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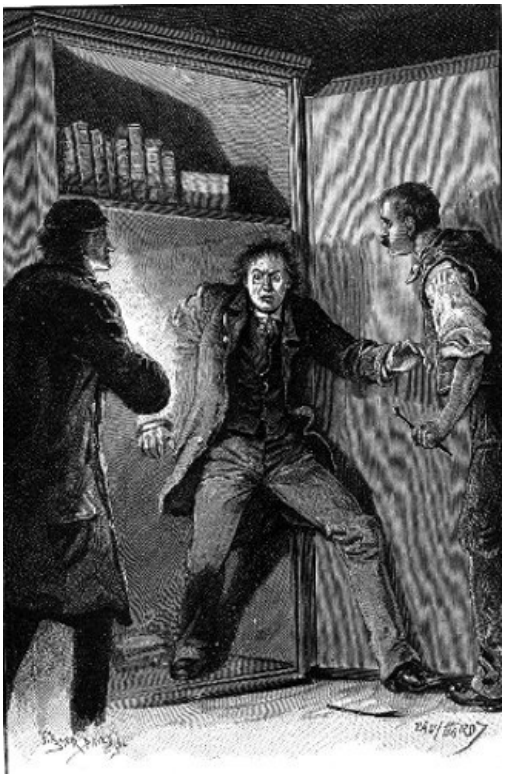


"The Head Book-keeper Stepped Out of the Safe."
(*Pierre and Baptiste.*)

By Beckles Willson.

I once knew two industrious mechanics named Pierre and Baptiste. They dwelt in a ramshackle tenement at Sault aux Belœuil, where each had half-a-dozen children to support, besides their wives; who, it is grievous to relate, were drones. They were only nominally acquainted with that godly art commonly associated with charwomen.

Pierre and Baptiste were hard workers. They worked far into the night and, occasionally, the thin mists of dawn had begun to break on the narrow city pavements before their labours would cease. No one could truthfully say that theirs was not a hard-earned pillow. Sometimes they did not toil in vain. It depended largely upon the police.

It was early one November that this horny-handed pair planned the burglary of a certain safe located in a wholesale establishment in St. Mark Street. On the particular evening that Pierre and Baptiste hit upon for the deed, the head book-keeper had been having a wrangle with his accounts.

"I can't make head or tail of this!" he declared to his employer, the senior member of the firm, "yet I am convinced everything must be right. An error of several hundred dollars has been carried over from each daily footing, but where the error begins or ends, I'm blessed if I can find out."

"THE HEAD BOOK-KEEPER HAD BEEN HAVING A WRANGLE WITH HIS ACCOUNTS."

The fact was that the monthly sales had been unusually heavy, and a page of the balance had been mislaid. The head book-keeper spent upwards of an hour in casting up both the entries of himself and his subordinates after the establishment had closed its doors for the day. [Pg 548]

Then he went home to supper, determined to return and locate the deficit, if he didn't get a wink of sleep until morning.

Book-keepers, it must be borne in mind, have highly sensitive organisms, which are susceptible to the smallest atom reflecting upon their probity or skill. At half-past eight the book-keeper returned and commenced anew his critical calculations. He worked precisely three hours and a half; at the end of which period he suddenly clapped his hand to his forehead and exclaimed:—

"Idiot! Why haven't you looked in the safe for a missing sheet? Ten chances to one they have been improperly numbered!"

He turned over the pages of the balance on his desk, and, sure enough, the usual numerical mark

or designation in the upper left-hand corner which should follow eleven was missing. Page twelve, in all likelihood, had slipped into some remote corner of the safe.

The safe was a large one, partially receding into the wall and containing all the papers, documents, and several day receipts in cash and drafts of the firm.

The head book-keeper, in his efforts at unearthing the lost page of the cash balance, was obliged to intrude his entire person into the safe. Fearful lest the candle he held should attract attention from the street, showing out as it did against the black recesses of the safe, upon entering he drew the door slightly ajar.

As he stepped in the tail of his coat caught on an angle of the huge riveted lock; the massive gate swung to as if it weighed no more than a pound, and the book-keeper was a prisoner.

He heard a resonant click—that was all. His candle went out.

The book-keeper at the outset lost his presence of mind. He fought like a caged animal. He first exerted almost superhuman strength against the four sides of the iron tomb. Then his body collapsed and, not for an instant losing consciousness, he found himself sitting in a partially upright posture, unable to so much as stir a muscle.

It was almost at the same moment, although hours seemed to have passed, that the drum of his ear, now abnormally sensitive, was almost split into fragments. A frightful monotonous clangour rent the interior of the safe.

"HE STEPPED IN."

The book-keeper used to observe afterwards that a single second's deviation of characteristic thought and he would have gone mad. Stronger minds in a parallel situation would have indeed collapsed. But a weaker man can never confront the inevitable, but clings more stubbornly to hope. They are only weak individualities who, in the act of drowning, catch at straws.

As the book-keeper felt himself gradually growing faint for want of air to breathe, his revivified hope led him to deliberately crash his fist into the woodwork with which the interior of the safe was fitted, in secretaire fashion, one drawer being built above another. This gave him a few additional cubic feet of air. [Pg 549]

As may have been conjectured, the noise which smote the book-keeper's ear was that of a drill. Although acutely discerned within, the sound was practically smothered on the outside of the vault.

At one end of the drill was a cavity, rapidly growing larger, in one of the steel panels. At its other end was a heavy, warty fist, part of the anatomy of Baptiste, the industrious mechanic. Baptiste held the drill while his comrade, Pierre, pounded it in.

Soon the two burglars became aware that some sort of animal commotion was going on within the safe. It nearly drove them into convulsions of astonishment. Baptiste was so startled that he dropped the drill.

"It is a ghost," he said.

Baptiste was for throwing up the job uncompromisingly on the spot, but this proposal met with obstacles. His fellow workman, who was of stiffer courage, rejected it with scorn, as savouring

too much of the superstitious. Pierre had a large family to support, he argued. He spoke frankly. They could not afford to throw away the opportunities of Providence. To his friend and co-labourer, the burden of his remarks was:—

"*Lâche!* Go hon! You make me tired wiz yer ghosts an' tings. Let's not have no beast foolin'—see? De job is commence: *Allons!*"

The upshot of this was that Pierre and Baptiste went back to work. At the third crack of the drill, Pierre crossed himself, and said:—

"Baptiste, dere's a man in dat safe!"

Both men grew pale as death at the very suggestion. Baptiste, for instance, was so frightened he couldn't utter a syllable. His tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. However, Pierre, as usual, was the first to recover. He applied his ear, first to the lock and then to the drill-hole.

"Hey, in dere!" he cried, yet not so loud as to be heard on the side-walk. To this there came a faint response—a very faint shout indeed; it sounded as if it were a mile away:—

"For God's sake, give me air! I am locked in here. Try and burst open the safe!"

The two burglars did not stop to talk, but went at once to work as if their own lives depended on the result, instead of the life of the mysterious occupant of the vault. In less than four minutes they had a hole, somewhat smaller than the business end of a collar-button, knocked into the panel of the vault.

Then Pierre and Baptiste paused to wipe the sweat from their brows. The man inside breathed.

It was now that the pair began to muse on the dénouement. Could this be a member of the firm or an employé? This hypothesis jeopardized the success of the night's adventure, unless, when they had permitted the prisoner to emerge, they bound and gagged him into silence.

On the other hand, this course would have an ugly look. If he resisted it might mean murder in the end; whereas, if they did not let him out at all, they would stand no chance of profiting by the pecuniary contents of the safe. Besides, as the man could scarcely live thus until morning, they would be responsible for his taking off. Thus reasoned Pierre and Baptiste.

"BOTH MEN GREW PALE AS DEATH."

These were not highly comforting reflections, but there was still another and a better in reserve. [Pg 550] What if, after all, the man were himself a felon? Might he not be a companion crib-cracker? In that case they would merely have to divide the spoils.

"Hey, in dere," cried Pierre, suddenly struck with an idea. "What is de combination hof de safe?"

"Fifteen—three—seventy-three!" came back in sepulchral tones.

It was evidently growing harder and harder to draw breath through the tiny aperture.

Thus it transpired that at the expiration of fifteen seconds the lock of the vault gave back the same resonant click it had rendered eight minutes previously. Thanks to the timely advent of Pierre and Baptiste it opened as lightly, as airily, and as decisively as it had closed 480 seconds before on the unhappy accountant.

The head book-keeper gasped once or twice, but without any assistance stepped out into the free air. He was very pale and his dress was much rent and disordered when his feet touched the floor. But this pallor quickly made way for a red flush at perceiving the two burglars, with the implements of their profession strewn around them.

Meanwhile Pierre and Baptiste themselves stood transfixed by the sheer novelty of the situation.

Without any kind of speech or warning, or without making any attempt at bravado, the book-keeper walked deliberately to his desk and rang an electric call for the police. Simultaneously it seemed, for so rapid and quiet was the action, he opened a drawer, took out a small revolver, and

covered both burglars with a fatal precision. As he did so he uttered these remarkable words:—

"Gentlemen, I would, indeed, be the basest of men if I did not feel profoundly grateful for the service you have just rendered me. I shall always regard you as any right-minded man should regard those who have saved his life with imminent peril to themselves or, which is just the same, to their liberty. Any demand in reason you make of me I shall make an effort to perform—but my duty to my employers I regard as *paramount*. I have accumulated a little money, and with it I propose to engage the best counsel in your defence, which is certainly marked by mitigating circumstances. If, on the other hand, you are convicted——"

Here the officers of justice entered, having broken open the door with a crash.

[Pg 551]

By W. Cade Gall.

An elderly gentleman of our acquaintance, whose reading has been rather desultory than profound, and tending rather to the quaint and speculative, was astonished recently at coming across a volume in his library of whose very existence he had been completely unaware. This volume was oblong in shape, was bound in mauve morocco, and was called "Past Dictates of Fashion; by Cromwell Q. Snyder, Vestamentorum Doctor."

Glancing his eye downwards past a somewhat flippant sub-title, the elderly gentleman came, with intense amazement, to understand that the date of this singular performance was 1993. Other persons at a similar juncture would have pinched themselves to see if they were awake, or have tossed the book into the street as an uncanny thing. But our elderly gentleman being of an inquisitive and acquisitive turn of mind, despite his quaintness, recognised the fact that if he was not of the twentieth century the volume obviously was; seized pen and paper, and began to make notes with the speed of lightning. Being also something of a draughtsman he was able to embellish his notes with sketches from the engravings with which "Past Dictates of Fashion" was copiously furnished. These sketches appear with the present article.

Fashion in dress, according to the twentieth century author, notwithstanding its apparent caprice, has always been governed by immutable laws. But these laws were not recognised in the benighted epoch in which we happen to live at present. On the contrary, Fashion is thought a whim, a sort of shuttlecock for the weak-minded of both sexes to make rise and fall, bound and rebound with the battledore called—social influence. But it will interest a great many people to learn that Fashion assumed the dignity of a science in 1940. Ten years later it was taken up by the University of Dublin. By the science as taught by the various Universities later on were explained those points in the history, manners, and literature of our own ancestors which were formerly obscure and, in fact, unknown. They were also, by certain strict rules, enabled to foretell the attire of posterity. Here is a curious passage from the introductory chapter to the book:—

"Cigars went out of fashion twenty years ago. Men and women consumed so much tobacco that their healths were endangered. The laws of Nature were powerless to cope with the evil. Not so the laws of Fashion, which at once abated it. It will, however, return in thirty-one years. In 1790 Nature commanded men to bathe. They laughed at Nature. In 1810 Fashion did the same thing. Men complied, and daily cold baths became established. In 1900 it was pushed to extremes. The

ultra-sect cut holes in the ice and plunged into the water. The fashion changed. For forty years only cads bathed."

The following table is also interesting, and should be borne in mind in considering the accompanying cuts. It professes to exhibit the sartorial characteristics of an epoch:— [Pg 552]

Table of Waves.

	Type.	Tendency.
1790 to 1815	Angustorial	Wobbling
1815 " 1840	Severe	Recuperative
1840 " 1875	Latorial	Decided
1875 " 1890	Tailor-made	Opaque
1890 " 1915	Ebullient	Bizarre
1915 " 1940	Hysterical	Angustorial

The first plate in the book is dated 1893, and serves as a frontispiece. The costumes of the lady and gentleman are familiar enough, although we note with surprise that the gentleman's coat-talks seem to have a crinoline cast, and if the turned-up bottoms of his trousers are a little mortifying, it is atoned for by a triumphant attitude which disarms hypercriticism. Also the lady's posture makes it difficult for us to tell whether it is a stick or an umbrella she is carrying.

There is a pictorial hiatus of some years, but the text notes that crinoline for women enjoyed a sway of some years' duration. For, taking the tracings from the plates in the order in which they are given in the book, we find a subdued form of the article in the female costume for 1905. The ladies may well regard this plate as astounding. There is even a suggestion of "bloomer" about its nether portion, and if the hat is not without precedent in history, the waist is little short of revolutionary.

1910

The next plate displays a gentleman's habit for the year 1908. The tailors, fifteen years hence, seemed to have borrowed, in the construction of the coat, very liberally from the lady's mantle of 1893. Apropos of this and the ensuing three plates, it is pleasing to be told, as we are by the author of this book, that the long reign of black is doomed. Towards the close of April, 1898, Lord Arthur Lawtrey appeared in the Park attired literally in purple and fine linen, *i.e.*, in a violet coat, with pale heliotrope trousers. [Pg 553]

1902

Yet, in spite of the opposition to Lord Arthur, the wave was due, and the affection for colour spread. The new century, at its birth, saw black relegated to the past—also to the future. This was midway in the Ebullient Age. Pent up for decades, mankind naturally began to slop over with sartorial enthusiasm. In 1920 its *bizarrerie* became offensive, and an opposition crusade was directed against it. Something had to be conceded. Trousers, which had been wavering between nautical buttons and gallooned knees—or, in the vernacular of the period, a sail three sheets in the wind and a flag at half-mast—were the items sacrificed. Knee-breeches enjoyed vogue for a time, but only for a time; for they vanished suddenly in 1930 and were replaced by tights or shapes. Boots made way for Elizabethan slippers. Hats had long since gone the way of the superannuated. Taught by the Darwinian theory, society discovered whence its tendency to baldness originated. They had recourse by degrees to flexible tiles of extraordinary cut.

1911-12

A further glance at the costume for the swells between 1902 and 1912 reveals the existence of an entirely novel adjunct to male attire. Silk bows have been worn about the neck for nearly, if not quite, a century, but never in the body of the attire. It is true the gentleman as early as 1910 adorns his nether garments with a plain silk band, but in the elderly party of 1911 he has assumed gay ribbons for his shoes as well as at his knees and throat. In this plate we greet the presence of an unmistakable umbrella as a good omen. But it is only a short-lived rapture, for the spruce young party in the next sketch is balancing lightly between thumb and forefinger what we take to be nothing more or less than a shepherd's crook. This is hardly an edifying prospect. Yet if we do not altogether mistake the two wing-shaped objects projecting from his person, it is not the only feature of gentlemen's fashions twenty years hence which will occasion a shock. Nor must we overlook the frivolity of the lady of the same period who is doing her utmost to look pleasant under the most trying conditions. Yet it must be confessed that in spite of its intricate novelty and perplexity, the costume must still be called plain. One might be forgiven for surmising that the kerchief-shaped article covering a portion of the lady's bust is formed of riveted steel, for surely nothing [Pg 554]

else could support the intolerable load she is so blandly carrying off.

Female costume seems to have always been regulated by the same waves and rules which governed male costume, but in a different degree. In the Ebullient period it is chiefly distinguished by head-dress and the total abolition of stays. Crinoline, in spite of certain opposition, enjoyed a slight revival in the present day, and in 1897 the divided skirt threatened to spread universally. But it passed off, and nothing of a radical order was attempted in this direction until the revolution which brought in trousers for women in 1942.

Meantime, in the next plate of a lady's costume, which is dated 1922, we have presented a very rational and beautiful style of dress. The skirt, it is true, is short enough to alarm prim contemporary dames, and it is scarcely less assuring to find in the whole of the remaining plates only three periods when it seems to have got longer. But doubtless the very ample cloak, which is so long that it even trails upon the ground, extenuated and in some degree justified its shortness.

The plate dated 1920 exhibits a very gorgeous and yet altogether simple set of garments for the male of that period. We are told that the upper portion was of crimson plush, and the lower part of a delicate pink, with white stockings and orange boots. It were well had the leaders of fashion stopped at this, but it would appear that either their thirst for novelty was insatiable or the Hysterical Wave too strong for them, for in the incredibly short space of six years fashion had reached the stage depicted in the following plate. Yet, even then, the depth of folly and ugliness does not appear to have been sounded, for three years later, in 1929, we are favoured with a plate of what is presumably a husband and wife on their way to church or perchance upon a shopping excursion. The lady is evidently looking archly back to see if anybody is observing what a consummate guy her spouse is making of himself, for with all her sartorial short-comings she has certainly the best of the bargain. The prudes, too, seemed to have gained their point, for the skirt is considerably less scanty in the region of the ankles.

[Pg 555]

This skirt seems to have been rather a weak point with our posterity of the female persuasion, for in the next three or four plates we find it rising and falling with the habitual incorrigibility of a shilling barometer. The Oriental influence is easily traced in the fashions from 1938 to 1945, but it cannot but make the judicious grieve to note that trousers seem to have been adopted by the women at the same time that they were discarded by the men.


1938

A further detail which might interest the student concerns the revival of lace, which transpired so early as 1905. Curiously enough, this dainty adjunct to the attire had fallen into desuetude among women. More curiously still, it remained for the sterner sex to revive it. For it was in that year that the backbone of stiff white collars and cuffs was broken. A material being sought which would weather the existing atmospheric conditions, it was yielded in lace, which continued in vogue for at least two generations.

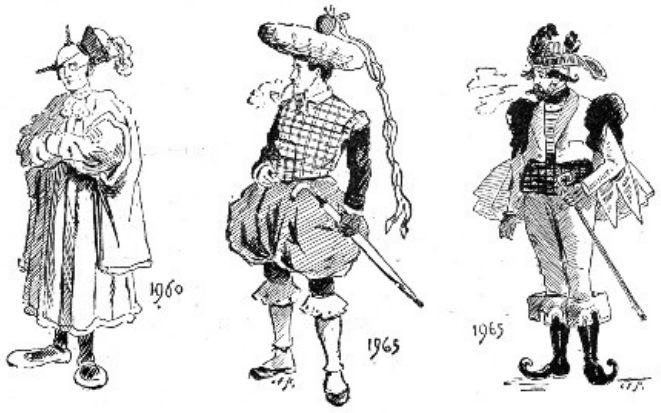
If we look for the greatest donkey in the entire collection, it is obvious that we shall find him in the middle-aged party of 1936, who is gadding about in inflated trunks and with a fan in his hand. If it were not for the gloves and polka-dot neck-wear we should assume that this costume was a particularly fantastic bathing-suit. The youth of the ensuing year, in the next plate, is probably a son of the foregoing personage, for it is not difficult to detect a strong family likeness. As to the costume itself for 1937, barring the shaved head and Caledonian cap, there is nothing particular to be urged against it. It seems clearly a revival of the dress of the Middle Ages.

[Pg 556]

It is at least consoling to feel that only a very small minority of those who read this is destined to enliven our thoroughfares with such grotesque images as is furnished by the plate for 1945. The confidently asinine demeanour of this youth is hardly relieved by the absurdity of a watch suspended by a chain from the crown of his hat. That society protested against this aspect of idiocy is evinced by the harmonious costume for 1950, in which a complete revolution is to be noted. We hasten to observe that the latter plate—the one for 1948—is that of a clergyman.

There is very little beauty about the lady's costume for 1946, or in that of the child in the plate. That for 1950 is a great improvement. The exaggerated chignon has disappeared, and two [Pg 557] seasons later we find the costume fascinating to a degree, although certainly partaking more of the male than of the female order of dress. Without the cape it is not so captivating, as shown by the plate dated 1955-6, where both a lady and gentleman are shown, although to accord praise to either's hideous style of head-dress would be to abandon permanently all reputation for taste.

The policeman shown in the drawing for 1960 seems to have a very easy time of it, for no man's person can be considered in danger from the mob who habitually offers so many *points à saisir* as this policeman's head displays. We may likewise suspect the military gentleman depicted in the plate for 1965. It is not customary in the present day for army officers to affect umbrellas, but seventy years hence it may be found necessary to protect one's head-dress.



Mawkish describes the attire of the civilian of the same year, but in 1970 we notice a distinct change for the better, although personally many of us would doubtless strenuously object to [Pg 558] wearing neckties of the magnitude here portrayed. In 1975 costume seems to have taken a step backward, and the literary young gentleman, who is the hero of the engraving, may well be carrying about his MSS. inside his umbrella. Whatever may be the merits of the spring fashions for 1978, it would appear to have been universal (to speak of the future in the past tense), for both these young gallants are dressed precisely alike. Of the three remaining designs, that of 1984 appears to us to exhibit the contour of the lady's figure most generously, and to have certain agreeable and distinctive traits of its own which are not only lacking in the gentleman's apparel, but are absent from the inane conception which appears to have obtained vogue five years later.

As to the last plate in the series, we can only remark that if the character of our male posterity [Pg 559] after four or five generations is to be as effeminate as its attire, the domination by the fair sex cannot be many centuries distant. The gentleman appears to be lost in contemplation of a lighted cigar. If he possessed the gift of seeing himself as others now see him, he would probably transfer his attentions to another and not less contiguous quarter.

In a general review of the costumes of the forthcoming century the Doctor observes:—

"The seventeenth is famous as the brown; the eighteenth is with us the yellow; and the nineteenth we term the black century. I am asked my opinion of the twentieth. It is motley. It has seen the apotheosis of colour. Yet in worshipping colour we do not confound the order of things. As is the twentieth, so was the fifteenth."

The author furthermore observes that "the single article of apparel which stands out most silhouetted against the background of the 19th century's dress is its hard, shiny, black head-gear. It is without a parallel. It is impossible for us to conceive of a similar article surviving for so long a period; and I venture to say, versed as I am in the science, nothing more absurd and irredeemably inappropriate, or more openly violating in texture and contour every rational idea on the subject, was ever launched. In 1962 the neck was left bare, in the négligé fashion, in imitation of Butts, the æsthete who the year previously had discovered the North Pole. In 1970, however, ruffs were resumed and are still worn, and I regret to say are growing in magnitude,

[Pg 560]

until they threaten to eclipse precedent."

At this juncture the notes and nap together terminated, for our elderly gentleman woke up.

Shafts from an Eastern Quiver.

[Pg 561]

XII.—THE DAUGHTER OF LOVETSKI THE LOST.

By Charles J. Mansford, B.A.

I.

"Our journey seems to have no end, Harold," remarked Denviers, as he lashed the horses which drew our sledge over the dreary plain; "for a week we have been pressing on, night and day almost, in the hope of coming across the hut near the road over which the exiles pass. If that mujik told us the truth, we certainly ought to have seen it by this time."

"We have had a long, desolate ride since we parted with him," I assented; "yet the snow lies in such drifts at times that we can hardly be surprised to find ourselves still driving onwards."

"See, sahibs!" exclaimed Hassan, as he pointed to where the snow-clad plain was at last broken by a distant forest of stunted pines. "There is surely the landmark of which the mujik spoke, and the peasant woman's dwelling cannot be far off."

After wandering through the outlying provinces of China, we determined to visit the vast plains beyond, being anxious to see a Russian mine. To all our requests for such permission we met with refusals, until Denviers pressed a number of roubles into the hand of an official, who eventually helped us to effect our purpose, after evincing some reluctance. Staying a few days after this at a peasant's hut, we had been fortunate enough to win his goodwill, and it was in consequence of what he told us that we promised to undertake our present expedition.

"A DESOLATE RIDE."

No sooner did the keen eyes of Hassan discover the forest far ahead than we dashed onwards

quicker than ever, as our exhaled breath froze in icy particles and the biting wind struck right through the heavy sheepskin wraps which we had purchased on entering Russia. Away across the snow our foam-flecked horses sped, until we saw the blue smoke curling upward in the frosty air from a low log hut, situated so that the pine forest sheltered it somewhat from the icy winds.

"Someone evidently lives here," said Denviers, as he beat with the handle of his whip against the low door. We heard a footstep cross the floor, then the noise of a bar being removed as a woman opened the door cautiously and peered into our faces. Bent as she was with age, with hair that hung in white masses about her shoulders, there was an unsubdued look which rested upon us from her dark eyes that contrasted forcibly with the dull, patient glance of the average Russian peasant.

"Who is it crossing the plains? Are you servants of the Czar?" she asked, in a tone of hesitation at our unexpected appearance, and glancing strangely at Hassan, who had secured our steeds and joined us.

"We are travellers crossing the Siberian wastes with our guide, and come to you for shelter," I answered, although we had a deeper purpose in visiting her. [Pg 562]

"It is yours," the woman replied, and having shaken our sheepskin wraps, we entered the hut and accepted the invitation to gather about the pine-wood fire which burnt in one corner of the rude dwelling.

"You are not a Russian peasant?" remarked Denviers, in a tone of inquiry, for the woman spoke English with some fluency.

"I am not, for my people are the Lost Ones, of whom you may have heard," she answered, with a dreary smile.

"We do not understand you," Denviers responded, as we waited for her explanation.

"If you were men of this country my words would be lucid enough. Among all those who were overcome in the many Polish struggles for liberty, none have ever returned who once trod the road by which the exiles passed to join those whom we call Our Lost."

"You have a motive for living here?" I remarked quietly, watching attentively to see what effect my words would have upon her.

"I am friendless and alone, choosing rather to dwell here within sight of the way to Tomsk, than in the great city from which I came. The Czar is merciful, and permits this."

"Then the mujik who directed us here was mistaken," I persisted. "He related strange stories to us of fugitives, whom the peasants whisper——"

"Hush!" she cried, looking nervously round. "What was the mujik's name?" For reply I placed in her hand a scrap of paper, upon which the man had scrawled a message. She glanced keenly at us after reading the missive, then answered:—

"He may be mistaken in you, for you are Englishmen, and do not understand these things. A piece of black bread—what is it that it should be denied to an enemy, even of the Czar, who has escaped from the mines and wanders for refuge over these frozen wastes?"

"You may trust us fully in this matter," said Denviers. "We have given our word to the mujik to render all the help we can."

"It is a terrible day to traverse the plain," the woman replied, as she rose and threw open the rough door to the icy blast, which was only imperfectly kept out before. We followed to where she stood, then watched as she raised her hand and pointed at a distant object.

"See!" the woman cried, bitterly; "yonder pine cross marks the spot where a brave man fell, he who was the lover of the daughter of Lovetski, one of our Lost Ones. By it, before the day is ended, will pass the long train of exiles guarded by the soldiery and headed by the one who hates to see that monument of his own misdeeds, but fears to remove it, for, persecuting the living, he dreads the dead." She closed and barred the door again; then, after some hesitation, spoke of the one to help whom we had gone so far.

"It was the night of a masquerade at the Winter Palace, long to be remembered by many, for on the following day another rising of the Poles had been planned to take place. A number of the leading citizens of St. Petersburg were involved in it, but so well apparently was their secret kept, that they ventured to accept the invitations issued to them. Amid the mad revel the plotters moved, making occasionally a furtive sign of recognition to each other, or venturing at times to whisper as they passed the single word which told of all their hopes and fears—'To-morrow!' Chief among them was Count Lovetski, who murmured the watch-word more hopefully than any of those concerned whenever his keen eyes searched out those sworn to take part in the revolt so near at hand.

"For three hours the gay crowd moved through the salons, then Lovetski, as he leant against a carved pillar, saw one of the revellers who was clad in strange attire approach several of the masqueraders and smilingly whisper something in their ears. At last the Count saw the stranger move close to himself, and a moment after he heard a mocking laugh from behind the black mask, as the unknown one stooped and uttered the preconcerted word. Lovetski looked

doubtfully at the man's sombre garb, for the glance from his eyes was by no means reassuring.

"'To-morrow!' repeated the masker. 'Count Lovetski, you do not respond. Have you forgotten?'

"'Lower your voice, or we shall be heard by others,' said the Count, with a warning gesture. 'Who are you?'

"'One of the three hundred citizens who are sworn to revolt to-morrow. The appointed day is fast drawing near, for in ten minutes the great clock will chime the midnight hour, and then, Count Lovetski—*Siberia!*'

"His listener stared in blank amazement, then, regaining his composure, he replied:—

"'So the plot is discovered? I am no coward. When is it settled for me to set out?' [Pg 563]

"'At the last stroke of the hour a drosky will await you at the main entrance. The palace is guarded by the soldiery. The others do not start immediately; you are the leader, and will be ready, doubtless.'

"'Quite,' answered Lovetski, for he knew resistance would be useless. He quietly passed his sword to the masker, who took it, smiled again, and disappeared in the crowd. One by one the followers of the Count were singled out by the strange messenger of the Czar, and when the masquerade was over three hundred exiles followed the track of the sledge in which their leader had been hurried away a couple of hours before them on the long, dreary journey to Tomsk.

"SIBERIA!"

"Lovetski was refused the privilege of communicating his whereabouts to his wife, who shortly after this event died, leaving their daughter to the care of strangers. Before long a rumour reached the capital that the Count had been shot while attempting to escape in disguise, and this was eventually found to be true.

"Scarcely had Marie Lovetski reached womanhood when she joined a political movement, fired with a mad resolve to avenge her father's death, and within a year her name appeared among those on the list of suspects, whose every action was closely observed. A Russian officer of high rank, Paul Somaloff, who had more than once made her an offer of marriage, begged her to remember the fate which overtook Count Lovetski, but the bare mention of it only made the woman more inexorable. The end which everyone foretold soon came, for, seated one day in the midst of treasonable correspondence, Marie Lovetski was surprised by three gendarmes, who burst into her apartment. She tore the letter into fragments before they could stop her, then scattered the pieces over the floor. One of the gendarmes, motioning to his companions to pick them up, moved towards her and attempted her arrest. For one moment the woman stood at bay, then thrust the cold barrel of a pistol into the gendarme's ear.

