimes seen in a jacket crimped round her waist, and made of bed furniture, having monkeys, macaws and frogs depicted in needlework.... Her upper bonnet (for she wore two) consisted of thirty-six pieces of black stuff, curiously joined together; the under one was an old chip hat she once found on a dunghill in a garden, and which she was remembered to have worn nineteen years at least. Over this covering sometimes she would throw pieces of gauze, silk brocade, and tiffany, to make herself fine, as she thought...in this manner did she call every Sunday evening on the Dean of Canterbury, stumping through the hall and up the great staircase into the drawing-room."

There is something stupendous about this bundle of unsavoury rags calling on the Dean of Canterbury; and Miss Bolaine's will was also picturesque. A dozen or so of people had endured her and bribed her for long years; and she left the whole of her fortune of £20,000 to a Prebendary of Canterbury, whose acquaintance she had just made.

The miser was a great favourite with the depicter of "Characters," as the friends of Mr. Boffin and of Silas Wegg will remember, but he had other strings to his bow. There was the Reverend George Harvest, "a lover of good eating almost to gluttony, extremely negligent in his dress, and a believer in ghosts, goblins, and fairies": there was the great painter, George Morland, who went through the ways of Marylebone, carrying a pig which he matched against every dog he met; there was Thomas Topham who could roll up a large pewter dish with his fingers; the Cock Lane Ghost; and the Fasting Woman of Tutbury—for Mrs. Nickleby, it seems,

was wrong in alluding to this Character as the Thirsty Woman.

“Doubles” In Crime

There are cases, in life and at law, which must ever remain mysteries. We may be assured, as reasonable beings, that the verdict was truly given, that the truth of the matter was reached, and yet at the unreasonable back of our heads there will be that little jot of hesitation, that unjustifiable “and yet,” which refuses to be quashed or put out of court.

There is such a case as this in Montagu Williams's wonderful volume of reminiscences. The affair happened somewhere in the mid-'eighties, and in its day was known as “The Brighton Bigamy.” One Miss Emma Dash met a gentleman on the Parade at Brighton, shortly before Eastertide. He introduced himself. He said he had met Miss Dash at a dance in London, and he was allowed to join the young lady, who was promenading with her mother. Captain McDonald—that was the name he gave—told the story of his heart. He was a sea captain, and four years before he had been engaged to a lady, who, her mother said, was over young to marry yet. So the Captain waited; but when he returned from his last voyage he found his sweetheart married to another. And he drew a moral: if he ever did get married, he avowed, he would take his wife aboard with him. Captain McDonald, it appeared, was every inch a sailor. One might almost venture to call him a Jack Tar. There were no cautious delays, no slow deliberations for him. He was full of the rush, the fine impulsiveness of the deep blue mariner—of fiction. That very afternoon, on permission given, he called on the young lady and her mother, and drove Miss Dash to Lewes. They dined at the White Hart and drove back to Brighton. At the station, the Captain took train to London, promising to send a wire to Miss Dash. The wire was duly received; it requested Miss Dash to meet the 12.34 train, and, if possible, secure the man who had driven them to Lewes. The two met, drove to Worthing, dined there, and returned to Brighton. The Captain saw Miss Dash home, and asked the mother for the daughter's hand. Mrs. Dash said that really they had known him for a very short time; still, she gave her consent. Captain McDonald thereupon said that he would get the licence directly. In the course of conversation he happened to mention the name of his ship: it was the *Kaikoura*. Next day came the Captain with the licence, and the two went to a clergyman. The Captain, evidently unprejudiced by any ecclesiastical bias, said he would like to be married on Good Friday. But the clergyman declined, and it was arranged that the wedding should take place the day after, Easter Eve. They were duly married at St. James's Church, among those present being Mrs. Dash, a Miss Lewis, and a Mr. May. After the breakfast Captain and Mrs. McDonald went away to Chichester. They came back to Brighton on Easter Monday, and the Captain departed, to go to his ship, as he said, there to make arrangements for the due reception and entertainment of his bride. But he never came back.

Some months afterwards, a Mr. Osborne, who had been one of the wedding guests, was at a garden-party at Fulham, given by the Butchers' Company. There he saw a gentleman dressed as a Highlander, and he thought he recognised him as that missing Highlander, Captain McDonald. Osborne thereupon tapped his man on the shoulder, and accused him of being Miss Dash's recreant husband. The Highlander denied it, and said his name was Malcolm. He was detained, and poor Miss Dash—or Mrs. Captain McDonald—was brought up from Brighton, and promptly identified the man as her husband. Mr. Malcolm denied everything. He said he had never been to Brighton in his life, and that he was married to another lady. When it came to the trial, the bride, the priest, and all the wedding guests swore without hesitation that Malcolm and McDonald were the same. On the other hand, Montagu Williams, defending, called, as he says, a host of witnesses who swore, also without hesitation, that the prisoner was in London on the days when, according to the prosecution, he was courting Miss Dash and getting married at Brighton. Mr. Malcolm, who was a meat-salesman at Newgate Market, received a most excellent character; he was, they said, the strictest of teetotallers. And Mr. Williams, his counsel, was able to produce a better piece of evidence even than this. He called the manageress of the hotel at Brighton where Captain McDonald told Miss Dash that he was staying, just before the wedding. The manageress swore that on the night before Good Friday a Captain McDonald was undoubtedly staying at her hotel, and also that the prisoner was, most certainly, not the Captain McDonald whom she had entertained.

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But then, again, all the wedding guest witnesses recognised on Malcolm's face a scar which, they said, they had seen on the face of McDonald. The signature on the marriage register was produced, and the master-butcher, Malcolm's employer, admitted, against his will, that, in his opinion, the name McDonald was in the handwriting of his man, Malcolm. And then, a very odd circumstance: McDonald had told Miss Dash that his ship was called the Kaikoura. And this was the name of a ship which had brought over a consignment of meat from Australia to Malcolm's master—a short while before McDonald went courting at Brighton.

The general defence was that Malcolm must have a double, a man exactly like him, who could honestly be mistaken for him. And this strange thing happened, in fact, which happened in fancy in the “Tale of Two Cities.”

“While I was addressing the jury,” says Montagu Williams, “and dwelling upon the probability that there were two men concerned who closely resembled one another, an individual, either by accident or design, wandered into the Court and took up his place underneath the dock, when it was immediately perceived that he bore a striking resemblance to the prisoner. It was, of course, not for one moment suggested that he was the mysterious bridegroom.”

The jury disagreed. The case was tried again in the following sessions, but by that time Montagu Williams was too ill to undertake the defence. “O Jaggerth, Jaggerth, Jaggerth! all otherth ith Cag—Maggerth, give me Jaggerth.” Malcolm was defended by another counsel, found guilty, and sentenced to five years' penal servitude. And, apparently, the verdict was a just one, since Montagu Williams adds: “It subsequently transpired that Miss Dash was not the only woman with whom he had committed bigamy.”

And yet, what about that “host of witnesses” (say half a dozen) who swore that Malcolm was in London, not at Brighton, on the critical dates? Professional perjurers, hired on the Jagger's system? Possibly. And the hotel manageress, with her evidence as to a Captain McDonald, who was not the prisoner, Malcolm, staying at her hotel? Here it would be interesting to consult the full report of the case. In the summary before me, it does not appear whether the manageress were asked if this guest of hers were like the prisoner, though she was sure he was, in fact, not the prisoner. There, evidently, is the real point. McDonald is not a very rare name. It might easily happen that a veritable McDonald and a man who had falsely taken the name might be in Brighton at the same time.

How Clubs Began

One or two shop fronts of our old Regent Street still survive amongst the ruins and the new buildings which are more depressing than any ruins. But the goodly street is ended, and it seems fitting that Mr. Jaschke, the Barber of Kings, did not long survive the destruction of his famous shop.

There was a picture in his window that was one of the features of London, like the Filter in Fleet Street and—in the same thoroughfare—the Meerscham Pipe, with the carving of the Battle of Leipsic on the bowl, priced at one hundred guineas. Mr. Jaschke's picture represented a personage in the costume of a hundred years ago. Long, dark locks flowed luxuriant and profuse over his shoulders, and the inscription was, “The Secret of Beau Brummel.” It advertised some cunning preparation which would make baldness impossible; and it is gone, like many another London landmark. Too many, indeed, of these landmarks have departed from us, and the men who come back to us after their years of service in the Malay States and China and Persia will look round vainly, seeking for things that are to be seen no more. It was not so formerly. Twenty years ago a friend of mine who had been in China for some time came back and found London the same as ever. “Nothing has changed,” he said. “The chickens are still feeding in the window of the incubator shop at the top of Regent Street.” The chickens have long flown away.

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But about Mr. Jaschke and his shop. We have all heard how King Edward pronounced him to be the perfect barber; the man who knew not only the art of beard-trimming in perfection, but also that more difficult art of hearing everything and saying nothing. Royalty was the province of Jaschke's razor and scissors; his back shop was called the House of Lords, so noble was the custom of the place. And, considering these things, the awful question has just struck me: what would have happened to me if I had strolled into Jaschke's and asked for a shave or a hair cut? This is a very deep and perplexing question, but the situation is not without precedent. Newman Noggs, it may be remembered, once escorted Miss Morleena Kenwigs to a highly genteel establishment in Soho, where they not only cut and curled ladies elegantly and children carefully, but shaved gentlemen easily. And while Morleena's pigtails were being attended to there presented himself for shaving a big, burly, good-humoured coal-heaver, with a pipe in his mouth, who, drawing his hand across his chin, requested to know when a shaver would be disengaged.

The journeyman, to whom this question was put, looked doubtfully at the young proprietor, and the young proprietor looked scornfully at the coal-heaver, observing at the same time:

“You won't get shaved here, my man.”

“Why not?” said the coal-heaver.

“We don't shave gentlemen in your line,” remarked the young proprietor.

“Why, I see you a-shaving of a baker, when I was a-looking through the winder, last week,” said the coal-heaver.

“It's necessary to draw the line somewheres, my fine fellow,” replied the principal. “We draw the line there. We can't go beyond bakers. If we was to get any lower than bakers, our customers would desert us, and we might shut up shop.” The situations seem to me fairly analogous. But what would I have said, if I had ventured into the “House of Lords” at Jaschke's, asked for a shave, and been told that Jaschke didn't shave gentlemen in my line? Should I have observed, “I see you a-shaving of a temporary major,” and would Jaschke have replied that he drew the line at temporary majors? It is a curious and a doubtful point.

And that consideration led me to another curious point, how, formerly at all events, things that were nominally public were, in fact, private. In the mythical days before the War you might find yourself in an old-fashioned country town and wander into the bar-parlour of an old-fashioned inn. There would be half a dozen comfortable-looking men, substantial farmers and tradesmen, talking together over their reasonable potations, and by the fire an inviting and an empty chair. In it you would sit down, and as you did so a round man would beg your pardon “but that's Mr. Apple's chair.” “He's sat in that chair every night for thirty years, has Mr Apple,” another round man would say to his neighbour, and there would be nothing for it but to get up as quickly as possible and leave Mr. Apple his place by the hearth. And in some such fashion, I suppose, certain of the old coffee-houses and chocolate-houses were converted from a public to a private use, sometimes by way of business, sometimes by way of pleasure.

Lloyd's was once Lloyd's Coffee House, and White's was White's Chocolate House in the year 1700, and for some time after. Indeed, as late as 1733, the proprietor, Mr. Arthur, “having had the misfortune to be burnt out of White's Chocolate House, is removed to Gaunt's Coffee House, next the St. James's Coffee House in St. James's Street, where he humbly begs they”—“all noblemen and gentlemen”—“will favour him with their company as usual.” Evidently, it was still an open house, in name at all events; and it would probably be a difficult matter to trace the successive steps by which White's became a club in the modern sense, open to its members, but strictly private as far as all others were concerned. Possibly a room was at first appropriated to the use of a few constant and privileged customers, who constituted the club and eventually took possession of all the rooms in the Chocolate House. There was, no doubt, a transitional period, as Davies, writing of Colley

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Cibber, remarks:

“But Colley, we are told, had the honour to be a member of the great club at White's and so, I suppose, might any man who wore good clothes and paid his money when he lost it.”

Indeed, it is certain that Colley Cibber was a member, since a book of rules and list of members dated 1736 contains his name, with those of the Duke of Devonshire, the Earls of Cholmondeley, Chesterfield and Rockingham, Sir John Cope, and Major-General Churchill. It seems likely, then, that Davies—he was the Tom Davies who kept the bookseller's shop in Russell Street, Covent Garden, where Boswell first met Johnson—was wrong in thinking that any well-dressed man who paid his gaming debts could be a member of “the great club at White's.” There might have been a public room into which the well-dressed man might stroll; but I do not think he would stay very long in the room occupied by the Duke and the Earls.

The first traces of a club subscription are to be found in the 1736 rules. It is directed that “every member is to pay one guinea a year towards having a good Cook,” and it was not till 1775 that this guinea became ten and of general application. A few years later an order was made that dinner should be served daily while Parliament was sitting, the reckoning to be twelve shillings a head: in our money, at least two guineas, and probably more. The old Chocolate House, as it existed in the days of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* had been distinguished for “gallantry and intrigue, pleasure and entertainment,” the later club had become the headquarters of high play. Walpole writes in 1750:

“They have put in the papers a good story made on White's. A man dropped down dead at the door was carried in; the club immediately made bets whether he was dead or not, and when they were going to bleed him the wagers for his death interposed, and said it would affect the fairness of the bet.”

And so Lord Lyttleton says that he trembles to think that “the rattling of a dice-box at White's may one day or other (if my son should be a member of that noble academy) shake down all our fine oaks.”

Indeed, the rules deal more and more with the apparatus of gambling. A rule of 1736 directs that “every member who is in the room after 7 o'clock and plays is to pay Half a Crown.” Note, by the way, that the phrase “in the room” goes to confirm my conjecture that the original club occupied one room in the Chocolate House; there being other rooms open to Davies' man in good clothes, who was not a member. Then, the “Picket Cards” are to be charged to the Dinner or Supper Bill, and the Quinze players are to pay for their own cards, the Dice used at Hazard are to be paid for by Boxes, and it is ordained that each member who plays at Chess, Draughts, or Backgammon “do pay One Shilling each time of playing by daylight and half a crown Each by candlelight.” But White's, like the barber in “Nicholas Nickleby,” did draw the line somewhere. There was a Rule that “No Member of the Club shall hold a Faro Bank.”

Polite Correspondance

They talk much of Dr. Johnson's Letter to Lord Chesterfield. Certainly, it is an amazing, a triumphant epistle. It is, perhaps, the palmary example of how agony long endured, shame, misery and humiliation can at last turn to flame and a sword, and rend and devour and hew asunder the wretched tormentor who is found at last to be but a Wig and buckram and a grin and a black heart. Listen to the phrases. They are well known, and yet I think that they cannot be too well known.

“When upon some slight encouragement I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address; and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found myself so little encouraged that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your Lordship in publick, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly

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scholar can possess. I had done all that I could, and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

“Seven years, my Lord, have now passed since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a Patron before...the notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known and do not want it.”

