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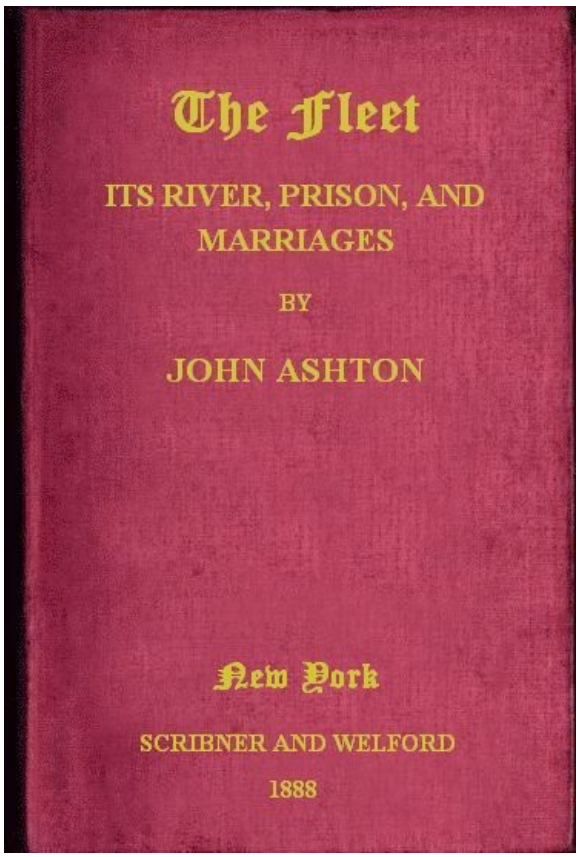
Transcriber's Note:

A single click on an illustration or decoration will give an enlarged view.

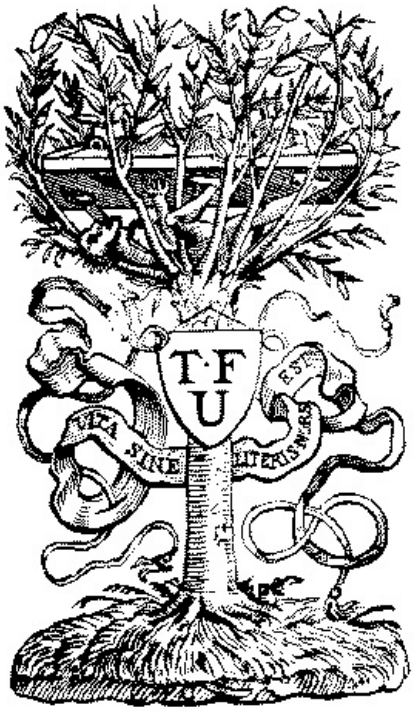
The letters 'u' and 'v' are often interchanged; as, e.g., "in haruest time" and "vnder a bridge".

Some of the spelling is very old, and often phonetic (they wrote as they heard it spoken, dialects and all).

An additional transcriber's note is at the end of the text.



THE FLEET.



The Fleet

ITS RIVER, PRISON, AND MARRIAGES

BY

JOHN ASHTON

(*Author of "Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne," "Dawn of the Nineteenth Century," &c., &c., &c.*)

ILLUSTRATED BY

PICTURES FROM ORIGINAL DRAWINGS AND ENGRAVINGS

New York

SCRIBNER AND WELFORD

1888

VIEW OF MOUTH OF THE FLEET circa 1765.

PREFACE.

THIS book requires none, except a mere statement of its scheme. Time has wrought such changes in this land of ours, and especially in its vast Metropolis, "The Modern Babylon," that the old land-marks are gradually being effaced—and in a few generations would almost be forgotten, were it not that some one noted them, and left their traces for future perusal. All have some little tale to tell; even this little River Fleet, which with its Prison, and its Marriages—are things utterly of the past, entirely swept away, and impossible to resuscitate, except by such a record as this book.