"'Raise but a hand or move an inch nearer and I will shoot you!' she cried, warningly. Her would-be captor shrunk back, and before he had recovered from his surprise Marie Lovetski darted past him towards the door. She seized the handle to wrench it open, then saw that all was lost. The door was locked and the gendarme had removed the key. There was a fierce struggle, in which one of the officers was dangerously wounded, but eventually they secured her, and within two months Marie Lovetski set out to traverse the same dreary road over which the Count had gone

long before when she was a mere child.

"Ivan Rachieff, the masquerader who had whispered into Count Lovetski's ear the fate to which he was consigned, was at that time a young attaché at the Court of the Czar. The zeal which he displayed in hunting down the autocrat's enemies rapidly brought promotion, so that when Marie Lovetski was exiled he had risen to be a general of the Russ army, and specially chosen for the duty of heading the Cossacks who conducted the exiles over the Siberian wastes, while among his subordinates was Paul Somaloff, who held a position scarcely inferior to his own.

"Convicted of a double offence, Marie Lovetski was condemned to walk the whole of that wearisome distance among criminals bound for the mines, while the political exiles were somewhat less harshly treated. General Rachieff had been warned that a band of discontents had threatened to attempt the rescue of the prisoners, and special powers of life and death were granted to him. By long forced marches he hurried the exiles on, scarcely giving them a few hours' rest each night when they arrived at their halting-places on the route. [Pg 564]

"SHE THRUST THE COLD BARREL OF A PISTOL INTO THE GENDARME'S EAR."

"It was with a deep feeling of sorrow at his inability to lessen her sufferings that Paul Somaloff glanced many times on the way at Marie Lovetski. In spite of the strange position in which he found himself, his love for the woman was by no means lessened, but increased each day as he saw to his dismay how plainly her strength was failing as he looked upon the woman's haggard countenance, who was wearily dragging her limbs forward over the frozen wastes. One day Marie Lovetski's condition became so serious that Somaloff begged General Rachieff to order the fetters which bound her wrists to be removed, receiving in reply a refusal as contemptuous as it was decisive. All that day the exile's secret lover walked moodily on, racking his brains for some method by which to save the woman from dying before even the terrible journey was ended.

"Not far from the hut in which you are now resting, the weary exiles were halted that night, and soon sank down in the log building into an exhausted sleep. After a severe conflict between his love and his allegiance to the Czar, Paul Somaloff rose, and, stealing carefully among the unconscious ones, he bent at last over the form of Marie Lovetski, stretched upon a straw pallet.

"'Marie,' he whispered softly, as he cautiously awakened her. ''Tis I, Paul Somaloff—I come to save you.'

"He remained by the woman's side till he had deftly removed the manacles from her wrists, then stole to the entrance as she silently followed him. Once he was outside the log building, Somaloff made for where his general's horse was stabled, and quickly untethering it led it forth. For one brief moment he clasped the exile to his breast, then lifted her into the saddle and placed the reins in her hand with a few hurried words as to the best course to pursue to avoid pursuit.

"Suddenly Paul Somaloff felt a heavy hand grip him by the shoulder, and turning round he found himself face to face with Ivan Rachieff, his general! At the same time the woman was dragged from the horse and held by three of the Cossacks.

"'Your traitorous plan was well thought out,' said Rachieff, as he smiled in derision at its failure. 'Paul Somaloff, you have broken your oath to the Czar, and I swear you shall die for this.'

"'You may do your worst,' replied the young officer. 'You would not listen to my repeated appeals for a slight act of clemency for Marie Lovetski, and so have turned a loyal subject of the Czar into

a traitor.'

"'Insolent!' cried General Rachieff. 'At sunrise you shall be knouted to death.'

"'Coward that you are,' retorted Somaloff, 'that is a punishment you dare not inflict upon one who wears a decoration given to him by the august Czar. I am a soldier, General, and, at the hands of my comrades, will die a soldier's death.' [Pg 565]

"'So be it,' answered Rachieff, calmly; 'you shall be shot at sunrise,' and he motioned to the soldiers who had gathered about him to take Somaloff into their charge, then turned on his heel and strode away, humming an idle air.

"The grey morning had scarcely dawned when brave young Somaloff was blindfolded and led forth to be shot in sight of the exiles, while the woman whom he had failed to save looked helplessly on.

"A few minutes afterwards, Paul Somaloff knelt on the snow-covered plain, the report of a dozen rifles rang out on the morning air, and the exiles saw his arms raised as he clutched convulsively at his breast, then he fell forward, dead!

"HE FELL FORWARD, DEAD."

"The wild, despairing cries of the exiles were quelled with threats of the knout, and then the prisoners were hurried on, as they had been for so many days and weeks past. Ten days later a large number of Polish insurrectionists, ill-armed, and accompanied by a throng of even worse accoutred peasants carrying a red banner, flung themselves upon the line of march, and made a futile effort to break through the soldiers who guarded the exiles. The trained troopers of the Czar thrust them back and, as they broke and fled into the forest, chased and cut them down like sheep, till the snow turned to a crimson hue with their hearts' blood.

"The exiles made desperate efforts to avail themselves of the opportunity to escape which the confusion presented. Those who were unbound fought with branches, which they tore from the stunted trees, while the others madly thrust the shackles upon their wrists into the faces of the brutal soldiery, who knouted or cut down men and women indiscriminately. Long will that massacre be remembered, and the dreadful sufferings which the survivors endured at the command of Ivan Rachieff. When at last Tomsk was reached, only a handful of decrepit exiles passed into the city out of all those who started on the long journey."

"And Marie Lovetski?" I interrupted, "did she live to complete the distance, or what was her fate?"

"It was reported that she was cut down during the massacre," the woman replied, slowly; "for nothing has been heard of her since by General Rachieff, although her body could not be found among the slain."

I glanced at the woman thoughtfully as she concluded her story, and Denviers, who had listened in silence throughout, asked:—

"Where is Marie Lovetski? You are aware that she is alive—nay, more, you know her place of concealment."

Surprised at the directness of the question, the woman involuntarily rose, and then, seeing that we suspected the fugitive was hidden in the log hut, she answered:—

"Marie Lovetski is not here, yet if the mujik has rightly judged your courage, within a week he will see your sledge return with one more occupant than when it started. Once she is carried there her escape is assured, for——" She stopped suddenly and pointed to the door. We listened attentively as the sound of footsteps drew near, then a heavy blow smote the barred entrance and a voice exclaimed:— [Pg 566]

"Open, in the Czar's name!" The woman's face turned ashy pale as she muttered faintly:—

"That is the voice of Ivan Rachieff, who is again in command of the exiles," and she drew away the heavy bar to admit him. We rose to our feet in an instant as the door was flung open and General Rachieff entered and stood before us.

II.

For a moment the Russian officer stared at us without speaking, then throwing back his heavy sealskin cloak and revealing the military garb which he wore beneath, he asked the woman sternly:—

"What does the presence of these men in your hut mean?"

"We are travellers, who have asked for shelter. Our guide is an Arab; we are Englishmen," responded Denviers, quietly but decisively.

"Spies, I do not doubt," said Rachieff, as he bit his heavy moustache.

"My word is accustomed to be believed," replied my companion, sharply. "If you doubt what I have said, read that," and he flung a package containing our passports upon the table as he spoke.

The officer took out our passports, which we had been careful to obtain. He glanced through them, then tossed the papers on to the table again as he remarked, in a morose tone:—

"You would not be the first Englishmen who have made their way into the Czar's territory only to discredit it."

"You have chosen a curious method of displaying your pleasantry," retorted Denviers, glancing sternly at the heavy-bearded Russian who had so wantonly insulted us. Rachieff drew a chair to the table, and, sitting down, leant his head upon his hands, narrowly scrutinizing our features.

"NARROWLY SCRUTINIZING OUR FEATURES."

"I saw some horses and a sledge in the shed without," he continued; "are they yours?"

"They are," answered my companion, laconically.

"Where was your last stopping-place before you reached here?" Rachieff asked, as if he were examining some prisoners.

"We are neither Russian subjects nor refugees," Denviers replied. "You may save your inquiries for others, since we have no intention of satisfying your ill-timed curiosity." My companion turned his back to Rachieff, and raising a blazing piece of pine-wood which had fallen, tossed it again among the glowing embers, taking no more notice of the discomfited officer. Rachieff was nonplussed; he frowned heavily, then rising, moved to the door. He turned as he held it partly open, saying:—

"If you were a Russian gentleman instead of an English spy, I would call you out for your insolence to an officer in the Czar's service."

I saw the blood mount to Denviers's forehead as he snatched the driving whip which Hassan held and, striding forward, struck the Russian a blow across his face with it.

"If I were an exile, no doubt you would knout me for that," he said, quietly. "You can do nothing [Pg 567]

as it is, since our papers are in order, except fight me."

"I am in command of the exiles," answered Rachieff. "They are now passing yonder; when the halting-place is reached to-night I will leave my subordinate in charge of them and return here with an officer as my second. If you are not a coward you will be here awaiting me at mid-day."

"I shall be here," replied Denviers. "Choose your own weapons; you have brought this meeting about entirely unprovoked, and to-morrow you or I will fall."

"Adieu till then!" cried Rachieff, with a bitter smile of hatred, then he turned his face away, upon which was a long livid mark where the whip had fallen, and we saw him stride towards the exiles passing over the plain before us.

"Ivan Rachieff is one of the most skilful duellists with sword or pistol in the Czar's army," said the woman, who had been an attentive observer of all that passed between the two men. "He will kill you with as little remorse as he ordered Paul Somaloff to be shot by the soldiers."

"Paul Somaloff!" exclaimed Denviers. "Ah! I had forgotten his fate for a moment; but to-morrow, when Rachieff and I stand face to face, I will surely remember it."

"Allah and Mahomet help the sahib," cried Hassan. "If the bearded Russ should chance to win, he shall fight the Arab afterwards."

"Never mind Rachieff, Hassan," said Denviers; "we must at once make our plans for the purpose of helping Marie Lovetski to escape from Siberia. Whatever happens to me, she must be saved at all hazards."

"Where is the woman concealed?" I asked the one who was our hostess.

She rose and questioned us:—

"Will you swear by the memorial which I have raised over Paul Somaloff's resting-place never to speak of what you may see in the strange hiding-place to which I may conduct you?"

"We will," I answered briefly, as Denviers joined in assenting.

We lost little time after Rachieff's departure, but drew together and discussed the probabilities of various plans succeeding, and at last decided on that which seemed to promise success. The dusk rapidly closed in upon us as we sat in thoughtful conversation, after which the woman rose, and, having scanned the plain near the hut as well as she could in the gloom, motioned to us to follow her.

Hassan remained in the hut while we set out, and making our way through a part of the pines and firs close to the dwelling in which we had sought shelter, we found ourselves groping blindly along, following each other like phantoms in the darkness which enveloped us. So far there was little need for the woman to have sworn us to secrecy, for neither going nor returning did we get a glimpse of anything likely to indicate the spot to us again at any future time. At last we felt what appeared to be a rough flight of stone steps beneath our feet, then our guide lit a pine-wood torch which she carried.

Holding up the flickering light before us, the woman led us into what we conjectured to be one of the catacombs of an ancient city. On both sides of us as we moved along the red flare of the pine-wood revealed many bodies of the dead, each stretched in a niche cut for it in the red rock, while at intervals between these we saw the resting-places of others distinguished by various strange emblems. One of these niches was silently guarded by two carved figures of horsemen with their white steeds caparisoned, and each of the riders held in his uplifted hand a sword such as the Damascenes use.

"A strange resting-place that," I remarked to Denviers, as it stood out weird and ghastly in the light of the torch. "No Russian soldiery ever wear such accoutrements as are depicted there, I am certain."

"They wear the garb of boyars of the time of Ivan the Terrible," our guide said, as she pointed to the mounted horsemen. "Where the pine forest about us is now there stood more than four hundred years ago one of the many cities built by that extraordinary monarch, but it has long been blotted out, and the Russ have forgotten its very existence. None now know of its catacombs save those of us who form a secret band, and whose object is to help the exiles who may escape and seek shelter and a safe hiding-place. Even now it would be impossible for you to find the one you seek, and if you wish to go farther it must be done blindfolded, or I will not lead you."

We stood by the strangely carved horsemen, and having consented to the woman's request, allowed her to fasten our sashes securely over our eyes; then, led by her, we slowly advanced through what appeared to be a labyrinth of ways until we were stopped by someone who spoke to the woman in a calm, grave tone. There was a whispered conversation between the two, directly following which our eyes were uncovered, and we found ourselves facing a strangely-robed [Pg 568] hermit. His long white beard fell almost to his waist, contrasting forcibly with the black garment which covered him, while his high forehead and the steadfast look directed towards us seemed to be in keeping with the hermit's strange surroundings. A heap of blazing pine-wood lit up his retreat and served to lessen the intense coldness of the air.

"WE FOUND OURSELVES FACING A STRANGELY-ROBED HERMIT."

"You are Englishmen, and have promised to help Marie Lovetski to escape from here to our next station of refuge," he said. "Since the day when she fled she has been hidden in various of our secret places. Six months ago she was brought here, yet so dangerous is the risk that we have waited for the mujik's messengers, telling us that all is safe for her to be conveyed there. He says in his message that you can be trusted, and doubtless your passports will help you to accomplish the task more easily than Russ or Pole could do. We trust, then, in your honour, that once Marie Lovetski is in your keeping, you will die in her defence rather than surrender her to the horrors of a mine."

We explained to the hermit the difficulty which the approaching duel between Denviers and Rachieff might cause, and discussed with him the possibility of overcoming it. Denviers was emphatic in his determination to meet the Russian on the morrow, and so it was arranged that at a certain hour Marie Lovetski should leave the catacombs and secretly watch the result of the duel. If Denviers escaped uninjured we were to mount our sledge and make for the spot where she would be stationed, and hiding her beneath the wraps, to start on our long journey back to the mujik who had intrusted us with the task of saving her.

"You will, of course, allow us to see this exile?" Denviers remarked, as soon as everything was arranged. "It was for that purpose that we were brought here to-night."

"Then your visit has been made in vain," was the unexpected reply. "It will be time enough for you to do so if your duel with Rachieff is successful."

We endeavoured to overcome the hermit's objection, but, although the woman who had guided us there spoke strenuously on our behalf, the strange guardian of Marie Lovetski was not to be persuaded from following his own cautious plan. Finding our protests useless, we consented to be blindfolded once more, and were led back through the catacombs into the forest, and before long we had entered the log hut again. There we threw ourselves on our sheepskin wraps in front of the pine-wood fire, and laid down upon them to sleep; then, when daylight came, the woman awoke us and we passed the morning vaguely wondering what the result of the duel would be.

Denviers urged upon our guide, Hassan, and myself the necessity of attempting to save the woman so long shut up in the dismal catacombs, and at last I gave a reluctant consent to do so if he fell, instead of making an attempt to avenge him. The Arab stolidly refused to do this, and justified his position by numerous quotations from the Koran, while declaring that Mahomet would certainly come to my companion's assistance, which, in spite of the gravity of his position, provoked a smiling retort from Denviers. Little did we know what the termination of the fight would be, or the strange part in it which Marie Lovetski was to have. [Pg 569]

III.

"Hark, sahibs!" exclaimed Hassan. "Although noon has not yet come, the Russian is approaching to keep his promise to fight."

We threw open the door of the hut and distinguished the ringing sound of the bells of a distant sledge. A few minutes after this the cracking of a whip and the neighing of horses were heard, and finally we saw the sledge appear before us. There were three occupants, and as it drew near we distinguished among them General Rachieff as the one who was urging on the horses. The conveyance dashed up to the hut; then one of the officers sprang out and restrained the animals, while a second, who carried a couple of swords, followed close behind Rachieff, with whom

Denviers was soon to try conclusions.

"The weapons are here," said General Rachieff, frigidly, as Denviers approached and bowed slightly. "There is no time to lose: we fight with swords as you see. Choose!" and he motioned to his second, who held them out. Following out the plan which we had determined to adopt, Hassan quickly placed our horses in our own sledge and drew them a little ahead, so that the conveyance should be ready for us to enter when the duel was ended, if my companion did not fall in the encounter.

"We fight there," said Denviers calmly, as he motioned to the part of the plain to the right of where Hassan had already stationed our sledge.

"As you will," responded Rachieff indifferently, and, accompanied by his second, he moved to the spot Denviers pointed out. There the usual formalities were settled by the other officer and myself, whereupon the two duellists made ready and waited for the signal to begin, which fell to my lot to give.

I fluttered a handkerchief in the biting air for a moment, dropped it, and the swords were rapidly crossed. The reputation which Rachieff had won as a duellist was certainly well deserved, since his feints and thrusts were admirable, while Denviers, whose coolness in critical circumstances never deserted him, acted mainly on the defensive, parrying his enemy's lunges with remarkable skill.

More than once the duellists stopped as if by mutual consent, to regain breath, then quickly facing each other again, fought more determinedly than ever. Rachieff saw that for once he had apparently met his match with the sword, and grew by degrees more cautious than he had been when the fight began; yet repeatedly he failed to completely ward off the quick lunges from my companion's weapon, and I saw the crimson stains of blood which marked where the sword point had touched him. Then he rained in his blows with lightning speed, pressing hard upon Denviers several times, and glaring furiously at him, while his distorted features showed plainly enough the mark of the blow he had received from the whip the day previous.

"Rachieff wins!" cried the Russian's second, and I saw, to my dismay, Denviers's weapon suddenly twisted from his hand and flung into the air, while an exultant exclamation burst from Rachieff's lips as he rushed upon his defenceless opponent! Before he could make use of the advantage which he had unexpectedly gained, Marie Lovetski uttered a wild, mournful cry, and started forward from the pine forest, standing pale with momentary fear before him!

The superstitious Russian stared incredulously, his sword-arm dropped to his side, while he gasped out:—

"Lovetski's daughter, and yet she is surely dead!"

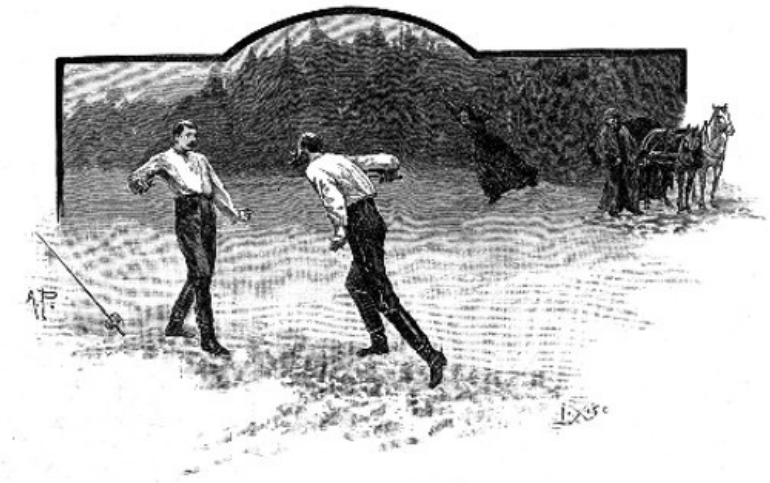
Taking full advantage of the Russian's dismay, Denviers instantly flung himself upon his foe, dashing him backwards to the ground. Kneeling upon his enemy's chest and gripping him by the throat, as he held the sword he had seized before the startled Russian, my companion hissed in his ear:—

"Yield, or you are a dead man!"

The Russian's face turned to a purple hue as he almost choked for breath, then he muttered brokenly the exiled woman's name.

"She is living!" cried Denviers, as he lowered the point of the sword till it touched the Russian's breast. "Swear that you will not attempt to hinder her flight, and I will release your throat."

General Rachieff raised his hand in sign of assent, for his voice had failed him. Denviers rose, whereupon the Russian staggered to his feet, then, mad at his defeat, moved over to where his sledge was. [Pg 570]



"HE RUSHED UPON HIS DEFENCELESS OPPONENT."

"Get the woman into our sledge," cried Denviers to me. I started forward to where Hassan was;

we snatched up the exile and immediately drove off.

"After them, men!" cried Rachieff, caring nothing for his promise. "We will take Marie Lovetski, or shoot her down!"

"Never trust a Russ, sahibs!" exclaimed Hassan, as he lashed our horses on, while our enemies followed furiously behind. "The only way to secure his silence would have been a sword thrust through the false one's heart."

Away our sledge was whirled across the plain, faster and faster still, yet Rachieff, whose horses were more numerous than our own, drew gradually nearer. Marie Lovetski, who had forgotten her alarm now that Denviers was safe, turned her pale-set countenance towards our pursuers, and, as she did so, the report of a pistol rang out, while a bullet whizzed past her head! I saw Rachieff holding the smoking weapon in his hand as Denviers cried to me:—

"If he fires again, I will shoot him like the dog that he is!"

"No," cried Marie Lovetski, snatching a pistol from my sash before I could prevent her. "Rachieff slew Somaloff, my lover, and I will avenge him." She pointed the weapon full at the Russian, and I barely had time to brush her arm aside before the frenzied exile fired. Fortunately, the shot was deflected, and Rachieff was saved from the fate that he certainly deserved.

"Shoot their horses!" exclaimed Denviers, and as our own dashed along he leant over towards the pursuing sledge and fired at the foremost of them. The animal reared for a moment, then fell dead, throwing the rest into confusion. Out the Russians sprang, and cut the traces through, and having in this way speedily managed to disencumber their steeds of the dead one, they immediately began the pursuit again. We waited for them to get near again, then fired in quick succession and brought down their other horses, in spite of the bullets which the Russians rained upon us, and which, fortunately, struck none who were in the sledge. Baffled in their pursuit, we saw our enemies standing knee-deep in the snow watching us as we dashed along.

"Well," remarked Denviers, as we slackened our speed at last, "we have had a strange running fight, such as I least of all expected."

"The sahibs have saved the woman," said our guide. "Their slave the Arab believes that even the Great Prophet would approve of what they have done. The promise to convey Marie Lovetski to the mujik's hut will now surely be kept"; and so it came about, for the daughter of Lovetski the Lost lived to find freedom hers on another soil and under another flag.

Illustrated Interviews.

[Pg 571]

No. XXIII.—MR. HARRY FURNISS.

"INTERVIEWED!"

It is the proud boast of every married man, and more particularly so when his quiver is fairly full, that he presides over the happiest home in the land. But there is a corner of Regent's Park where stands a house whose four walls contain an amount of fun and unadulterated merriment, happiness, and downright pleasure that would want a lot of beating. The fact is that Mr. Harry Furniss is not only a merry man with his pencil. Humour with him may mean a very profitable thing—it unquestionably does; fun and frolic as depicted on paper by "Lika Joko" brings in, as Digby Grant would put it, many "a little cheque." But I venture to think that the clever caricaturist would not have half as many merry ideas running from the mind to the pencil if he

sold all his humour outside and forgot to scatter a goodly proportion of it amongst his quartette of children.

"MY LITTLE MODEL."

[Pg 572]

"LITTLE GUY—OR, A FIDGETY MODEL."

I had not been in the house five minutes before they made their presence known. I had not been there a quarter of an hour before the discovery was made that they were small but impressive editions of their father. Have you heard of Harry Furniss's little model—"My Little Model"? She is Dorothy, who sits for all the little girls in her father's pictures. A clever, bright young woman of thirteen, with glorious auburn tresses. For two or three years past she has not forgotten to write her father a story, illustrated it herself, and duly presented it on his birthday. "Buzzy," for that is her pet name, is retained as a model at a modest honorarium per sitting. Should she be indisposed, she must find a substitute! Then there is Frank, the eldest, home for his holidays just now from Cheltenham; young Lawrence, who also draws capitally; and little Guy, the youngest, who creeps into the pictures occasionally. Guy is a very fidgety model. "I have drawn him in twenty different moves, when trying to bribe him with a penny to sit!" said Mr. Furniss. And it seemed to me—and one had an excellent opportunity of judging during a too-quickly-passed day spent at Regent's Park—that not a small amount of Mr. Furniss's humour was caught from the [Pg 573] children. He has brought them up to live a laughing life, he ignores the standing-in-the-corner theory, and believes that a penny discreetly bestowed on a youngster during a troubled moment

will teach him a better lesson than a shilling's-worth of stick. It is also evident that the brightness and jollity of the children are inherited, not only from father, but mother as well; and it was easy to discern, from the remarks that fell from the subject of my interview, that the touches of artistic taste to be seen about the place were due to the "best of wives and mothers"—immaculate housewife and capital hostess—Mrs. Furniss. And, as Mr. Furniss himself acknowledges, half the battle of life is overcome for a hard-worked professional man by the possession of a sympathetic and careful wife.

Just run through this budget of letters from father to children. When I arrived at Regent's Park—ten minutes before my time, by-the-bye—Mr. Furniss was out riding, a very favourite exercise with him. "Buzzy" and Frank and Lawrence and Guy brought out their treasured missives. When "Lika Joko" gets a pen or pencil in his hand he can't help caricaturing. These juvenile missives were decorated with sketches in every corner. Here is a particularly merry one. Frank writes from Cheltenham for some fret-work patterns. Patterns are sent by return of post—the whole family is sent in fret-work. Mr. Furniss goes away to Hastings, suffering from overwork. He has to diet himself. Then comes a letter illustrated at the top with a certain gentleman greatly reduced in face and figure through following Dr. Robson Roose's admirable advice. There are scores of them—all neatly and carefully kept with their envelopes in scrap-books.

Some few days afterwards I discovered that Mr. Furniss delights in "illustrating" his letters to others besides his children. My photo was needed by Mr. Furniss for the purpose of making a sketch. I sent him a recent one. He wanted a "profile" too. The "profile" was taken when I was sadly in need of the application of the scissors of the tonsorial artist. I posted the "profile" with a request that perhaps Mr. Furniss would kindly apply his artistic shears and cut off a little of the surplus hair. By return comes an illustrated missive. I am sitting in a barber's chair, cloth round neck; the artist is behind me with the customary weapon, and laying low the locks. The whole thing probably only took a minute or two to do, but it is a capital little bit of drawing. It is reproduced at the end of this article. [Pg 574]

This quarter of an hour spent with the youngsters over their paternal letters was not lost. It prepared me for the man himself, it gave me the true clue to his character, and when he rushed into the house—riding boots and whip included—it was just the one the children had unanimously realized for me. A jolly, hearty, "give us your hand" sort of individual, somewhat below the medium height, with a face as merry as one of his own pages in *Punch*. He is restless—he must be always at it. He thinks and talks rapidly: there is no hesitation about him. He gets a happy thought. Out it comes—unique and original in its unvarnished state. He is as good and thorough a

specimen of an Englishman as one would meet—frank and straight-spoken, says what he thinks and thinks what he means. An Englishman, notwithstanding the fact that he was born in Ireland, his mother was a Scotchwoman, and he married a lady of Welsh descent! But, then, his father was a Yorkshireman! So much for the man—and much more. Of his talents we will speak later.

We all sat down to lunch, and the children simply did for me what I could not have done for myself. Frank ran his father on funny stories. Then it all came out. Mr. Furniss is an excellent actor—had he not been a caricaturist he must have been a comedian. His powers of imitation are unlimited. He will give you an Irish jarvey one moment and Henry Irving the next, and the children led him on. But it all at once dawned upon Mr. Furniss that it was interfering with the proper play of knife and fork, so we dispensed with the mimicry and went on with the mutton.

"Lika Joko" is suggested at once on entering the hall. Here are a quartette of quaint Japanese heads, which their owner calls his "Fore Fathers!" His Fellowship of the Zoo is typified by pictures of various animals. A fine etching of St. Mark's, at Venice, is also noticeable, the only two portraits being a Rembrandt and Maroni's "Tailor."

"I always hold that up as the best portrait ever painted," said Mr. Furniss, as he glances at Maroni's masterpiece.

[Pg 575]

THE DINING-ROOM.
From a Photo. by Elliott & Fry.

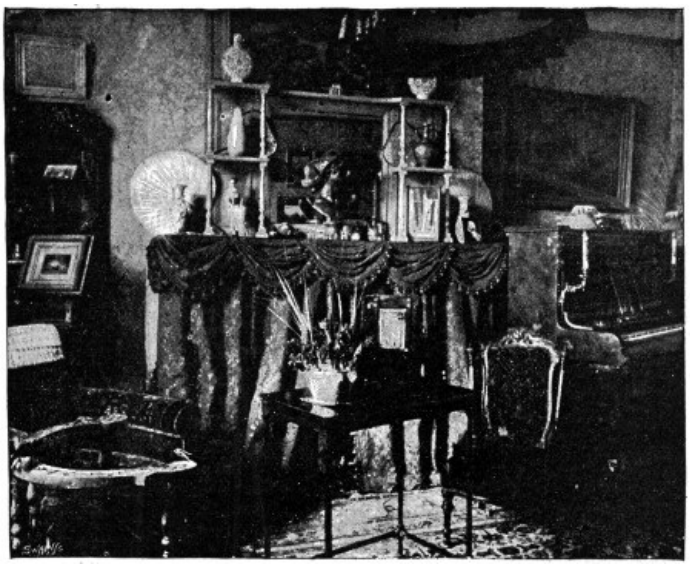
In the dining-room Landseer, Herkomer, Alma Tadema, and Burton Barber are represented—little Lawrence was the original study for the child in the latter artist's "Bethgelert." Fred

Barnard's work is here, and some quaint old original designs on wood by Boyd Haughton are pointed out as curios. *Punch* is to the front, notably in Du Maurier, by himself, which cost its possessor thirty guineas; a portrait group of the staff up the river, some delicate water-colours by C. H. Bennett, and a fine bit of work by Mr. Furniss of the jubilee dinner of the threepenny comic at the Ship Hotel, Greenwich. Upstairs the children's portraits, and pictures likely to please the youngsters, reappear. The nursery is full of them, though perhaps the most interesting apartment in this part of the house is the principal bedroom. It is full of the original caricatures of M.P.'s and other notabilities, and the occupant of the bed has Bradlaugh and the Baron de Worms on either side of him, whilst from a corner the piercing eye of Mr. George Lewis is constantly on the watch.