“Till I am solitary and cannot impart it.” Johnson's wife had died in the interval between the beginning and the end of the Dictionary. An absurd woman, they say, many years older than Johnson, given to “cordials” somewhat too freely, given also to the extravagant use of paint as applied to the face; but yet the Doctor loved her dearly. It would have been an exquisite joy to tell his “Tetty” how the great Lord Chesterfield was the fervent friend of the poor, ragged, starving scholar, the approver of his work and his helper in it. But Tetty was dead, and it had never been possible to utter that comfortable word; and so, I say, agony turns to flaming fire, to this great letter of denunciation.

There is no letter that I know of worthy of being compared with it. But Johnson's letter is tragedy; the spectacle of a soul on fire, while yet the tears rain down from the man's eyes. There is no spectacle, I think, that can be paralleled with this. But if I were compiling an anthology of letters, I believe that I could find something on the comic side, worthy at least of being in the same volume.

A little way off the white limestone road that winds by the river from Newport to Caerleon-on-Usk, in Monmouthshire, there is, or was, an ancient dwelling called St. Julians. In this place lived, in the time of Queen Elizabeth, a certain Sir William Herbert, third son of the first Earl of Pembroke. This gentleman was once annoyed by a Mr. Morgan, who is only known as the object of Sir William's fury. And thus we begin:

“Sir—Peruse this letter in God's name. Be not disquieted. I reverence your hoary hair. Although in your son I find too much folly and lewdness, yet in you I expect gravity and wisdom. It hath pleased your son, late of Bristol, to deliver a challenge to a man of mine, on the behalf of a gentleman (as he said) ‘as good as myself’ who he was, he named not, neither do I know; but if he be as good as myself, it must be either for virtue, for birth, for ability, or for calling and dignity: for virtue, I think he meant not, for it is a thing which exceeds his judgment; if for birth, he must be the heir male of an Earl, the heir in blood of ten Earls, for in testimony thereof I bear their several coats. Besides, he must be of the blood royal, for by my grandmother Devereux, I am lineally and legitimately descended out of the body of Edward IV. If for ability, he must have a thousand pounds a year in possession, a thousand pounds more in expectation, and must have some thousands in substance besides. If for calling and dignity, he must be knight, or lord of several seignories, in several kingdoms; a lieutenant of his county; and a counsellor of a province.

“Now, to lay all circumstances aside, be it known to your son, or to any man else, that if there be anyone who beareth the name of gentleman, and whose words are of reputation in his county, that doth say, or dare say, that I have done unjustly, spoken an untruth, stained my credit and reputation in this matter, or in any matter else, wherein your son is exasperated, I say he lieth in his throat, and my sword shall maintain my word upon him, in any place or province, wheresoever he dare, and where I stand not sworn to observe the peace. But if they be such as are within my governance, and over whom I have authority, I will, for their reformation, chastise them with justice, and for their malapert misdemeanour bind them to their good behaviour. Of this sort I account your son, and his like; against whom I will shortly issue my warrant, if this my warning doth not reform them. And so I thought fit to advertise you hereof, and leave you to God.”

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How magnificent is “my grandmother Devereux!” The race of such grandmothers is, I am sure, extinct. No man can write such a letter now. No man dares in these days to think so nobly of himself and his ancestors. Sir Leicester Dedlock, even, would not have addressed Mr. Lawrence Boythorn in this superb and exalted manner. He would have instructed Mr. Tulkinghorn to take some kind of proceedings, and though Mr. Tulkinghorn was a great man in his way, after all he was but an attorney. And recourse to an attorney is but a shabby substitute for the resounding boasts and the terrific threats of “old Sir William Herbert of St. Gillyans,” as his age called him.

And now for an example of a very different school of letter-writing. We are to fall a little in the world. Our polite correspondent is neither a Georgian saint and sage, nor a high Elizabethan gentleman. He is Mr. Percy Mapleton, generally known as Lefroy, who is in Maidstone Gaol, awaiting his trial for the murder of Frederick Isaac Gold upon the 27th of June, 1881. He is addressing a lady who, I believe, was a relation of his:

“My Darling Annie,

“I am getting this posted secretly by a true and kind friend, and I trust you implicitly to do as I ask you. Dearest, should God permit a verdict of ‘Guilty’ to be returned, you know what my fate must be unless you prevent it, which you can do by assisting me in this way. Send me (concealed in a common meat pie, made in an oblong tin cheap dish), a saw file, six inches or so long, without a handle; place this at bottom of pie, embedded in under crust and gravy. And now, dearest, for the greater favour of the two. Send me, in centre of a small cake, like your *half-crown* one, a tiny bottle of prussic acid, the smaller the better; this last you could, I believe, obtain from either Drs. Green or Cressy for *destroying a favourite cat*. My darling, believe me when I say, as *I hope for salvation*, that this last should only be used the last night allowed me by the law *to live*, if it comes to that last extremity. Never while a *chance of life remained* would I use it, but only as a last resource.... By packing these, as I say, carefully, sending with them a tin of milk, etc no risk will be incurred as my things are, comparatively speaking, never examined. Get them yourself soon, and direct them in a feigned hand, without any accompanying note. If you receive this safely, and will aid me, by return send a postcard, saying; ‘_Dear P., Captain Lefroy has returned.’“

It has been remarked, I believe, that the profuse use of the italic character is often a sign of a weak and confused mind. It is certainly evidence of such a state in this extraordinary letter of Lefroy's. It will be noted that he italicises phrases which need no italics. “As I hope for salvation,” is quite clear in Roman type; “a chance of life,” “a favourite cat” are phrases which involve no obscurity. There are, indeed, phrases which the commentator might write in italics or mark with bracketed notes of exclamation, and chief of these is Lefroy's remark that his things were, “comparatively speaking, never examined.” How do you “comparatively speaking,” never examine anything? Clearly, the man's mind was a heap of foolishness and confusion; he doesn't even understand how a meat pie is made, as appears by his idle talk about “under crust.” He has been reading silly fictions about prisoners escaping by means of hidden files, the kind of fiction with which Tom Sawyer embittered the life of the unfortunate Jim, who “mashed his teeth” by biting on a brass candlestick

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concealed by Tom in the negro's prison fare. And the “feigned hand” of Lefroy is much on the level of the “nonnamous letters” which Tom insisted on writing to Jim's gaolers. And it must be said that the poor woman to whom this extraordinary letter was addressed seems to have belonged to the crazy world which Lefroy himself inhabited. She replied. She did not say, as kindly as might be, “don't talk nonsense.” She did not perceive that the file business was sheer idiocy, but:

“First I must tell you that the delay about what you mentioned has happened through our being told that only two shops in London make them, but trust before you have this it will have arrived safely; if so, say in your next: `The little basket with butter, etc., came safely.”

And her letter, too, is full of italics, and many phrases are in “small caps.” Lefroy, clearly, was a man of confusion, and lived in a world of confusion. If he had avoided italics, he might have avoided Maidstone Gaol, the hangman and the rope.

Casanova In London

The eighteenth century, that extraordinary, admirable, and detestable age, gave us all manner of wonderful things and men, but was, above all, rich in adventurers, in the species which was rightly named *chevaliers d'industrie*. Rightly, because there was always something of polish, of singularity, of distinction about the eighteenth century rogue. The species, I think, is extinct.

We have swindlers now in plenty, confidence men in abundance. There were some highly ingenious artists in knavery engaged in the case of “Mr. A.” And we have occultists, and occult cranks, and founders of new religions, and initiators in secret rites, enough and more than enough. And again, we have dons, learned men, in profusion. But the type that combined all these types in one has ceased to exist. There is no modern translation of Casanova; swindler, cardsharp, occult quack, profligate, dealer in all the mysteries, man of the world—and LL.D. of the University of Padua at the age of fifteen. There were, as I say, some very clever people who interested themselves in the unfortunate Indian Rajah's banking account; but not one of them, I feel sure, could have written as a degree thesis: *Utrum judaei possint construere novam synagogas*: “Should the Jews be allowed to build new synagogues?” Then, on the other hand: Madame Blavatsky told some amazing tales about Mahatmas, and deceived many persons in high official places. But I never understood that she made much money by it, “it” being taken to mean Theosophy, the “ancient wisdom religion.” Casanova, on the other hand, was accused by the nephew of Madame la Duchesse d'Urfê of having swindled his aunt of a million francs, forty thousand pounds or more. The nephew may have exaggerated, for he was in a rage. But it is certain that Venetian Casanova did very handsomely out of Madame d'Urfê's Rosicrucian delusions.

This ingenious gentleman, Giovanni Giacomo Casanova, visited our shores in the early 'sixties of the eighteenth century, soon after the accession of King George III. He had hired a packet at Calais, and was delighted to accommodate the Duke of Bedford on board. The passage took two and a half hours, and at Dover “the custom-house officials made a minute, offensive, and even an impertinent perquisition.” Still:

“England is different in every respect from the rest of Europe; even the country has a different aspect, and the water of the Thames has a taste peculiar to itself. Everything has its own characteristics, and the fish, cattle, horses, men and women are of a type not found in any other land. Their manner of living is totally different from that of other countries, especially their cookery. The most striking feature in their character is their national pride; they exalt themselves above all other nations.”

Casanova had business in London. He had to call on the famous Madame Comely, Cornelis, or Comelys. This lady, an old Venetian friend of our adventurer, had used in her time many names, but had finally and for English use coined a new one out of the name of a Dutch lover, Cornelius Rigerboos. She had settled down in Carlisle House, Soho Square—afterwards in the occupation of Crosse and Blackwell—just opposite to the

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Venetian Embassy, and here she gave balls, concerts and masquerades to the nobility and gentry on the most splendid scale. But, somehow, she displeased the Grand Jury of the County of Middlesex, who presented her as a public nuisance. Madame was ruined. She became a vendor of asses' milk at Knightsbridge, and died at last in 1797, a prisoner in the Fleet.

But when Casanova called on her in the early sixties, she was in all the splendour of success. In her own words:

“I give twelve balls and twelve suppers to the nobility, and the same number to the middle-classes in the year. I have often as many as six hundred guests at two guineas a head.”

She had two secretaries, over thirty servants, and her gross receipts were £24,000 per annum. And she felt able to be insolent to her old friend Casanova, who resented her behaviour, and took a furnished house in Pall Mall, china, linen and plate included, for twenty guineas a week. He was in disgrace with his own government, since he had broken prison in a spectacular and amazing manner, and so he was presented at Court by the French ambassador, the Comte de Guerchi. King George III spoke in a low voice, but his Queen seems to have been lively. She spoke of the Venetian Ambassador Extraordinary:

“M. Querini amused me extremely, he called me a little devil.”

“He meant to say,” replied Casanova, “that your highness is as witty as an angel.”

And one seems to hear the voice of a later member of the Royal house remarking severely:

“We are not amused.”

Casanova had managed to get introductions to fine company in England. He called on Lady Harrington and played whist for small stakes, losing fifteen guineas. He was given a lesson in English manners.

“You paid in gold,” said Lady Harrington. “I suppose you had no bank-notes about you?”

“Yes, my lady, I have notes for fifty and a hundred pounds.”

“Then you must change one of them or wait till another time to pay, for, in England, to pay in gold is a solecism only pardonable in a stranger. Perhaps you noticed that the lady smiled.”

Many things struck Casanova as strange. He was invited by a younger son of the Duke of Bedford to oysters and champagne at a tavern. They drank two bottles of champagne, and the Duke's son made Casanova pay half the cost of the second bottle. And the tavern cooking: they laughed at Casanova when he said that he did not care to dine at taverns, because he could not get soup.

“Are you ill?” said the Englishmen. “Soup is only fit for invalids.”

The English of the day, says Casanova, were wholly carnivorous; they ate neither soup nor dessert: “which circumstance made me remark that an English dinner is like eternity; it has no beginning and no end. Soup is considered very extravagant, as the very servants refuse to eat the meat from which it has been made. They say it is only fit to give to dogs. The salt beef which they use is certainly excellent. I cannot say the same for their beer, which was so bitter that I could not drink it.”

Casanova went to Drury Lane. By some accident the company could not give the piece that had been announced. The house was in an uproar. “Garrick, the celebrated actor, came forward and tried in vain to

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restore order. He was obliged to retire behind the curtain. Then the King, the Queen, and all the fashionables left the theatre, and in less than an hour the house was gutted, till nothing but the bare walls were left. After this destruction, which went on without any authority interposing, the mad populace rushed to the taverns to consume gin and beer.... Such are the English and above all the Londoners. They hoot the King and the royal family when they appear in public, and the consequence is that they are never seen, save on great occasions, when order is kept by hundreds of constables." Casanova went everywhere; he was to be seen alike in high company and in low. He went to Ranelagh and to Vauxhall, preferring the latter. He strolled into coffee-houses, and now and then caught odd scraps of conversation—when the language used was French or Italian. Thus:

"Tommy has committed suicide, and he was right, for he was in such a state that he could only expect unhappiness for the rest of his life."

"You are quite mistaken," said the other, with the greatest composure. "I was one of his creditors myself, and on making an inventory of his effects I feel satisfied that he has done a very foolish and a very childish thing; he might have lived on comfortably, and not killed himself for fully six months."

And, then, Casanova met Miss Charpillon, of Denmark Street, Soho, and this turned out to be the most unfortunate meeting of his life. Miss Charpillon robbed, swindled, humbugged the experienced old profligate to her heart's content. She drove him to the point of suicide. She belonged to a Swiss family of hereditary bad character, and a few years later she triumphed almost as completely over another wily old practitioner of bad morals, the famous Jack Wilkes. Jack recovered; but Casanova was never quite the triumphant rascal again. One of the consequences of his entanglement with the terrible Charpillon was an appearance before Sir John Fielding at Bow Street. The woman had sworn an information against him. He was arrested and taken before the magistrate, whom he confused with the illustrious novelist, dead in Lisbon many years before.

"At the end of the room I saw a gentleman sitting in an armchair, and concluded him to be my judge. I was right, and the judge was blind. He wore a broad band round his head, passing over his eyes. A man beside me, guessing I was a foreigner, said in French:

"Be of good courage, Mr. Fielding is a just and equitable magistrate."

"I thanked the kindly unknown, and was delighted to see before me this famous and estimable writer, whose works are an honour to the English nation...."

"Signor Casanova," said he in excellent Italian, "be kind enough to step forward. I wish to speak to you."

"I was delighted to hear the accents of my native tongue, and making my way through the press, I came up to the bar of the court, and said:

"Eccomi, Signore."

"He continued to speak Italian, and said:

"Signor de Casanova, citizen of Venice, you are condemned to perpetual confinement in the prisons of his Majesty the King of Great Britain."

This was Sir John's little joke. He explained to Casanova that an information, supported by witnesses, charged him with "intending to do grievous bodily harm to the person of a pretty girl," and that, in consequence, he must be kept in prison for the rest of his days. Casanova declared that he had no intention of doing harm to the pretty girl, who was, of course, Miss Charpillon of Denmark Street. Then two householders were summoned,

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and Casanova was bailed out, after a brief visit to Newgate, which struck him as “a hell such as Dante might have conceived.”

He left London and England in a hurry. There was a forged bill of exchange and a talk of hanging, and Casanova wisely posted away with all speed on the Dover Road.

Mr. Lutterloh

On a famous evening Mr. Boffin called on his literary man in ordinary, Mr. Silas Wegg. He was in a cab, blocked up with books, and he called excitedly:

“Here! lend a hand, Wegg, I can't get out till the way is cleared for me. This is the Annual Register, Wegg, in a cabful of wollumes. Do you know him?”