A striking portrait of Mr. F. C. Burnand recalls to Mr. Furniss the first time he sketched him.

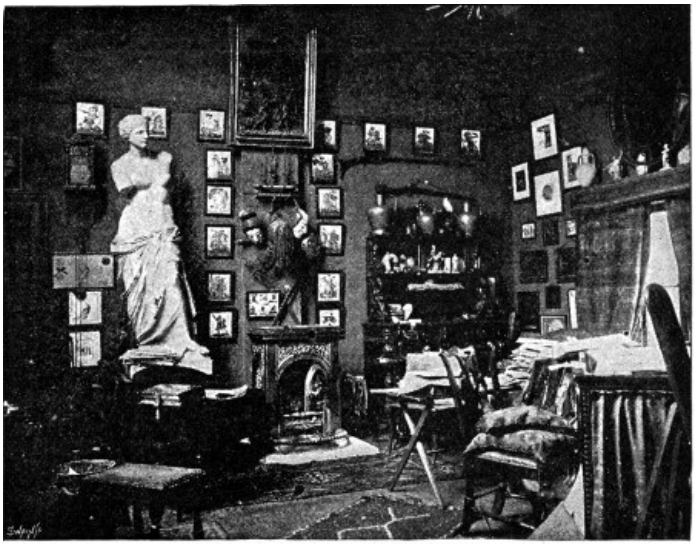
"I was making a chalk drawing of him," said the caricaturist. "He sat with his back to me for half-an-hour writing, and suddenly turned round and wanted to know if I had finished! Perceiving a piece of bread for rubbing-out purposes in my hand, he objected to my having lunch there! And finally, when I induced him to turn his head my way and I finished the sketch, he looked at it critically and cried out, 'Splendid likeness, remarkable features, fine head, striking forehead, characteristic eyebrow, splendid likeness; somebody I know, but I can't remember who!' Encouraging, wasn't it?

"But I remembered it. Some years after I gave a dinner at the Garrick Club to the *Punch* staff and some friends. Burnand sat at the head of a long table. It was understood that there was to be no speaking. Suddenly I saw the editorial eyebrows wriggling. I knew what it meant—Burnand was going to make a speech. I hurriedly got about a dozen sheets of note-paper, and tore them in bits. I jumped up very nervous, produced 'notes'; terrible anxiety on part of diners—suppressed groans. I spoke, got fearfully muddled, constantly losing notes, etc. 'Art amongst the Greeks,' I said—notes; 'yes, your sculptors of Athens were, unquestionably'—notes again. 'And what of it? *Punch* is a—*Punch* is a—well, you all know *what Punch* is!' Then it began to dawn upon them that this was a little lark. So I hurriedly threw notes under the table and suggested that on an occasion like the present it was our duty to first propose the health of the Queen! We did. Then the Prince of Wales, the Army and Navy, the Reserve Forces, the Bishops and Magistrates. All these were replied to, and Burnand didn't get a chance!" [Pg 576]



THE DRAWING-ROOM.
From a Photo. by Elliott & Fry.

There are many delightful water-colours in the drawing-room, bronzes and quaint Japanese ivories. The first meet of the "Two Pins Club" at Richmond, June 8th, 1890, gives excellent back views of Sir Charles Russell, F. C. Burnand, Frank Lockwood, Q.C., Linley Sambourne, Chas. Matthews, Q.C., and the caricaturist himself. The "Two Pins" is a riding club named after Dick Turpin and Johnny Gilpin. Works by Goodall and Rowlandson are here, a fine Albert Dürer, and a most ingenious bit of painting by a man who never had a chance to get to the front—he has used his brush with excellent effect on the back of an old band-box. Mary Anderson has written on the back of a photo, "Better late than never," for the picture was a long time coming; another excellent example of photographic work being a large head of Mr. Irving as "Becket," bearing his autograph. In a corner is a queer-looking wax model of Daniel O'Connell addressing the crowd, and amongst a hundred little odds and ends spring flowers are peeping out. Mr. Furniss finds little time now to use his paint-box. The example—an early one, by-the-bye—he has contributed to this apartment is by no means prophetic. It is a trifle in water-colours—a graveyard of a church with countless tombstones! Now, who would associate the caricaturist with tombstones?



THE STUDIO.
From a Photo. by Elliott & Fry.

Passing down a glass corridor—from the roof of which the grapes hang in great and luscious clusters in the autumn—you reach the studio. It is a big, square room. Run your eyes round the [Pg 577] walls, try to take in its thousand and one quaint treasures. You can see humour in every one of them—merriment oozes out of every single item. Stand before this almost colossal statue of Venus. She of the almost faultless waist and fashion-plate divine rests on a coal-box. Sit down on the sofa. It is the stuffed lid of another receptacle for fuel. Golf is one of the artist's hobbies, and he invariably plays with clergymen—excellent thing for the character. We light our cigars from a capital little match-stand modelled out of a golf-ball, and the next instant "Lika Joko" is juggling with three or four balls. A clever juggler, forsooth. And the battledore and shuttlecock? Excellent exercise. After a long spell of work, the battledore is seized and the shuttlecock bounces up to the glass roof. It went through the other day, hence play has been postponed owing to the numerous engagements of the local glazier. Fencing foils are in a corner; a quaint arrangement of helmets, masks, and huge weapons *à la* Waterloo suggests "scalping trophies." The china is curious—there is even an empty ginger jar—picked up in country places, of a rare and valuable old-fashioned type. He has the finest collection of old tinsel pictures of the Richard III. and Dick Turpin order in the kingdom, and values an old book full of tinsel patterns of the most exquisite design and workmanship. Old glass pictures are scattered about, "Lord Nelson's Funeral Car," and Joey Grimaldi grins at you from the far corner of the room.

SCALPING TROPHIES.
From a Photo. by Elliott & Fry.

All this and much more is characteristic of the humour of the famous caricaturist. We look at "Lika Joko's" skits and laugh; we take a delight in picking out from his ingenious pictorial mazes our own particular politician or favourite actor; we roar at "Lika Joko's" comicality, and only know him as a caricaturist. But there is another side to this studio picture—Mr. Harry Furniss's pencil is such that it can make you weep; so realistic, indeed, that when in his early days he was sent to sketch scenes of distress and misery, they were so terribly real and dramatic that the paper in question dared not publish them. No artist appreciates a "situation" better than he. I looked through portfolio after portfolio, drawer after drawer—full of character studies and work of a serious character done in all parts of the world. These have never been given to the public. Should they ever be published, Mr. Harry Furniss will at once be voted as serious and dramatic an artist as he is an eminently refined yet outrageously humorous caricaturist. He is a great reader—he once collected first editions. We begin to talk seriously, when he suddenly closes the portfolio with a bang, shuts up once more his hidden and unknown talents, and hastens to inform you that he is a member of the Thirteen Club—Irving and he were elected together—and believes

in helping other people to salt, dining thirteen on the thirteenth, with thirteen courses, etc. Always passes under ladders, and swears by peacocks' feathers.

We stand before the great easel in the middle of the room—though not much work is done there. He prefers to work standing at a desk. He draws all his pictures very large; they are studies from life. It prevents the work from getting cramped. The same model has stood for all his principal [Pg 578] people for the last ten years, and he has a wardrobe of artistic "props" big enough to fit out every member of the House of Commons. He is a perfect business man. His ledger is a model book. Every one of his pictures is numbered. In this book spaces are ruled off for—Subject, Publisher, When delivered, Published, Price, When paid, When drawing returned, Price of original, and What came of it. Humour by no means knocks system out of a man. Look at the score of pigeon-holes round the studio. As we are talking together now his secretary is "typing off" his illustrated weekly letter which finds a place in the *St. James's Budget*, *New York World*, *Weekly Scotsman*, *Yorkshire Weekly Post*, *Liverpool Weekly Post*, *Nottinghamshire Guardian*, *South Wales Daily News*, *East Anglian Times*, and in Australia, India, the Cape, etc. He writes children's books and illustrates them. His impressions of America are in course of preparation. There is his weekly *Punch* work; he is dodging about all over the country giving his unique "Humours of Parliament" entertainment, and he found time to make some special sketches for this little article.

From a Drawing by Mr. Furniss.

We sat down. Tea was brought in—he believes in two big breakfast cups every afternoon—and with "Bogie," the Irish deerhound—so called owing to his very solemn-looking countenance—close by, Mr. Furniss went back as far as he could possibly remember, to March 26th, 1854. That is the date of his birthday.

"I am always taken for an Irishman," said Mr. Furniss. "Nothing of the kind. My father was a Yorkshireman. He was in Ireland with my mother, and I believe I arrived at an unexpected moment. Possibly my artistic inclinations came through my mother. Her father was Æneas Mackenzie, a well-known literary man of Newcastle-on-Tyne, and proprietor of several newspapers. He founded the Newcastle School of Politics, and Mr. Joseph Cowen—as a boy—got his first tuition in politics from sitting at the knee of my grandfather. A bust of him is in the Mechanics' Institute—which he founded."

Little Harry was brought up in Wexford. He remembers being held up in his nurse's arms to see the *Great Eastern* pass on its first voyage, whilst an incident associated with the marriage of the Prince of Wales is vividly impressed upon his mind. He was struck on the top of his hat by a "fizzing devil" made out of moist powder, which burnt a hole through it. He says that he would rather have this recollection on his mind now, than the "fizzer" on his head at the time. The young artist in embryo was a rare young pugilist at school. He was forced to use his fists, as friction was strong between the Irish and English lads at the school he went to. But he did well in athletic sports, and was never beaten in a hundred yards race. He firmly believes that this early athletic training is responsible for the rapid way in which he does everything to-day—be it walking or talking, eating or working, all is done on the hundred yards principle—to get there first.

[Pg 579]

He was a spoilt boy—first of all because he was sent to a girls' school, but mainly from a very significant incident which happened at the Wesleyan College School in Dublin—a collegiate establishment from which pupils (not necessarily Wesleyans, for Mr. Furniss

is not of that sect) passed to Trinity College—where he obtained all his education. He was not a studious lad. He found the editing, writing, illustrating, publishing, and entire bringing-out of a small journal he founded far more agreeable to his taste than Latin verbs and algebraical problems.

"AT WORK."
From a Photo. by Elliott & Fry.

"I was in knickerbockers at the time," he said, "and introduced to the schoolboy public—*The Schoolboy's Punch*. It sounds strangely prophetic as I think of it now. The entire make-up of it was *à la Punch*, and it had its cartoon every week. At that time the Davenport Cabinet Trick was all the rage, and the very first cartoon I drew was founded on that. Here is the picture: myself—as a schoolboy—being tied up with ropes depictive of Greek, Latin, Euclid, and other cutting and disagreeable items. I am placed in the cabinet—the school. The head-master, whom I flattered very much in the drawing, opens another cabinet and out steps the young student covered with glory and scholastic honours thick upon him! From that moment my school-master spoiled me. I left school and started work. I got a pound for my first drawing. A. M. Sullivan started a paper in Ireland on very similar lines to *Punch*. There was a wave in Ireland of better class journalism at this time which had never existed before or since. I slipped in. For some years I drew on wood and engraved my own work. I was given to understand that all black and white men engraved their own efforts, so I offered myself as an apprentice to an engraver.

"He said: 'Don't come as an apprentice. If you will undertake to look after my office, I'll teach you the art of engraving.'"

It meant a hard struggle for young Furniss. He was loaded down with clerical work, but in his own little room, when the day's labours were done, he would sit up till two and three in the morning. There was no quenching his earnestness. Work then with him was a real desire. It is so to-day. To rest is obnoxious to him.

STUDY OF AN IRISHMAN.

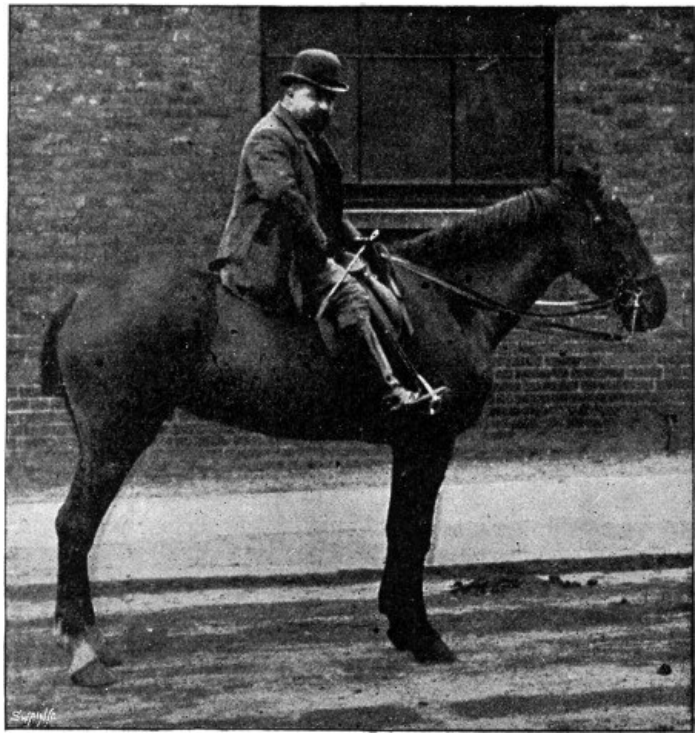
He worked away. The feeling in Ireland against Englishmen at that time was very strong. Tom Taylor, then the editor of *Punch*, saw some of his sketches in Dublin, and advised him to go to the West of Ireland to make studies of character. He was in Galway, and he had persuaded a number of Irishmen who were breaking stones to pause in their work and let him sketch them. They consented. The overseer came up. [Pg 580]

"What d'yer mane," he cried, "allowing this hathen Saxon to draw yer?"

"I've never been out of Ireland in my life," said the artist; but the overseer had seized him, and but for the intervention of the men, whom he had paid liberally for the "sitting," he would have thrown him into the river.

Then a great trouble came. His father was stricken with blindness. The young man came to London, and with something more than the proverbial half-crown in his pocket. He was nineteen years of age when he hurried out of Euston Station one morning and stood for a moment thinking—for he did not know a soul in the Metropolis. But he soon found an opportunity.

"My first work was on *London Society*, for Florence Marryat," he said; "then for the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*. The *Illustrated London News* employed me. I did such things as the Boat Race, Eton and Harrow cricket match, and similar subjects—all from a humorous point of view. I have had as many as three full pages in one number. Then came that terrible distress in the mining districts. I was married that year. I was sent away to "do" the Black Country, and well remember eating the first Christmas dinner of my married life alone in a Sheffield hotel.



MR. FURNISS ON "RHODA."
From a Photo. by Elliott & Fry.

"Those sketches were never published. They were too terribly real. The people dying in rooms with scarcely a stick of furniture, the children opening the cupboards and showing them bare, appealed to me, and my pencil refused to depict anything else. It was the same kind of thing that was afterwards made notorious by Sims and Barnard in "How the Poor Live." I came back and was selected to do some electioneering work for the same paper. This necessitated the putting off of a little dinner party to some friends, and I wired one of the invited to that effect. When I was starting, imagine my surprise to meet a *Graphic* artist on the platform, and to hear that my friend had unwisely given away the contents of my telegram! However, we chummed up. He stayed with friends—I at an hotel. I sat up all that night working after attending the meetings. At four o'clock I heard a knock at the door. A journalist. I was just about to put into my picture the large figures. I made him very much at home, and told him I would give him any information I knew as to the previous night's proceedings if he would act as my model. He did. We worked on till breakfast time, and we sat down together. I sent off my page—it was in a week before the *Graphic*! It was a good return. I had started on the Tuesday, got home on the Thursday, and never had my boots off the whole time! I'd rather keep my boots on for a week than disappoint an editor."

Punch!

I asked Mr. Furniss if Tom Taylor helped him to any considerable extent. Oh! dear, no. Tom Taylor wrote a terrible fist, spattered the page all over with ink, and invariably replied on the back of the letter sent him. At least, it was so in Mr. Furniss's case. He would send sketches to *Punch*; they were acknowledged as "unsuitable." They invariably turned up a week or so later—the idea re-drawn by a member of the staff! He began to despair. But that first cartoon in the schoolboy's periodical was always before him. [Pg 581]

"When Mr. Burnand became editor," continued Mr. Furniss, "I was working on the *Illustrated London News*. He saw one of the sketches and asked me to call—the result was that I have worked for them ever since. I started at very small things; my first was a small drawing of Temple Bar. Then, when Parliament opened, Mr. H. W. Lucy commenced *Toby*—by-the-bye, Lucy and I both joined the *Punch* table, the weekly dinner, together—and I worked with him. I have special permission at the House; as a matter of fact, I have the sanction of the Lord Great Chamberlain to sketch anywhere in the precincts of Westminster. My right there is an individual one."

"But supposing, Mr. Furniss," I said, "they put a stop to you and your pencil entering?"

"I'd go into Parliament!" came the ready reply. And, indeed, he has been approached on this subject by constituencies two or three times.

We spoke of some of the eminent statesmen and others Mr. Furniss has caricatured. Mr. John Morley is the most difficult. He is not what an artist would call a black and white man. You must suggest the familiar red tie in your picture and then you have "caught" him.

THE FURNISS FAMILY.
From a Photo. by Elliott & Fry.

"I have seen Mr. Morley look a boy, a young man, and an old man—and all in an hour," said Mr. Furniss. "Mr. Asquith is difficult, too. But I don't think I have ever missed him, as there's a Penley look about his face and a decided low comedian's mouth that help you immensely. Sir Richard Temple is the easiest. Many members have some characteristic action which assists you materially. For instance, Mr. Joseph Arch always wipes his hands down his coat before shaking hands with you, whilst Mr. Goschen delights to play with his eye-glass when speaking. Lord Randolph Churchill likes to indulge in a little acrobatic exercise and balance himself on one foot, whilst Mr. Balfour hangs on persistently to the lapel of his coat when talking. All these little things help to 'mark' the man for the caricaturist. I invented Gladstone's collar and made Churchill small. Not because he is small, but because I think it is the caricaturist's art not so much to give an absolutely correct likeness, but rather to convey the character and value of the man through the lines you draw. Gladstone! A wonderful man for the caricaturist, and one of the finest. I have sat and watched the rose in his coat droop and fade, his hair become dishevelled with excitement, and his tie get round to the back of his neck."

"And what do the wives of our estimable M.P.'s think of all this?" I hinted.

"Oh! I get most abusive letters from both sides. Wives of members write and ask me not to caricature their husbands. One lady wrote to me the other day, and said if I would persist in [Pg 582] caricaturing her husband, would I put him in a more fashionable coat? Now, this particular member is noted for the old-fashioned cut of the coats he wears. Another asked me to make the sharer of her joys and sorrows better looking; whilst only last week a lady—the wife of a particularly well-known M.P.—addressed a most plaintive letter to me, saying that since some of the younger members of her family had contrived to see my pictures they had become quite rude to their papa!

"Why, members often *ask* me to caricature them. One member was very kindly disposed to me, and suggested that I should keep my eye on him. I did. Yet he cut me dead when he saw his picture! It's so discouraging, don't you know, when you are so anxious to oblige."

I asked Mr. Furniss if he thought there was anything suggestive of cruelty in caricature.

"Not in this country," he replied; "in Spain, Italy, and France—yes. Caricaturists there score off their cruelty. Listen to this. One night I was in the House. Mr. Gladstone rose to speak. He held his left hand up and referred to it as 'This old Parliamentary hand.' I noticed a fact—which men who had sat in that House for years had never seen. On that left hand Mr. Gladstone has only three fingers! Think of it—think of what your caricaturist with an inclination towards cruelty might have made of that fact, coupled with those significant words! I ask you again—think of it!"

He spoke in thorough earnestness. He told me that he looked forward to the time when he should consign to the rag-basket the famous Gladstone collar and cease to play with Goschen's eye-glass. He is striving to accomplish something more—he would do it now, but it isn't marketable. Mr. Furniss is a sensible man. He caricatures to live; and, if the laughs follow, well, so much the better.

The afternoon passed rapidly, and the studio became darker and darker. Venus on the coal-box

looked quite ghostly, and a lay figure in the far corner was not calculated to comfort the nervously-inclined when amongst the "props" of an artist's studio. "Buzzy" merrily rushed in and announced dinner, and "Bogie" jumped up and barked his raptures at the word. "Bogie" knew it meant scraps. Mrs. Furniss and the children met us at the dining-room door. The youngsters' faces were as solemn as the Court of Queen's Bench. Little Lawrence looked up at me very demurely, the others waiting anxiously.

"Please could you tell us what a spiral staircase is?" he asked.

A dead silence.

"Oh!" I answered, anxious to show a superior knowledge of these peculiarly constructed "ups and downs," "It's—it's—it's one of those twirley-whirley"—here I illustrated my meaning by twirling my finger round and round.

A shout of laughter went up.

If the reader will try this little joke on a score of people, by the time the twentieth is arrived at he will then discover why the happiest quartette of youngsters in the immediate vicinity of Primrose Hill laughed so gaily.

Then we all went in to dinner. How well the shirt-cuff story went down with the soup.

"Pellegrini," said the artist, "used to remark somewhat sarcastically to his brother artists: 'Ah, you fellows are always making sketches. I carry all mine here—here in my brain!' Pellegrini wore very big cuffs. He made his sketches on them. Until this came out we thought his linen always dirty!"

BALLYHOOLY, M.P., GETS EXCITED.

Then Burnand came on with the beef. The two fellow-workers on *Punch*—Mr. Burnand and Mr. Furniss—run pretty level in their ideas. A happy thought is often suggested to both of them through reading the same paragraph in a newspaper, and they cross in the post. We spoke of *Punch's* Grand Old Man—John Tenniel—of clever E. J. Milliken, whose really wonderful work is yet but little known. Mr. Milliken wrote "Childe Chappie"—and is "'Arry." Of Linley Sambourne, whom Mr. Furniss once saw walking down Bond Street, and had the strange intuition that he was the artist, connecting his work, and walk, and bearing together. He had never seen or spoken to him before. Charles Keene's name was mentioned. It was always the hardest matter to get Keene to make a speech. He far preferred the famous stump of a pipe to spouting. Mr. Furniss hurt Keene's feelings once with the happiest and kindest of compliments. It was at a little dinner party, and Mr. Furniss linked Keene's name with that of Robert Hunter—who did so much to provide open spaces for the people. He referred to Keene as "the greatest provider of open spaces!" Keene said he was never so grossly insulted—he never forgave Mr. Furniss. He failed to see the truly charming inference to be drawn from this remark. [Pg 583]

"THE ASSASSINATED SCARECROW, SOR!"

We went into the drawing-room, and together ran through the pages of a huge volume. It contained the facsimiles of the pictures which comprised one of Mr. Furniss's biggest hits—what was in reality an attack on the Royal Academy. His "Artistic Joke"—a sub-title given to this exhibition by the *Times* in a long preliminary notice—created a sensation six years ago. He attacked the Royal Academy in a good-natured way, because he was not himself a member of that influential body. But there was a more solid and serious reason. "I saw how cruel they were to younger men," he said; "the long odds against a painter getting his work exhibited, the indiscriminate selection of canvases."

This really great effort on the part of Mr. Furniss—this idea to caricature the style of the eminent artists of the day—kept him at work for more than two years. There were eighty-seven canvases in all. His friends came and went, but they saw nothing of the huge canvases hidden away in his studio. He worked at such a rate that he became nervous of himself. He would go to bed at night. He would wake to find himself cutting the style of an R.A. to pieces in his studio at early morn—in a state of semi-somnambulism. He fired his "Artistic Joke" off, the shot went home, and the effect was a startler for many people and in many places. It advanced Mr. Furniss in the world of art in a way he never expected, and did not a little for those he sought to benefit. One of these "jokes"—and a very dramatic one—is reproduced in these pages.

The hour or two passed in the little drawing-room after dinner was delightful. We had his unique platform entertainment. Mr. Furniss was induced by the Birmingham and Midland Institute to appear on the platform as a lecturer. This was followed by his lecturing for two seasons all over the country, but finding that the Institutes made huge profits out of his efforts, and that his anecdotes and mimicry were the parts most relished, he abandoned the role of lecturer for that of entertainer with "The Humours of Parliament." As soon as he had crushed the idea that it was a lecture, people flocked to hear his anecdotes and to watch his acting, the result of his first short tour resulting in a clear profit of over £2,000.

DRAWING FROM "AN ARTISTIC JOKE."

So it came about that young Frank closed his foreign stamp book, and "Buzzy" settled down in a corner by her mother's side and looked the little model she is. "Bogie" lay on the hearth-rug. Suddenly—we were all in "The House." We heard the young member make his maiden speech; we watched the mournful procession of the Speaker. Mr. Gladstone appeared upon the scene—he walked the room, and in a merry sort of way played with "Buzzy's" long curls—and took an intense interest in Frank's collection of foreign stamps. "Bogie" was evidently inclined to break out in a loud bark of presumable applause when the Irish member rose to his legs—the member for Ballyhooly—who had a question to ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland regarding an assassinated scarecrow! The reply did not satisfy him, and the Ballyhooly M.P. poured forth such a torrent of abuse upon the Chief Secretary's head that "Bogie's" bark came forth in boisterous tones just as the Speaker called the Irish representative to order!

"What a hissing there was at one of my entertainments at Leicester," said the humorist-caricaturist looking across at me with twinkling eyes. "A terrible hissing! I showed Mr. Gladstone on the sheet. Immediately it burst forth like a suddenly alarmed steam-engine. The audience rose in indignation—they tried to outdo it with frantic applause, but in spite of their lusty efforts it continued for several minutes.

"'Turn him out—turn him out!' they cried. But we couldn't find the party who was acting so rudely.

"Imagine my feelings next morning when I saw in the papers leading articles speaking in strong terms of this occurrence, which, one of them stated in bold type—'was a disgrace to the people of Leicester.'" [Pg 585]

"Bogie" rose from the hearth-rug, wagged his tail, and made his exit.

"Good night, Buz."

"Good night, Frank."

"And did they ever discover this very unseemly person?" I asked Mr. Furniss when we were alone.

"Oh! I forgot to tell you," he said, "that it was the hissing of the lime in my magic lantern!"

HARRY HOW.

Telegraphic Address, Likajoko, London

Portraits of Celebrities at Different Times of their Lives.

[Pg 586]

AGE 10.
From a Photo. by W. Andrews, Dublin.

Age 20.
From a Photo. by W. & D. Downey.

HARRY FURNISS.

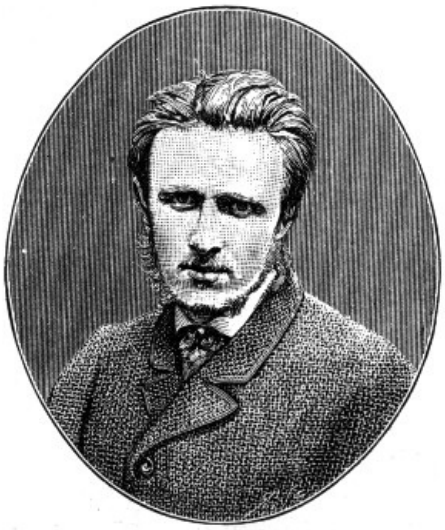
BORN 1854.

At ten years old Mr. Furniss was a pupil at the Wesleyan College School at Dublin, where he started and edited *The Schoolboy's Punch*, in the manner described in the extremely interesting interview which appears in the present number. At twenty he had just come up to London, and was working for the illustrated papers. At twenty-six he joined the staff of *Punch*, with which his name has ever since been intimately connected.

AGE 26.
From a Photo. by C. Watkins, Camden Road, N.W.

PRESENT DAY.
From a Photo by Debenham & Gould.

AGE 17.
From a Photo, by A. Adams, Aberdeen.

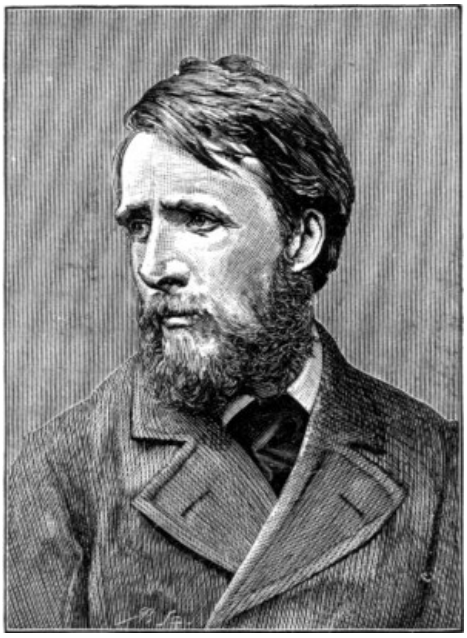


AGE 24.
From a Photo. by John Lamb, Aberdeen.

SIR GEORGE REID, P.R.S.A.

Born 1842.

Sir George Reid, P.R.S.A., was born in Aberdeen, N.B., in the year 1842, and when nineteen years of age commenced his artistic studies at the "Trustees' Academy," in the City of Edinburgh, and shortly afterwards in Utrecht, under Mollinger. In 1870 he quitted the latter place for Paris, where he continued his studies; and for several months in 1871 completed his student life with Israels, at The Hague. He has proved himself a true artist, and proficient in all departments—both figure and landscape. Latterly he has applied himself to portrait painting, in which he finds few competitors. He has done much in the way of book illustrating. He was elected an Associate of the Royal Scottish Academy in 1870, and a full member seven years afterwards, receiving on the death of Sir W. Fettes Douglas the unanimous call of his brethren to occupy the chair as President.



AGE 36.
From a Photo. by John Lamb, Aberdeen.

PRESENT DAY.
From a Photo. by A. Inglis, Edinburgh.

COLIN HUNTER, A.R.A.

Born 1841.

AGE 15.
From a Daguerreotype.

Colin Hunter, A.R.A., was born in Glasgow, July 16, 1841, and is the son of John Hunter, bookseller and postmaster, of Helensburgh. He was educated in that town, and began painting at twenty years of age, after four years' clerkship. His education as a painter was derived from Nature. Mr. Hunter was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy in January, 1884, and is also a Member of the Royal Scottish Water Colour Society.

AGE 24.
From a Photo. by Ovinius-Davis, Glasgow.

AGE 32.
From a Photo. by Fradelle & Marshall, London.

PRESENT DAY.
From a Photograph.

AGE 20.
From a Drawing by Carl Hartmann.

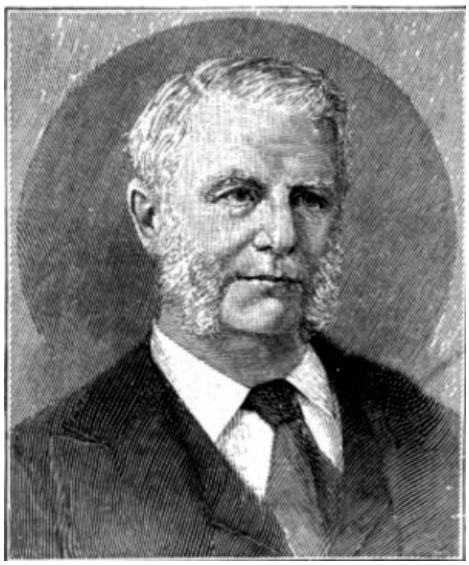
SIR FREDERICK AUGUSTUS ABEL, BART., K.C.B., D.C.L., F.R.S.

Born 1827.

Sir Fredk. A. Abel, Bart., who has lately been prominent before the public in connection with the recent opening of the Imperial Institute, of which he has been Organizing Secretary from 1887, was born in London in 1827, and is known principally in connection with chemistry and explosives. His published works are: "The Modern History of Gunpowder," 1866; "Gun Cotton," 1866; "On Explosive Agents," 1872, "Researches in Explosives," 1875; and "Electricity Applied to Explosive Purposes," 1884. He is also joint-author with Colonel Bloxam of a "Handbook of Chemistry." Sir Frederick Abel has been President of the Institute of Chemistry, the Society of Chemical Industry, and the Society of Telegraph Engineers and Electricians. He was appointed Associate Member of the Ordnance Committee in 1867; and is Chemist to the War Department and likewise Chemical Referee to the Government. In 1883 he was one of the Royal Commissioners on Accidents in Mines, and was President of the British Association at the Leeds meeting, 1890. He was created C.B. in 1877, Hon. D.C.L., Oxford, in 1883, knighted in the same year, and raised to the rank of Baronet at the opening of the Imperial Institute.

AGE 28.
From a Photo. by Maull & Co., London.

AGE 50.
From a Photograph.



AGE 65.
From a Photo. by Barraud, London.

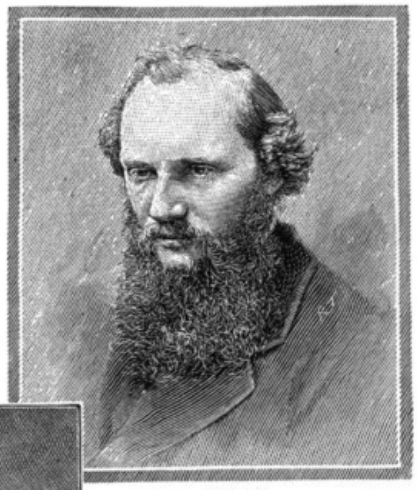
LORD KELVIN.

[Pg 590]

Born 1824.

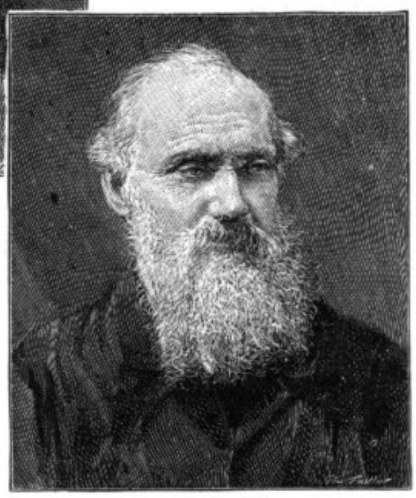
William Thomson, Lord Kelvin, was born at Belfast on the 26th of June, 1824. His father was a distinguished mathematician, and was Professor of Mathematics, first in Belfast, and afterwards in Glasgow University. At a very early age, Lord Kelvin showed extraordinary mathematical ability; and he passed with great distinction, first through the University of Glasgow, and then through Cambridge, where he gained the Second Wranglership and the first Smith's Prize. He became Professor of Natural Philosophy in the University of Glasgow in 1846, at the age of twenty-two; and he still holds that office. He was one of the pioneer band who laid the first successful Atlantic cable, in 1858. In 1866 Her Majesty conferred the honour of knighthood on him for his distinguished services to the science and practice of submarine telegraphy. Lord Kelvin is the author of many inventions. His mariner's compass and sounding machine have done good service to seamen. His electrical instruments are the standards all over the world. He is President of the Royal Society and member of every important scientific society at home and abroad. In January, 1892, the Queen conferred upon him his peerage. He held the Colquhoun

Sculls, at Cambridge, for two years. He is a sailor at heart and an enthusiastic yachtsman; and, among amateurs, a more keen lover of music it would be difficult to find.



AGE 45.
From a Photo by John Fergus, Largs.

From a] AGE 28. *[Photograph.*



PRESENT DAY.
From a Photo. by W. & D. Downey.

[Pg 591]

AGE 2.
From a Painting.

AGE 40. ***From a Photo. by M. Guttenberg, Manchester.***

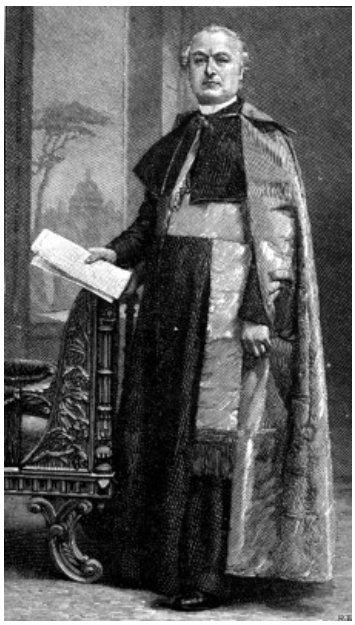
AGE 8.
From a Photo. by R. Tudor Williams,

CARDINAL-ARCHBISHOP VAUGHAN.

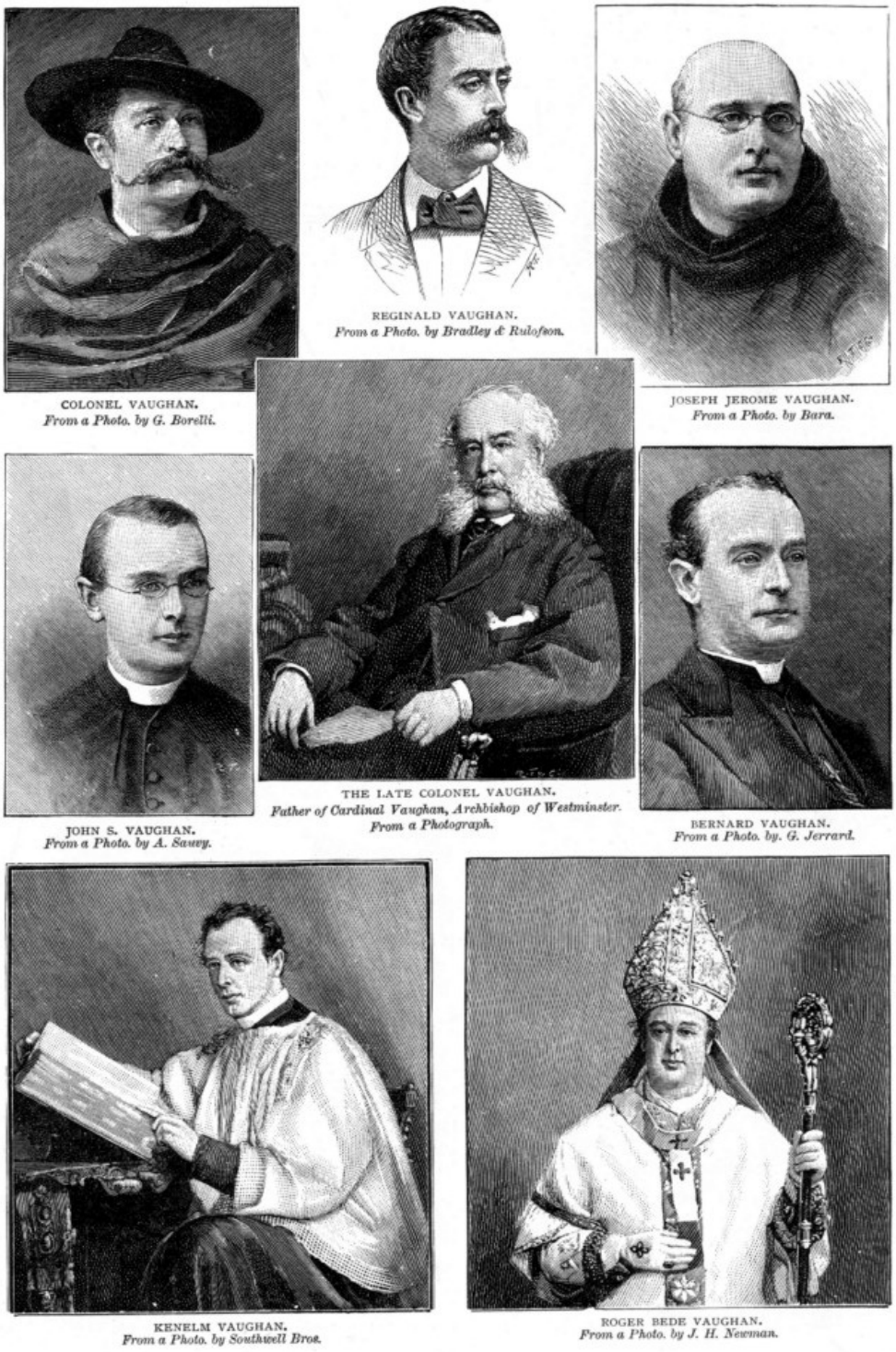
BORN 1832.

His Eminence Herbert Vaughan, D.D., is the eldest son of the late Lieut.-Colonel Vaughan, of Courtfield, Herefordshire, born at Gloucester, April 15, 1832, and was educated at Stonyhurst College, Lancashire, on the Continent, and in Rome. On the death of Bishop Turner, he was elected Bishop of Salford, a post which he held until his recent elevation to the rank of Cardinal-Archbishop.

AGE 25.
From a Photo. by Jules Géruzet, Brussels.



PRESENT DAY.
From a Photo. by G. Felici, Rome.



COLONEL VAUGHAN.
From a Photo. by G. Borelli.

REGINALD VAUGHAN.
From a Photo. by Bradley & Rulofson.

JOSEPH JEROME VAUGHAN.
From a Photo. by Bara.

JOHN S. VAUGHAN.
From a Photo. by A. Savvy.

THE LATE COLONEL VAUGHAN.
Father of Cardinal Vaughan, Archbishop of Westminster.
From a Photograph.

BERNARD VAUGHAN.
From a Photo. by G. Jerrard.

KENELM VAUGHAN.
From a Photo. by Southwell Bros.

ROGER BEDE VAUGHAN.
From a Photo. by J. H. Newman.

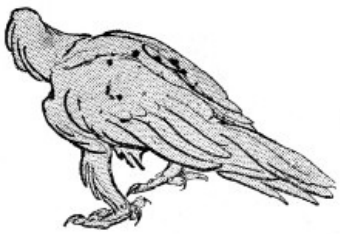
The Father and Brothers of Cardinal-Archbishop Vaughan.

XII.—ZIG-ZAG ACCIPITRAL.

The accipitral birds are the eagles, the vultures, the falcons, the owls—all those birds that bite and tear unhappy mammals as well as birds of more peaceful habits than themselves. They have all, it will be observed, Roman noses, which may be the reason why the Romans adopted

the eagle as a standard; as also it may not. They have striking characteristics of their own, and have been found very useful by poets and other people who have to wander off the main subject to make plain what they mean. The owl is the wiseacre of Nature, the vulture is a vile harpy, and the eagle is the embodiment of

everything great and mighty, and glorious and free, and swooping and catoptrical. There is very little to say against the eagle, except that he looks a deal the better a long way off, like an impressionist picture or a volcano. When the eagle is flying and swooping, or soaring and staring impudently at the sun, or reproaching an old feather of his own in the arrow that sticks in his chest, or mewing his mighty youth (a process I never quite understood)—when he is doing noble and poetical things of this class at an elevation of a great many thousand feet above the sea level he is sublime. When you meet him down below, on his feet, much of the sublimity is rubbed off. [Pg 594]



CORNS,—

CHARLEY.

CHILBLAINS, OR—

BUNIONS,—

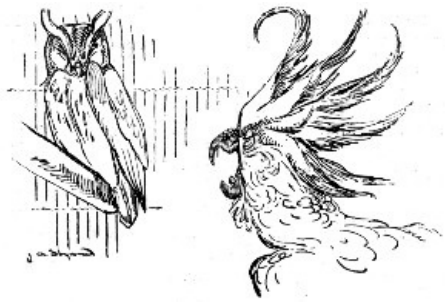
IKINESS?

There is only one eagle in the world with whom I can claim anything like a confidential friendship, although I know many. His name is Charley. If, after a chat with Bob the Bactrian, you will turn your back to the camel-house and walk past the band-stand toward the eagles' aviaries, you will observe that the first corner cage is occupied by wedge-tailed eagles—a most disrespectful name, by-the-bye, I think. There are various perches, including a large tree-trunk, for these birds; but one bird, the oldest in the cage, doesn't use them. He keeps on the floor by the bars facing the place where Suffa Culli and Jung Perchad stand to take up passengers, and looks out keenly for cats. That is Charley. He is all right when you know him, is Charley, and I have it on the best authority that there are no flies on him. A rat on the straggle has been known to turn up in this aviary and run the gauntlet of all the cages—till he reached Charley; nothing alive and eatable ever got past *him*. I have all the esteem and friendship for Charley that any eagle has a right to expect; but I can't admit the least impressiveness in his walk. An eagle's feet are not meant to walk with, but to grab things. An eagle's walk betrays a lamentable bandy-leggedness, and his toe-nails click awkwardly against the ground. This makes him plant his feet gingerly and lift them quickly, so that worthy old ladies suppose him to be afflicted with lameness or bunions, an opinion which disgusts the bird, as you may observe for yourself; for you will never find an eagle in these Gardens submitting himself to be fondled by an old lady visitor. It is by way of repudiating any suggestion of bunions that the eagle adopts a raffish, off-hand, chickaleary sort of roll in the gait, so that altogether, especially as viewed from behind, a walking eagle has an appearance of perpetually knocking 'em in the Old Kent Road. On Charley's next birthday I shall present him, I think, with a proper pearly suit, with kicksies cut saucy over the trotters, and an artful fakement down the side, if the Society will allow me. [Pg 595]

A PASSING SNACK.

DINNER AHOY!

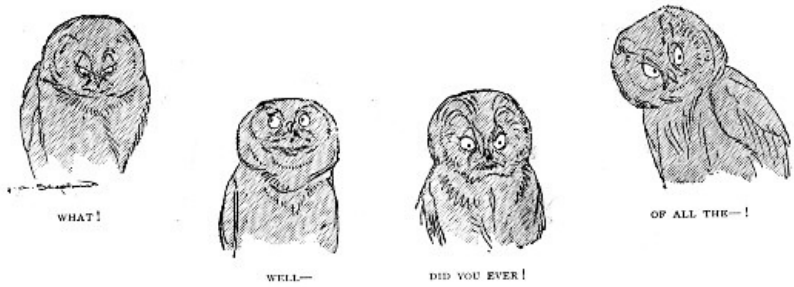
There is nothing in the world that pleases an eagle better at dinner-time than a prime piece of cat. Charley tells me that, upon the whole, he prefers a good, plump, mouse-fed tabby; he adds that he never yet heard of a tame eagle being kept at a sausage shop, though he would like a situation of that sort himself, very much. The stoop of a free eagle as it takes a living victim is, no doubt, a fine thing, except for the victim; but the grabbing of cut-up food here in captivity is merely comic. The eagle, with his Whitechapel lurch, makes for the morsel and takes it in his stride; then he stands on it in a manner somehow suggesting pattens, and pecks away at the hair—if, luckily, he has secured a furry piece. I am not intimate with any eagle but Charley, but I am very friendly with all of them—golden, tawny, white-tailed, and the rest, with their scowls and their odd winks—all but one other of the wedge-tailers, who stays for ever at the top of the tree trunk and looks out westward, trying to distinguish the cats in the gardens of St. John's Wood; he is reserved as well as uppish, and I don't know him to speak to.



UNCIVIL BAWLINGS.

I am pretty intimate with many of the owls. The owl I know least is a little Scops owl, kept alone in the insect-house. He has for next-door neighbour a sad old reprobate—Cocky, the big Triton cockatoo—who abuses him horribly. The fact is, they both occupy a recess which once Cocky had all to himself, and now Cocky bullies the intruder up hill and down dale; although little Scops would gladly go somewhere else if he could, and takes no notice of Cocky's uncivil bawlings further than to lift his near wing apprehensively at each outburst. He and I have not been able to improve our acquaintance greatly, partly because he is out of reach, and partly because Cocky's conversation occupies most of his time.

[Pg 596]

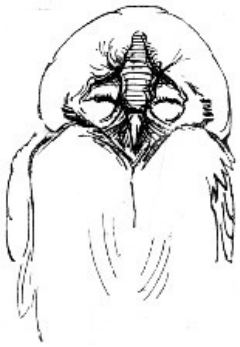


The Zoo owls are a lamentably scattered family. Another Scops owl, with one eye, lives in the eastern aviary, in Church's care. He is a charming, furious little ruffian (I am speaking of the owl, and not of Church), and perfectly ready to peck any living thing, quite irrespective of size. Where he lost his eye is a story of his own, for he was first met with but one. He sits on his perch with a furious cock of the ears—which are not ears at all, but feathers—with the aspect of being permanently prepared to repel boarders; and the only thing that could possibly add to his fierceness of appearance would be a patch over the sight of the demolished eye; a little present I would gladly make myself, if he would let me.

THE SCOWLING SCOPS.

He lives just underneath a much less savage little Naked-foot Owl, who doesn't resent your existence with his beak, but gazes at you with a most extreme air of shocked surprise. He doesn't attack you bodily for standing on this earth on your own feet—he is too much grieved and scandalized. He looks at you as a teetotal lady of the Anti-Gambling League would look at her nephew if he offered to toss her for whiskies. He follows you with his glare of outraged propriety till you shrink behind Church and sneak away, with an indescribable feeling of personal depravity previously unknown. Why should this pharisaical little bird make one feel a criminal? As a matter of fact, he is nothing but a raffish fly-by-night himself; and his pious horror is assumed, I believe, as much to keep his eyes wide open and him awake as to impose on one.

The owls' cages proper are away behind the llamas' house, and here you may study owl nature in plenty; and you may observe the owls, like people sitting through a long sermon, affecting various concealments and excuses for going to sleep in the daytime. The milky eagle-owl [Pg 597] pretends to be waiting for a friend who never keeps his appointment. You come upon him as he is dozing away quietly; he sees you just between his eyelids, and at once stares angrily down the path as if he were sick of waiting, and the other owl already half an hour overdue. Of course there is no owl coming, so he shakes his head testily and half shuts his eyes. If you go away then, he goes to sleep again. If you stay, he presently makes another pretence of pulling out his watch and wondering if that owl is ever coming. He has practised the transparent deception so long that he does it now mechanically, and sleeps, I believe, or nearly so, through the whole process. The oriental owl does it rather differently. He doesn't open his eyes when you first wake him—this in order to give greater verisimilitude to his pretence of profound meditation; he wishes you to understand that it is not your presence that causes him to open his eyes, but the natural course of his philosophical speculations. As a pundit, he disdains to appear to observe you; so he gazes solemnly at a vast space with nothing whatever for its centre. He sees you, but he knows you for a creature that never carries raw meat with it, like a keeper; a creature beneath the notice of *Bubo orientalis*.



MILKY REPOSE.

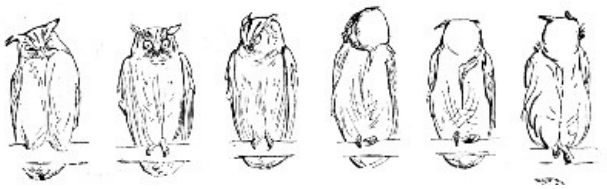
As a song-bird, the owl is not a conspicuous success. Perhaps he has learned this in the Zoo, for he cannot be induced to perform during visiting hours. He is a reserved person, and exclusive. If you, as a stranger, attempt to scrape his acquaintance, he meets you with an indignant stare—confound your impudence! Nothing in this world can present such a picture of offended, astounded dignity as an owl. I often wonder what he said when Noah ordered him peremptorily into the Ark. As for myself, I should as soon think of ordering one of the beadles at the Bank.

IS HE COMING?

Many worthy owls, long since passed away as living things, now exist in their astral forms as pepper-boxes and tobacco-jars. They probably belonged, in life, to the same species as a friend of mine here, who exhibits one of their chief physical features. He sits immovably still, so far as his body—his jar or pepper-reservoir—is concerned; indeed, if he is not disturbed, he sits immovably altogether, and sleeps. When he is disturbed he wakes in instalments, opening one eye at a time. [Pg 598] He fixes you with his wild, fiery eye, his indignant stare. Start to walk round him; the head turns, and the stare follows you, with no movement whatever of the part containing the pepper. The head slowly turns and turns, without the smallest indication of stopping anywhere. I never tempted it farther than once round, but walked back the other way, for

WHAT A NUISANCE!

fear of strangling a valuable bird. Besides, I remembered an owl pepper-box once, which became loose in the screw through continual turning, so that the head fell off into your plate, and all the pepper after it.



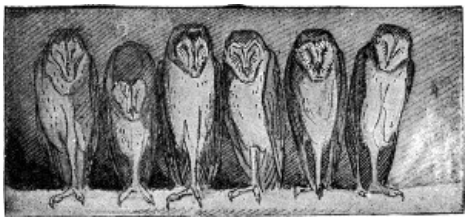
The biggest owls are the eagle-owls. The eagle-owls here occupy a similar sort of situation to that of the hermit in an old tea-garden. In a secluded nook behind the camel-house a brick-built cave is kept in a wire cage, which not only hinders the owls from escaping, but prevents them taking the cave with them if they do. The cave is fitted up with the proper quantity of weird gloom and several convenient perches; the perches, however, are indistinct, because the gloom is obvious. In the midst of it you may see two fiery eyes, like the fire-balls from a Roman candle, and nothing else. This is the most one often has a chance of seeing here in bright day. Often the eagle-owls are asleep, and then you do not even see the fireworks. I know the big eagle-owl fairly well; that is to say, I am on snarling terms with him. But once he has settled in his cave he won't come out, even when I call him Zadkiel.

NOT YET?

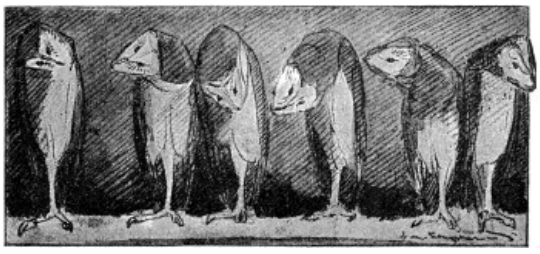
OH, HANG IT!

THE EAGLE-OWLS' RETREAT.

There is nothing much more grotesque than a row of small barn owls, just awakened from sleep and curious about the disturber. There is something about the odd gaze and twist of the neck that irresistibly reminds me of an illustration in an Old Saxon or Early English manuscript. [Pg 599]



SLEEP.

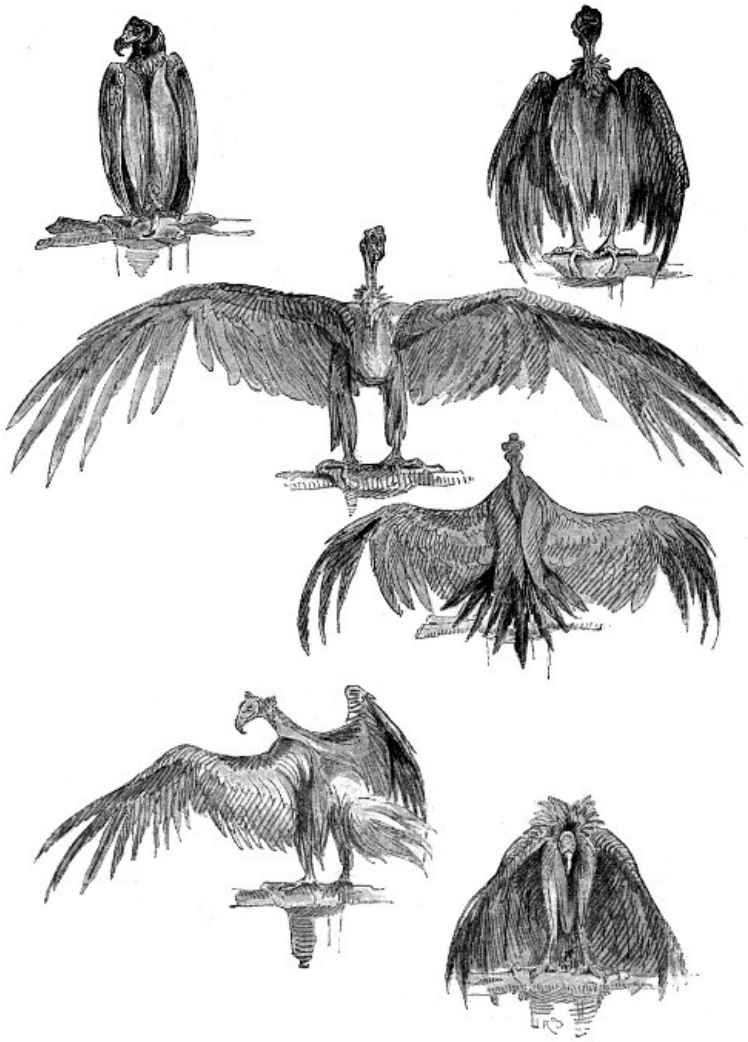


I am not particularly friendly with any of the vultures. Walk past their cages with the determination to ingratiate yourself with them. You will change your mind. There are very few birds that I should not like to keep as pets if I had the room, but the vulture is the first of them. I don't know any kind of vulture whose personal appearance wouldn't hang him at a court of Judge Lynch. The least unpleasant-looking of the lot is the little Angola vulture, who is put among the kites; and she is bad enough: a horrible eighteenth-century painted and powdered old woman; a Pompadour of ninety. The large bearded vulture is not only an uncompanionable fellow to look at, but he doesn't behave respectably. It is not respectable to hurl yourself bodily against anybody looking over a precipice and unaware of your presence, so as to break him up on the rocks below, and dine off his prime cuts. I have no doubt that Self—(Self, by-the-bye, keeps eagles and vultures as well as camels)—has any amount of sympathy for his charges, but who *could* make a pet of a turkey-vulture, with its nasty, raw-looking red head, or of a cinereous vulture, with its unwholesome eyes and its unclean-looking blue wattle? No, I am not over-fond of a vulture. He is always a dissipated-looking ruffian, of boiled eye and blotchy complexion, and you know as you look at him that he would prefer to see you dead rather than alive, so that he might safely take your eyes by way of an appetizer, and forthwith proceed to lift away your softer pieces preparatory to strolling under your ribs like a jackdaw in a cage much too small. He sits there placid, unwinsome, and patient; waiting for you to die. But he has his little vanities. He is tremendously proud of his wings—

THE ANGOLA.

[Pg 600]

and they certainly are wings to astonish. On a warm day he likes to open them for coolness, but often he makes this a mere excuse for showing off. He waits till some easily-impressed visitor comes along—not a regular frequenter. Then he stands up and spreads his great pinions abroad, and perhaps turns about, and the visitor is duly impressed. So the vulture stands and receives the admiration, hoping the while that the visitor has heart disease, and will drop dead where he stands. And when the visitor walks off without dying the old harpy lets his wings fall open, ready for somebody else.



The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes.

[Pg 601]

XIX.—THE ADVENTURE OF THE REIGATE SQUIRE.

By A. Conan Doyle.

It was some time before the health of my friend, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, recovered from the strain caused by his immense exertions in the spring of '87. The whole question of the Netherland-Sumatra Company and of the colossal schemes of Baron Maupertins are too recent in the minds of the public, and are too intimately concerned with politics and finance, to be fitting subjects for this series of sketches. They led, however, in an indirect fashion to a singular and complex problem, which gave my friend an opportunity of demonstrating the value of a fresh weapon among the many with which he waged his life-long battle against crime.

On referring to my notes, I see that it was upon the 14th of April that I received a telegram from Lyons, which informed me that Holmes was lying ill in the Hotel Dulong. Within twenty-four hours I was in his sick room, and was relieved to find that there was nothing formidable in his symptoms. His iron constitution, however, had broken down under the strain of an investigation which had extended over two months, during which period he had never worked less than fifteen hours a day, and had more than once, as he assured me, kept to his task for five days at a stretch. The triumphant issue of his labours could not save him from reaction after so terrible an exertion, and at a time when Europe was ringing with his name, and when his room was literally ankle-deep with congratulatory telegrams, I found him a prey to the blackest depression. Even the knowledge that he had succeeded where the police of three countries had failed, and that he had out-manœuvred at every point the most accomplished swindler in Europe, were insufficient to rouse him from his nervous prostration.