“Know the Animal Register, sir,” said the Impostor, who had caught the name imperfectly. “For a trifling wager, I think I could find any Animal in him, blindfold, Mr. Boffin.”

I shall never pretend to the minute knowledge affected by Mr. Wegg; but I have been glancing through an odd volume of the Register, and have certainly come across some very queer animals.

And the first of them is a literal animal, the swallow. The account quoted in the Register is from Barrington's Miscellanies. It seems that during the winter the swallow hides itself under water. This is a well-known fact, and Linnæus is quoted in support of it, with many other witnesses. For example, Mr. Stephens, A.S.S.—there seems to me something ominous about these letters—used to pick up bunches of swallows or martins from a pond at Shrivenham, where his father was vicar. “The birds were carried into the kitchen, on which they soon afterwards flew about the room, in the presence of his father, mother, and others, particularly the Rev. Dr. Pye.”

I find it very hard to resist the Rev. Dr. Pye. There is something orthodox, comfortable and full-bodied in his style. I wish I could have seen him as he walked abroad, in wig, cassock, gown and bands, round of speech, I am sure.

But, indeed, a host of witnesses to the submersive habit of the swallow are cited, including a Brentford man and Sigismond, King of Poland. The Brentford man said he had caught specimens in the eyt opposite the town, and the King affirmed on his oath to Cardinal Commendon that he had frequently seen swallows which were found at the bottom of lakes.

And before we laugh, let us remember how many of us saw Russians, thousands of them, in England, in the year 1914. The Annual Register from which I am quoting is dated 1781.

And then there are the other Animals, the featherless bipeds. There is a full account of the trial of Lord George Gordon for High Treason on February 5, 1781, with a very vivid description of the scene at the doors of the House of Commons (see “Barnaby Rudge,” Chapter XLIX). And here I came across a very odd animal. There is a well-known passage in Boswell's “Johnson” in which Johnson and Boswell decide that Fleet Street (or the town) is better than Greenwich Park (that is, the country). Boswell fortifies himself in this opinion “by the authority of a very fashionable baronet in the brilliant world, who, on his attention being called to the fragrance of a May evening in the country, observed, ‘This may be very well; but for my part, I prefer the smell of a flambeau at the playhouse.’” A footnote informs us that Mr. Boswell's smart friend was Sir Michael Le Fleming. I have never heard more of him, and never expected to hear more of him. A learned Boswellian surmises that, on the evidence given, Sir Michael was probably an unprofitable friend for Boswell, and so the matter ended, as I thought. And here, to my amazement, the fashionable, brilliant and—may one

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surmise?—somewhat sophisticated baronet, makes his appearance in the Gordon trial. The Rev. Thomas Bowen was officiating as Chaplain to the House of Commons on June 2, 1780. Giving evidence, he says that, prayers ended, he sat under the gallery, near the door. In and out of the House comes Lord George, telling his supporters in the lobby what was going on within. This intelligence comes in gusts to the Chaplain, thus:

Lord George: “Mr. Burke, member for Bristol (*the* Burke) has said——” and then the door was shut, and no more was heard.

Again: “Lord North calls you a mob”: “Mr. Rous has just moved that the civil power be sent for, but don't you mind; keep yourselves cool; be steady——” and so on, and so on. And then the Chaplain saw a gentleman go up to Lord George and speak to him, and as soon as Lord George saw who it was, he called to the people, “This is Sir Michael le Fleming; he has just been speaking for you.” He seemed to be remarkably pleased with Sir Michael, the witness testified: “patted or stroked, his shoulder, and exhibited a kind of joy, which the witness knew not how to describe.”

Dear me! Who would have thought that Boswell's brilliant, fashionable, playhouse–flambeau loving baronet was a stout Protestant after all?

But the most awe–inspiring of all the Animals in this Register of 1781 is a certain Mr. Lutterloh. He and his strange name and his strange career are to be found in the account of the arrest, trial, conviction and condemnation of Henry Francis de la Motte for treasonable practices. De la Motte was a French nobleman, with the queer title of Baron Deckham. He had been colonel of the regiment of Soubise in the last war, and had shown gallantry. He had lived beyond his income, and taken refuge in England, and had then, so said the prosecution, engaged in the treasonable practice of furnishing the French Government with information as to his Majesty King George's forces and plans. He had resided in Bond Street, at a Mr. Otley's, a woollen–draper, for some time. The story begins with Mr. De la Motte visiting the Secretary of State—of his free will or in response to a hint does not appear. On his way upstairs he dropped several papers full of guilty matters, which were picked up by the messengers and carried with him to the Secretary, Lord Hillsborough. Thereupon, De la Motte was immediately committed a close prisoner to the Tower on the charge of high treason. And here is the first shock: Would a man guilty of such practices fortify himself for a visit to the Secretary of State by stuffing his pockets with treasonable documents, and then carelessly strew the Secretary's stairs with them, as if they were roses? But I lack space in which to tell the whole story of poor De la Motte—the evident source and prototype of Darnay in “The Tale of Two Cities.” I do not know whether he were guilty; but the case against him has an ill look—for the Government and its agents. The dignity and nobility of his demeanour during the trial were remarked by all, and after the dreadful sentence had been passed, Mr. Akerman, the gaoler, said that he never in his life saw a man in De la Motte's position with more becoming firmness and fortitude. But the mysterious Mr. Lutterloh? After the examination of the papers which Mr. De la Motte had so thoughtfully dropped on the Secretary's stairs, orders were issued for the apprehension of Henry Lutterloh, Esq., of Wickham, near Portsmouth. The messengers found Mr. Lutterloh ready booted to go a–hunting, but when he was told of the messengers' business “he did not discover the least embarrassment.” His keys, his papers were all at their service. He was a German, who had lately taken a house near Portsmouth. He kept a pack of hounds, and was very popular with the neighbouring gentry.

And yet, as it turned out at the trial, Mr. Lutterloh had been a servant (discharged on suspicion of thieving), a chandler in Great Wild Street, Drury Lane, a bankrupt and a fugitive, and a book–keeper at the George Inn, Portsmouth. He confessed in the witness–box that the prisoner, De la Motte, had raised him from beggary to comfort by his generosity. But a powerful feeling came upon Mr. Lutterloh, urging him to make some restitution to the country he had injured. Also, he said, he felt a desire to enrich himself. And so he swore the generous French gentleman's life away.

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I am sure that Mr. Dunning and Mr. Peckham did their best for the defence. But I wish the prisoner's solicitor could have briefed Mr. Stryver and Mr. Sydney Carton.

Before Wembley

It is to be gathered from all sorts of sources that the great Exhibition at Wembley did not go so prosperously as might be desired. I wonder why. I believe the reasons are composite. In the first place, I suspect that the Exhibition was much too big; the Great Exhibition of 1851 went into the Crystal Palace. Then it was too technical. I think I have heard that six acres—the area of Trafalgar Square—were devoted to engineering exhibits. Perfectly enchanting—to engineers. But how I should loathe seeing six acres of wheels going round. And, lastly, there is the matter of “closing hours.” It is said that the first remark of the late Lord Tennyson on entering the Exhibition of 1851 was “Can one get a decent bottle of Bass here?” It is deplorable, no doubt; but to the average male mind Exhibitions and the modern closing hours are incompatible.

It seems to me that we should begin by separating things which don't go together in the least. Let the Engineers hold their exhibition at Olympia, or at the Agricultural Hall, Islington; let the Builders follow them; let the Dominion Products have their due turn. But what London wants of a summer night is a place of moderate size where, amidst agreeable surroundings, it can sit and eat and drink and smoke in the open-air, and listen to a band or two and dance a dance or two, and perhaps see a revue or two, with a few variety turns now and then, and a cabaret performance and an occasional concert. Fireworks, of course; and I think a Grand Guignol theatre, with the audience in the open air on fine nights. I doubt whether there would be room for an Amusement Park. The fact is, I am for a return to Vauxhall, and all that sort of thing, with all the improvements that modern ingenuity can suggest. Here is a note of a pleasant evening spent at Vauxhall, just 175 years ago.

“I had a card,” writes Horace Walpole, “from Lady Caroline Petersham, to go with her to Vauxhall. I went accordingly to her house, and found her and the little Ashe, or the Pollard Ashe as they called her; they had just finished their last layer of red, and looked as handsome as crimson could make them.... We marched to our barge, with a boat of French horns attending and little Ashe singing. We paraded some time up the river, and at last debarked at Vauxhall.... Here we picked up Lord Granby, arrived very drunk from Jenny Whims (a Chelsea tavern). At last we assembled in our booth, Lady Caroline in the front with the vizor of her hat erect, and looking gloriously jolly and handsome. She had fetched my brother Orford from the next box, where he was enjoying himself with his *petite partie*, to help us to mince chickens. We minced seven chickens into a China dish, which Lady Caroline stewed over a lamp with three pats of butter and a flagon of water, stirring and rattling and laughing, and we every minute expecting the dish to fly about our ears. She had brought Betty, the fruit-girl, with hampers of strawberries and cherries from Roger's, and made her wait upon us, and then made her sup by us at a little table.... In short, the whole air of our party was sufficient, as you will easily imagine, to take up the whole attention of the Gardens; so much so, that from 11 o'clock till half an hour after one we had the whole concourse round our booth; at last they came into the little gardens of each booth on the sides of ours, till Harry Vane took up a bumper and drank their healths, and was proceeding to treat them with still greater freedoms. It was three o'clock before we got home.”

The company, as you perceive, was high, though distinctly jolly. Indeed, a contemporary writer describing Spring Gardens, as the place was then called, declares that they were laid out “in so grand a taste that they are frequented in the three summer months by most of the nobility and gentry then in and near London; and are often honoured with some of the Royal Family, who are here entertained with the sweet song of numbers of nightingales, in concert with the best band of musick in England. Here are fine pavilions, shady groves, and most delightful walks, illuminated by above a thousand lamps, so disposed that they all take fire together, almost as quick as lightning, and with such a sudden blaze as is perfectly surprising.” In the generation before this Sir Roger de Coverley visited Vauxhall “exquisitely pleasant in summer,” as his friend, the Spectator, declares. “When,” he says, “I considered the fragrancy of the walks and bowers, with the choirs of birds that

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sang upon the trees, and the loose tribe of people that walked under their shades, I could not but look on the place as a kind of Mahometan Paradise. Sir Roger told me it put him in mind of a little coppice by his house in the country, which his chaplain used to call an Aviary of Nightingales. He here fetched a deep sigh, and was falling into a fit of musing when a Mask, who came behind him, gave him a gentle tap on the shoulder and asked him if he would drink a bottle of Mead with her? But the Knight being startled at so unexpected a familiarity and displeased to be interrupted in his thoughts of the widow, told her she was a wanton baggage, and bid her go about her business. We concluded our walk with a glass of Burton ale and a slice of hung beef.”

The gardens lingered on, I believe, into the fifties of the last century, but the shady groves had got too shady to be agreeable. The Mask or Baggage still frequented the walks, but the nightingales had flown away, and with them Lady Caroline Petersham, the little Ashe, Horace Walpole, Lord Orford, the Marquis of Granby, Harry Vane, Sir Roger and the Spectator. The last real party who went to Vauxhall were Amelia Sedley, Jos. Sedley, George Osborne, Dobbin, and Becky Sharp; when Jos. drank too much rack punch and called Becky his diddle–diddle–darling.

Vauxhall had many competitors, on the large scale and the small. In 1740, Ranelagh was begun on a site near Chelsea Hospital. “Vauxhall under cover” it was called: there was a Rotunda with balconies full of little alehouses. Of course, Horace Walpole went to Ranelagh.

“Two nights ago Ranelagh Gardens were opened at Chelsea; the prince, princess, duke, much nobility, and much mob besides were there. There is a vast amphitheatre, finely gilt, painted, and illuminated, into which everybody that loves eating, drinking, staring, or crowding is admitted for twelve pence. The building and disposition of the gardens cost sixteen thousand pounds. Twice a week there are to be *ridottos* at guinea tickets, for which you are to have a supper and music.”

Horace was inclined to sniff in a languid manner when Ranelagh was opened. Vauxhall, he thought, was “a little better.” But in two years the fashionable success of Ranelagh was assured, and the languid sniff has changed into a shrill squeak. “Every night constantly I go to Ranelagh, which has totally beat Vauxhall. Nobody goes anywhere else— everybody goes there. My Lord Chesterfield is so fond of it that he says he has ordered all his letters to be directed thither.” One of the first of the entertainment gardens of London was old Spring Gardens, close to Charing Cross, and it is strange to think that this place, with its grave, late memories of the serious and salutary labours of the London County Council, owed its name to a piece of simple jocularly. There was a jet, or spring, of water there, and a German, travelling in England in Queen Elizabeth's days, writes:

“In a garden joining to this Palace (Whitehall) there is a jet d'eau, with a sundial, at which, while strangers are looking, a quantity of water forced by a wheel, which the gardener turns at a distance through a number of little pipes, plentifully sprinkles those that are standing around.”

The joke was improved later. A trap was contrived on the ground, and whoever trod on this trap was immediately deluged. There were other amusements, a bathing pond, a pheasant yard, and a bowling green. In the time of King Charles I:

“There was kept in it an ordinary of six shillings a meal (when the King's proclamation allows but two shillings elsewhere), continual bibbing and drinking wine all day under the trees; two or three quarrels every week.” There was also “a certain cabaret, in the middle of this paradise, where the forbidden fruits are certain trifling tarts, neats' tongues, salacious meats, and bad Rhenish.”

Then there were Cuper's Gardens just opposite Somerset House, which became Cupid's Gardens in the famous old song, and Marylebone Gardens, and Bagnigge Wells, and Sadler's Wells, all popular in their day.

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I believe I saw the last of the tribe one day in Camden Town. In a dreary street there was a drearier public house, with the dreariest little triangle of a garden beside it. Two dusty trees, six dusty bushes, four metal tables, and twice as many chairs, a small pipe from which a small jet of water might sometimes issue, traces of fairy lamps.... Such was the last echo of gorgeous, gay Vauxhall.

The Ingenious Mr. Blee

“Stephen M'Daniel, John Berry, James Egan (otherwise Gahagan) and James Salmon were indicted, for that, at the gaol delivery for our sovereign lord the King at the county gaol at Maidstone for the county of Kent, on Tuesday, the 13th of August, in the twenty–eighth year of our said sovereign lord the King, Peter Kelly and John Ellis were, in due form of law, indicted for a robbery on the King's highway on James Salmon, by putting him in corporal fear and danger of his life, in the parish of St. Paul, Deptford, in the county of Kent, and taking from him one linen handkerchief, value 4d., two pair of leather breeches, one clasp knife, one iron tobacco box, one silver pocket–piece, one guinea, and one half–crown; and that the said Peter Kelly and John Ellis were tried and convicted for that robbery; and that the said M'Daniel, Berry, Egan, and Salmon, on the 23rd of July, 1754, in the City of London, were accessories before this felony was committed; and feloniously and maliciously did aid, abet, assist, counsel, hire and command the said Ellis and Kelly to commit this robbery, against the peace his crown and dignity.”

Thus in and these words were the Right Honourable Theodore Janssen, Esq., Lord Mayor of the City of London, and his Majesty's Justices of Oyer and Terminer introduced to what Mr. Sampson Brass would have called a pretty little conspiracy. And the person who unveiled it all, for good reasons, no doubt, pertaining to his comfort and peace of mind and of body was a Mr. Thomas Blee, who lodged at John Berry's house and did odd jobs, very odd jobs indeed, for him. It seemed that there was what we should call a Little Syndicate, consisting of Berry and his fellows at the bar of the Old Bailey. They all lived round and about Hatton Garden and the backways of Holborn, and they had quiet little drinks together over business in the taproom of the Bell and in other vanished taverns. The syndicate was in low water in July, 1754, and Berry sent his man Blee—how did Stevenson miss so wonderful a name while he was thinking of his pirates and villains at large?—to M'Daniel, and a sort of unofficial committee meeting was held. At the end of it they both said to Blee: “Tom, money grows scarce, you must give a sharp look out for a couple to go upon the scamp now, and if you cannot get two, you must get one.” The “scamp,” Thomas Blee explained, meant the highway. But Thomas was troubled with scruples. He told Berry and M'Daniel, as he swore, that Kidden's was so bad an affair that he did not choose to be concerned more. Kidden had been tried, condemned and executed a year before; and since secrecy is now valueless it may be mentioned that the business of Berry and his syndicate was to lure poor runagates into the commission of felony, to get them condemned and executed, and then to pocket the reward. It was Fagin, and perhaps rather worse than Fagin, long before Fagin's day; but it will be noted that Mr. Berry's beat was not very remote from that of Dickens's Jew.

Well, Thomas Blee, remembering poor Kidden's end, had scruples, but they were overcome. The next day Berry, M'Daniel and Blee went into Spa Fields—all grey squares and grey streets now between Sadler's Wells and Islington—and looked for idle fellows, at first without success. Then there was another and a fuller committee meeting at the sign of Sir John Oldcastle; in this Salmon, the breeches maker, was included. There was a good deal of discussion as to where the robbery should be committed, and it was pointed out that there were peculiar advantages attached to the road between New Cross turnpike and Deptford, since the inhabitants of East Greenwich offered a special reward of twenty pounds for the apprehension of highwaymen and footpads. And it was settled that Mr. Salmon should be the gentleman to be robbed, and that a Mr. Egan should act as “fence,” to buy the stolen goods, and the happy party calculated that what with the official reward and the unofficial reward they would make twenty pounds apiece—about £100 of our money, I suppose. And a day or two later, the friends met together at the Bell, in Holborn, and made the most minute arrangements as to the various identifiable properties that Salmon was to carry; in order that he might be robbed of them. So everything was settled very comfortably, and it only remained to find a couple of young

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fellows to play the part of the thieves; and that was the business of good Thomas Blee. Accordingly, Mr. Blee went to work. He found two likely young fellows, known pickpockets, down in Fleet Market, Farringdon Street. These were Kelly and Ellis, and Blee told them, according to his instructions, that he knew where to get “a brave parcel of lullies”—otherwise, a parcel of linen. And then followed the most elaborate proceedings. Blee had to show his two prospective highwaymen to Berry and the other members of the syndicate that their skilled eyes might see whether the two young men were suitable for the purpose; and there were meetings at the Plumb Tree ale-house in Plumb Tree Court, Shoe Lane, and occasions when Blee stood by Ellis and Kelly in the Artillery Ground—where the White Regiment was marching. Everything was satisfactory.

“Mr. Berry,” said Thomas Blee, “do you think they will do?” And Mr. Berry said, in his hearty way:

“Do! Damme, I have done less than they over, for March and Newman were less.”

I am not quite clear as to the precise sense of this remark. It may mean that Mr. Berry was quite satisfied that Ellis and Kelly were not too young to be hanged. At any rate, he was pleased, since he gave Blee sixpence, double his usual gratuity. The affair seemed very promising, and the day for the robbery had been settled, when the plan was a little disarranged by some trouble in the Artillery Ground, where Kelly and Ellis usually “worked”—in the sense that the Artful Dodger and Charley Bates worked.

“About half-an-hour after that,” says Thomas Blee, “there was hue-and-cry after a pickpocket. M'Daniel came to me, and said, ‘The chief person is a-ducking in the Pyed-Horse Yard; follow him, and give him some gin, for they have almost killed him.’”

Blee found Ellis and gave him a penny or two and went back and reassured M'Daniel: “then he and I came out of the Artillery ground together; as we were coming out of the ground, we met one they call Plump (his name Brebrook) and another fellow they call Doctor, that was turnkey at Clerkenwell Bridewell. Plump, seeing M'Daniel and I together, said to me, ‘You rascal, you deserve to be hanged for that affair of Ridden.’”

The day was finally settled. Berry gave Blee the extraordinary sum of five shillings “to flash to the boys,” to dazzle them, that is, with the sight of so much money, for Blee usually gave them gin by ha'porths. So the party set out on the way to Deptford, calling by arrangement with the syndicate at certain taverns on the way. At one of these taverns there was almost a misadventure. Kelly caught a glimpse of Berry, lurking in obscurity, and on coming out observed with an oath to Blee: “There is that old thief-catching son of a bitch, your old master.” But Blee soothed his fears, and a breast of lamb was bought in the Borough Market, and fried for dinner at the Black Spread Eagle in Kent Street. The three drank together, and slept in the fields, Salmon and Berry always, as it were, round the corner, slinking on the track of Blee and his victims, communicating with Blee under the very noses of Kelly and Ellis. Salmon came into a tavern where Blee and his young friends were sitting, and, taking a place near them, began to speak of walking to London. Then Berry passes the tavern window and beckons to Blee with an evil crook of his finger, and so Blee gets his last instructions, and the three steal out on the track of Salmon. Up to this time, be it remembered, the two dupes thought they were to steal “lullies,” or linen. But the sight of Salmon walking before them on the dark, lonely road had the desired effect. Kelly observed: “There is that old blood of a bitch, the breeches-maker in Shoe Lane...let's scamp him.” Accordingly, Salmon was set upon by all three and robbed according to plan. The next day, Egan, the receiver, or fence, of the comedy, was “discovered” in the Black Spread Eagle by Blee, and over a breakfast of lamb's liver and bacon, washed down by a pot of “twopenny”—the eighteenth century equivalent of the “four ale” of pre-War days—the stolen goods, all carefully marked for identification, were handed over to the fence. Kelly and Ellis were arrested, tried, and condemned to death in due course; and everything seemed to point to a large reward and a happy ending for everybody concerned—save Kelly and Ellis.

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But something went wrong. The constables arrested not only Kelly and Ellis but also Thomas Blee. This may have been a blunder, a pure accident, or Kelly and Ellis may have given Blee away, or Mr. Berry may have considered in his wisdom that Blee's time was come, and that he was ripe for the journey in the Tyburn cart. But Thomas did exactly as might have been expected. He turned King's Evidence at the first possible moment; and the little syndicate found themselves in the dock at the Old Bailey pleading not guilty to the indictment quoted at the head of this article. They called divers friends to give evidence as to character, and the said friends declared in cheerful unison that Berry and the rest of them bore the worst characters possible. The verdict was Guilty, and sentence seven years' imprisonment, two turns in the pillory, and a fine of one mark each. The sting of the sentence was in the pillory. M'Daniel and Berry, pilloried near Hatton Garden, were with difficulty rescued by the sheriff from the fury of the mob. Then Egan and Salmon stood in the pillory at Smithfield. At the end of half an hour's hail of oyster-shells and stones, Egan was struck dead, and Salmon dangerously wounded. In the end, Salmon and Berry died in Newgate, and M'Daniel "procured himself to be sent abroad for life to the Indies as a soldier."

The Gay Victorians

There is a certain fable with which we greatly comfort our hearts in these days. And this is the fable of the mild, the tame, the old-maiden-ladylike Victorians. We know in our inner hearts that we, the Georgians, are the most regulation-ridden people that ever were. If we want a box of chocolates or a packet of cigarettes after eight o'clock at night, we cannot get either without breaking the law. In most parts of London, the greatest city in the world, a glass of beer after ten becomes a penal offence. We have the liberty to go to bed quietly; that is about all. I suppose it is the secret knowledge of all this, the knowledge that we have become a flock of rather pitiful sheep, driven tamely off to our pens by the sheep dog of the law, that makes us puff out our chests and pity the poor, limited, propriety-ridden Victorians, and pretend that we are desperate dogs, indeed. If a man would keep any spirit at all, it is necessary that he should look down on someone; rightly or wrongly. But the mid-Victorian age was not really what we pretend to think it. It was, probably, one of the jolliest ages in our history; and all the better for this, that a great deal of the jollity was above-ground, harmless, hearty mirth. There was the other side, of course; there always is that, and now more than ever, since the coming of cocaine—the nasty, underground, poisonous gaiety that is not gaiety at all, but rather ghastliness. But on the whole, the mid-Victorian who was resolved to "keep it up" and "make a night of it" could make a most tremendous night of it and be rather the better than the worse the morning after. A headache? Possibly. But an occasional headache does not do anyone much harm.

I was talking the other day to a man whose business it is, speaking generally, to know everything. I will not define his occupation more precisely; but I happened to mention to him the "Welcome Guest" and Sala's "Twice Round the Clock." He had neither heard of the periodical nor the series of articles. And so, perhaps, I may safely quote this witness of the London world in the year 1858, when Queen Victoria had been reigning twenty-seven years. The period may fairly be called the mid-Victorian; and this was the fashion of it. The time is midnight; the people are coming out of the Haymarket Theatre, still laughing at the drolleries of the inimitable Mr. Buckstone and——

"Supper is now the great cry, and the abundant eating and drinking resources of the Haymarket are forthwith called into requisition. By the ravenous hunger and thirst displayed by the late patrons of the theatre, you would imagine that they had gone without dinner for a week...Are you rich—there is Dubourg's, the Hotel de Paris, and the upstairs department of the Café de l'Europe. There is no lack of cunning cooks there, I warrant, to send you up pheasants and partridges *en papillote*; *filets* with mushrooms or truffles, culinary gew-gaws that shall cost five shillings the dish. Yes, and cellarers shall not be wanting to convey to you the Roederer's champagne, the fragrant Clos Vougeot, the refreshing Lafitte and the enlivening Chambertin with yellow seal...If your taste leads you still towards French cookery—though you wince somewhat at the idea of the claret, burgundy and champagne to follow—there exists a second-class French restaurant or two where excellent suppers may be obtained at moderate prices." Sala follows on the descending scale: a porkpie and a

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glass of ale at a bar for a few pence: “trotters,” mysterious but succulent, for a penny; a potato from the can at the Coventry Street end of the Haymarket, with salt and pepper, for a halfpenny: and then reverts to oysters, as the refreshment most proper to the hour and the place.

“I will abide by the Haymarket oyster shop, rude, simple, primitive as it is, with its peaceful concourse of customers taking perpendicular refreshment at the counter, plying the unpretending pepper–castor and the vinegar cruet with the perforated cork, calling cheerfully for crusty bread and pats of butter; and tossing off foaming pints of brownest stout.” But a few oysters and a little bread–and–butter and stout at midnight were only the beginning of a mid–Victorian's night out. Refreshed, he strolled on to Evans's in Covent Garden, where, as Mr. Sala assures him, Captain Costigan is no longer allowed to sing his dubious songs, to the shame of young Clive Newcome and to the rage and indignation of the immortal Colonel, his father.

“We have been to the play, we have consumed a few oysters in the Haymarket; but the principal effect of that refreshment seems to have been to make us ten times hungrier. The delicate bivalves of Colchester”—I am afraid that Sala was the first to call an oyster a “succulent bivalve”—“have failed in appeasing our bucolic stomachs. We require meat. Wherefore we walk till the piazza looms in sight. A low doorway, brilliantly lit with gas, greets our view. We descend a flight of stone steps, pass through a vestibule, and enter the ‘Cave of Harmony.’ The visitor finds himself in a vast music–hall of really noble proportions and decorated not only with admirable taste, but with something nearly akin to splendour. At the northern extremity of the hall is a spacious proscenium and stage, with the grand pianoforte *de rigueur*, the whole veiled by a curtain in the intervals of performance. As for the huge area stretching from the proscenium to a row of columns which separate it from the ante–chamber café, it is occupied by parallel lines of tables.... See the suppers set forth for the strong stomached supporters of Evans's. See the pyramids of dishes arrive; the steaming succession of red–hot chops, with their brown, frizzling caudal appendages seething hot tears of passionate fat. See the serene kidneys unsubdued, though grilled, smiling though cooked, weltering proudly in their noble gravy.... See the yellow lava of the Welsh rabbit stream over and engulf the timid toast. Sniff the fragrant vapour of the corpulent sausage. Mark how the russet leathern–coated baked potato at first defies the knife, then gracefully cedes, and through a lengthened gash yields its farinaceous effervescence to the influence of butter and catsup. The only refreshment present open to even a suspicion of effeminacy are the poached eggs, glistening like suns in a firmament of willow–pattern plate; and those, too, I am willing to believe, are only to be taken by country gentlemen hard–pressed by hunger, just to ‘stay their stomachs,’ while the more important chops and kidneys are being prepared...Pints of stout, if you please, no puny half–measures, pints of sparkling pale ale, or brownest Burton moisten these sturdy rations. And when the strong men have supped—or, rather, before they have supped, and while they have supped—and indeed generally during the evening, there bursts out a strong smell of something good to drink; and presently you perceive that the strong men have ordered potent libations of spirituous liquors, hot whiskey and water being the favourite one; and are hastily brewing mighty jorums of punch and grog which they undauntedly quaff.”

There! What a jolly scene it is, and how entirely honest and free from blame. And while people are eating heartily and drinking heartily and smoking heartily, a choir of small boys sing eighteenth century glees to them; or perhaps it is a nigger minstrel, some far–off precursor of poor Chirgwin; or it may be a comic singer who obliges. Perhaps, as I have hinted, there may be a headache to–morrow morning, perhaps a slight distaste for breakfast; but those stout fellows of the 'fifties care little for such trifles. And all this jollity, all this brown stout and steaming punch at one o'clock in the morning! To us “daring” Georgians it seems well–nigh incredible.

There is one odd note in this tale of Sala's. It is well–known that Thackeray was a constant visitor at Evans's. Here is his portrait according to Sala.

“Thersites Theorbo (who is an assiduous frequenter of the Cave at hours when men of not so transcendent a genius are in bed), Thersites Theorbo, down yonder in the café ante–saloon, glowering over his grog, cannot

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forbear beating time and wagging his august head approvingly when he hears the little boys sing. May their pure harmony do the battered old cynic good!"

Now, I wonder. This was the very year of the famous Dickens–Thackeray–Yates quarrel. Thackeray had called Yates “Young Grub–street” in print; I wonder whether he had called Sala “Young Guttersnipe” in conversation. Sala was a Dickens man; and led–captains fought valiantly for their chiefs in those brave days.