Three days later we were back in Baker Street together, but it was evident that my friend would be much the better for a change, and the thought of a week of spring-time in the country was full of attractions to me also. My old friend Colonel Hayter, who had come under my professional care in Afghanistan, had now taken a house near Reigate, in Surrey, and had frequently asked me to come down to him upon a visit. On the last occasion he had remarked that if my friend would only come with me, he would be glad to extend his hospitality to him also. A little diplomacy was

needed, but when Holmes understood that the establishment was a bachelor one, and that he would be allowed the fullest freedom, he fell in with my plans, and a week after our return from Lyons we were under the Colonel's roof. Hayter was a fine old soldier, who had seen much of the world, and he soon found, as I had expected, that Holmes and he had plenty in common.

On the evening of our arrival we were sitting in the Colonel's gun-room after dinner, Holmes stretched upon the sofa, while Hayter and I looked over his little armoury of fire-arms.

"By the way," said he, suddenly, "I think I'll take one of these pistols upstairs with me in case we have an alarm."

"An alarm!" said I.

"Yes, we've had a scare in this part lately. Old Acton, who is one of our county magnates, had his house broken into last Monday. No great damage done, but the fellows are still at large."

"No clue?" asked Holmes, cocking his eye at the Colonel.

"None as yet. But the affair is a petty one, one of our little country crimes, which must seem too small for your attention, Mr. Holmes, after this great international affair."

Holmes waved away the compliment, though his smile showed that it had pleased him.

"Was there any feature of interest?"

"I fancy not. The thieves ransacked the library and got very little for their pains. The whole place was turned upside down, drawers burst open and presses ransacked, with the result that an odd volume of Pope's 'Homer,' two plated candlesticks, an ivory letter-weight, a small oak barometer, and a ball of twine, are all that have vanished." [Pg 602]

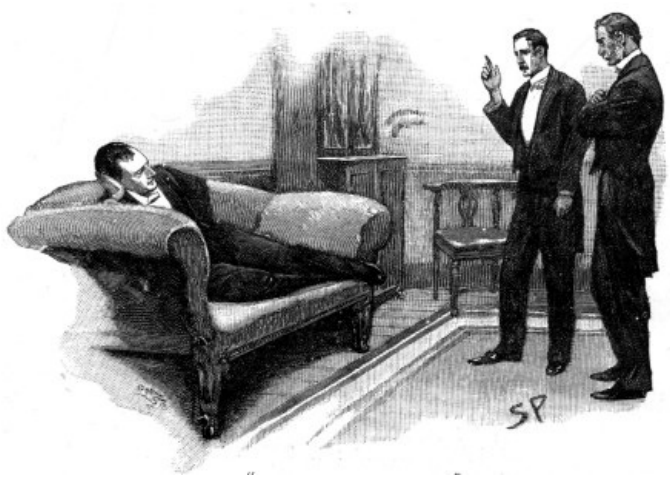
"What an extraordinary assortment!" I exclaimed.

"Oh, the fellows evidently grabbed hold of anything they could get."

Holmes grunted from the sofa.

"The county police ought to make something of that," said he. "Why, it is surely obvious that——"

But I held up a warning finger.



"I HELD UP A WARNING FINGER."

"You are here for a rest, my dear fellow. For Heaven's sake, don't get started on a new problem when your nerves are all in shreds."

Holmes shrugged his shoulders with a glance of comic resignation towards the Colonel, and the talk drifted away into less dangerous channels.

It was destined, however, that all my professional caution should be wasted, for next morning the problem obtruded itself upon us in such a way that it was impossible to ignore it, and our country visit took a turn which neither of us could have anticipated. We were at breakfast when the Colonel's butler rushed in with all his propriety shaken out of him.

"Have you heard the news, sir?" he gasped. "At the Cunningham's, sir!"

"Burglary!" cried the Colonel, with his coffee cup in mid air.

"Murder!"

The Colonel whistled. "By Jove!" said he, "who's killed, then? The J.P. or his son?"

"Neither, sir. It was William, the coachman. Shot through the heart, sir, and never spoke again."

"Who shot him, then?"

"The burglar, sir. He was off like a shot and got clean away. He'd just broke in at the pantry window when William came on him and met his end in saving his master's property."

"What time?"

"It was last night, sir, somewhere about twelve."

"Ah, then, we'll step over presently," said the Colonel, coolly settling down to his breakfast again. "It's a baddish business," he added, when the butler had gone. "He's our leading squire about here, is old Cunningham, and a very decent fellow too. He'll be cut up over this, for the man has been in his service for years, and was a good servant. It's evidently the same villains who broke into Acton's."

"And stole that very singular collection?" said Holmes, thoughtfully.

"Precisely."

"Hum! It may prove the simplest matter in the world; but, all the same, at first glance this is just a little curious, is it not? A gang of burglars acting in the country might be expected to vary the scene of their operations, and not to crack two cribs in the same district within a few days. When you spoke last night of taking precautions, I remember that it passed through my mind that this was probably the last parish in England to which the thief or thieves would be likely to turn their attention; which shows that I have still much to learn." [Pg 603]

"I fancy it's some local practitioner," said the Colonel. "In that case, of course, Acton's and Cunningham's are just the places he would go for, since they are far the largest about here."

"And richest?"

"Well, they ought to be; but they've had a law-suit for some years which has sucked the blood out of both of them, I fancy. Old Acton has some claim on half Cunningham's estate, and the lawyers have been at it with both hands."

"If it's a local villain, there should not be much difficulty in running him down," said Holmes, with a yawn. "All right, Watson, I don't intend to meddle."

"Inspector Forrester, sir," said the butler, throwing open the door.

The official, a smart, keen-faced young fellow, stepped into the room. "Good morning, Colonel," said he. "I hope I don't intrude, but we hear that Mr. Holmes, of Baker Street, is here."

The Colonel waved his hand towards my friend, and the Inspector bowed.

"We thought that perhaps you would care to step across, Mr. Holmes."

"The Fates are against you, Watson," said he, laughing. "We were chatting about the matter when you came in, Inspector. Perhaps you can let us have a few details." As he leaned back in his chair in the familiar attitude, I knew that the case was hopeless.

"INSPECTOR FORRESTER."

"We had no clue in the Acton affair. But here we have plenty to go on, and there's no doubt it is the same party in each case. The man was seen."

"Ah!"

"Yes, sir. But he was off like a deer after the shot that killed poor William Kirwan was fired. Mr. Cunningham saw him from the bedroom window, and Mr. Alec Cunningham saw him from the back passage. It was a quarter to twelve when the alarm broke out. Mr. Cunningham had just got into bed, and Mister Alec was smoking a pipe in his dressing-gown. They both heard William, the coachman, calling for help, and Mister Alec he ran down to see what was the matter. The back door was open, and as he came to the foot of the stairs he saw two men wrestling together outside. One of them fired a shot, the other dropped, and the murderer rushed across the garden

and over the hedge. Mr. Cunningham, looking out of his bedroom window, saw the fellow as he gained the road, but lost sight of him at once. Mister Alec stopped to see if he could help the dying man, and so the villain got clean away. Beyond the fact that he was a middle-sized man, and dressed in some dark stuff, we have no personal clue, but we are making energetic inquiries, and if he is a stranger we shall soon find him out."

"What was this William doing there? Did he say anything before he died?"

"Not a word. He lives at the lodge with his mother, and as he was a very faithful fellow, we imagine that he walked up to the house with the intention of seeing that all was right there. Of course, this Acton business has put everyone on their guard. The robber must have just burst open the door—the lock has been forced—when William came upon him." [Pg 604]

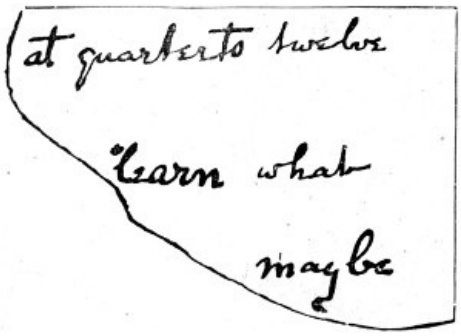
"Did William say anything to his mother before going out?"

"She is very old and deaf, and we can get no information from her. The shock has made her half-witted, but I understand that she was never very bright. There is one very important circumstance, however. Look at this!"

He took a small piece of torn paper from a note-book and spread it out upon his knee.

"This was found between the finger and thumb of the dead man. It appears to be a fragment torn from a larger sheet. You will observe that the hour mentioned upon it is the very time at which the poor fellow met his fate. You see that his murderer might have torn the rest of the sheet from him or he might have taken this fragment from the murderer. It reads almost as though it was an appointment."

Holmes took up the scrap of paper, a facsimile of which is here reproduced:—



"Presuming that it is an appointment," continued the Inspector, "it is, of course, a conceivable theory that this William Kirwan, although he had the reputation of being an honest man, may have been in league with the thief. He may have met him there, may even have helped him to break in the door, and then they may have fallen out between themselves."

"This writing is of extraordinary interest," said Holmes, who had been examining it with intense concentration. "These are much deeper waters than I had thought." He sank his head upon his hands, while the Inspector smiled at the effect which his case had had upon the famous London specialist.

"Your last remark," said Holmes, presently, "as to the possibility of there being an understanding between the burglar and the servant, and this being a note of appointment from one to the other, is an ingenious and not entirely an impossible supposition. But this writing opens up——" he sank his head into his hands again and remained for some minutes in the deepest thought. When he raised his face again I was surprised to see that his cheek was tinged with colour and his eyes as bright as before his illness. He sprang to his feet with all his old energy.

"I'll tell you what!" said he. "I should like to have a quiet little glance into the details of this case. There is something in it which fascinates me extremely. If you will permit me, Colonel, I will leave my friend, Watson, and you, and I will step round with the Inspector to test the truth of one or two little fancies of mine. I will be with you again in half an hour."

An hour and a half had elapsed before the Inspector returned alone.

"Mr. Holmes is walking up and down in the field outside," said he. "He wants us all four to go up to the house together."

"To Mr. Cunningham's?"

"Yes, sir."

"What for?"

The Inspector shrugged his shoulders. "I don't quite know, sir. Between ourselves, I think Mr. Holmes has not quite got over his illness yet. He's been behaving very queerly, and he is very much excited."

"I don't think you need alarm yourself," said I. "I have usually found that there was method in his madness."

"Some folk might say there was madness in his method," muttered the Inspector. "But he's all on fire to start, Colonel, so we had best go out, if you are ready."

We found Holmes pacing up and down in the field, his chin sunk upon his breast, and his hands thrust into his trouser pockets.

"The matter grows in interest," said he. "Watson, your country trip has been a distinct success. I have had a charming morning."

"You have been up to the scene of the crime, I understand?" said the Colonel.

"Yes; the Inspector and I have made quite a little reconnaissance together."

"Any success?"

"Well, we have seen some very interesting things. I'll tell you what we did as we walk. First of all we saw the body of this unfortunate man. He certainly died from a revolver wound, as reported."

"Had you doubted it, then?"

"Oh, it is as well to test everything. Our inspection was not wasted. We then had an interview with Mr. Cunningham and his son, who were able to point out the exact spot where the murderer had broken through the garden hedge in his flight. That was of great interest." [Pg 605]

"Naturally."

"Then we had a look at this poor fellow's mother. We could get no information from her, however, as she is very old and feeble."

"And what is the result of your investigations?"

"The conviction that the crime is a very peculiar one. Perhaps our visit now may do something to make it less obscure. I think that we are both agreed, Inspector, that the fragment of paper in the dead man's hand, bearing, as it does, the very hour of his death written upon it, is of extreme importance."

"It should give a clue, Mr. Holmes."

"It *does* give a clue. Whoever wrote that note was the man who brought William Kirwan out of his bed at that hour. But where is the rest of that sheet of paper?"

"I examined the ground carefully in the hope of finding it," said the Inspector.

"It was torn out of the dead man's hand. Why was someone so anxious to get possession of it? Because it incriminated him. And what would he do with it? Thrust it into his pocket most likely, never noticing that a corner of it had been left in the grip of the corpse. If we could get the rest of that sheet, it is obvious that we should have gone a long way towards solving the mystery."

"Yes, but how can we get at the criminal's pocket before we catch the criminal?"

"Well, well, it was worth thinking over. Then there is another obvious point. The note was sent to William. The man who wrote it could not have taken it, otherwise of course he might have delivered his own message by word of mouth. Who brought the note, then? Or did it come through the post?"

"I have made inquiries," said the Inspector. "William received a letter by the afternoon post yesterday. The envelope was destroyed by him."

"Excellent!" cried Holmes, clapping the Inspector on the back. "You've seen the postman. It is a pleasure to work with you. Well, here is the lodge, and if you will come up, Colonel, I will show you the scene of the crime."

We passed the pretty cottage where the murdered man had lived, and walked up an oak-lined avenue to the fine old Queen Anne house, which bears the date of Malplaquet upon the lintel of the door. Holmes and the Inspector led us round it until we came to the side gate, which is separated by a stretch of garden from the hedge which lines the road. A constable was standing at the kitchen door.

"Throw the door open, officer," said Holmes. "Now it was on those stairs that young Mr. Cunningham stood and saw the two men struggling just where we are. Old Mr. Cunningham was at that window—the second on the left—and he saw the fellow get away just to the left of that bush. So did the son. They are both sure of it, on account of the bush. Then Mister Alec ran out and knelt beside the wounded man. The ground is very hard, you see, and there are no marks to guide us."

As he spoke two men came down the garden path, from round the angle of the house. The one was an elderly man, with a strong, deep-lined, heavy-eyed face; the other a dashing young fellow, whose bright, smiling expression and showy dress were in strange contrast with the business which had brought us there.

"Still at it, then?" said he to Holmes. "I thought you Londoners were never at fault. You don't seem to be so very quick, after all."

"Ah! you must give us a little time," said Holmes, good-humouredly.

"You'll want it," said young Alec Cunningham. "Why, I don't see that we have any clue at all."

"There's only one," answered the Inspector. "We thought that if we could only find——Good heavens! Mr. Holmes, what is the matter?"

My poor friend's face had suddenly assumed the most dreadful expression. His eyes rolled upwards, his features writhed in agony, and with a suppressed groan he dropped on his face upon the ground. Horrified at the suddenness and severity of the attack, we carried him into the kitchen, where he lay back in a large chair and breathed heavily for some minutes. Finally, with a shame-faced apology for his weakness, he rose once more.

"Watson would tell you that I have only just recovered from a severe illness," he explained. "I am liable to these sudden nervous attacks."

"Shall I send you home in my trap?" asked old Cunningham.

"Well, since I am here, there is one point on which I should like to feel sure. We can very easily verify it."

"What is it?"

"Well, it seems to me that it is just possible that the arrival of this poor fellow William was not before but after the entrance of the burglar into the house. You appear to take it for granted that although the door was forced the robber never got in." [Pg 606]

"GOOD HEAVENS! WHAT IS THE MATTER?"

"I fancy that is quite obvious," said Mr. Cunningham, gravely. "Why, my son Alec had not yet gone to bed, and he would certainly have heard anyone moving about."

"Where was he sitting?"

"I was sitting smoking in my dressing-room."

"Which window is that?"

"The last on the left, next my father's."

"Both your lamps were lit, of course?"

"Undoubtedly."

"There are some very singular points here," said Holmes, smiling. "Is it not extraordinary that a burglar—and a burglar who had had some previous experience—should deliberately break into a house at a time when he could see from the lights that two of the family were still afoot?"

"He must have been a cool hand."

"Well, of course, if the case were not an odd one we should not have been driven to ask you for an explanation," said Mister Alec. "But as to your idea that the man had robbed the house before William tackled him, I think it a most absurd notion. Shouldn't we have found the place disarranged and missed the things which he had taken?"

"It depends on what the things were," said Holmes. "You must remember that we are dealing with a burglar who is a very peculiar fellow, and who appears to work on lines of his own. Look, for example, at the queer lot of things which he took from Acton's—what was it?—a ball of string, a letter-weight, and I don't know what other odds and ends!"

"Well, we are quite in your hands, Mr. Holmes," said old Cunningham. "Anything which you or the Inspector may suggest will most certainly be done."

"In the first place," said Holmes, "I should like you to offer a reward—coming from yourself, for the officials may take a little time before they would agree upon the sum, and these things cannot be done too promptly. I have jotted down the form here, if you would not mind signing it. Fifty pounds was quite enough, I thought."

"I would willingly give five hundred," said the J.P., taking the slip of paper and the pencil which Holmes handed to him. "This is not quite correct, however," he added, glancing over the document.

"I wrote it rather hurriedly."

"You see you begin: 'Whereas, at about a quarter to one on Tuesday morning, an attempt was made'—and so on. It was at a quarter to twelve, as a matter of fact."

I was pained at the mistake, for I knew how keenly Holmes would feel any slip of the kind. It was his speciality to be accurate as to fact, but his recent illness had shaken him, and this one little incident was enough to show me that he was still far from being himself. He was obviously embarrassed for an instant, while the Inspector raised his eyebrows and Alec Cunningham burst into a laugh. The old gentleman corrected the mistake, however, and handed the paper back to Holmes.

"Get it printed as soon as possible," he said. "I think your idea is an excellent one."

Holmes put the slip of paper carefully away in his pocket-book.

"And now," said he, "it would really be a good thing that we should all go over the house together and make certain that this rather erratic burglar did not, after all, carry anything away with him." [Pg 607]

Before entering. Holmes made an examination of the door which had been forced. It was evident that a chisel or strong knife had been thrust in, and the lock forced back with it. We could see the marks in the wood where it had been pushed in.

"You don't use bars, then?" he asked.

"We have never found it necessary."

"You don't keep a dog?"

"Yes; but he is chained on the other side of the house."

"When do the servants go to bed?"

"About ten."

"I understand that William was usually in bed also at that hour?"

"Yes."

"It is singular that on this particular night he should have been up. Now, I should be very glad if you would have the kindness to show us over the house, Mr. Cunningham."

A stone-flagged passage, with the kitchens branching away from it, led by a wooden staircase directly to the first floor of the house. It came out upon the landing opposite to a second more ornamental stair which led up from the front hall. Out of this landing opened the drawing-room and several bedrooms, including those of Mr. Cunningham and his son. Holmes walked slowly, taking keen note of the architecture of the house. I could tell from his expression that he was on a hot scent, and yet I could not in the least imagine in what direction his inferences were leading him.

"My good sir," said Mr. Cunningham, with some impatience, "this is surely very unnecessary. That is my room at the end of the stairs, and my son's is the one beyond it. I leave it to your judgment whether it was possible for the thief to have come up here without disturbing us."

"You must try round and get on a fresh scent, I fancy," said the son, with a rather malicious smile.

"Still, I must ask you to humour me a little further. I should like, for example, to see how far the windows of the bedrooms command the front. This, I understand, is your son's room"—he pushed open the door—"and that, I presume, is the dressing-room in which he sat smoking when the alarm was given. Where does the window of that look out to?" He stepped across the bedroom, pushed open the door, and glanced round the other chamber.

"I hope you are satisfied now?" said Mr. Cunningham, testily.

"Thank you; I think I have seen all that I wished."

"Then, if it is really necessary, we can go into my room."

"If it is not too much trouble."

The J.P. shrugged his shoulders, and led the way into his own chamber, which was a plainly furnished and commonplace room. As we moved across it in the direction of the window, Holmes fell back until he and I were the last of the group. Near the foot of the bed was a small square table, on which stood a dish of oranges and a carafe of water. As we passed it, Holmes, to my unutterable astonishment, leaned over in front of me and deliberately knocked the whole thing

over. The glass smashed into a thousand pieces, and the fruit rolled about into every corner of the room.

"HE DELIBERATELY KNOCKED THE WHOLE THING OVER."

"You've done it now, Watson," said he, coolly. "A pretty mess you've made of the carpet." [Pg 608]

I stooped in some confusion and began to pick up the fruit, understanding that for some reason my companion desired me to take the blame upon myself. The others did the same, and set the table on its legs again.

"Halloa!" cried the Inspector, "where's he got to?"

Holmes had disappeared.

"Wait here an instant," said young Alec Cunningham. "The fellow is off his head, in my opinion. Come with me, father, and see where he has got to!"

They rushed out of the room, leaving the Inspector, the Colonel, and me staring at each other.

"'Pon my word, I am inclined to agree with Mister Alec," said the official. "It may be the effect of this illness, but it seems to me that——"

His words were cut short by a sudden scream of "Help! Help! Murder!" With a thrill I recognised the voice as that of my friend. I rushed madly from the room on to the landing. The cries, which had sunk down into a hoarse, inarticulate shouting, came from the room which we had first visited. I dashed in, and on into the dressing-room beyond. The two Cunninghams were bending over the prostrate figure of Sherlock Holmes, the younger clutching his throat with both hands, while the elder seemed to be twisting one of his wrists. In an instant the three of us had torn them away from him, and Holmes staggered to his feet, very pale, and evidently greatly exhausted.

"Arrest these men, Inspector," he gasped.

"On what charge?"

"That of murdering their coachman, William Kirwan!"

The Inspector stared about him in bewilderment. "Oh, come now, Mr. Holmes," said he at last; "I am sure you don't really mean to——"

"Tut, man; look at their faces!" cried Holmes, curtly.

Never, certainly, have I seen a plainer confession of guilt upon human countenances. The older man seemed numbed and dazed, with a heavy, sullen expression upon his strongly-marked face. The son, on the other hand, had dropped all that jaunty, dashing style which had characterized him, and the ferocity of a dangerous wild beast gleamed in his dark eyes and distorted his handsome features. The Inspector said nothing, but, stepping to the door, he blew his whistle. Two of his constables came at the call.

"I have no alternative, Mr. Cunningham," said he. "I trust that this may all prove to be an absurd mistake; but you can see that——Ah, would you? Drop it!" He struck out with his hand, and a revolver, which the younger man was in the act of cocking, clattered down upon the floor.

"BENDING OVER THE PROSTRATE FIGURE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES."

"Keep that," said Holmes, quickly putting his foot upon it. "You will find it useful at the trial. But this is what we really wanted." He held up a little crumpled piece of paper.

"The remainder of the sheet!" cried the Inspector.

"Precisely." [Pg 609]

"And where was it?"

"Where I was sure it must be. I'll make the whole matter clear to you presently. I think, Colonel, that you and Watson might return now, and I will be with you again in an hour at the furthest. The Inspector and I must have a word with the prisoners; but you will certainly see me back at luncheon time."

Sherlock Holmes was as good as his word, for about one o'clock he rejoined us in the Colonel's smoking-room. He was accompanied by a little, elderly gentleman, who was introduced to me as the Mr. Acton whose house had been the scene of the original burglary.

"I wished Mr. Acton to be present while I demonstrated this small matter to you," said Holmes, "for it is natural that he should take a keen interest in the details. I am afraid, my dear Colonel, that you must regret the hour that you took in such a stormy petrel as I am."

"On the contrary," answered the Colonel, warmly, "I consider it the greatest privilege to have been permitted to study your methods of working. I confess that they quite surpass my expectations, and that I am utterly unable to account for your result. I have not yet seen the vestige of a clue."

"I am afraid that my explanation may disillusionize you, but it has always been my habit to hide none of my methods, either from my friend Watson or from anyone who might take an intelligent interest in them. But first, as I am rather shaken by the knocking about which I had in the dressing-room, I think that I shall help myself to a dash of your brandy, Colonel. My strength has been rather tried of late."

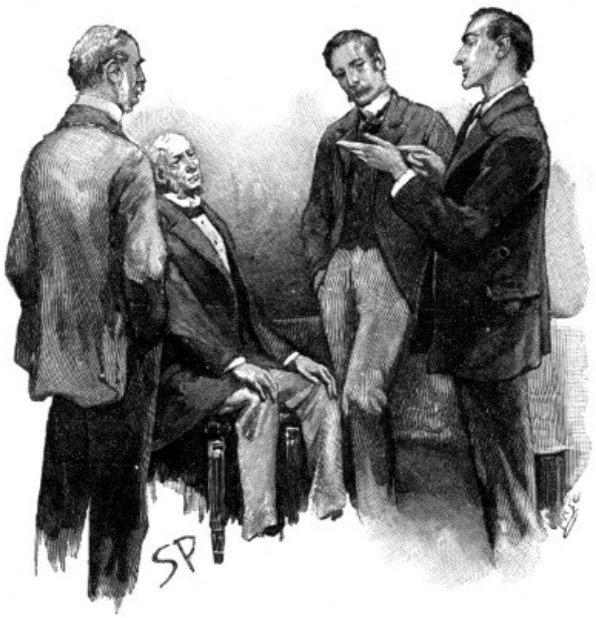
"I trust you had no more of those nervous attacks."

Sherlock Holmes laughed heartily. "We will come to that in its turn," said he. "I will lay an account of the case before you in its due order, showing you the various points which guided me in my decision. Pray interrupt me if there is any inference which is not perfectly clear to you.

"It is of the highest importance in the art of detection to be able to recognise out of a number of facts which are incidental and which vital. Otherwise your energy and attention must be dissipated instead of being concentrated. Now, in this case there was not the slightest doubt in my mind from the first that the key of the whole matter must be looked for in the scrap of paper in the dead man's hand.

"Before going into this I would draw your attention to the fact that if Alec Cunningham's narrative was correct, and if the assailant after shooting William Kirwan had *instantly* fled, then it obviously could not be he who tore the paper from the dead man's hand. But if it was not he, it must have been Alec Cunningham himself, for by the time that the old man had descended several servants were upon the scene. The point is a simple one, but the Inspector had overlooked it because he had started with the supposition that these county magnates had had nothing to do with the matter. Now, I make a point of never having any prejudices and of

following docilely wherever fact may lead me, and so in the very first stage of the investigation I found myself looking a little askance at the part which had been played by Mr. Alec Cunningham.



"THE POINT IS A SIMPLE ONE."

"And now I made a very careful examination of the corner of paper which the Inspector had submitted to us. It was at once clear to me that it formed part of a very remarkable document. Here it is. Do you not now observe something very suggestive about it?" [Pg 610]

"It has a very irregular look," said the Colonel.

"My dear sir," cried Holmes, "there cannot be the least doubt in the world that it has been written by two persons doing alternate words. When I draw your attention to the strong t's of 'at' and 'to' and ask you to compare them with the weak ones of 'quarter' and 'twelve,' you will instantly recognise the fact. A very brief analysis of those four words would enable you to say with the utmost confidence that the 'learn' and the 'maybe' are written in the stronger hand, and the 'what' in the weaker."

"By Jove, it's as clear as day!" cried the Colonel. "Why on earth should two men write a letter in such a fashion?"

"Obviously the business was a bad one, and one of the men who distrusted the other was determined that, whatever was done, each should have an equal hand in it. Now, of the two men it is clear that the one who wrote the 'at' and 'to' was the ring-leader."

"How do you get at that?"

"We might deduce it from the mere character of the one hand as compared with the other. But we have more assured reasons than that for supposing it. If you examine this scrap with attention you will come to the conclusion that the man with the stronger hand wrote all his words first, leaving blanks for the other to fill up. These blanks were not always sufficient, and you can see that the second man had a squeeze to fit his 'quarter' in between the 'at' and the 'to,' showing that the latter were already written. The man who wrote all his words first is undoubtedly the man who planned this affair."

"Excellent!" cried Mr. Acton.

"But very superficial," said Holmes. "We come now, however, to a point which is of importance. You may not be aware that the deduction of a man's age from his writing is one which has been brought to considerable accuracy by experts. In normal cases one can place a man in his true decade with tolerable confidence. I say normal cases, because ill-health and physical weakness reproduce the signs of old age, even when the invalid is a youth. In this case, looking at the bold, strong hand of the one, and the rather broken-backed appearance of the other, which still retains its legibility, although the t's have begun to lose their crossings, we can say that the one was a young man, and the other was advanced in years without being positively decrepit."

"Excellent!" cried Mr. Acton again.

"There is a further point, however, which is subtler and of greater interest. There is something in common between these hands. They belong to men who are blood-relatives. It may be most obvious to you in the Greek e's, but to me there are many small points which indicate the same thing. I have no doubt at all that a family mannerism can be traced in these two specimens of writing. I am only, of course, giving you the leading results now of my examination of the paper. There were twenty-three other deductions which would be of more interest to experts than to you. They all tended to deepen the impression upon my mind that the Cunninghams, father and son, had written this letter.

"Having got so far, my next step was, of course, to examine into the details of the crime and to

see how far they would help us. I went up to the house with the Inspector, and saw all that was to be seen. The wound upon the dead man was, as I was able to determine with absolute confidence, fired from a revolver at the distance of something over four yards. There was no powder-blackening on the clothes. Evidently, therefore, Alec Cunningham had lied when he said that the two men were struggling when the shot was fired. Again, both father and son agreed as to the place where the man escaped into the road. At that point, however, as it happens, there is a broadish ditch, moist at the bottom. As there were no indications of boot-marks about this ditch, I was absolutely sure not only that the Cunninghams had again lied, but that there had never been any unknown man upon the scene at all.

"And now I had to consider the motive of this singular crime. To get at this I endeavoured first of all to solve the reason of the original burglary at Mr. Acton's. I understood from something which the Colonel told us that a law-suit, had been going on between you, Mr. Acton, and the Cunninghams. Of course, it instantly occurred to me that they had broken into your library with the intention of getting at some document which might be of importance in the case."

"Precisely so," said Mr. Acton; "there can be no possible doubt as to their intentions. I have the clearest claim upon half their present estate, and if they could have found a single paper—which, fortunately, was in the strong box of my solicitors—they would undoubtedly have crippled our case." [Pg 611]

"THERE WAS NO POWDER-BLACKENING ON THE CLOTHES."