Chivalry

When I am down in the country, I am sometimes taken to see castles, and I want to make a confession about them. I look about their walls, I mark portcullis and moat, newel stair and keep, I enter into the central court, a green space surrounded by walls half–whole, half–broken—and I cannot form the faintest conception of what these great places were like when they were inhabited; for, it must be remembered, what we see when we admire a ruined castle is a house without a roof, generally without floors or ceilings, always without woodwork of any kind or sort. Take the roof off Smith's villa at Surbiton. Burn every beam in the house, break in all the windows, make the kitchen and back garden a heap of confused stones overgrown with grass and weeds. Knock down every door and every party wall, blow up the stairs, smash the floors, make Smith's potting–shed and his fowl–house in the back garden into beautiful green mounds, turf–covered; and then bring along your post–historic New Zealander, and ask him to tell you what Laburnum Villa was like in the days of its pride, and what manner of life the Smiths led there. I don't believe the New Zealander would make much of the job; and so I make very little of the job when I pass into a twelfth century castle. I can see that those high outer walls, sloping outward to the ground (“battered”) for greater strength, were meant to keep people out; I conjecture that those windows, a narrow slit outside, a broad splay within, were handy for shooting without much chance of being shot; I have been told that the keep, or central tower, with walls six, eight, ten feet thick, was the last refuge of the De Somethings when a breach had been made in the outer defence; and that is about all. “The great hall,” says somebody, pointing to a large space, where an inner wall half–stands, half–falls. It may be so; but it may be the chapel, or the great kitchen; all is so broken, so uncertain. And then: “Secret passage, communicating with the Abbey, five miles away,” and “The black dungeon under the keep, where the objects of feudal oppression pined away.” It may be so, or it may be the mere apparatus of drainage.

And as to how the De Somethings lived, where they slept, at what time they had their meals, what they ate at their meals, how they spent their days when the foe were not battering at the outer bailey, I have hardly the faintest notion. I except a few items of the castle bill of fare: a great deal of salt cod, a great deal of salt beef, a great deal of salt herring, venison pies, roast game, peacock and swan occasionally, buttered eggs, richly spiced dishes from the east, dishes in which meat, raisins, and currants were mingled—the mince–pie is the only modern survivor of this school of cookery—pike and other fish from the castle pond; abundance of strong, thick ale—there were no clarifying hops then—and liberal Gascon wine; we may make out a fairly satisfactory bill for the table of our great lord. But that is about all, so far as I am concerned. Indeed, I once asked a man deeply learned in antiquity, a famous herald, to tell me what it was like, generally speaking, to pay a visit to a thirteenth century lord at his castle. “For example,” I said, “when a Barry of Manorbier went to stay for a few weeks with a Bohun of Caldicot, how did the castle party begin the day? Was the Barry called for breakfast?”

He considered the question, and finally declared that in his opinion there was no formal beginning of the day: “I believe they all woke up like animals, and shook themselves.” It may be: but I would rather incline to think that a bell at six o'clock in the morning roused everybody for Mass in the chapel, and that afterwards people strolled to the buttery–hatch and broke their fast, lunching—in the proper sense of the word “lunch”—on hunks of bread and chunks of salt beef or pasty, with quarts of ale for the simple and quarts of red wine for the gentle. And then to the stables, quite in the manner of a modern country house in the hunting shires, and a long discussion there as to the horses. And then, perhaps, a little tennis, the court being the castle court–yard

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with its lean—to wooden buildings (the penthouse of the game) the opening now called the grille—then the buttery—hatch aforesaid—and the odd projection of one wall which tennis players call the tambour. And so to a mighty dinner at ten, with a very honest appetite, and a strong thirst. Of course, knight errantry in the sense of the romances never existed; nothing at all like it ever existed. The romances of chivalry that is, do not picture the thirteenth century as Dickens, Thackeray, and Trollope between them very fairly pictured the earlier and middle nineteenth century. The romances are pure fantasies of the imagination: nothing more. I have just been reading a curious document which bears on this point. It is a contract, and is as formal and business—like a document as any contract between manager and actor, or between author and publisher. It was executed in the year 1297. It begins:

“An du rengle le Roy Edward fiz le Roy Hen' vintenne et quint ssi accoumto p'entr Sire Johan Bluet Chevaler et Wylliam Martel.”

Or in English:

“In the year of the reign of King Edward, the son of King Henry, one score and five, it was thus agreed between Sir John Bluet, Knight, and William Martel.”

The fact was that the stout knight—to use the later Gothic manner— Sir John Bluet, wanted a courtly squire. William Martel applied for the engagement, and got it. A contract was then drawn up, and duly sealed: it was a contract valid during the life of William Martel, and it was binding on the heirs of Sir John Bluet. And the said Sir John was to pay William sixty pence of silver yearly; payments due at Hockday (Eastertide) and Michaelmas. Provision is made for default on the part of tenants who paid the rents from which William was to draw his salary: it is expressly stipulated that the squire or his solicitor may put an execution into the house of any such defaulting tenant. Besides the money payment, the chivalrous (though businesslike) squire was to have a robe at Christmas and another robe at Easter; the value of each to be ten pence. Furthermore, William was to be maintained as long as he lived in sufficient meat and drink as a gentleman ought to have—“E a sustenir le devaunt dit Wyll' taunt come il vivera en manger e en beovere avenauntement come a gental homme a peut.” And his two servants are also to have their board and lodging, and his two horses are to be found in hay and oats and shoes; the two horses to have between them 46 bushels of oats a year. And, on his side, the gentle William engaged himself well and faithfully to serve Sir John Bluet as an esquire ought to do “in the war now wageing between the King of England and the King of France; and also in England if war should break out there, which God forbid; and in Wales and all other lands on this side the sea, or beyond the sea wherever the said John may be (except the Holy Land), and in tournaments in time of peace with a great war horse—en tens de pees od en graunt chevall de armes—which the said John will find him and suitable armour without any default on his part.”

The gentle, the chivalrous William! He had evidently heard a thing or two about crusading; and I seem to hear a more modern voice speaking to much the same effect:

“No, dear old chap, I'm afraid we'll have to cut that clause about the Eastern Tour. I don't mind the Welsh smalls or the Scotch fitups, and I'm quite willing to go to South Africa or the States; but I've made up my mind I'll never play juvenile leads in the East again. You see, old man, if you come to cues, there's no bunce in it.”

Such was the actual Age of Chivalry. A little on the practical side, perhaps. Don Quixote would have been disgusted by the document which I have quoted; and, indeed, when Sancho Panza asked for a fixed salary—Teresa urging him—the Knight said there was no precedent in the books for such an arrangement. Not in *Amadis of Gaul* or in *Tirante lo Blanch*, perhaps, but we see how it was in actual life.

It is clear that Sancho knew more about Chivalry than his master.

How The Rich Live

This is to be a talk about some wealthy men that I have known and heard of. I was once a wealthy man myself; a friend of mine confessed to me quite lately that he had been a capitalist in his day; and then there is a great figure in musical history, known well enough for his work, but not generally recognised as being amongst the very rich. To begin with my friend. This is Mr. Lenville, the well-known actor. We were talking the other day as we often do talk about the old times of the stage, of which I know a very little, and he a great deal; the old times being understood to be somewhere between thirty and forty years ago. There is no doubt that they were bad old times. Now a bright young gentleman “walks on” for six months or so. He has little paragraphs in the papers about the amazingly brilliant way in which he walks on, and how interesting it is that he should walk on at all. Then he has a small part; and there are portraits and clever caricatures as well as paragraphs. Then he models in clay a little, and the public interest, as the paragraphists declare, is enormous, so that he gets quite a large part and delivers it so naturally that very few people beyond the front row of the stalls hear a word he says. The bright young man's fortune is then made. Things were very different in the time of which Mr. Lenville was talking. In those days people had to learn how to act before they were heard of in the western theatres of London. They learned how to act by playing dozens, hundreds of parts in all sorts of obscure playhouses in the country and in the unknown suburbs. They laboured in stock companies in northern towns, at the Britannia, Hoxton; they went on tour in repertory. They were hungry for experience and for bread and cheese and beer. They tried the booths for a while, some of them, and learned what “nunty munjare” means, and how to put the “portable” together, take it to pieces, and get the snow off the roof; also to paint scenery and manufacture dress shirts and shoes and mediæval armour out of white paper, American cloth, and sheet tin, and, by the way, to learn the text of any part ever written in rather less than no time. I remember one of the old stock managers saying to me:

“So I made up my mind to put up ‘Venice Preserved,’ and gave the company three days for study. The Heavy Man said to me: ‘Look here, I can't study the Cardinal in three days.’ I talked to him. ‘You play the Heavy Lead, don't you?’ ‘Yes,’ he said, ‘but I can't study 500 lengths in three days.’ ‘Well, the Cardinal is the heavy part, isn't it?’ ‘I know.’ ‘Then,’ said I, ‘you'd better go’; and one of the Responsibles took it on, and was perfect on the night.”

Well, it was of such times as those that Mr. Lenville was telling me. He and his friend, Mr. Folair, were in a very bad way. There was nothing doing, and very little to eat. So the two of them walked up one fine morning to the Grand, Islington, where a stock company was running, in the hopes of getting an engagement. But there was no vacancy. They came out into the sunlight, with twopence between them, and walked over to the Angel, and, boldly entering the public bar, ordered a pint of four ale, which they drank slowly, in alternate sips, out of the pewter pot. And as they drank, they discussed the best way to walk home. This was an easy problem for Lenville, who lived in Marylebone, but a formidable business for Folair, an inhabitant of uttermost Hammersmith. And so Lenville gave his views on the subject of the shortest cut to Hammersmith, illustrating his remarks by drawing a kind of diagram, or map, with his stick on the sawdust of the floor.

“Here you see,” said Lenville, “you get up by Portobello Road,” and drew the stick firmly along in the direction of Notting Hill Gate. *Something glittered in the disturbed sawdust.* The two men hardly dared to believe in that which they saw. It was a half-sovereign—otherwise wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. “Do we hand it over to the barman?” whispered Folair. Lenville replied in words which signified that they emphatically didn't, and as he spoke his pipe dropped from his hand on to the floor. He picked it up, and soon after the pair of players were having some more beer and sharing the change.

“And I never felt so well off before or since.” So Mr. Lenville ended his tale.

And I, too, I have known wealth in my day. I was living in Queer Street at the time, a quiet place enough to look at, but not really so quiet as it seemed, being close to a certain Grove, where there are streets even

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queerer. Well, in those days, I went out regularly to get the supper beer. Not in the honest, manly way of the Briton, who carries the jug in his hand and boldly enters the jug and bottle department, rejoicing in the brown foam that crowns the vessel. This was too high for me; so I used to go to the saloon bar and buy a quart bottle of beer and smuggle it back in a bag or great coat pocket, the whole being done in a very careless, easy manner. But one night there was only fivepence—halfpenny in the house. It is true the bottle of beer cost only fourpence; but it was my custom every evening to have a small glass of something with bitters in it. This cost threepence; and I was ashamed to go to the public-house and omit this decorative part of the ceremony—and yet there was only fivepence—halfpenny in the house. And then, as I fumbled aimlessly, desperately, about in odd corners and disused places, there appeared and was manifested in a dusty drawer, a shabby little old purse, with a broken fastening. I opened the purse, and at the bottom of it was a sixpence and a shilling, both black from lying by. How rich, how glorious a superfluity! I tasted in their acutest savours the delights of wealth!

The last story of the wealthy was told of himself by the mighty John Sebastian Bach. When he was a lad—it was soon after his voice had broken—he had a great desire to hear an illustrious organist of Hamburg, one Reinken. Bach was very poor, and the long journey had to be done on foot, and coming back, he found himself a far way from his home, with hardly any money left in his pockets. He sat down on a bench outside an inn, very hungry, very weary. Suddenly, a window was opened, and two herring heads fell at Bach's feet. He picked them up; there might be a scrap or two of herring left that he might eat. And behold! he found on examination that in each head was a piece of gold. He never found out how it had happened, but, refreshed, he went back and heard the great Reinken once more, and was able to go on his way home at ease and rejoicing.

So much of wealthy men. I once knew a poor man. He was a country squire with an income of ten thousand a year, in the time when ten thousand bought twice as much as it will buy to-day. This squire wished very violently to set up a coach and four, and to possess a steam yacht; but found that he could hardly afford the upkeep of both. In the end, he fixed on the coach, and drove it about bravely enough and tried to smile. But he longed all the while, very bitterly and grievously, for the steam yacht.

I was sorry for him.

A Lament For London's Lost Inns

Amongst the pleasant recollections of old, vanished London that I possess, none is more agreeable than my memories of the old inns. I do not mean the inns which would now be called hostels—in an attempt to be older than the old—that is, the various Inns of Chancery, though of these I could tell a long tale. I remember well the joy of turning aside from the gaiety of the Strand when the Strand was the cheerfullest, most delightful street in all London, and, as I believe, in the world, and going up a little quiet way and so into Clement's Inn, with its fine Hall, its lawns, its peace and quiet, and its Garden House, a red brick, mid-Georgian house in the middle of a green garden. Once when I turned thus aside, the Garden House was empty, and I asked the rent. It was only £120 a year; but it was slightly beyond my means. And then there was New Inn, as peaceful as Clement's, which it adjoined, but not so green. There were some sad, broken fragments of it surviving off Aldwych up to two or three years ago, but I am afraid these are now gone. The main entrance to New Inn was in Wych Street.

“The gentleman next in esteem and authority among us is another Bachelor who is a member of the Inner Temple. He is an excellent Critic and the time of the Play is his hour of business; exactly at five he passes through New Inn, crosses through Russell Court, and takes a turn at Will's till the play begins.”

Thus the Spectator, and thus, I think, we see one of the sources of the younger Dickens. Lyons' Inn, where the old Globe Theatre stood, was gone long before my day. Barnard's, which Pip in “Great Expectations” disliked so thoroughly, has been converted into the Mercer's School, its hall happily intact; Clifford's (one of the

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choicest specimens of the Inns of Chancery) survives in a fragmentary state, but, I am afraid, will not last much longer. Thavie's Inn, the residence of Mr. Jellaby, still exists by Holborn, but looks exactly like a street. I suppose it was rebuilt soon after the Society of Lincoln's Inn sold it in 1771. It was named after John Thavie, an armourer, who lived in the reign of Edward III. Thus do old, old names, even the names of lesser men, cling to our London byways.

But it is not of the inns of this sort that I am thinking, but rather of those inns of common, not of legal, entertainment. It is odd to note that the word is fast becoming—if it has not become—obsolete, together with tavern; the reason being, as I suppose, that the things themselves are gone, or almost gone. We have hotels and we have “pubs”; scarcely inns or taverns. One of the noblest of the old inns that I remember was the Bell, in Holborn, to which the Amersham coach used to run up to in 1880, or thereabouts. Facing the street, it was seen to be a late seventeenth century building of dim and yet warm old brick, with a fine coat of arms in terra-cotta set into it. But within, under the archway, it was, in my recollection, almost a replica of the White Hart Yard, as shown in the “Pickwick” plate, depicting the first appearance of Mr. Samuel Weller. There were two tiers of galleries leading to the bedrooms, running round three sides of the court. In a word, you turned from Holborn into the seventeenth century, as, by the way, you may still turn if you will take the trouble to walk under Gray's Inn archway through South Square into Gray's Inn Square. Then, near at hand, was Ridley's Family Hotel, with bow windows bulging over the Holborn pavement; a sound, comfortable, snug-looking place, where I can see archdeacons reading the Times after breakfast. Of the taverns of former years my chief recollections cluster round the Cock, standing where a branch of the Bank of England now stands, near the corner of Chancery Lane. I had several chops in that old coffee-room of the Cock, where Tennyson called for his pint of port, of which he wrote one of the finest things in the lighter vein that have been written in English or in any other language. Thus to the head-waiter:

Live long, ere from thy topmost head
The thick-set hazel dies;
Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread
The comers of thine eyes;
Live long, nor feel in head or chest
Our changeful equinoxes,
Till mellow Death, like some late guest,
Shall call thee from the boxes.

My occasional visits to the old vanished tavern were paid in its last days, in '82 or '83. I do not know what I could have been reading, what eighteenth century stuff was in my head—I was twenty at the time—but I had a vague idea that I should meet “the wits” at the Cock, otherwise, “the most respectable authors of the day.” I should think I was about a hundred years too late. I met no wits at the Cock, and I found that the coffee-room began to empty soon after nine, when, according to my out-dated fancies, it should have begun to be brilliant. But the odd thing is that once upon a time the sort of thing that I expected to happen did really happen.

“I was about seventeen when I first came up to town, an odd-looking boy, with short rough hair, and that sort of awkwardness which one always brings up at first out of the country. However, in spite of my bashfulness and appearance, I used now and then to thrust myself into Will's to have the pleasure of seeing the most celebrated wits of that time, who then resorted thither. The second time that ever I was there, Mr. Dryden was speaking of his own things, as he frequently did, especially of such as had been lately published. ‘If anything of mine is good,’ said he, ‘tis MacFlecknoe; and I value myself the more upon it, because it is the first piece of ridicule written in Heroics!’ On hearing this, I plucked up my spirit so far as to say, in a voice just loud enough to be heard, ‘that MacFlecknoe was a very fine poem, but that I had not imagined it to be the first that ever was writ that way.’ On this, Dryden turned short upon me, as surprised at my interposing; asked me how long I had been a dealer in poetry; and added, with a smile, ‘Pray, sir, what is it that you *did* imagine to have been writ so before?’ I named Boileau's *Lutrin*, and Tassoni's *Secchia Rapita*, which I had read, and knew

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Dryden had borrowed some strokes from each. `Tis true,' said Dryden, `I had forgot them.' A little after Dryden went out, and in going spoke to me again, and desired me to come and see him next day. I was delighted with the invitation; went to see him accordingly and was well acquainted with him after, as long as he lived."

Thus it was at Will's, the Great Coffee House in Covent Garden, as Pepys called it. It was No.1, Bow Street, on the west side at the corner of Russell Street, and was perhaps the most illustrious of London taverns, from the Restoration to early Hanoverian days. It was here that "old Swinney" described Dryden as holding court. He told Dr. Johnson that "at Will's Coffee House Dryden had a particular chair for himself, which was set by the fire in winter, and was then called his winter-chair; and that it was carried out for him to the balcony in summer, and was then called his summer-chair."

Decidedly, I was a little late in searching for the wits at the Cock.

More Inns

There is a certain "framework" to one of Dickens's Christmas Stories which, I suppose, is not as well known as many of his occasional works. It is called "Somebody's Luggage," and is, as a framework, tolerably artificial. The scheme of it is, that a certain unknown traveller comes to an old fashioned London Inn, situated (I gather) in Holborn or the Strand, writes a great deal in the coffee-room, sends the porter on errands to publishing quarters, stays a night, and vanishes the next evening, leaving all his luggage behind him. Christopher, the head waiter, a most delightful character, becomes curious about this abandoned luggage. He buys it from the proprietress for the amount of the unknown's bill, and discovers that the luggage is full of manuscripts.

"He had crumpled up this writing of his everywhere, in every part and parcel of his luggage. There was writing in his dressing-case, writing in his boots, writing among his shaving tackle, writing in his hat box, writing folded away down among the whalebones of his umbrella."

Christopher first of all disposes of the luggage to a dealer not far from St. Clement Danes in the Strand. "On my remarking that I should have thought these articles not quite in his line, he said; `No more ith a manth grandmother, Mithter Chrithtoper; but if any man will bring hith grandmother here, and offer her at a fair trifle below what the'll feth with good luck when the'th thcoured and turned—I'll buy her."

And then Christopher disposes of the Writings to the Editor of the *All the Year Round*, otherwise Mr. Dickens, and the Christmas Number begins with the manuscript that was found in the traveller's boots—and I am afraid that it had been better to have left it in his boots.

But what concerns me for the moment with "Somebody's Luggage," is the Bill of the man who went away. It is entered under the heading: "Coffee Room, No.4—the number of the box occupied by the traveller— Feb. 2nd, 1856." It contains some curious items.

Item £ s. d.

Pen and Paper 6
Port Negus 2 0
Ditto 2 0
Pen and Paper 6
Tumbler Broken 2 6
Brandy 2 0
Pen and Paper 6

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Anchovy Toast 2 6
Pen and Paper 6
Bed 3 0

Feb. 3rd £ s. d.
Pen and Paper 6
Breakfast 2 6
Broiled Ham 2 0
Eggs 1 0
Watercresses 1 0
Shrimps 1 0
Pen and Paper 6
Blotting Paper 6
Messenger to Paternoster Row and back 1 6
Again, when No Answer 1 6
Brandy, 2s. Devilled Port Chop, 2s 4 0
Pens and Paper 1 0
Messenger to Albemarle Street and back 1 0
Again (detained), when No Answer 1 6
Salt–cellar broken 3 6
Large Liqueur glass Orange Brandy 1 6
Dinner, Soup, Fish, Joint, and Bird 7 6
Bottle old East India Brown 8 0
Pen and Paper 6

Total £2 16 6

The oddest item is the charge for breakfast. Nominally this was half–a–crown, but this sum covered, it is evident, merely the tea or coffee, the bread and toast and the butter. Everything else is an extra, and these bring the total up to seven–and–sixpence; the profits to the establishment amounting to about 1000 per cent. or more; since I do not believe that the water–cress cost more than a penny. The breakages were also charged excessively, but the bed is cheap at three shillings, and the dinner most reasonable—provided that the dishes were good of their kind. Unfortunately, it is impossible to compare Christophers' inn with any hotel of our day, since the old kind has ceased to exist, save, perhaps, in a few old hostelries, lingering in small out–of–the–way country towns.

I have stayed at all sorts of houses of entertainment in my day in all parts of this island. I have lodged at small country “pubs” and have been very comfortable; I have stayed at Palatial Hotels in big towns and have been hideously uncomfortable. I remember especially one of these latter. It had a Louis Quatorze, or Quinze, or Seize Tea room, furnished with the utmost luxury. There was marble everywhere, and hot air and cold air, and bathing arrangements that recalled the later Romans at their worst. And they kept me waiting twenty–five minutes for the bacon and eggs at breakfast; and when this rare and exotic dish did appear it was by no means excellent.

A great contrast to this was the Bell at Driffield, in that part of Yorkshire splendidly called the High Wolds. It is an extraordinary country; a great part of it ploughland when I visited it about eight years ago. The fields are huge; some of them, I believe, a hundred acres in extent. There are hardly any trees; they want to grow corn (they told me) not trees. The hedges are about three feet high by a foot broad, and if a hedge shows signs of becoming luxuriant, it is torn up. No weeds were suffered to grow in these hedgerows; not a flower appeared. But the lie of the land was the strangest thing about this strange region. It rose up before you with a great surge and swell; not precipitously, but gently and yet mightily, climbing up and up to the sky line; the white

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road rising perhaps for three or four miles, and in such a way that one felt that there must be a sudden and tremendous descent on the other side. Indeed I was strongly reminded of the Graveyard Scene in Sir John Martin Harvey's production of "Hamlet," the finest piece of scenic illusion that I have ever seen, where there was just such a gradual upward surge of the stage to the panorama cloth of the sky, with the like imperative suggestion that beyond the line of meeting, a thousand feet of sheer, precipitous cliff fell to the sea. But the Wolds were as deceptive as the theatre. The summit of the long wave gained, there was no violent, abrupt fall. The land went slowly down as it had slowly ascended; and then, far away, rose again into another climbing billow, marked by the white chalk road.

But the Bell at Drifffield. It is a small, old coaching inn, and I did not suppose that its resources would be very varied. So when the landlord asked me on my first evening there what I would like for breakfast, I said, "Oh, bacon and eggs, I suppose." Instantly my host was roused. His manner became combative, his chin advanced with a sort of side-toss, peculiar to Yorkshire. And he said:

"Ah don't know about that. What about devilled kidneys?"

I assented gladly. Next morning, the devilled kidneys came and were admirable. Soon after they were served, the landlord came into the coffee-room. I expressed my high approval of the kidneys. He pointed to the sideboard, on which were a magnificent ham, just cut, and two plump fowls, golden brown from the roasting.

"Now mind you help yourself, Mr. Machen," said he, in an admonitory manner; implying that he would think very little of me if I did not help myself. "And if there's anything else you would fancy, I hope you'll mention it."

I left early the next day, and bid good-bye to this good host of the Bell. He relaxed a little.

"Coom again, Mr. Machen, coom again. Coom next time for your pleasure, not for your business. As far as I know, you can get oop when you like, and go to bed when you like, and do anything you like for that matter." And he wagged a genial finger at me, as if he would say that he had imparted the great secret of life. Driving to the station, I found myself thinking of Shenstone's lines. I quote from memory:

Whoe'er hath travelled life's dull round,
Whate'er his fortunes may have been,
Must sigh to think he still has found
His warmest welcome at an inn.

I have other good inns of pleasant and grateful memory. It is a great thing to stay at the Swan at Wells in summer weather; to look out across the street over the green turf of the close, to see the marvellous imagery of the west front of the cathedral against a sky of such a glowing and luminous blue as one only sees in the west. The inn at Dunster, too, the Luttrell Arms; that has a warm welcome and one of the loveliest prospects in England to commend it. And the Vine at Stafford has an old and flourishing vine making all its front green and living; and within there is the most delightful bar parlour, shaped like a boat. Here the boots brought a bag of list slippers at ten o'clock at night, and we all suited ourselves with slippers, as men who are too comfortable to stir in a hurry. We sat up talking to one another, and to the landlady and her daughter, who sat in the boat-shaped room with us in the old, friendly fashion. It was two o'clock in the morning before we stirred. The next morning, the landlady apologised for keeping me up so late. "But really," she said smiling, "when one once embarks on these literary conversations, time seems to fly." I agreed that literature was an absorbing subject; but what I remembered chiefly was some very old bottled ale which, to quote Mr. Bob Sawyer on the brandy at the Blue Lion, Muggleton, was too good to leave in a hurry.

How I wish somebody would open a Bell or a Swan, or a Luttrell Arms, or a Vine—in London!

Deadly Nevergreen

There is a great talk of ghosts just now. They call them spirits, but ghosts is the good and ancient word of England. These ghosts come when the lights are out, and utter nothing or very little of consequence; and sometimes their remarks are “evidential” and sometimes they are not “evidential,” and on the whole nothing much happens. But how is it—if ghosts are, in fact, accustomed to revisit the lands beneath the moon—that anyone dares to pass the intersection of the Edgware Road with the Oxford Road after night has fallen? For it is stated that the ghosts of men who have died violently are given to revisit the scenes of their taking off. The murdered haunt the places of their dreadful endings; how is it, then, that the site of Tyburn Tree is not dense with the spirits of the great multitude of men and women who perished awfully there during the space of three hundred years or more? One would have said that the very ground would cry out with the agony of all these unhappy souls, that perished there by the old torturous method of execution: the cart driven on, the poor wretch left dangling in the air, to strangle by slow and excruciating degrees. But there are no reports of ghosts by the place of Deadly Nevergreen, Tyburn Tree.

One of the strangest of the ends made at Tyburn was that of Lord Ferrers, who was executed on May 5, 1760, for the murder of his steward, John Johnson. It is probable that Lord Ferrers was, in fact, a homicidal maniac, but, being tried by his peers, he was found guilty of murder and condemned to death, and accordingly was hanged with infinite pomp and ceremony. Every courtesy was shown this unhappy nobleman. He was allowed to drive from the Tower to Tyburn in his own landau, drawn by six horses, instead of in the mourning coach which had been provided by some friends. Mr. Sheriff Vaillant attended him, and observed “that it gave him the highest concern to wait upon him upon so melancholy an occasion, but that he would do everything in his power to render his situation as easy as possible.” Earl Ferrers replied politely, and, being dressed in light clothes, embroidered with silver, remarked that his dress might seem strange, but that he had a reason for wearing it. It is said that this gay and rich habit was his lordship's wedding suit, and that he remarked that the latter occasion was as good a one for wearing it as the former. And so the procession set forth: a large number of the constables of Middlesex, a party of horse—grenadiers, and a party of foot, Mr. Sheriff Errington's coach, the famous landau and six, Mr. Sheriff Vaillant's chariot, a mourning coach and six, and lastly a hearse and six. This horrid pageantry set out from the Tower soon after nine, but moved so slowly that Tyburn was not reached till a quarter to twelve. The condemned man behaved with the greatest calmness, hinted very politely to the chaplain that he was a Deist, censured the late Lord Bolingbroke for suffering his religious sentiments to be given to the world, and as to the late Mr. Johnson, whom he had shot dead, protested that he had not the slightest malice against him, but “he had met with so many crosses and vexations that he scarce knew what he did”—he had been a good deal worried, as we should put it.

At last the procession got as far as Drury Lane, and here Lord Ferrers said that he was thirsty and would like a glass of wine and water. But Mr. Sheriff Valliant pointed out that the dense crowd would become still denser if a halt were made, and that his lordship might be disturbed thereby, whereupon the Earl answered: “That's true, I say no more, let us by no means stop.” They drew near to Tyburn, and Earl Ferrers said that there was a person waiting in a coach, for whom he had a very sincere regard, and of whom he would be glad to take leave before he died. Again the Sheriff was polite, but firm. He said that if his lordship insisted it should be so, “but that he wished his lordship, for his own sake, would decline it, lest the sight of a person, for whom he had such regard, should unman him, and disarm him of the fortitude he possessed.” Again my lord gave way, and now the landau was over against the place of death.

And here it is to be noted that there were two instruments of execution at Tyburn. One was the permanent three-legged structure, the true Tyburn Tree which stood where the two roads meet. The other was a temporary scaffold sometimes erected in the Oxford road, by the park railings. It was on this scaffold that Lord Ferrers suffered. It was covered with black baize, and on two black cushions the condemned man and the chaplain knelt and, repeated the Lord's Prayer together. Lord Ferrers took leave of the chaplain and the two sheriffs with many polite expressions, desiring Mr. Sheriff Vaillant to be so good as to accept his watch. Then

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he called for the executioner, who desired his forgiveness, and his lordship, intending to give the man five guineas, gave it to the assistant hangman by mistake. Hence an “unseasonable dispute between these unthinking wretches.” But Mr. Sheriff Vaillant instantly ended that. And then:

“His neckcloth being taken off, a white cap, which his lordship had brought in his pocket being put upon his head, his arms secured by a black sash from incommoding himself, and the cord put round his neck, he advanced by three steps upon an elevation in the middle of the scaffold, where part of the floor had been raised about eighteen inches higher than the rest, and standing under the cross-beam which went over it, covered with black baize, he asked the executioner, ‘Am I right?’ Then the cap was drawn over his face; and then, upon a signal given by the sheriff (for his lordship, upon being asked, declined to give one himself), that part upon which he stood instantly sunk down from beneath his feet, and left him entirely suspended; but not having sunk down so low as was designed, it was immediately pressed down, and levelled with the rest of the floor. For a few seconds his lordship made some struggles against the attacks of death, but was soon eased of all pain by the pressure of the executioner.”