"There you are!" said Holmes, smiling. "It was a dangerous, reckless attempt in which I seem to trace the influence of young Alec. Having found nothing, they tried to divert suspicion by making it appear to be an ordinary burglary, to which end they carried off whatever they could lay their hands upon. That is all clear enough, but there was much that was still obscure. What I wanted above all was to get the missing part of that note. I was certain that Alec had torn it out of the dead man's hand, and almost certain that he must have thrust it into the pocket of his dressing-gown. Where else could he have put it? The only question was whether it was still there. It was worth an effort to find out, and for that object we all went up to the house.

"The Cunninghams joined us, as you doubtless remember, outside the kitchen door. It was, of course, of the very first importance that they should not be reminded of the existence of this paper, otherwise they would naturally destroy it without delay. The Inspector was about to tell them the importance which we attached to it when, by the luckiest chance in the world, I tumbled down in a sort of fit and so changed the conversation."

"Good heavens!" cried the Colonel, laughing. "Do you mean to say all our sympathy was wasted and your fit an imposture?"

"Speaking professionally, it was admirably done," cried I, looking in amazement at this man who was for ever confounding me with some new phase of his astuteness.

"It is an art which is often useful," said he. "When I recovered I managed by a device, which had, perhaps, some little merit of ingenuity, to get old Cunningham to write the word 'twelve,' so that I might compare it with the 'twelve' upon the paper."

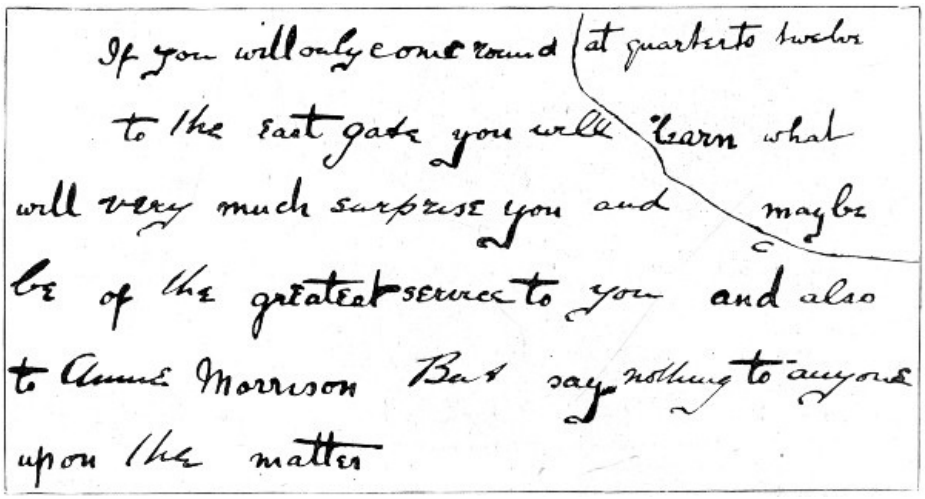
"Oh, what an ass I have been!" I exclaimed.

"I could see that you were commiserating with me over my weakness," said Holmes, laughing. "I was sorry to cause you the sympathetic pain which I know that you felt. We then went upstairs together, and having entered the room and seen the dressing-gown hanging up behind the door, I contrived by upsetting a table to engage their attention for the moment and slipped back to examine the pockets. I had hardly got the paper, however, which was, as I had expected, in one of them, when the two Cunninghams were on me, and would, I verily believe, have murdered me then and there but for your prompt and friendly aid. As it is, I feel that young man's grip on my throat now, and the father has twisted my wrist round in the effort to get the paper out of my hand. They saw that I must know all about it, you see, and the sudden change from absolute security to complete despair made them perfectly desperate.

"I had a little talk with old Cunningham afterwards as to the motive of the crime. He was tractable enough, though his son was a perfect demon, ready to blow out his own or anybody else's brains if he could have got to his revolver. When Cunningham saw that the case against him was so strong he lost all heart, and made a clean breast of everything. It seems that William [Pg 612] had secretly followed his two masters on the night when they made their raid upon Mr. Acton's, and, having thus got them into his power, proceeded under threats of exposure to levy blackmail upon them. Mister Alec, however, was a dangerous man to play games of that sort with. It was a stroke of positive genius on his part to see in the burglary scare, which was convulsing the country side, an opportunity of plausibly getting rid of the man whom he feared. William was decoyed up and shot; and, had they only got the whole of the note, and paid a little more attention to detail in their accessories, it is very possible that suspicion might never have been aroused."

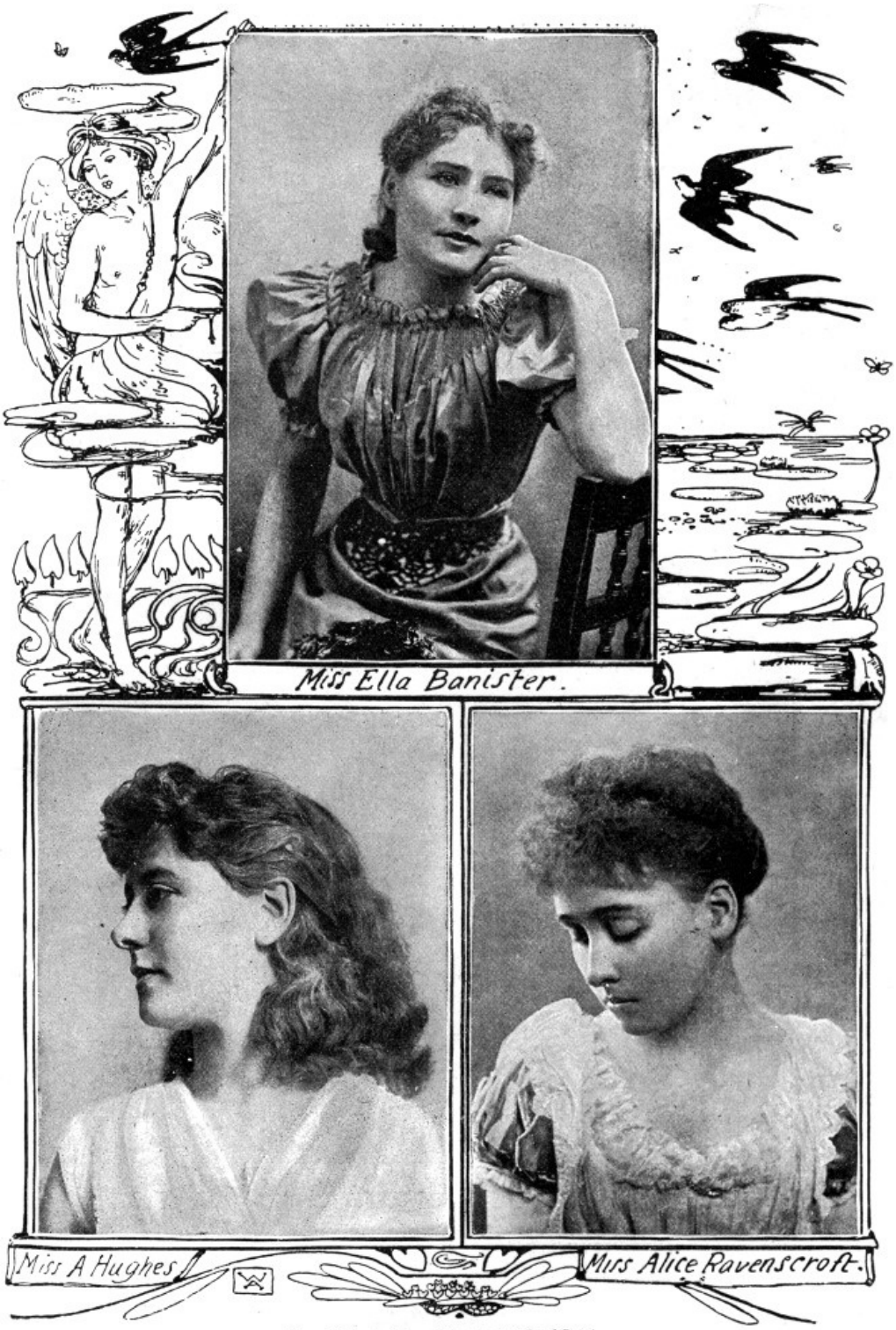
"And the note?" I asked.

Sherlock Holmes placed the subjoined paper before us:—



"It is very much the sort of thing that I expected," said he. "Of course, we do not yet know what the relations may have been between Alec Cunningham, William Kirwan, and Annie Morrison. The result shows that the trap was skilfully baited. I am sure that you cannot fail to be delighted with the traces of heredity shown in the p's and in the tails of the g's. The absence of the i-dots in the old man's writing is also most characteristic. Watson, I think our quiet rest in the country has been a distinct success, and I shall certainly return, much invigorated, to Baker Street to-morrow."

Beauties. [Pg 613]



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From a Photo. by W. & D. Downey.

From a Photo. by W. & D. Downey.

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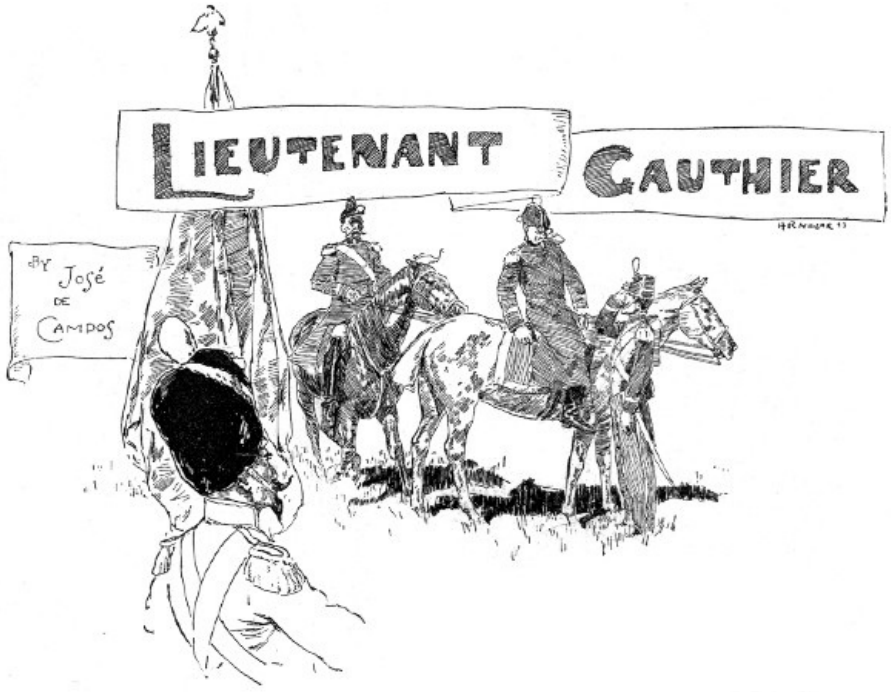
Miss Norah Williams.

Miss L. Harold.

Lady Aberdeen. Photo. by Barraud



[Pg 616]

From the French of José de Campos. An Episode of the Crimean War. Approved and Authorized by General Saussier, Military Commander of Paris.

Nicolas Gauthier, Sergeant-Major in the Foreign Legion, was about twenty-six years of age. He was strikingly handsome, with black hair and moustache and a pale complexion. His dark eyes were perhaps somewhat dreamy and intensely sad, but they had a certain expression of gentleness and candour which won all hearts.

He was above the medium height, upright and broad-shouldered, and was altogether more fitted for a cuirassier than for a foot-soldier. As, however, he had entered the army from choice, it was for him to select the arms he preferred.

He had undoubtedly military tastes, but he had evidently some family trouble or some love affair which had made him anxious to leave Paris and to go to Africa with the Foreign Legion (which, as everyone knows, is always the first regiment to be called out in case of war).

He had been in the garrison at Constantine, and while there had been a great favourite with all the ladies, and the men had envied him.

It could scarcely be wondered at, for he was so handsome, and then, too, he had such a martial bearing and such pleasant, attractive manners.

All the sensation he caused was lost upon him, for he did not even seem to notice it himself.

He was a good soldier: subordinate to his superiors, and always indulgent to the men under his command, and, consequently, a great favourite in the Legion.

When Napoleon III. was reviewing the troops, he noticed Gauthier, who was at that time only a sub-officer. He made inquiries about him, and a fortnight later Gauthier was appointed sergeant-major.

It was evident that some great sorrow was weighing on him, for when he was free from his military duties, instead of going out with his comrades to any places of amusement, he would go off by himself for long, solitary walks.

Several times, on seeing him strolling along far from the walls of the city, the other officers had warned him of the risk he ran of being surprised by one of those bands of Arabs who wander about outside the Algerian cities, and who take their revenge on any European who falls into their hands for the yoke that has been put on to them.

[Pg 617]

Sergeant Gauthier took very little notice of these warnings. He loved solitude and was perfectly fearless. No one knew why he was so sad. Certainly he had lately lost his mother, and still wore a badge of crape on his arm. Of course, this had increased his melancholy, but it was not the original cause of it.

The war with Russia had just been declared. Gauthier, like a great many other officers and sub-officers, was tired of the monotony of garrison life, and volunteered to join the regiments which were to be sent to the Crimea. The Minister of War dispatched the Foreign Legion, to the great joy of Gauthier. His brother officers noticed that he was almost gay, not at all like his former self.

He soon distinguished himself; was always foremost in the fight. His courage and *sang-froid* won

the admiration of all. He was wounded, but he cared little for that; and shortly after he was promoted to the rank of sub-lieutenant.

Gauthier was very intimate with Lieutenant Saussier, another hero who had gone through the "baptism of fire" in Africa, and whose great valour and integrity have won for him the high office he now holds.

These two soldiers were of the same metal: they were able to understand and appreciate each other, and were almost inseparable.

One day during the siege of Sebastopol, Lieutenant Saussier said to his friend:—

"Gauthier, may I ask you a question?"

"Two questions, if you like."

"You won't think it mere curiosity?"

"Are we not friends, Saussier?"

"Yes, but perhaps this is a secret——"

"I have only one secret in the world, and as you do not know *that* and could not even have an idea of it, there is no fear, so you can speak out."

"Well, will you tell me what is the cause of your sadness, I might almost say bitterness? When we left Africa I thought you had left it behind you; but now in Russia it is worse than ever."

At this unexpected question Gauthier started, then trying to smile he answered:—

"It must be a kind of complaint born in me, and perhaps the change of climate aggravates it."

"Perhaps so," said Lieutenant Saussier, slowly, and watching the expression of his friend's face.

"This cold goes right through me to my very bones," said Gauthier, shivering.

Saussier quite understood that his friend meant, "Let us change the subject," but he continued:—

"May I ask you another question?"

"You seem to have a few to ask to-day," said Gauthier, looking rather annoyed.

"I have often wanted to speak to you, but have never dared before."

"Well, to-day you don't seem afraid of running the risk."

"If it vexes you, don't answer me."

"Oh, I don't mind. I have had one; I may as well have the next."

"Well, will you tell me why, every time there is an engagement, you take such pains to find out the name of the chief who commands the enemy?"

This time Gauthier was visibly annoyed. He answered, after a few minutes' hesitation, "Because some day I intend writing the history of the Crimean War. It is only natural I should want to know the names of the commanders on the other side."

"Oh! of course," said Saussier, feeling rather disconcerted.

For some minutes the two friends continued their walk in silence. There was no sound but the crunching of the snow under their heavy boots, for it had been snowing hard in the district of Simferopol, and a thick white mantle covered the ground.

Lieutenant Saussier looked at Gauthier, and in spite of his friend's attempt to turn away his head, Saussier saw that there were tears in his eyes.

"Forgive me for asking you!" he exclaimed. "I had no idea of causing you pain."

"How do you know you have?" asked Gauthier, passing his arm through that of his friend.

"Don't try and hide it. I can see that, quite unintentional as it was, I have pained you with my questions."

"It is nothing, nothing at all; or rather your questions brought to mind something in my past life. It is only natural that you should have asked me, and as a proof of my friendship I will tell you all."

"No, no! Indeed I do not want you to. We will not talk about it. I am awfully sorry to have spoken of it."

"After all, you are my greatest friend. Why should I not tell you about it? Perhaps, too, it might relieve me to speak of my trouble."

"If it will be any relief to you, tell me; but if not, why, do not let us say any more about it." [Pg 618]

YOU ARE MY GREATEST FRIEND.

"I would rather tell you. Life is very uncertain on the battlefield, and I would rather not die with this secret untold. Perhaps, too, if you knew it you might be able to help me."

"If I could help you in any way, you know you have only to tell me how."

"Well, you shall hear all. You know that, before leaving Algeria, I went to Paris with a three months' leave."

"Which you never stayed out, for you were back again in six weeks."

"What could I do with myself in that Babylon, where everyone was gay while I was so wretched? How could I stand the sardonic laughter and gaiety around me when my heart was aching bitterly? As soon as my poor mother was buried I was only too anxious to get from that city of luxury, where the artificial lights only blinded and dazzled me.

"I wanted to get away from the noise and the vice and the hypocrisy, and go to the desert and be alone with Nature and with reality, where I could breathe pure, wholesome air, and not that atmosphere which bewilders and poisons you. I left what we *call* the civilized world to go to the savages whom I prefer.

"I gave up society for solitude, peace for war. I despise my life and long for death, but death does not come at my call."

Gauthier stopped for a minute, overcome with emotion.

"You are too sensitive," said Saussier.

"Perhaps so, but I have had something to bear."

"Is it a love affair, Gauthier?"

"No, no! I have never loved anyone, and besides, I am one of those who must not, who dare not love——"

"I do not understand."

"No, I will explain. My mother, who was dying of consumption, brought on by some great grief that she had always suffered alone, sent for me to bid me farewell. Three days before her death I was at her bedside.

"'My son,' she said, 'I have sent for you to tell you something which I feel you ought to know before my death. I have always led you to believe that your father was dead.'

"'And he is not dead. I have felt sure of that for a long time.'

"'How could you nave guessed it?' exclaimed my mother.

"'By your sadness, and, too, because you have never taken me to his grave, nor even spoken of it. My poor mother, did he leave you?'

"'No, no! Do not blame him; it was not his fault that he had to leave us.'

"'He is in prison, then; but surely he is innocent?'

"'No, he is quite free.'

"'How is it, then——"

"'Listen, but do not interrupt me, for I have not strength for much. The name you have, Gauthier, was my father's and mine, but not your father's, Nicolas. My father was a wealthy shipbuilder at

Havre. He died in 1825. My mother sold everything, and then she and I went to Paris to live.

"'She was ambitious for me and wished me to marry well. We had plenty of money, and as that opens most doors she managed to get introductions and invitations to her heart's content.

"'I was nineteen, and people said I was beautiful. My mother paid great attention to my toilette, and by mixing in society I soon lost all traces of having been brought up in the provinces. There was a young Russian captain, Prince Nicolaï Porthikopoff, whom I used to meet at different houses. He belonged to the Czar's Imperial Guard, and was an *attaché* of the Russian Embassy in Paris.

"'He was very handsome, and was as noble at heart as he was by birth.

"He loved me, and I returned his affection. At the end of six months he came to my mother and asked for my hand. Our engagement caused a great stir in Paris, it scandalized the aristocracy and caused jealousy in our own circle. Prince Nicolaï cared nothing for the storm that he had roused.

"HE CAME TO MY MOTHER AND ASKED FOR MY HAND."

"'There was so much gossip, and there was so much scheming to break off our engagement, that the Ambassador himself felt it his duty to inform the Czar. It appears the Czar only laughed at it all until the Princess Porthikopoff, your father's mother, wrote herself asking for his intervention, and declaring that she would never give her consent to our union. The Czar wrote a letter of advice to the Prince, but as it took no effect, and the Princess still insisted, the Czar objected formally to the marriage. Your father saw that it was hopeless, that there was no chance whatever of winning the consent of his mother or of his Sovereign. He proposed to me a desperate expedient, and I, young and inexperienced as I was, and believing that it would be for our mutual happiness, consented.

"'We were to be married privately, but, as your father told me, the marriage would not be legal, as we could not have the necessary papers, and should even have to be married under assumed names, and in another country. He believed that then, when his mother saw that the honour of a Porthikopoff was at stake, she would take steps to have the ceremony performed again with the necessary formalities. He thought that she would do for the honour and pride of her family what she would not do for love of her son.

"'I consented to everything; but, alas! a month later, seeing that your father continued to brave all authority, the Czar recalled him to St. Petersburg.

"'Your father pleaded our cause but in vain! Nicholas I., proud autocrat as he was, and the Princess were both inexorable. Your father was exasperated, and he gave vent to his indignation. The result was that he was ordered to start the next day for Irkoutsk, in Siberia He was to be exiled! Exiled because he had loved me, because he wished to do his duty and make me his lawful wife! My mother and I went away to Lille, where you were born. [Pg 620]

"'The Prince, your father, was not allowed to write or receive letters without sending them first to the Governor to be read and approved. I happened to meet with someone who was going to Irkoutsk, and begged him to take a message to your father and to tell him of your birth. When this man returned he brought me a letter from your father, in which he said he was going to try and make his escape, and that he would never again set foot in Russia.

"'Just at this time my mother died. Your father was not able to put his plan into execution, and a year later he was allowed to write to me, but merely to tell me the conditions on which Nicholas I. offered to allow his return from exile. The Czar had chosen a wife for him, and he was to renounce me for ever. Your father added that he was refusing such terms; that he would never

break his vow to me, and preferred exile to what was offered him.

"'He was right!' I exclaimed, proudly, for I was glad to find that I had no cause to blush for my father.

"'It was noble of him!' said my mother, and her eyes filled with tears. 'It was noble, but how could I accept such a sacrifice? I could not; it would have been too selfish. There was only one thing to do, and although in doing it I had to sacrifice all my womanly pride, my courage held out. I wrote to your father, telling him to accept the Czar's offer, as I myself was about to marry.'

"'It was not true?'

"'No! No! It was to save him. I wanted him to be free, to be happy if possible. As for me, all was over. He wrote to me, reproaching me, and it broke my heart. I did not reply to his letter. I went back to Paris, where I lived quietly and unknown, devoting myself entirely to you.... Six months later I heard that he had married a Princess according to the will of the Czar, and that he was appointed captain.'

"'Is he happy?'

"'I have never heard another word about him, and as he has no idea of my whereabouts, he could never have made inquiries about me. Now you know all, you know the cause of my sadness and the secret of your birth. You must now judge between your father and your mother, and either pardon or condemn us, for, alas! my poor boy, you have no name and no future.'

"My poor mother hid her face in her hands and sobbed in an agony of grief.

"'I have nothing to forgive, mother; but if you wish me to judge my father and you, I can only say that you both did your duty and that your sacrifice was sublime. Society makes laws at its own pleasure, but in the sight of God, who surely is over all, your marriage was valid, and I have nothing to be ashamed of. On the contrary, you were both victims, and you suffered through your loyalty to each other—and your love was surely truer and more ideal than many which society recognises.'

"My poor mother could not speak for some time, her emotion was so great. Later on she told me where I should find some papers, which I was to read after her death, and she added:—

"'You will also find in the same drawer two things by which your father would always recognise you, if you should ever meet him and if you wished to make yourself known. I leave it entirely to you to act as you think best; but if you ever should see him, tell him that I was true to him, explain all, and tell him that I loved him to the last.'

"Two days later my poor mother passed away. I was thus left an orphan and nameless. I was utterly alone in the world. I had not a creature to love me, and I knew that I must never dare to love anyone. Left to myself, I cursed the whole world and its prejudices and baseness."

Gauthier covered his face with his hand, and Saussier, respecting his friend's grief, did not speak for some time. The two officers walked on through the snow without noticing where they were going.

Suddenly Gauthier said, bitterly: "You understand now the cause of the melancholy that is always weighing on me?"

"I do, indeed," replied Saussier.

"The tortures of the Inquisition are nothing to what I endure, when I think of my poor mother suffering through all those years without a word of consolation from any living soul."

"It must have been terrible!"

"Then, too, you know now why I always find out the name of the Russian commander before every attack; for by now he must be at least a General."

"Yes, it is indeed fearful!"

Sebastopol had been besieged ever since October 9th, 1854. Marshal Canrobert commanded the troops with Lord Raglan. [Pg 621]

"TELL HIM THAT I LOVED HIM TO THE LAST."

Prince Mentschiskoff and Prince Todleben resisted the attack bravely.

The sight of the city, which was all in ruins, exasperated the Russian Commander-in-Chief, and he ordered a sally, but the French and the English were well on guard and repulsed this desperate attempt.

The attack was terrible, and the heroism on every side sublime.

The most warlike of the besieged troops rushed against the French, preferring to have to do with the *furia francesca* rather than with the British deliberation and *sang-froid*. The combat was sustained and desperate.

Profiting by the confusion amongst the French troops, caused by the death of their Commander-in-Chief, the Russians succeeded in obtaining the first trench. The besiegers, however, got reinforcements and the struggle was continued.

Two young officers, who were fighting side by side, attracted everyone's notice. They were in the first rank, and they led their soldiers into the thickest of the fray and cut down the enemy right and left.

One of them was rather in advance of the other, and was encouraging his soldiers to follow him. Suddenly with his pistol he took aim at a Russian commander, who, on seeing that the enemy was gaining ground, had spurred his horse forward and was calling to his soldiers to advance. Another horseman, seeing the danger his chief was in, rushed before him, exclaiming:—

"Take care, General Porthikopoff!"

On hearing this the French officer dropped his murderous weapon and stood as if paralyzed, looking at his enemy.

On receiving the warning the Prince had drawn out his pistol and fired at the French officer. The ball struck him, and he fell. His friend, who had just reached him, and who had also heard the Russian General's name, drew his men to the right where the enemy was strongest, exclaiming, in desperation: "Follow me! Follow me!"

The Russian soldiers rushed at the young officer, who had fallen, and would have killed him, but, waving them off, he said he must speak with their General before he died.

The Prince, astonished at the request at such a moment, consented.

"What is it you have to say, and why did you not attempt to shoot me?"

"I could not."

"But what prevented you?"

"Duty."

"I do not understand."

The young officer drew from his tunic a letter, a locket, and a small box, and handed them to the General.

"What is the meaning of this?" exclaimed the Prince.

"Look inside the locket."

The Prince opened it and started. "My portrait and Madeline's!" Then, opening the box: "And her

engagement ring! Where did you get these from?"

"The letter will explain all."

The Prince opened it, and, after glancing at it quickly, said: "And you are——"

"Nicolas Gauthier."

"And your mother?"

"She is dead. Her love for you killed her." [Pg 622]

"That is not true, for she married another."

"Never! She loved you to the last, and died with your name on her lips. Read the letter to the end."

Mechanically the General read the letter, and then kissing the locket passionately: "I knew, I felt that Madeline was true!" he said, and then bending over Gauthier, he continued: "How did you recognise me, though?"

"I heard them call you by your name."

"That was why you would not fire?"

"Yes. A son could not kill his father, even though he be his enemy."

"But you allowed a father to kill his son?"

"I could not help it. It was fate."

"No, no, my son! You shall not die! You *must* live!"

"God wills otherwise, father. Farewell! I have only seen you for a minute, but I am satisfied."

Gauthier made a great effort to get up, smiled at the Prince, and then fell back dead.

"My boy, my boy!" exclaimed the Prince, in desperation, stooping over the dead body of his son. "Dead, dead, and killed by me, his father! And this is the work of our Czar! Oh, cruel fate!"

"THE GENERAL REMAINED KNEELING BY THE SIDE OF HIS SON."

The General remained some minutes kneeling by the side of his son in mute despair, and then for the last time he sprang on to his horse and rushed into the thickest of the fray.

"Prince! Prince! what are you doing there?" exclaimed a French officer at his side.

"I am seeking death! I have killed my son, and I will not survive him——"

He had scarcely finished when a ball struck him and he fell down dead.

"Who can say there is no Providence! The father has not waited long to join his son," exclaimed the French officer, as he rushed on at the head of his men.

For some time the result of the combat seemed uncertain, but at last the French won the day, and the Russians had to take refuge in Sebastopol.

When Marshal Canrobert went over the battlefield, he asked where the young officer was who belonged to the Foreign Legion, and who had fought so bravely.

"He fell by the retrenchments," was the reply.

The Commander-in-Chief rode over to the spot named and ordered the surgeon to examine the young officer who was lying on the ground. It was, however, too late.

"There was another officer of the same Legion whom I saw fall there, to the left," said the Marshal.

The young officer was brought and was told that his friend was dead.

"It is a pity," he said to the Marshal, "for you have lost a true soldier."

"What was his name?"

"Nicolas Gauthier."

"And yours?"

"Félix Saussier."

The Commander-in-Chief ordered the army to fall into rank, and then as they presented arms he took the Cross of the Legion of Honour which he was wearing himself and placed it on Lieutenant Saussier's breast. [Pg 623]

"Wear it proudly," he said; "it is the recompense that France accords to her bravest sons, and you well deserve it."

Then taking another Cross from one of the officers who belonged to the État Major, he placed it on the body of Gauthier. "You, too, have well earned it," he said, "and shall take it with you to your grave."

The troops filed off, after passing in front of the two officers, the one wounded and the other dead. Marshal Canrobert himself raised his sword and saluted the two heroes (the one, alas! had died too soon, and the other was destined to become one of the bravest Generals of France), and then passed on deeply moved, but satisfied with the victory, and ignorant of the drama which had taken place so near to him.

From Behind the Speaker's Chair. [Pg 624]

VI.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT.

Sir William Harcourt has been so long a familiar figure in the House of Commons, and has established so high a reputation, that it seems odd to speak of him as one of the successes of the new Session. But the phrase accurately describes his position. Circumstances connected with the personality of the Premier have given him opportunity to show what potentialities as Leader of the House modestly lurk behind his massive figure, and the result has been eminently satisfactory to his party and his friends. Sir William's early reputation was made as a brilliant swordsman of debate, most effective in attack. The very qualities that go to make success in that direction might lead to utter failure on the part of a Leader of the House.