It was his lordship's misfortune that he made the experiment of the New Drop in a very early and ineffective stage of that invention.

It was one of the ugly features of the eighteenth century that it was by no means the rough mob of London that alone took pleasure in these hideous scenes. Boswell was an amateur of executions, and there were many elegant gentlemen who made a point of being present and write to each other, in unspeakably loathsome terms, on the matter. Thus Gilly Williams writes to George Selwyn:

“Harrington's porter was condemned yesterday. Cadogan and I have already bespoke places at the Brazier's. I presume we shall have your honour's company, if your stomach is not too squeamish for a single swing.”

And so again, the Earl of Carlisle, another of Selwyn's correspondents, writes of Hackman, the murderer of Miss Reay:

“He was long at his prayers; and when he flung down his handkerchief for the signal for the cart to move on, Jack Ketch, instead of instantly whipping on the horse, jumped on the other side of him to snatch up the handkerchief, lest he should lose his rights. He then returned, to the head of the cart, and jehu'd him out of the world.”

Dickens has been accused of grossly libelling the famous Lord Chesterfield by his character of Sir John Chester in “Barnaby Rudge.” All good friends of Dr. Johnson will agree that it is impossible to speak too harshly of the detestable Chesterfield. But, that apart, it is doubtful whether a more odious type has ever existed than the bad Whig noble of the eighteenth century.

Ceremony On The Scaffold

On the tenth of June, 1541, Sir Edmund Knevet was arraigned before the officers of the Green Cloth for striking one Master Cleer of Norfolk within the Tennis Court of the King's House. The sentence was that Sir Edmund Knevet must lose his right hand, and forfeit all his possessions.

Now supposing that the Board of Green Cloth existed still in all its vigour, with the old power of passing exemplary sentences, what would happen to plain Bill Smith of these days convicted of giving Tom Robinson one for himself within the verges of St. James's Park? I can imagine the scene very well. Bill would be taken from his cell at eight o'clock one morning. He would be led to a dingy and despairing metal shed in the prison-yard by a couple of warders. Here there would await him the Governor of the Prison, the Medical Officer, perhaps the Chaplain, a skilled surgeon, an anæsthetist, a nurse (very bright and cheerful, with red

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cheeks), and an operating table. On this table Bill would be politely requested to place himself. He would inhale the very latest formula, the Medical Officer keeping in careful touch with his pulse. The distinguished surgeon would then amputate Bill's right hand, the dressings would be applied with the greatest care, and in due course the prisoner would be escorted to the hospital. Here he would remain for the next three weeks, being nurtured on a light but nourishing diet. On his release from prison he would be fitted with an artificial hand, of the newest pattern. Such would be the course of justice in 1926, if it had continued to order right hands to be cut off.

They did not do things in that shabby, hole-in-the-corner way four hundred years ago. The ancient chronicle from which I quote continues the story thus:

“Whereupon there was called to do execution, first the Serjeant Surgeon, with his Instruments pertaining to his office, then, the Serjeant of the Wood Yard, with a mallet and a block to lay the hand upon, then the King's Master Cook with a knife to cut off the hand, then the Serjeant of the Larder to set the knife right on the joint, then the Serjeant Ferrier with searing irons to sear the veins, then the Serjeant of the Poultry with a Cock, which Cock should have his head smitten off upon the same block and with the same knife; then the Yeoman of the Chandry with Sear-cloaths, then the Yeoman of the Scullery, with a pan of fire to heat the Irons, a chafer of water to cool the ends of the Irons, and two forms for all officers to set their stuff on, then the Serjeant of the Cellar with Wine, Ale and Beer; then the Serjeant of the Ewry with Bason, Ewre, and Towels.”

There! It must be confessed that there was nothing mean about the court of Henry VIII. If it was only a matter of cutting off a gentleman's hand, the thing was done magnificently; with—I think we may say—a sense of style. In this particular affair of Sir Edmund Knevet I am afraid that some of the company were disappointed; for when it came to the point of execution Sir Edmund confessed everything and submitted himself in every respect, only begging that the King's Majesty would take the left hand instead of the right, since with that hand, he said, he might live to do the King some service. Whereupon somebody ran to tell the King, and the King immediately forgave Sir Edmund, and left him both his hands and restored to him all his forfeited lands and goods. I am afraid, I say, that, some of the company went away grumbling and asking (more or less) if they were going to have their money back; but I daresay there were others who were all for a happy ending. And I have no doubt that the seven Serjeants, the two Yeomen, and the King's Master Cook gave a good account of the Wine, Ale, and Beer.

Things did not always end so pleasantly. When Nigel (he of “The Fortunes”) was in prison for drawing his sword on the villain, Dalgarno, in the precincts of the Court, Sir Mungo Malagrowth visited him, and, by way of consolation, gave a lively account of some proceedings under the Board of Green Cloth which he had once witnessed. The culprit, if I remember, bore the striking off of his hand bravely enough, but when it came to the application of those red-hot irons to the stump, he uttered an eldritch screech. The Palace Court, the body which once gave these savage sentences, lingered on far into the 'forties of the last century. Tip (otherwise Edward) Dorrit once occupied a stool in the office of an attorney “in a great National Palladium called the Palace Court,” and indeed the Marshalsea, whence Tip came, was originally built as a prison for persons accused of offences committed within the verge of the Court. But I suppose that in its later years the tribunal bled its victims rather metaphorically than literally.

But as to the general question of the public ceremonial and elaborate execution of judgment upon criminals; how does it compare with our grim and secret way of carrying out the last doom of the law? So far as we are concerned, no doubt Charles Dickens, that determined and consistent denouncer of public executions, was perfectly right. Johnson was mistaken when he said that the pageant of Tyburn, with its long drive from Newgate, furnished an example to the populace. Dickens describes the execution of the Mannings and the demeanour of the crowd that waited all night to witness it; it is plain that the vilest degradation, not reformation, was the result of that hideous spectacle. But as for the criminal himself; there, perhaps, Johnson was right in thinking that he was fortified by the dismal pageantry, by the bell ringing at St. Sepulchre's, by

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the flowers presented by lady admirers, by the last drink at St. Giles's. Jonathan Wild is reported by Fielding to have picked the chaplain's pocket of a corkscrew going in the cart to Tyburn, and Sixteen Stringed Jack wore a bright pea-green coat as he went on his way to the Three Wooden Stilts. And, then, there was the admirable Colonel Turner, who was hanged in the seventeenth century for something like robbery with violence. He made what Leslie Stephen rightly called a superb dying speech. "He spoke under the gallows as if he were the good apprentice just arrived at the mayoralty...." He was brought up in an honest family in the good old times, he said, and lamented the bad times that had since come in. So the Colonel ran on happily, speaking of his loyalty to the King, his firm piety, his detestation of profane swearing and drunkenness; in a word of his well-nigh saintly character. At last the hangman put the rope round his neck.

"Dost thou mean to choke me, fellow?" asked the Colonel. "What a simple fellow is this! How long have you been executioner that you know not how to put the knot?"

Then, as he was putting on the white cap, he saw a lady at a window. He kissed his hand to her, said, "Your servant, Mistress," and pulled down the cap, undaunted to the last, as an eye-witness of the scene reports.

It is clear that Colonel Turner would not have liked our modern ways of doing things.

Old Dr. Mounsey

Sometime in the summer of 1768, Dr. Samuel Johnson supped at the Crown and Anchor, in the Strand, with a little company that Mr. Boswell had collected to meet him. The company consisted of Dr. Percy, afterwards Bishop of Dromore (Percy's "Reliques"), Dr. Douglas, Mr. Langton ("Lanky"), Dr. Robertson, the historian, Dr. Blair (Blair's "Rhetoric") and Mr. Thomas Davies, the bookseller of Russell Street, Covent Garden. The Scots were all prudent and silent, but Johnson was "in remarkable vigour of mind and eager to exert himself in conversation." He did exert himself in conversation: to the following effect:

"He was vehement against old Dr. Mounsey, of Chelsea College, as 'a fellow who swore and talked bawdy.' I have been often in his company (said Dr. Percy), and never heard him swear or talk bawdy.' Mr. Davies, who sat next to Dr. Percy, having after this had some conversation 'aside with him, made a discovery which, in his zeal to pay court to Dr. Johnson, he eagerly proclaimed aloud from the foot of the table: 'O, Sir, I have found out a very good reason why Dr. Percy never heard Mounsey swear or talk bawdy; for he tells me he never saw him but at the Duke of Northumberland's table!', 'And so, Sir (said Johnson loudly to Dr. Percy), you would shield this man from the charge of swearing and talking bawdy because he did not do so at the Duke of Northumberland's table. Sir, you might as well tell us that you had seen him hold up his hand at the Old Bailey, and he neither swore nor talked bawdy; or that you had seen him in the cart at Tyburn, and he neither swore nor talked bawdy. And is it thus, Sir, that you presume to controvert what I have related?', Whereupon Dr. Percy left the room in a huff, and next morning Dr. Johnson observed complacently that there had been "good talk."

Of course, the passage had been long familiar to me, but not reading Boswell in the luxury of an annotated edition, I had always speculated vainly as to this "old Dr. Mounsey," who appears on the great lantern show for a moment, sets Johnson and Percy by the ears, and then vanishes. It was only the other day that I found in an odd old book (published, strangely enough, at Louisville, Kentucky) the true history of Dr. Messenger Mounsey (or Monsey), Physician to Chelsea Hospital.

He was the son of a country parson, who refused in 1689 to take the oath of allegiance to the Usurpers, William and Mary. He was educated at Cambridge and settled down as a physician in Bury St. Edmunds, where he married a widow with a handsome jointure. He made an income of £300 a year, and grumbled because he had to work too hard for it. Fortunately for him, Lord Godolphin was seized with apoplexy on a journey to his country seat, and Bury was the nearest point where medical help was to be had. Dr. Mounsey

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was called in, Lord Godolphin got better, liked his physician's talk, and made Dr. Messenger for life. He had an apartment at Lord Godolphin's town house, was made Physician to Chelsea Hospital and saw all the best company of the age, from King George II downwards. For a time he was a great friend of Garrick's; but Garrick had a sly tongue, and the Doctor had a rough tongue, and the friendship ended in offence and epigrams. Garrick used to make comic business out of Mounsey's oddities for the entertainment of his friends; Mounsey said that Garrick would never leave the stage "so long as he knows a guinea is cross on one side and pile on the other"—so long as guineas have heads and tails—and the two became sworn enemies. The fact is that Dr. Mounsey was an intensely rude old man, or, in the elegant phrase of my authority, "it became the fashion for the young, the delicate, and the gay to exclaim against him as an interrupter of established forms, and as a violator of those minute rules of good breeding—which, however trifling they may appear to the sage and the philosopher, contribute essentially to the ease and comfort of modern life." Yet the queer old man had, like the greater Doctor of his age, an interior benevolence. Once, going along Oxford Market, he observed a poor woman asking the price of a fine piece of beef.

"The brute answered the woman, 'One penny a pound,' thinking, no doubt, it was too good for her. 'Weigh that piece of beef,' said the Doctor.

"'Ten pounds and a half,' said Mr. Butcher.

"'Here, good woman,' cried the Doctor, 'hold up your apron and take that beef home to your family.'

"'God bless your honour!'

"'Go off, directly, home; no compliments! Here, Mr. Butcher,' continued the Doctor, 'give me change out of this shilling for that poor woman's beef.'

"'What do you mean, Sir?' replied the Butcher.

"'Mean, Sir! why to pay for the poor woman's beef, what you asked her; a penny a pound. Come, make haste and give me three halfpence; I am in a hurry.'

"'Why, Sir...' said the Butcher.

"'No why sirs with me,' answered the Doctor, 'give me my change instantly, or I will break your head.' The Butcher again began to expostulate, and the Doctor struck him with all his force with his cane."

But the principal adventure of his life seems to have been the affair of the bank-notes. Dr. Mounsey, who was born in 1693, not long after the foundation of the Bank of England, had an old-fashioned distrust of "securities" of all sorts, and so, being bound on a summer holiday, he hid his notes and gold in his fire-place, putting them under the "cinders and shavings" of the laid fire. A month later Dr. Mounsey returned and found his house-keeper entertaining a few friends to tea in his sitting-room. The fire had just been lighted; the kettle was on the hob. "He ran across the room like a madman, swearing his housekeeper had ruined him for ever, and had burned all his bank-notes. First went the contents of the slop-basin, then the teapot, and then he rushed to the pump in the kitchen, and brought a pail of water, which he threw partly over the fire and partly over the company, who in the utmost consternation retreated as speedily as possible. His housekeeper cried out: 'For God's sake, Sir, forbear, you will spoil the steel stove and fire-irons.' 'Damn the stove, irons, you, your company, and all!' replied the Doctor, 'you have ruined and undone me for ever; you have burned my bank-notes.' 'Lord, Sir,' said the half-drowned woman, 'who'd think of putting bank-notes in a Bath stove, where the fire is ready laid?' 'Fire,' said he, 'who'd think of making a fire in summer-time, where there has not been one for months?'" The notes were recovered in a damaged and dubious condition. But Dr. Mounsey's patron, Lord Godolphin, said that he would go with him the next day to the Bank of England, and everything

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would be quite all right. But Godolphin had told the King, and the King said that he must hear Mounsey tell the tale of the burning notes and the drenched tea-party. And so, when the Doctor came, King George II was hidden in a cupboard, and was so much amused that he kicked the cupboard door open. “God!” said the Doctor in a rage, and then saw who had been listening, and with considerable tact ran on his sentence, “bless your majesty; this may be a joke with you and his lordship, but to me a loss of near £400.” But Lord Godolphin assured him that he should have his money, and made an appointment to meet him at the Bank a little later. Dr. Mounsey, in the interval, transacted some business at the Horse Guards, and took water at Whitehall for the Bank. In going down the river he felt that he must have a look at the bank-notes, to make quite sure that they were safe. So he pulled out his pocket-book; and a gust of wind blew the notes out of the book and into the river. “The Doctor, with a volley of oaths—the other Doctor was right on one point, at all events—desired the waterman to put back, for that his bank-notes were overboard. He was instantly obeyed; and when he reached them he took the hat from his head, and, dipping it in the river, took up his notes, together with half a hatful of water. With his hat, the notes, and the water under his arm he was landed at the famous stairs called the Three Cranes in the Vintry, and walked straight to the Bank.

“What have you under your arm?” asked Lord Godolphin. “The damned notes,” replied the Doctor, throwing the hat on the table with such violence that the water spurted into the faces of the City Kings who sat about the board. “There,” said the Doctor, “take the remains of your damned notes, for neither fire nor water will consume them.” He got his money in full, but he did not go away in peace. He had forgotten all about the watermen and the fare from Whitehall. They were waiting outside the Bank “howling for their money,” and swearing that the Doctor was a madman. When he came out, one of the watermen laid hold of him—and was instantly knocked down for his pains. However, a crown for the little mistake, with half a crown for the fare, adjusted this little difficulty, and Dr. Messenger Mounsey resolved to invest his money in the Funds for the future.