"MODESTLY LURKING."

If one sought for a word that would describe the leading characteristics of Sir William Harcourt in Parliament it would be found in the style aggressive. Perhaps the most fatal thing a Leader of the House of Commons could do would be to develop aggressiveness. The Leader must be a strong man—should be the strongest man on his side of the House. But his strength must be kept in reserve, and if he err on either side of this particular line, submissiveness should be his characteristic. The possession of this quality was the foundation of Mr. W. H. Smith's remarkable success as Leader. It is true he could not, had he tried, have varied his deferential attitude towards the House by one of sterner mould, and the House enjoys the situation more keenly if that alternative be existent. It took Mr. Smith as he was, and the two got on marvellously well together.

Nothing known of Sir William Harcourt's Parliamentary manner forbade the apprehension that, occupying the box-seat, there would be incessant cracking of the whip. It was difficult in advance to imagine how he would be able to resist the opportunity of letting the lash fall on the back of a restive or a stubborn horse. The opportunity of saying a smart thing, at whatever cost, seemed with him irresistible. If only he had his jest they might have his estate; in this case the estate of his party.

"AGGRESSIVE."

Reflection on an earlier experience of Sir William in the seat of the Leader might have caused these forebodings to cease. Four years ago, towards the close of the Session of 1889, the [Pg 625] temporary withdrawal of Mr. Gladstone from the scene gave him his chance. It happened that the Government under the leadership of Mr. Smith, and, it was understood, on the personal instruction of Lord Salisbury, were pressing forward the Tithes Bill. They had an overwhelming, well-disciplined majority, and being pledged up to the hilt to carry the Bill, the issue seemed certain. Through a whole week Sir William led the numerically-overpowered Opposition, fighting the Bill at every step. The hampered Government were determined to get some sort of Bill passed, and, hopeless of achieving their earliest intention, foreshadowed another measure in a series of amendments laid on the table by the Attorney-General. The Opposition were not disposed to accept this with greater fervour than the other, and finally Mr. Smith announced a total withdrawal from the position.

Nothing was finer throughout the brilliant campaign than Sir William Harcourt's lamentations over this conclusion. Having inflicted on a strong Government the humiliation of defeat upon a cherished measure, he, in a voice broken with emotion, held poor W. H. Smith up to the scorn of all good men as a heartless, depraved parent, who had abandoned by the wayside a promising infant.

In the present Session Sir William, as Deputy Leader, finds himself in a position different from, and more difficult than, the one filled in August, 1889. He was then in the place of the Leader of the Opposition, and had a natural affinity for the duty of opposing. In the present Session he has been frequently and continuously called upon to perform the duties of Leader of the House, and

his success, though not so brilliantly striking as in the short, sharp campaign against the Tithes Bill, has stood upon a broader and more permanent basis. The House of Commons, as Mr. Goschen learned during the experiments in Leadership which preceded his disappearance from the front rank, may be led, but cannot be driven.

It is curious that two of the most aggressive controversialists in the House, being temporarily called to the Leadership, have shown themselves profoundly impressed with this truth. Like Lord Randolph Churchill, when he led the House, Sir William Harcourt appears on the Treasury Bench divested even of his side-arms. Like the Happy Warrior, his helmet is a hive for bees. His patience in time of trial has been pathetic, and, whatever may be his own feelings on the subject, the House has been amazed at his moderation. He has sat silent on the Treasury Bench by the hour, with Mr. Arthur Balfour, Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Randolph Churchill, and other old familiar adversaries, trailing tempting coat-tails before him.

"THE HAPPY WARRIOR."

One night this Session, in debate on Uganda, Mr. Chamberlain interposed and delivered a brilliant, bitter speech, which deeply stirred a crowded House. It was drawing to the close of an important debate, and Mr. Chamberlain sat down at half-past eleven, leaving plenty of time for the Leader of the House to reply. To an old Parliamentary war-house the situation must have been sorely tempting. A party like to be sent off into the division lobby with a rattling speech from the Front Bench. There was ample time for a brisk twenty minutes' canter, and the crowded and excited sport. But there was nothing at stake on the division. Though Mr. Chamberlain could not withstand the opportunity of belabouring his old friends and colleagues, he did not intend to oppose the vote for Uganda, which would receive the hearty support of the Conservatives. Half an hour saved from speech-making would mean thirty minutes appropriated to getting forward with other votes in Committee of Supply. Sir William followed Mr. Chamberlain, and was welcomed with a ringing cheer; members settling themselves down in anticipated enjoyment of a rattling speech. When the applause subsided the Chancellor of the Exchequer contented himself with the observation that there had been a useful debate, the Committee had heard some excellent speeches, "and now let us get the vote." [Pg 626]

There was something touching in the depressed attitude of the right hon. gentleman as he performed this act of renunciation. What it cost him will, probably, never be known. But before progress was reported at midnight half-a-dozen votes had been taken.

THE WHIPS.

Of the various forms ambition takes in political life the most inscrutable is that which leads a man to the Whip's room. In Parliamentary affairs the Whip fills a place analogous to that of a sub-editor on a newspaper. He has (using the phrase in a Parliamentary sense) all the kicks and few of the half-pence. With the sub-editor, if anything goes wrong in the arrangement of the paper he is held responsible, whilst if any triumph is achieved, no halo of the resultant glory for a moment lights up the habitual obscurity of his head. It is the same, in its way, with the Whip. His work is incessant, and for the most part is drudgery. His reward is a possible Peerage, a Colonial Governorship, a First Commissionership of Works, a Postmaster-Generalship, or, as Sir William Dyke found at the close of a tremendous spell of work, a Privy Councillorship.

Yet it often comes to pass that the fate of a Ministry and the destiny of the Empire depend upon the Whip. A bad division, even though it be plainly due to accidental circumstances, habitually influences the course of a Ministry, sometimes giving their policy a crucial turn, and at least exercising an important influence on the course of business in the current Session.

An example of this was furnished early in the present Session by a division taken on proposals for a Saturday sitting made necessary by obstruction. Up to the announcement of the figures it had been obstinately settled that the Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill should be moved before Easter. The Opposition had pleaded and threatened. Mr. Gladstone stood firm,

SIR WILLIAM DYKE.

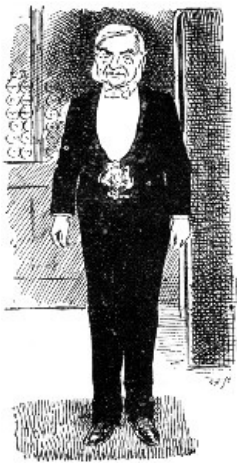
and only three days before this momentous Friday had almost impatiently reiterated his determination to move the Second Reading of the Bill on the day appointed when leave was given to introduce it. The normal majority of forty reduced to twenty-one worked instant and magic charm. The falling-off had no political significance. Everyone knew it arose from the accidental absence of a number of the Irish members called home on local business. But there it was, and on the following Monday Sir William Harcourt, on behalf of the Premier, announced that the Home Rule Bill would not be taken till after Easter.

For other members of the Ministry there is occasional surcease from work, and some opportunity for recreation. For the Whip there is none. He begins his labour with the arrival of the morning post, and keeps at it till the Speaker has left the chair, and the principal door-keeper standing out on the matting before the doorway cries aloud: "The usual time!"

That ceremony is a quaint relic of far-off days before penny papers were, and the means of communicating with members were circumscribed. It is the elliptical form of making known to members that at the next sitting the Speaker will take the chair at the usual time. For ordinary members, even for Ministers, unless they must be in their place to answer a question, "the usual time" means whatever hour best suits their convenience. The Whip is in his room even before the Speaker takes the chair, and it is merely a change of the scene of labour from his office at the Treasury. He remains till the House is up, whether the business be brisk or lifeless.

In truth, at times when the House is reduced almost to a state of coma, the duties of the Whip become more arduous and exacting. These are the occasions when gentle malice loves to bring about a count-out. If it is a private members' night the Whips have no responsibility in the matter of keeping a House, and have even been suspected of occasionally conniving in the beneficent plot of dispersing it. But just now private members' nights stand in the same relation to the Session as the sententious traveller found to be the case with snakes in Iceland. There are none. Every night is a Government night, and weariness of flesh and spirit naturally suggests a count-out. The regular business of the Whip is to see that there are within call sufficient members to frustrate the designs of the casual counter-out. [Pg 627]

Mr. Gladstone and other members of the Cabinet, on many dull nights of this Session, have been cheered on crossing the lobby by the sight of Mr. "Bobby" Spencer gracefully tripping about, note-book in hand, holding an interminable succession of members in brief but animated conversation. He is not making a book for the Derby or Goodwood, as one might suspect. "Do you dine here to-night?" is his insinuating inquiry, and till he has listed more than enough men to "make a House" in case of need, he does not feel assured of the safety of the British Constitution, and therefore does not rest.



MR. JARRETT, DOOR-KEEPER.

This is part of the ordinary work of the average night. When an important division is impending, the labour imposed upon the Whip is Titanic. He, of course, knows every individual member of his flock. With a critical division pending he must know more, ascertaining where he is and, above all, where he will be on the night of the division. It is at these crises that the personal characteristics of the Whip are tested. A successful Whip should be almost loved, and not a little feared. He should ever wear the silken glove, but there should be borne in upon the consciousness of those with whom he has to deal that it covers an iron hand.

It happens just now that both political parties in the House of Commons are happy in the possession of almost model Whips. As was said by a shrewd observer, no one looking at Mr. Marjoribanks or Mr. Akers-Douglas as they lounge about the Lobby "would suppose they could say 'Bo!' to a goose." The goose, however, would do well not to push the experiment of forbearance too far. All through the last Parliament Mr. Akers-Douglas held his men together with a light, firm hand, that was the admiration and despair of the other side. Mr. Marjoribanks has, up to this present time of writing, maintained the highest standard of success in Whipping.

"BOBBY" SPENCER.

"BOBBY" SPENCER.

With a Ministerial majority standing at a maximum of forty, it is of the utmost importance to the Government that there shall be no sign of falling off. If the forty were diminished even by a unit, a storm of cheering would rise from the Opposition Benches, and Ministerialists would be correspondingly depressed. With the exception named, due to circumstances entirely beyond the Whip's control, Mr. Marjoribanks has in all divisions, big or small, mustered his maximum majority of forty, and has usually exceeded it.

MR. MARJORIBANKS.

That means not only unfailing assiduity and admirable business management, but personal popularity on the part of the Whip. Aside from party considerations, no Liberal would like to "disoblige Marjoribanks," who is as popular with the Irish contingent as he is with the main body of the British members. He is fortunate in his colleagues— [Pg 628]

Mr. Ellis, Mr. Spencer, Mr. Causton, and Mr. McArthur. The Whip's department has not always been a strong feature in a Liberal Administration. In the present Government it is one of the strongest.

Why Mr. Marjoribanks should be content to serve as Whip is one of the mysteries that surround the situation. He does not want a peerage, since that will come to him in the ordinary course of nature. He is one of the personages in political life who excite the sympathy of Lord Rosebery, inasmuch as he must be a peer *malgré lui*. He served a long apprenticeship when the office of Whip was more than usually thankless, his party being in opposition. When Mr. Gladstone's Ministry was formed, it was assumed, as a matter of course, that Mr. Marjoribanks would have found for him office in other department than that of the Whip. But Mr. Gladstone, very shrewdly from the Leader's point of view, felt that no one would be more useful to the party in the office vacated by Mr. Arnold Morley than Mr. Marjoribanks. Mr. Marjoribanks, naturally disposed to think last of his own interests and inclinations, did not openly demur.

MR. MARJORIBANKS.

The Whip's post, though hard enough, is much lightened by adoption of the twelve o'clock rule. Time was, at no distant date, when for some months in the Session Whips were accustomed to go home in broad daylight. It is true the House at that time met an hour later in the afternoon, but the earlier buckling to is a light price to pay for the certainty that shortly after midnight all will be over. Even now the twelve o'clock rule may be suspended, and this first Session of the new Parliament has shown that all-night sittings are not yet impossible. But so unaccustomed is the present House to them, that when one became necessary on the Mutiny Bill everyone and everything was found unprepared. In the old days, when Mr. Biggar was in his prime, the commissariat were always prepared for an all-night sitting. When, this Session, the House sat up all night on the Mutiny Bill, the larder was cleared out in the first hour after midnight.

ALL-NIGHT SITTINGS.

It is not generally known how nearly the valuable life of the Chairman of Ways and Means was on that occasion sacrificed at the post of duty. Having lost earlier chances by remaining in the chair, it was only at four o'clock in the morning he was rescued from famine by the daring foraging of Mr. Herbert Gladstone, who, the House being cleared for one of the divisions, brought in a cup of tea and a poached egg on toast, which the Chairman disposed of at the table.

MR. MELLOR.

Mr. Mellor is an old Parliamentary campaigner, and remembers several occasions when, living injudiciously near the House, he was brought out of bed to assist in withstanding obstruction. Being called up one morning by an imperative request to repair to the House, he observed a man violently ringing at the bell of the house of a neighbour, also a member of the House of Commons. On returning two hours later, he found the man still there, diligently ringing at the bell.

"What's the matter?" he asked; "anyone ill?"

[Pg 629]

"No, sir," said the man. "Lord Richard Grosvenor sent me to bring Mr. —— down to the House, and said I was not to come away without him."

"Ah, well, you can go off now; the House is up."

Mr. ——, it turned out on subsequent inquiry, had gone down to Brighton with his family, and the servants left at home did not think it necessary to answer a bell rung at this untimely hour.

"PAIRED FOR THE NIGHT."

It was about the same time, in the Parliament of 1880, that another messenger from the Government Whip went forth in the early morning in search of a member. He lived in Queen Anne's Mansions, and the messenger explaining the urgency of his errand, the night porter conducted him to the bedroom door of the sleeping senator. Succeeding in awakening him, he delivered his message.

"Give my compliments to Lord Richard Grosvenor," said the wife of the still somnolent M.P.; "tell him my husband has gone to bed, and is paired for the night."

BARE-HEADED.

It is an old tradition, observed to this day, though the origin of it is lost in the obscurity of the Middle Ages, that a Whip shall not appear in the Lobby with his head covered. It is true Mr. Marjoribanks does not observe this rule, but he is alone in the exception. All his predecessors, as far as I can remember, conformed to the regulation. In the last Parliament the earliest intimation of the formation of a new Radical party was the appearance in the Lobby of Mr. Jacoby without his hat. Inquiry excited by this phenomenon led to the disclosure that the Liberal opposition had broken off into a new section. There was some doubt as to who was the leader, but none as to the fact that Mr. Jacoby and Mr. Philip Stanhope were the Whips. Mr. Stanhope was not much in evidence. But on the day Mr. Jacoby accepted the appointment he locked up his hat and patrolled the Lobby with an air of

sagacity and an appearance of brooding over State secrets, which at once raised the new party into a position of importance.

MR. JACOBY.

Dick Power, most delightful of Irishmen, most popular of Whips, made through the Session regular play with his hat. Anyone familiar with his habits would know how the land lay from the Irish quarter. If Mr. Power appeared hatless in the Lobby, a storm was brewing, and before the Speaker left the chair there would, so to speak, be wigs on the green. If his genial face beamed from under his hat as he walked about the Lobby the weather was set fair, at least for the sitting.

THE WINSOME WIGGIN.

One of the duties of the junior Whips is to keep sentry-go at the door leading from the Lobby to the cloak-room, and so out into Palace Yard. When a division is expected, no member may pass out unless he is paired. That is not the only way by which escape from the House may be made. A member desirous of evading the scrutiny of the Whips might find at least two other ways of quitting the House. It is, however, a point of honour to use only this means of exit, and no member under whatsoever pressure would think of skulking out.

For many nights through long Sessions, Lord Kensington sat on the bench to the left of the doorway, a terror to members who had pressing private engagements elsewhere, when a division was even possible. There is only one well-authenticated occasion when a member, being unpaired, succeeded in getting past Lord Kensington, and the result was not encouraging.

"SKULKING OUT."

One night, Mr. Wiggin (now Sir Henry), the withdrawal of whose genial presence from the Parliamentary scene is regretted on both sides of the House, felt wearied with long attendance on his Parliamentary duties. There came upon him a weird longing to stroll out and spend an hour in a neighbouring educational establishment much frequented by members. He looked towards the doorway, but there was Lord Kensington steadfast at his post. Glancing again, Mr. Wiggin thought the Whip was asleep. Casually strolling by him he found that this was the case, and with something more than his usual agility, he passed through the doorway. [Pg 630]

Returning at the end of an hour he found Lord Kensington still at his post, and more than usually wide awake.

"You owe me £25," said Mr. Wiggin.

"How?" cried the astonished Whip.

"If," said Mr. Wiggin, producing his unencumbered watch-chain and dangling it, "you hadn't been asleep just now, I wouldn't have got past you; if I hadn't got past you, I wouldn't have dropped in at the Aquarium; and if I hadn't looked in at the Aquarium, I shouldn't have had my watch stolen."

Quod erat demonstrandum.

REMARKABLE FEAT OF A COUNTRY PAPER.

It was stated at the time, to the credit of the provincial Press, that at the very moment Mr. St. John Brodrick was delivering in the House of Commons his luminous speech on the Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill, his constituents at Guildford, thanks to the enterprise of the local weekly paper, were studying its convincing argument, lingering over the rhythm of its sentences, echoing the laughter and applause with which a crowded House punctuated it. I enjoyed the higher privilege of hearing the speech delivered, and was probably so absorbed that I was not conscious of the crowd on the benches, and do not recollect the laughter and applause. Indeed, my memory enshrines rather a feeling of regret that so painstaking and

able an effort should have met with so chilling a reception, and that an heir-apparent to a peerage, who has had the courage to propose a scheme for the reform of the House of Lords, should receive such scant attention in the Commons.

Il y a POWER *et* POWER.

Mr. Brodrick, however, got off his speech, and the local paper came out with its verbatim report, a concatenation of circumstances not always achieved. In the high tide of the Parnell invasion of the House of Commons, there happened an accident that excited much merriment. Mr. O'Connor Power—one of the ablest debaters the early Irish party brought into the House, a gentleman who has with equal success given up to journalism what was meant for the House of Commons—had prepared a speech for a current debate. Desirous that his constituents should be at least on a footing of equality with an alien House of Commons, he sent a verbatim copy in advance to the editor of the local paper, an understanding being arrived at that it was not to be published till signal was received from Westminster that the hon. member was on his feet. It happened that Mr. O'Connor Power failed on that night to catch the Speaker's eye. Mr. Richard Power was more successful, and the local editor receiving through the ordinary Press agency intimation that "Mr. Power opposed the Bill," at once jumped to the conclusion that this was the cue for the verbatim speech. Mr. Power was speaking; there was not the slightest doubt that Mr. O'Connor Power, when he did speak, would oppose the Bill. So the formes were locked, the paper went to press, and the next morning County Mayo rang with the unuttered eloquence of its popular member, and Irishmen observed with satisfaction how, for once, the sullen Saxon had had his torpid humour stirred, being frequently incited to "loud cheers" and "much laughter."

SIR ELLIS ASHMEAD-BARTLETT'S DILEMMA.

In this same debate on the Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill, where the energy and enterprise of the provincial weekly Press was incidentally illustrated in connection with Mr. Brodrick's speech, there happened another episode which did not work out so well. Sir Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett broke the long silence of years by delivering a speech in the House of Commons. It was a great occasion, and naturally evoked supreme effort. It was, in its way, akin to [Pg 631] the wooing of Jacob. For seven years that eminent diplomatist had worked and waited for Rachel, and might well rejoice, even in the possession of Leah, when the term of probation was over. For nearly seven years Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett had sat on the Treasury Bench wrapped in the silence of a Civil Lord of the Admiralty. Now his time was come, and he threw himself into the enjoyment of opportunity with almost pathetic vigour. It was eleven o'clock when he rose, and the debate must needs stand adjourned at midnight. When twelve o'clock struck, Sir Ellis was still in the full flow of his turgid eloquence. His speech was constructed on the principle of, and (except, perhaps, in the matter of necessity) resembled, the long bridge in Cowper's "Task"—

> That with its wearisome but needful length
> Bestrides the wintry flood.

The scene and the atmosphere were sufficiently Arctic to bear out the comparison. The audience had long since fallen away, like leaves in wintry weather. In ordinary circumstances Sir Ellis, an old Parliamentary Hand, would have wound up his speech, and so made an end of it, just before the stroke of midnight gave the signal for the Speaker's leaving the chair.

There were, however, two reasons, the agony of whose weight must have pressed sorely on the orator. One was the recollection of an incident in his career still talked of in the busy circles round Sheffield. One night in yesteryear he was announced to deliver a speech at a meeting held in Nottingham. "For greater accuracy"—as the Speaker says, when, coming back from the House of Lords on the opening day of a Session, he reads the Queen's Speech to hon. members who have two hours earlier studied it in the evening papers—Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett had written out his oration and supplied it to the Sheffield paper whose recognition of his status as a statesman merits reward. Proceedings at the Nottingham meeting were so protracted, and took such different lines from those projected, that the orator of the evening, when his turn came, found the night too far advanced for his ordered speech, which would in other respects have been beside the mark. He accordingly, impromptu, delivered quite another speech, probably better than the one laboriously prepared in the seclusion of the closet. In the hurry and excitement of the moment he forgot to warn the Sheffield editor, with the consequence that the other speech was printed in full and formed the groundwork of a laudatory leading article.

That was one thing that agitated the mind of Sir Ellis, and probably gave a profounder thrill to his denunciation of Mr. Gladstone's iniquity in the matter of the Home Rule Bill. Another was that this later speech, with all its graceful air of ready wit, fervid fancy, and momentarily inspired argument, was also in print, and, according to current report, was in advance widely circulated among a friendly Press. It turned out to be impossible to recite it all before the adjournment; equally impossible to cut it down. That mighty engine, the Press, was already, in remote centres of civilization, throbbing with the inspiration of his energy, printing off the speech at so many hundreds an hour. It was impossible to communicate with the unconscious editors and mark the exact point at which the night's actual contribution to debate was arrested. There was only one thing to be done: that was boldly to take the fence. So Sir Ellis went on till twelve o'clock as if nothing were happening elsewhere, was pulled up by the adjournment, and, turning up bright and early with the meeting of the House next day, reeled off the rest regardless of the gibes of the enemy, who said some of the faithful papers had muddled the matter, reporting on Tuesday morning passages that were not delivered in the House of Commons till Tuesday night.

These accidents have their comical aspect. When it comes to appropriating two hours of the time of a busy Legislature, they also have their serious side. The House of Commons is a debating assembly, not a lecture hall, where prosy papers may be read to sparse audiences. The House is seen at its best when masters of fence follow each other in swift succession, striking and parrying, the centre of an excited ring. A prevalence of the growing custom of reading laboriously-prepared papers will speedily bring it down to the level of the Congress meeting at Washington. There the practice has reached its natural and happy conclusion, inasmuch as members having prepared their papers are not obliged to read them. They hand them in to the printer, and, at a cost to the nation willingly borne in view of compensating circumstances, they are printed at length in the *Congressional Globe*.

SIR ELLIS ASHMEAD-BARTLETT.

Perhaps when we have our official report of debates in the House of Commons this also will follow. It is easy to imagine with what eagerness the House would welcome any alternative that should deliver it from the necessity, not of listening to these musty harangues—that, to do it justice, it never suffers—but of giving up an appreciable portion of its precious time to the gratification of ponderous, implacable, personal vanity.

THE PITY OF IT.

There is one gleam of light flickering about this intrinsically melancholy topic in connection with the name of Thackeray. I have read somewhere that it was a kindred calamity of a public speaker which led to Thackeray's first appearance in print. At a time when the century was young, and the author of "Vanity Fair" was a lad at Charterhouse, Richard Lalor Sheil, the Irish lawyer and orator, had promised to deliver a speech to a public meeting assembled on Penenden Heath. In those days there were no staffs of special reporters, no telegraphs, nor anything less costly than post-chaises wherewith to establish rapid communication between country platforms and London newspaper offices. Sheil, rising to the height of the occasion, wrote out his speech, and, before leaving town, sent copies to the leading journals, in which it, on the following morning, duly appeared.

"REELING IT OFF."

Alack! when the orator reached the Heath he found the platform in possession of the police, who prohibited the meeting and would have none of the speech. The incident was much talked of, and the boy Thackeray set to and wrote in verse a parody on the printed but unspoken oration: Here is the last verse, as I remember it:—

"What though these heretics heard me not?"
Quoth he to his friend Canonical;
"My speech is safe in the *Times*, I wot,
And eke in the *Morning Chronicle*."

THACKERAY ON THE SUBJECT.

[*The original drawings of the illustrations in this Magazine are always on view, and on sale, in the Art Gallery at these offices, which is open to the public without charge.*]

A Work of Accusation.

By Harry How.

"Suicide whilst in a state of temporary insanity."

Such was the verdict of the coroner's jury, and they could scarcely have declared anything else—there was not a tittle of evidence implicating another as the perpetrator of the deed. The deceased was found lying in his studio at the foot of his easel, shot through the heart. The revolver—a six-chambered one—was tightly gripped in his hand. Four out of the six chambers remained undischarged. It must have been suicide, simple and premeditated! The inquiry into the death of the deceased revealed only one spark of anything approaching sensationalism. It was the evidence of the housekeeper—an old lady of distinctly nervous temperament—who wept bitterly. Previous to the sad occurrence she had heard the firing of a pistol some five or six times during a period of two days. On the first occasion she had hurried to the studio, and the alarmed state of her feelings was sufficient to cause her to overlook the formality of giving the customary tap at the door previous to entering. She entered the room, only to find the deceased artist holding a pistol—the one produced—and looking at its barrel, still smoking, earnestly. He burst into a

hearty laugh when he saw her, and told her not to be frightened.

"It is nothing, Mrs. Thompson," he said, "and should you hear the firing again, do not be alarmed. Don't be frightened."

"DON'T BE FRIGHTENED."

So the firing was frequent, and though it played pitifully with the old housekeeper's nerves and shook her seventy-year-old bones considerably, she quietly submitted to it and "hoped it was all right."

I knew Godfrey Huntingdon well. He often chatted over his pictures with me. As a medical man and a student somewhat beyond the range of physic and prescriptions, the pros and cons of an idea to be eventually carried to the canvas gave rise to many interesting and discussable points. I liked the man—he was so frank and true and positively simple in his unassuming manner. Poor fellow! He never dreamt for a moment that he was a genius, but what he did not know the public were quick to recognise. Every picture from his brush was watched and waited for—a canvas from him meant a vivid, striking, often sensational episode, which seemed to live. I have some of his work in my dining-room now. I often look at his figures. They are more human than anything I have seen by any other modern painter. They seem possessed of breath and beating hearts of their own, with [Pg 634] tongues that want to speak, and eyes that reveal a thinking brain. The trees in his landscapes appear to be gently shaken by the breeze from across the moorland, the clouds only need touching by the breath of the firmament to lazily move across the face of the blue sky. He was indeed a genius.

It was always an open question in the minds of the public and the judgment of the critics as to who excelled the other—Godfrey Huntingdon or Wilfred Colensoe. They both belonged to the same school of ideas. Their works were equally impressive, their figure and portrait painting particularly so, and the judges said it would be a life-long race between them for supremacy with the brush. Huntingdon's sad death was a terrible blow to the artistic world. I went to his funeral.

He had not forgotten me. He left me all his studies. There were several hundreds of them. Many were familiar to me, for he had made them whilst we were smoking a pipe together, as I pointed out to him the necessary laws of science he must needs regard in order to insure accuracy in his work. The studies made quite a number of huge bundles, and in the evening I would delight in sorting them through. It was a long task, for I found something to admire and think over in every single one of them.

A fortnight had passed away since they first came into my possession. I had only another parcel to go through, and I should be finished. I was quietly sitting in my chair with my legs stretched out on another chair, as is my custom—I find it remarkably restful—and lighting up my brier I cut the string of the last bundle. Slowly, one by one, I lifted up those pieces of brown paper. They were still objects of reverence to me. Here was the head of a child, a sweetly pretty child, and next to it a study of a dissipated character, the face of a man fast losing every working power of his brain and body by liquor. I realized the genius of my dead friend more and more.

"SLOWLY I LIFTED UP THOSE PIECES OF BROWN PAPER."

I had gone through quite a score of these play studies, when my hand stretched out for another from the pile by my side. I turned the piece of paper round and round, and it was some time before I grasped what the subject was intended for. It appeared to be a piece of round tubing from which smoke was protruding. The next half-dozen studies were of a similar character. In one the smoke was very small, just a thin streak; in another it was a full volume, as though to represent the after effect of the discharge of a bullet from a revolver. I looked again. The chalk drawing of the tubing was evidently intended for the barrel of a pistol! Huntingdon always put the date on every study he made, and I found my hand trembling as I turned the paper over. Great heavens—10th October, 1872—the day before his death! Another paper bore the same date, and the others had the date of the previous day—the 9th. Was his death, then, the result of an accident and not a suicide after all? Here was the simple explanation of it so far—here was the reason for the several shots which the old housekeeper had heard fired. He had discharged the revolver at these times in order to watch the effect and immediately place his impressions on the pieces of paper I now held in my hand. My knowledge of Godfrey Huntingdon—both medically and fraternally—told me that, at the time of his death, there was positively nothing on his mind to cause such an act, and I now began reasoning the whole within myself once again, as I had done many times since the occurrence. [Pg 635]

"It's a mystery—a terrible mystery!" I exclaimed, jumping up and commencing to pace the room. I walked that room for over an hour, and was only aroused from my reverie by the announcement of a servant that supper was served. I ate my meal in silence, and the deliberate mouthfuls I took, and my more than ordinarily methodical manner of eating, must have told my wife that to disturb my present inward argument would have been disastrous to the immediate prospects of domestic harmony. I had come to a conclusion. There is nothing like science and its accompanying occupations for balancing a man's brain. A game of chess is recreative concentration. So the study of science was with me, whilst physic was my profession. Scientific research and the weighing of Nature's problems had steadied my thoughts and cooled my actions. It was a settled thing with me that poor Huntingdon had been murdered. By whom? Scientific investigation had transformed me into a calculating individual. Every action, to me, could be proved as a proposition in Euclid or an algebraical problem. I therefore said nothing about my startling discovery, and decided to wait the possibility of a further suggestion coming in my way, and "proving it."