This remarkable character outlived Dr. Johnson by five years, dying in 1789, at the age of ninety-six. Naturally, he made an eccentric will. He left the bulk of his money to his daughter, tying it up by a complicated system of entail to her female descendants. He mentioned in his will a young lady on whose wit, taste and elegance he “lavished encomiums”—leaving her an old battered snuff-box, worth about sixpence. He mentioned also another young lady to whom he had intended to bequeath a legacy. But she turned out “a pert, conceited minx,” so she got nothing. Then came annuities to two clergymen, who had turned Unitarian.

And I am wondering whether Dr. Johnson knew all that there was to be known about Dr. Messenger Mounsey. He abominated foul and blasphemous language, no doubt; he would have detested a man who abused the Church of England and comforted heretics. But if he had known of the principal clause in old Dr. Mounsey's will, by which large property was not only left to a woman but entailed in the female line, then he would have dismissed Dr. Mounsey as a wild and irresponsible madman, fit for Bedlam and nothing else.

The Euston Square Mystery

Decidedly; the murder of Matilda J. Hacker in Euston Square, in the year 1878, is one of those cases that are to be marked with an “and yet....” No doubt the verdict of the jury was the right verdict, according to the rules of the law; but....

Miss Hacker, if she had lived in an earlier age, would undoubtedly have been one of those “Characters,” of whom we were talking. Like Miss Betty Bolaine, she lived at Canterbury; like Miss Bolaine she had an aversion from the spending of money. But, born in a later age, she did not appear in polite company as an animated and malodorous rag-bag, nor did she make her meals of rotten meat picked up in the gutter and roasted on a fire of cabbage stalks. We have long lost the courage of our opinions; and Miss Hacker expressed herself in a purely negative way—she would not pay her rates at Canterbury. She was a well-to-do old woman, but she did not like paying rates. Accordingly, she absconded. She took various names, and lived in

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various places, so as to avoid being traced and proceeded against by the Canterbury authorities. At length, she called herself Huish, and took lodgings at 4, Euston Square—the place changed its name in consequence—a house kept by a Mr. and Mrs. Bastindoff. Like many other “Characters” of the chronicles, she was accustomed to keep a good deal of money by her in a cash-box.

On the 10th of October, 1878, she wrote a business letter to her agent about some property, the reply to be addressed to “M. B., Post Office, Holborn.” On Sunday, October 14, Mr. and Mrs. Bastindoff were out for the day, and Miss Hacker was alone in the house with the servant, Hannah Dobbs. Next day, Mr. Bastindoff told the servant to go up to the old lady and get some rent due to him. Hannah, Mr. Bastindoff declared, ran upstairs with alacrity, saying, “I’ll go,” and came down again with a £5 note. The note was changed, the rent owing deducted, and the balance handed to Hannah Dobbs; it does not appear why. But one would think that the lodger would have received the balance. And now a very singular point. Mrs. Bastindoff said afterwards in the witness-box that on the morning of Sunday, October 14, Hannah had told her that she thought that Miss Huish (otherwise Hacker) was going to leave the lodgings that day; indeed, that she believed the old lady had already gone. This statement seems to have produced little effect on the Bastindoff family, since Mr. Bastindoff sent up his servant to collect money from his lodger on the Monday morning, and collected it. It is not recorded that he said: “So she hasn’t gone, after all,” or made any remark in particular. But after the successful embassy of the £5 note, it would appear that the lodger’s disappearance was gently allowed to steal on the family consciousness. Still, nobody troubled to go into the old lady’s rooms for a couple of days, and then only to get them ready for a new lodger. In these rooms, Mrs. Bastindoff declared, she saw a stain on the carpet, and also clear evidence that someone had tried to wash the stain away. Still, Mrs. Bastindoff did not seem afraid with any amazement. A lodger had disappeared, probably on Sunday morning; had handed over five pounds on the Monday; her room, on the Wednesday, was found to be darkly stained; afterwards, analysis showed that this was, indeed, the stain of blood. But, so far as we can see, all these odd circumstances were accepted by the Bastindoffs as being completely in the natural order of things.

And there were other queer things, that appear to have aroused no particular comment at the time of their occurrence. Soon after October 15 Hannah Dobbs showed one of the Bastindoff children a Dream Book, which, she said, had belonged to Miss Hacker. She gave another child a funny toy, the lodger’s cash-box—with a broken lid. She also mounted a watch and chain which no one had ever seen about her before. But she explained that the watch and chain had been left her by an old uncle, lately dead at Bideford. She pawned them, later, under a false name, and it turned out at last that they were originally the property of Miss Hacker. It was found that there was no uncle at Bideford, and, naturally enough, therefore, that he hadn’t died. Soon after the disappearance of the old woman, Hannah Dobbs left the Bastindoff service, and went into lodgings. She could not pay her rent, so left her box as security. Eventually it was opened, and several articles in it were identified as having been the property of Miss Hacker.

So much for Miss Hacker’s disappearance; now for her reappearance. Seven months later, in May, 1879, the cellar at No.4, Euston Square, was cleared out, as one of the lodgers wanted to store coal there. Then Miss Hacker reappeared; very dead down in that cellar, with a rope about her neck. But the body was identified beyond doubt, and some pieces of jewellery found by the body were known to have been the property of the dead woman. A pretty strong case, as Montagu Williams observes, and yet Hannah Dobbs was acquitted. The judge was Mr. Justice Hawkins, who was not generally supposed to be unduly favourable to prisoners at the bar. But the point, it seems, was technical. Hannah Dobbs was, undoubtedly, in possession of various pieces of property that had belonged to Miss Hacker; but that was no proof that she had murdered Miss Hacker; it was not even proof that she knew that Miss Hacker had been murdered. I do not know whether it were proved that Hannah Dobbs must have seen the watch and chain (for example) in the dead woman’s possession; even so, they might have been given to her by another person and that other person might have assured Hannah that they were a gift to him from Miss Hacker.

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Then followed a very odd sequel. Hannah Dobbs became a popular heroine. The proprietor of the *Police News* took up her case, and issued a pamphlet, which pretended to tell Miss Dobbs' true story. Miss Dobbs declared that there had been certain relations between herself and Bastindoff, before she entered his service, and during her residence in his house. Then Mr. Bastindoff filed an affidavit, denying these allegations. And on that affidavit he was indicted for perjury. Again the Judge was Hawkins. Hannah Dobbs, who had been rather shabby at her own trial, turned up smartly dressed in the witness-box. She swore that the relations between herself and Bastindoff began in the autumn of 1877, when she was in service at 42, Torrington Square. Hannah and another girl were cleaning windows, and Mr. Severin Bastindoff spoke to them.

“In consequence of that conversation he and I went out together that night or a night or two afterwards, and from that time until I entered his service we frequently went out together. The relationship was kept up during the time I was an inmate of his house.”

This story was corroborated by Hannah's fellow-servants. Two of them said that one night they were waiting for Bastindoff and that all three fell asleep before the kitchen fire, leaving the area door open. Two policemen noticed the open door, entered, woke the girls up, and partook of a little coffee with them. The girls identified the prisoner as the man they had seen, but explained that when they had met him below stairs his beard was differently cut. Mr. Justice Hawkins then directed that a witness, once a partner of Bastindoff's, should be recalled, and he gave a description of the prisoner's beard, old style, which confirmed the statement of the servant girls. A Mrs. Carpenter, keeper of an inn at Redhill, swore that in the year 1877 Dobbs and Bastindoff passed the night together at her hotel. It was observed that this Mrs. Carpenter was violently antagonistic to the accused man. Hannah Dobbs was cross-examined. It appeared that she had been convicted of theft, and her little life story led Mr. Justice Hawkins to declare her “a most infamous person.” The defence was that on the day on which Bastindoff was said to have been at Redhill with infamous Hannah, he was really fishing in quite a different part of the country; and that the man who was with Hannah was really brother Peter Bastindoff, who was just like Severin. But, unfortunately, the people who swore that Severin was fishing, swore that Peter was fishing too, a statement making confusion very much worse confounded, but not helpful to the defence.

There is only one gleam of light in this strange, tragical, most horrible case: Severin Bastindoff's best witness was his mother-in-law. One would have thought that this affecting circumstance would have melted brassy bosoms and hearts of flint; but it was not so. In the result, Severin Bastindoff was found guilty of the crime of perjury, and sentenced to twelve months hard labour.

There is no happy ending to this queer story. Nobody was hanged, though it seems pretty clear that somebody, perhaps several somebodies, would have been “nane the waur for a hanging,” as the humorous Scots justice observed on one occasion.

The Power Of Jargon

Not so many years ago, fifteen or sixteen, or seventeen, perhaps, we were all following the Druce Case with immense interest. Stated baldly, as I remember it, the general thesis was that a Mr. Druce, keeper of a big furniture shop in Baker Street, who in due season died, and was buried in Highgate Cemetery, was not Mr. Druce at all, but the Duke of Portland; the famous Duke who caused to be constructed the underground mansion at Welbeck, and was thought to be more than a little eccentric. Now, I have forgotten the detail, I regret to say, but if this Mr. Druce could be proved to have been, in fact, the Duke, then somebody would come in for a great deal of money. The original claimant went mad and died, and then another claimant appeared, and turned himself or herself into a company, and found some hundreds of people ready to subscribe quite large sums so that the legal proceedings should be taken and the recovered treasure distributed amongst them. This monstrous bubble of a story was finally burst by leave being given to open the Druce vault at Highgate; whereupon the body of poor Mr. Druce was disclosed and found to be undoubtedly the

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body of Mr. Druce, and not a lump of lead, as (I think) was alleged by the Claimant. But in the course of litigation one extraordinary witness was called in support of the Claimant's case. She was a very old lady, over eighty, to the best of my recollection, and she had been brought all the way from New Zealand to tell the most outrageous cock-and-bull story that was ever heard in an English law court. She knew all about the secret of the Duke of Portland, who had the odd humour, according to the fable, of pretending at intervals to be an upholsterer in Baker Street; she knew, because in her youth she had been "outside correspondent" to him, Charles Dickens, and Lord Lytton. She did not explain what an "outside correspondent" was; she placidly babbled her imbecilities in the witness-box, and was finally prosecuted for perjury, convicted and let off very lightly.

But it is her phrase that interests me. I am convinced that it was a great attraction to the people who were persuaded to back this crazy imposture, just because it was idiotic, which, after all, is not surprising, since the persons concerned who parted with their money in such a cause were undoubtedly idiots, and so it was, I think, with the amazing case of Benson and the Turf Frauds, an old tale of the 'seventies.

Benson was a man of Jewish race. He was only twenty-six, but he had been in grave trouble before. He was perfectly well-mannered, well-educated, well-dressed, and had contrived, one gathers, by gig-keeping on a magnificent scale, to associate with the very best people in the Isle of Wight. He drove a splendidly equipped carriage and pair; therefore, he was a good man. He had collected about him a remarkable gang of assistants; and in the year 1876 Benson and his friends laid a remarkable trap, and baited it in the oddest manner. This bait was taken, and taken eagerly, by one Madame de Goncourt, a wealthy French widow. Benson, no doubt, had marked her down; it is the business of men who follow his difficult and dangerous craft to know everything—everything that may at all concern them. At all events, Madame de Goncourt received an odd number of an English paper called *Sport*. Of course, there was no such paper. But Madame de Goncourt, reading this journal which had fallen on her from the clouds, learned from it that it was the property of an immensely wealthy Englishman, a Mr. Montgomery. This Mr. Montgomery had mysterious and masterly access to turf and stable secrets that had enabled him to win, not thousands, but millions of pounds on the race-course. Not unnaturally, the bookmakers were enraged at the disastrous science of Mr. Montgomery. They refused to take his bets. *Sport* was enraged. It pointed out a way. Though Mr. Montgomery could not make bets in his own name, he could pay a slight commission to foreign agents, who would back horses for him in their own names. All this impressed Madame de Goncourt immensely, and she was impressed still more by the receipt of a letter from the great Mr. Montgomery. This gentleman—alias Benson—wrote as follows:

"Your name has been favourably mentioned to me by the Franco-English Society of Publicity, and I consequently repose in you the most esteemed confidence. What I require of you is very simple indeed. I will send you for each race the amount which I desire to put on the horse which must, in my opinion, win. You will have to forward the money *in your name*, but *on my account*, to the bookmaker, and thus will be able to get the real odds, which, on account of my success and great knowledge, are denied me. The bookmaker will, on settling day, send you the amount, added to the stake originally forwarded to him. This you will please remit to me, and, on its receipt, I will forthwith forward to you a commission of five per cent."

Madame de Goncourt had more money than she knew what to do with; naturally, therefore, she wanted to make more. She became Mr. Montgomery's agent, and received cheques of "The Royal Bank of London, Charing Cross." There was no such bank, to be sure; but, then, there was no Franco-English Society of Publicity. Sham cheques came raining on Madame de Goncourt, and she forwarded them to various agents of Benson, who were supposed to be English bookmakers. Then Mr. Montgomery sent her a Bank of London cheque for £1000, which was to be put on a certain horse and sent to a bookmaker named Francis, who, said Mr. Montgomery, was a "sworn-bookmaker." And he advised the lady, very strongly, to invest a like sum on her own account. She did so, and in a few days she had sent £10,000 to various sworn-bookmakers.

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Then, of course, the inevitable mistake. The gang did not know when to leave the board. They put it to Madame de Goncourt that a vast fortune was to be made if she could venture £30,000 with a sworn-bookmaker named Ellerton; and Mr. Montgomery said that if the lady could not command the whole sum he would gladly advance the difference himself. She was only too ready to find the whole sum required; but before this could be done she had to have a talk with her banker—and then all was spoilt. Madame de Goncour came over to England, and characteristically enough, applied to the Lord Mayor, telling him, no doubt, that she had suffered wrong. Her confidence in the French Legend of the Lord Mayor of London was justified; Benson and his rascals were caught, and the lady recovered almost the whole of her money. I do not think I am in the least glad to record this fact. On the whole, I think Benson and his pirates deserved the money quite as well as Madame de Goncourt, if not better. Poor men, men of large families and small means, may be readily excused if they are over-ready to accept idle tales of immense gains: but the rich should not be covetous. But this is not a moral tale. Its point lies in the highly successful use of absurd jargon, of the “outside correspondent” order. Mark the “Franco-English Society of Publicity,” non-existent, of course but interesting as containing an early example of the ugly word, “publicity.” Note “The Royal Bank of London”; note, above all, the “sworn-bookmaker,” a great creation. There is no surer bait than pompous and unmeaning gibberish of this sort. You remember “The Anglo-Bengalee Disinterested Loan and Life Assurance Company.” In England we require the moral touch implied in “Disinterested.” Benson was baiting his hook for Continental victims, and so did not appeal to the ethical issue. It is well known that they are not really moral on the Continent. I shall call my swindle “The All-British Orphans' Benevolent Protection and Reconstruction Company, Ltd.” Reconstruction is one of the most blessed of these blessed words; and what good man could resist the temptation of benevolently protecting and reconstructing an All-British Orphan—especially if he were promised interest on his money at the rate of twenty-five per cent?