I suppose it was the deep interest I took in all matters concerning art which brought so many artist-patients to my consulting room. Six months had passed since the fatal 11th October, and the public were loudly expressing their approval of a marvellously impressive bit of painting by Wilfred Colensoe, which was the feature—and very justly so—of one of the early spring exhibitions. It was the picture of a duel—a very realistic canvas indeed. The young man—lying bleeding on the ground—almost told the story of the attempted avenge of an action towards someone dear to him on the part of an elderly *roué*, whose still-smoking revolver was in his hand. Colensoe came to see me one morning. He was a remarkably handsome man, classically featured, with hair picturesquely scattered with streaks of silver.

"Done up, eh?" I said to him.

"Done up is the word," he answered.

"You've been doing too much," I said, looking into his grey eyes as I held his hand a moment. "You must cease work for a time. Get away from your easel, go abroad, and forget to take your brushes with you. Go anywhere, a hundred miles from a retail colourman's."

"'YOU'VE BEEN DOING TOO MUCH,' I SAID."

"My dear doctor," he answered, "your prescription is too strong. You forget I am an artist. It is like taking a man with a dying thirst to a fountain of water and telling him he mustn't drink. I can't leave my work."

"When I tell you that it is either a case of your leaving your work or your work leaving you, my remark may not be very original, but it is undeniably true. Do you sleep well?"

"I can't say," was his reply. "When I fall asleep at night I never wake until my hour for rising. But I am more tired in the morning than when I turned in over-night." [Pg 636]

"Quite so. Do you dream at all?"

"Yes, I dream."

"Feel sleepy now—eh?"

"Doctor, I could go to bed for a week," he replied.

"Again, I tell you—overwork," I said, with strong deliberation. "Now I'll make you a proposal, which I can couple most heartily with the name of Mrs. Gratton. Come away with us. We are going to Herne Bay for a few weeks. I have taken a house there. Most invigorating place. You want no medicine, you won't leave your work alone, I won't be hard in my treatment of your case. Bring your tools with you. I will prescribe so much colour for you during the day—your paints and brushes may become converted into agreeable physic, but—they must be taken at periodical times. What do you say?"

Colensoe consented—gratefully accepted my offer, stayed to lunch, and my wife took care to let him feel that the invitation was one of combined cordiality from both of us. I was a great admirer of Colensoe's work, and therefore took a deep interest in the worker. In a week's time we were at Herne Bay. A room—with a good light—was apportioned off as a small studio for Colensoe. A week passed by. Colensoe obeyed my instructions to the letter. I limited his working hours, and he began himself to be thankful when the periodical times for laying aside his brush came round. I noticed this, and lessened the hours of painting more, thinking that by degrees he would soon put his palette away completely and take the undisturbed rest he needed for a time to restore him thoroughly.

About a fortnight after our arrival I was sitting alone in the dining-room. My wife and visitor had retired an hour ago. It was a glorious night. I turned out the gas, walked to the window, and drew up the blinds. The sea was sparkling with gems thrown out by the moon-beams. The beauty of the night seemed to heighten the stillness of the surroundings. Although it wanted but a few minutes to midnight I determined to walk out to the cliffs—a couple of hundred yards from the house—and view the moonlit scenery to greater advantage. I turned from the window, opened the door, and, just as I was turning into the passage, I heard a footstep. It was a steady, deliberate step; there was nothing uncertain or hesitating about it. I waited a moment; it came nearer. I drew back into the shadow. Now it was on the top stair. A form appeared in sight. It was Wilfred Colensoe.

"Colensoe," I cried, softly; "why, what's the matter?"

"HE STOOD BEFORE HIS EASEL."

He made no answer. With monotonous step he descended the stairs and was now at the bottom. His blank, staring eyes at once told me that he was in a state of somnambulism. He was fully dressed. His face was deadly pale, his features stolidly set, and his lips were gently moving as though impressively muttering. When he reached the bottom stair, he turned and walked in the direction of the room we had converted into a studio for him. I followed on quietly. With all the method and mysterious discretionary power of the sleep-walker he turned the handle of the door [Pg 637] and entered. The room was flooded with light, for the roof was a glass one. I watched him take his palette in hand and play with the brushes on the colours. He stood before his easel, on which rested a half-finished canvas. And he painted—painted as true and as sure as if awake, blending the colours, picking out his work, working with all his old artistic touch and finish. All this time his lips were moving, muttering incoherent words I could not hear. At last he laid aside his tools with a sigh that almost raised compassion in my heart. Then walking towards the window at the far end of the room, he appeared to look out upon the sea. He was now talking louder. I crept up to him and tried to catch a word. It was a terrible brain-ringing word I heard—and uttered in a way I shall never forget.

"Murder!"

That was the word. "Murder, murder, murder!" he muttered, with agonized face. Yet another word came to his lips.

"Huntingdon!"

"Murder—Huntingdon!" I said within myself as I linked the two words together.

The sleeping man passed his hand across his forehead. It was evident that he was in the midst of an agonizing dream—a vision of conviction. Here stood the guilty man before me now, pale and motionless, the rays from the moon lighting up his face and revealing the word "guilt" written on every feature. I watched him and waited for something else to come from his lips. I stood by his side for nearly an hour, but he did nothing more than repeat these same two words. With measured tread he turned to go. I followed him to his bedroom and heard him turn the key. I sat up the whole night—thinking. None knew of the remarkable discovery which I had made amongst poor Huntingdon's sketches; none should know of what I had learnt to-night. By the morning I had fully determined upon my course of action. The ramblings of a sleep-walking man would not prove a conviction to those who would judge his deed. He should convict himself. He should witness against himself. He was a sleep-worker. I had met with many similar cases before, all of which tended to prove that sleep by no means deadens the faculties of labour. It is indisputable that the hands will follow the inclinations of the brains of somnambulists. They will act as they think—perform what they dream. If Colensoe would only work out his terrible night dreams!

My conduct towards him at the breakfast table and throughout the day was just the same as ever. It was far from a comfortable feeling, however, to pass the wine to one who had taken another's life, and to offer an after-dinner cigar to a murderer. The day passed. I slept during the afternoon, for I was tired with my over-night watching, and could I but put my inward plans into execution, it was more than probable that I should be awake for many nights to come. I told my wife that Colensoe was a somnambulist, and that he worked at the canvas equally as well whilst sleeping as waking. I impressed upon her the absolute necessity of silence on the subject, as I firmly believed that I was on the brink of a great discovery. Seeing that I was a medical man, her curiosity was in no way aroused. Indeed, she thought me foolish to give up my night's rest.

That night, after Colensoe had gone to bed, I went into his studio. My hand trembled somewhat

as I placed on his easel a square piece of new canvas. This done, I waited patiently. A step on the stairs rewarded me. It was Colensoe walking again. His speech was louder this time, and more impressively distinct; his dream was evidently more agonizing than the night before. If he would only follow out the promptings of that dream—if he would but work to-night—to-night! I watched him breathlessly. He wandered about the room for some time, then suddenly, as though impelled by some mysterious force within, crossed to the cupboard where he kept his tools, took out his materials and walked to the canvas.

"Huntingdon—Huntingdon!" he cried, and the first lines of his everlasting vision were written on the hitherto untouched canvas. It was the outline of a man's face! For two hours he worked, and then, replacing his brushes and palette, went to bed. I took the canvas away. Night after night for ten days I placed the canvas in position. Night after night the artist got nearer to accomplishing his own condemnation. And as the picture grew more like the man he had murdered, so his dream became more intense. His features showed that. The rapidity of his brush revealed the rush of thoughts within, of an anxiety to complete his task. Never was such a true portrait painted, and when on the last night he put the finishing touches to it, the face of Huntingdon seemed to live on the canvas. It was the face which existed in the brain of the painter. The last night's work was done. The sleeping man turned from his easel and went to his bedroom once more. [Pg 638]

The morrow would tell me if Colensoe was guilty. I had little doubt of it in my own mind—but he should say so himself when waking as he had condemned himself whilst sleeping. I would take him to the studio and confront him with his own testimony. He should see the face of the man whose life he had taken, painted with his own hands. He was later than usual in coming down that morning. I left the breakfast-room with the intention of calling him, when, just as I got into the passage, I saw him at the top of the stairs. His hat was on. His face was ghastly pale, every feature was working. His eyes betokened some mad intention—their gaze appeared to kill. He almost flew down the stairs.

"Don't stop me," he cried. "I must go into the open. I want God's air. Let me go now—let me go, only for a little while!"

"Colensoe," I said, catching him by the arm, "what mad act do you contemplate?"

"Nothing—nothing. Believe me, nothing. I only want the refreshing breeze, that's all. I'm tired—worn out."

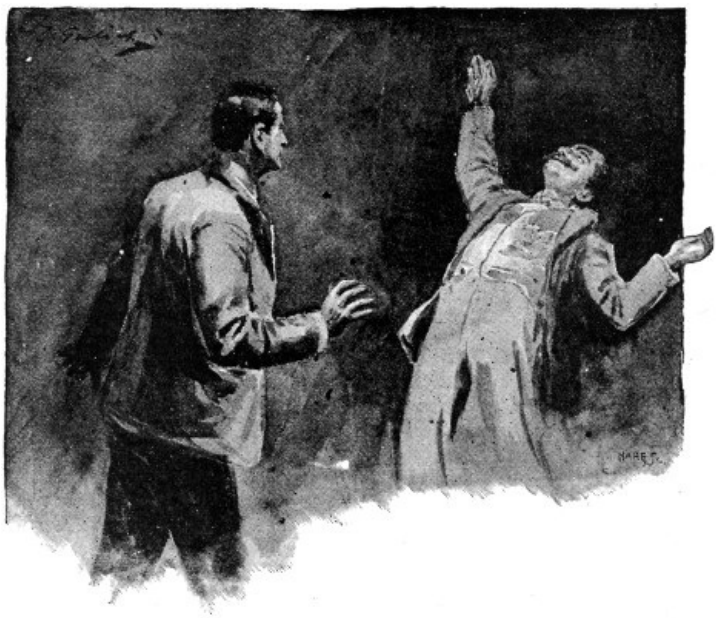
"Yes, you are truly tired," I said.

"What do you mean?" he cried.

"Your work."

"Work—what work?—who works?"

"Come with me," I said.



"HE SHRIEKED THE MURDERED MAN'S NAME."

Like a child he followed me to his studio. I opened the door. The portrait of Huntingdon rested on the easel. He saw it. The eyes he had painted pierced him to the heart, and the lips almost moved in accusation. He shrieked the murdered man's name and fell to the ground. He was dead!

The following letter was found on Wilfred Colensoe's dressing-table:—

"What good is life to me?—what good am I for life? Then why live? A guilty conscience only

means a living death. You have been very good to me—both you and your wife. But I am going to end it all. Let me confess. It will bring me some small comfort even now in the dying hour I have given to myself. You remember poor Huntingdon? I shot that man—murdered him. Listen and then 'Good-bye.' Huntingdon and I were friendly rivals. You remember my picture of 'The Duel'? Yes. One day I visited Huntingdon. That same morning I had been making some studies of a revolver in the act of being discharged. I had it in my pocket when I went to see Huntingdon, and one chamber remained loaded. I walked straight into his studio. As I entered Huntingdon had a pistol in his hand pointed immediately towards me and—fired. In an instant my revolver was in my grasp and a bullet had entered his heart. That is the simple history of the crime. I fled from the place and none knew. Thank God this is written. A life for a life. I am passing through death all the day, and at night I do not cease to die. You do not know what that means. The guilty do. Angels of darkness play with you all day long and at night watch over you—watch over you that you do not escape, that they may gambol with you on the morrow. They are making merry now. They have got what they want—*Me*. Yes, a life for a life. I will deliver my own up. Good-bye."

The Queer Side of Things.

[Pg 639]

Young Bansted Downs had finally arrived home from school; the cabman had placed his box in the front hall, and young D. was in the act of hanging up his hat on the stand, when the elder Bansted Downs, his father, put his head out of the library, and said:—

"And now, young Bansted Downs, what sphere in life do you propose to fill?"

"I have been thinking, old Bansted Downs," replied the youth, respectfully, "since I left school seventy-five minutes ago, that I should prefer to be something prosperous."

The father nodded his head approvingly at this evidence of foresight in his child, and said:—

"I think you have come to a very wise decision, young Bansted Downs. No doubt you have, while at school, selected such studies as were best fitted to prepare you for the struggle of life?"

"I think so, old Bansted Downs," replied the son. "The head-master took in regularly for our use all the best prize-competition periodicals; in fact, he was of opinion that a complete selection of these rendered all other educational books superfluous. I myself have attained to such dexterity in guessing the right word, deciding on the best eight pictures and the two best stories, divining the correct number of pairs of boots made in London on a given day, and so forth, that Dr. Practiccle pronounced my education singularly complete."

"Good—very good! young Bansted Downs," said the father, thoughtfully; "and now as to a more specific choice of profession?"

"Well, old Bansted Downs," said the son, "I have been thinking that I should like to be apprenticed to a Genius, with a view to adopting his calling."

"Very well thought out," said the parent. "I must consider whether the necessary premium——"

"Pray do not trouble about that," said the son, "as my success at the word competitions has more than provided for the contingency." And young Bansted Downs drew from his pocket a large bag filled with a mixture of sovereigns, marbles, and peppermint-drops.

[Pg 640]

"Very good! Then the matter's settled; and perhaps you would like something to eat."

All the friends by whose opinion old Bansted Downs set any store heartily approved of young Bansted Downs's choice of a calling; and the matter was fully discussed that evening. The advertisement columns of the newspapers were consulted as to the most suitable genius to undertake the charge of the youth; and the following seemed promising:—

"*To Parents and Guardians.—Young men of promise wishing to adopt the profession of genius will do well to apply to Brayne Power and Sons, of 3019A, George Street, Hanover Square, who have a vacancy for one apprentice. Telephone No. 7142863.*"

The very next day young Bansted Downs called at the address given, and was shown into the presence of Power senior, a man of venerable appearance, whose high broad forehead, far-away gaze, long hair, and abstraction sufficiently revealed his calling.

"It will be fifty pounds—twenty-five down, and the rest in monthly instalments of one pound after you have got your H.A.W.," said the Master Genius.

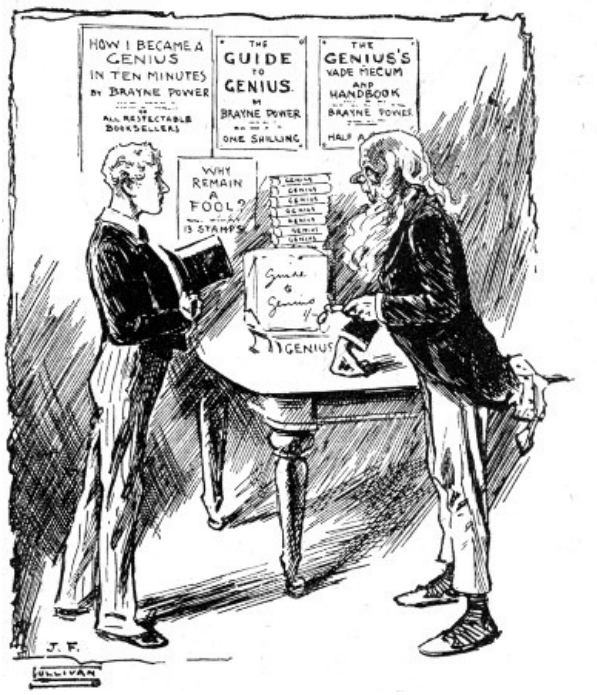
"If you please, what is my H.A.W.?" asked young Bansted Downs.

"Your final degree—your Head Above Water."

"That will not be just yet?" asked the youth.

"Oh, dear, no! Not for a very long while, if ever. There are two preliminary degrees to get before that. There are the F.I. and the E.P.—your Foot In and your Ear of the Public; and before you can obtain either of these you will have to Make your Mark."

"I can sign my name—will not that do as well?" asked the youth.



"THE MASTER GENIUS."

"That entirely depends upon the sort of name. If it's just a surname with a coronet over it, it entitles you to your F.I. and your E.P. without any examination. You have the same advantage if you can append to your signature either of the following affixes: P.P. (Pertinacious Pusher) or C.I. (Chum of the Influential).

"But if you can't sign these kinds of names, you will have to Make your Mark. It's a difficult mark, and requires a lot of learning.

"As the first instalment of twenty-five pounds down is all I am ever likely to get, I will take it now—no, that one won't do; it's a peppermint-drop, not a sovereign. *That's* not the way to get on, young man!"

"Isn't it?" asked young Bansted Downs thoughtfully. "I'm glad you told me. I thought perhaps it might be; but, of course, I've got to learn."

That very week young Bansted Downs commenced his studies under the Master Genius. He found he had a very great deal to learn.

"The difference between talent and genius is that talent does what it can and genius does what it must—you will find that in the poets," said the Master Genius. "Consequently, to be a genius, you need not feel that you have the *ability* to do a thing, but only that it is *necessary* to do it. A house-painter is a specimen of genius: he has not the ability to do his work; but he is compelled to do it in order to obtain the means for his Saturday drinks. But, of course, that's only one kind of genius. What we have to teach you first is to feel that you *must* do something transcendent—and then all you've got to do is to do it—see?"

So, acting on his instructions, young Bansted Downs went to the office and sat quite still day after day for a month or two, with his eyes fixed on space; and one afternoon at the end of that time he got up and rushed at Power junior (who took charge of him in these preliminary studies), and announced that he felt the irresistible impulse to do something great and wonderful. [Pg 641]

"What sort of thing?" asked the Junior Genius.

"I don't know—anything—something stupendous and transcendent—a master-piece!" said young Bansted Downs.

"Knock it off, then. Don't make a labour of it, mind; that would spoil all the genius of it. Just knock it off—shed it—see?"

The apprentice went back to his stool in the corner and knocked off that scintillation of genius.

"Very good for a beginner," said the Junior Genius; "you show much promise. I shall soon be able to hand you over to my father for the Higher Grades."

And some time after that young Bansted Downs moved into the room of the Master Genius to learn the higher attributes of genius—eccentricity and obscureness. These were the most important parts of the qualifications, and he worked hard at acquiring them. The eccentricity had infinite ramifications extending into language, manner, dress, habits, appearance, and opinions. The teacher communicated a thousand little touches of eccentricity invaluable to a genius—such as the bringing out of a book of poems with the title printed upside down and the capitals at the end of the lines instead of the beginning; the wearing of the back hair tied in a bow under the tip of the nose, and so forth. The pupil learned to hop backwards on to a public platform, wearing his dress-coat upside down, to paint his figures with their bones outside their skin, to sob audibly when performing on the piano; and many other things necessary to the obtaining of his degrees.

"A HOUSE-PAINTER IS A SPECIMEN OF GENIUS."

Having completed these studies, he was ready for the uphill work of trying to Make his Mark; and he found it a complicated bit of drawing too, far worse than the signature of a Chinese emperor—everything lay in the flourish.

The Master Genius said that no one could Make his Mark without a great flourish; and the best way to make the flourish was to blow it on his own trumpet; so there was the expense of a trumpet.

But he didn't seem able to get on; and after he had worn out a gross of pens in the attempt to Make his Mark he felt that he would never obtain his degrees, and took a back cistern-cupboard under the roof in a poor street, and fell into a low state.

One day, as he was eating his weekly sausage at the Three Melancholy Geniuses, off Fleet Street, there entered a party whom he knew slightly and who had Made his Mark and passed all his degrees some time before.

"Haven't Made your Mark yet?" said this party. "Tell you what—why don't you get Boomed?"

[Pg 642]

"TO SOB AUDIBLY WHEN PERFORMING ON THE PIANO."

"Does it hurt?" asked young Bansted Downs.

"Hurts your self-respect just a little and your respect for your fellow-creatures a little more—but it's nothing," replied the party.

"Where do you go?"

"To the Press Booming Department, of course. Just put your name down for Booming, and fill up a form, stating what you require said about you. You began all wrong: I never studied—I only went and put my name down the moment it occurred to me that I would be a genius. I called at the office every day, and shouted my name, and created disturbances, and got turned out; until at last they couldn't stand it any longer, and my turn came.

"I CALLED AT THE OFFICE EVERY DAY AND

"They put a long article about me in every newspaper, all the same day—mostly interviews—and quoted me as a classic. Some of 'em described me as a painter, and others as a novelist: I never was either; but it answered all right."

So young Bansted Downs went to the Booming office, and put his name down, and shouted; and the end of it was he got his Boom, and several editors wrote to him; and he began to be a little successful.

He hired halls, and went before the public in person; and painted on the platform; and sang and played his own compositions to them; and recited his own poems, and acted his own plays; and told them about his own scientific researches, and his military, exploratory, judicial, political, and athletic achievements.

But the thing dulled off, for one day a deputation of the public called at the Booming office to ask something about him; and the office had forgotten his name, and said that he wasn't being Boomed now, as Smith was up; and so the public got on an omnibus and went to Smith's hall, and Bansted Downs faded out.

After that he was to be found all day at the Three Melancholy Geniuses, drooping over fours of Irish; and one day his late instructor happened to come in and find him thus, with his melancholy nose over the edge of his glass.

"Haven't got your Head Above Water, I see?" said the Master Genius. "Sorry you haven't Made your Mark."

"I've made a good many," said Downs, pointing to the wet rings on the counter. [Pg 643]

"Ah, that sort of mark's no use—unless you make it in Company," said the Genius.

One day, as young Bansted Downs sat in his cistern-cupboard biting his nails, a step was heard on the stair, and his late instructor entered.

"HAVEN'T GOT YOUR HEAD ABOVE WATER, I SEE?"

"I've been all wrong," he said, sitting down on the cistern. "I put you all wrong—I've put all my pupils all wrong. I fell down stairs lately and knocked my head, and when I got up I saw everything—the light broke in upon me!"

"Why, you've cut your hair, and you're dressed quite neatly—I should hardly have known you for a Master Genius at all!" exclaimed young Bansted Downs.

"I am no longer a Genius—I am now the M.W.K.A.A.I.—the Man Who Knows All About It. I now know why genius fails to get the Ear of the Public, and is not appreciated——"

"Fault of the public—everybody knew that before," growled young Bansted Downs.

"Pardon me, it is not the fault of the poor public, but the fault of the system. We—the entertainers—have made the mistake of being geniuses; whereas we had no business to meddle with genius at all.

"It is the public who ought to have the genius; *they* should have the lively appreciation, the keen sense of humour, the afflatus, and all that; and then those who cater for them would not need to trouble about those things—they would only have to cater, and leave the public to perceive, by means of their genius, the excellences of the fare provided. If a plain person does something, and geniuses perceive greatness in it, that's a right state of affairs; but if a genius does something great, and plain persons fail to appreciate it, that's a wrong state of things, and a waste of material—-see?"

"And what do you propose to do?" asked young Bansted Downs.

"That's very simple—just make geniuses of the public. Of course the public, having their own affairs to attend to, will not wish to turn caterers and originate—their province is to appreciate, perceive, applaud, and pay at the doors—see? By this system any dullard is enabled, without effort, fatigue, or preliminary study, to Make his Mark and get his F.I., his E.P., and his H.A.W. A child could use it."

"But," objected young Bansted Downs, "under your system, dullardism paying so well, everybody would want to cater for the public, and there wouldn't be any audience—any public."

"Pooh! The system at present in vogue is all I require—compulsory education. Everybody will have to be educated as a genius, except a few who will be specially exempted from attendance at the Board schools to enable them to lie fallow and fit themselves for originators.

"Of course, you may say that it would not be *necessary* for the entertainer to be dull. Of course it would not; but, as it is not necessary for him to be a genius either, there would be a waste of

public money in educating him as one. In fact, it might be a disadvantage for both originator and appreciator to be geniuses, and their conceptions might clash and create confusion. It's better for a conception to be lighted from one side only, as you get more contrast."

"But would not the genius of the spectator simply perceive the dulness of the originator?"

"Not in the least. It's just the sphere of genius to perceive, in a given production, excellences which the ordinary observer fails to detect; and it's only a question of degree of genius. I take it that perfect genius can detect perfect excellence in everything submitted to its discrimination. [Pg 644] And now, will you be kind enough to come and vote for me, as for the furtherance of my scheme I am offering myself as Chairman of the School Board?"

In due course, the Man Who Knew All About It was elected to the School Board. He secured this by publishing handbills declaring his intention to squander the rate-payers' money like water, and provide free food, clothing, lodging, sweets, tobacco, drinks, theatres, and pianos to all the Board school children and their parents, relatives, and friends. The public judged by the proceedings of past candidates, all of whom had deliberately broken their promises on coming into office; and they concluded that this one would do so as well, and refuse to spend a penny. The Board were compelled to choose him as Chairman; and he at once commenced his work of reform.

Genius took the place of all the former studies at the Board schools: no pupil was permitted to leave until he had passed the fifth standard, which turned him out a full-fledged genius; and he had to attend until he *could* pass it, even if he became old and decrepit. This was a wise step; for, had this rule been relaxed, those unable to pass the standard would have joined the ranks of the originators, and thus flooded the market.

"THE GENIUS CLASS AT THE BOARD SCHOOL."

Young Bansted Downs now set himself to steadily forgetting all the genius he had learned, feeling that it would be nothing but an incumbrance in his new career; and he succeeded so well that in the course of a few years he had become as dull as ditch-water.

Meanwhile a new public were growing up, a public of such brilliant perceptions—so great a faculty of appreciation—that they were quite bewildered with the excellences they perceived in everything around them.

To take the sense of humour alone: they possessed it to so marvellous an extent that they could perceive a joke in the passing cloud, facetiousness in the growth of flowers, a choice witticism in the rates and taxes, an incentive to mirth in strikes. Not that they were incessantly giggling—that would have argued a something wanting; no, they drank in and appreciated and enjoyed the universal humour, and their eyes were bright.

So, when young Bansted Downs was middle-aged Bansted Downs he started all over again in quite a different way: he just wrote twaddle, and painted twaddle, and composed twaddle; and went on to a platform and twaddled about twaddle: and the public genius detected the brilliancy lurking in it all, and they were in ecstacies.

A terrible thing happened to the Boom Department of the Press. One day the public arose as one man and remarked that they were capable of finding out merit for themselves and no longer required the Department; and they took large stones, and bad eggs, and dead cats, and fagots of wood, and proceeded to the Boom Department; and it was in vain that the head of the Department came out on the balcony and pleaded that the Booming System, as practised by the Press, had nothing to do with the finding-out of merit; for the public smashed the windows and burned the offices, and abolished the Boom Department. [Pg 645]

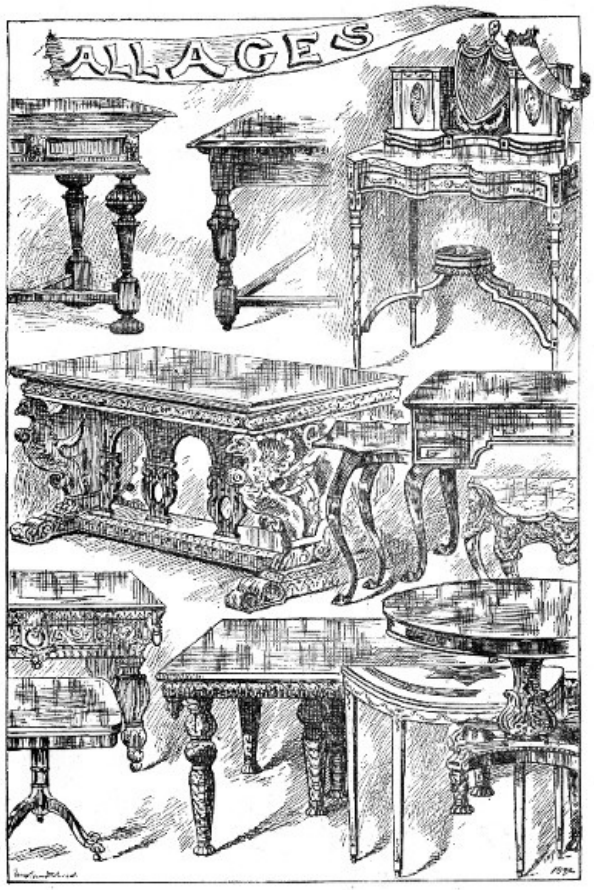
"A CHOICE WITTICISM IN THE RATES AND TAXES."

However, nobody required Booming now, as absence of ability was no longer a bar to fame; and things worked far more happily than they ever had under the old system. Authors and others no longer pined under want of appreciation; on the contrary, they were always wildly surprised at the wonderful things the public discovered in their work; and as for the public, they were vastly contented.

It's the true system—there's not a question about that.

J. F. Sullivan.

[Pg 646]



COMPLIMENTARY (A Fact).

GLADYS: "GRANDPA, WHAT ARE THOSE STRINGS MADE OF?"

GRANDPA: "CAT-GUT, MY DEAR."

GLADYS: "WHAT'S THAT?"

GRANDPA (JOKINGLY): "OH, THE INSIDES OF PUSSIES DEAR."

GLADYS (AFTER A PAUSE): "I SUPPOSE THEY FOUND OUT THEY WERE GOOD FOR THAT ON ACCOUNT OF THE NOISE CATS MAKE!"

TURN THESE UPSIDE DOWN.

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