I have endeavoured, by searching all available sources of information, to write a trustworthy history of my subject—and, at the same time, make it a pleasant book for the general reader. If I have succeeded in my aim, thanks are due, and must be given, to W. H. Overall, Esq., F.S.A., and Charles Welch, Esq., Librarians to the Corporation of the City of London, whose friendship, and kindness, have enabled me to complete my pleasant task. It was at their suggestion that I came upon a veritable *trouvaille*, in the shape of a box containing Mr. Anthony Crosby's Collection for a History of the Fleet, which was of most material service to me, especially in the illustrations, most of which were by his own hand.

I must also express my gratitude to J. E. Gardner, Esq., F.S.A., for his kindness in putting his magnificent and unrivalled Collection of Topographical Prints at my disposal, and also to J. G. Waller, Esq., F.S.A., for his permission to use his map of the Fleet River (the best of any I have seen), for the benefit of my readers.

JOHN ASHTON.

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The Fleet:

Its River, Prison, and Marriages.

CHAPTER I.

ONLY a little tributary to the Thames, the River Fleet, generally, and ignominiously, called the Fleet *Ditch*, yet it is historically interesting, not only on account of the different places through which its murmuring stream meandered, almost all of which have some story of their own to tell, but the reminiscences of its Prison stand by themselves—pages of history, not to be blotted out, but to be recorded as valuable in illustration of the habits, and customs, of our forefathers.

The City of London, in its early days, was well supplied with water, not only by the wells dug near houses, or by the public springs, some of which still exist, as Aldgate Pump, &c., and the River Thames; but, when its borders increased, the Walbrook was utilized, as well as the Fleet, and, later on, the Tye-bourne, or twin brook, which fell into the Thames at Westminster. In the course of time these rivulets became polluted, land was valuable; they were covered over, and are now sewers. The course of the Fleet being clearly traceable in the depression of Farringdon Street, and the windings of the Tye-bourne in the somewhat tortuous Marylebone Lane (so called from the Chapel of St. Mary, which was on the banks of "le bourne," or the brook[1]). Its further course is kept in our memory by Brook Street, Hanover Square.

The name of this little river has exercised many minds, and has been the cause of spoiling much good paper. My own opinion, backed by many antiquaries, is that a *Fleet* means a brook, or tributary to a larger river, which is so wide, and deep, at its junction with the greater stream as to be navigable for the small craft then in use, for some little distance. Thus, we have the names on the Thames of Purfleet, Northfleet, and Southfleet, and the same obtains in other places. Its derivation seems to be Saxon—at least, for our language. Thus, in Bosworth's "Dictionary of the Anglo-Saxon Language," we find, "Flede-Fledu: part. *Flooded*; *overflowed*: tumidus[2] : Tiber fledu wearð[3]—the Tiber was flooded (Ors. 4. 7)."

Again, the same author gives: "Fleot (*Plat* fleet, m. *a small river*; *Ger.* flethe. f. *a channel*). *A place where vessels float, a bay, gulf, an arm of the sea, the mouth of a river, a river*; hence the names of places, as *Northfleet*, *Southfleet*, *Kent*; and in London, *Fleet ditch*; *sinus*.[4] Sœs Fleot, *a bay of the sea*.[5] *Bd.* 1. 34."

Another great Anglo-Saxon scholar—Professor Skeat, in "An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language": "Fleet, a creek, bay. In the names *North-fleet*, *Fleet* Street, &c. Fleet Street was so named from the Fleet Ditch; and *fleet* was given to any shallow creek, or stream, or channel of water. See Halliwell. M.E. *fleet* (Promptorium Parvulorum, &c., p. 166). A.S. *fleót*, a bay of the sea, as in Sœs Fleot, bay of the sea. Ælfred's tr. of Beda, i. 34.[5] Afterwards applied to any channel or stream, especially if shallow. The original sense was 'a place where vessels float,' and the derivation is from the old verb *fleet*, to float, &c."

The French, too, have a cognate term, especially in Norman towns, as Barfleur, Honfleur, Harfleur, &c., which were originally written Barbe*flot*, Hune*flot*, and Hare*flot*: and these were sometimes written Hareflou, Huneflou, and Barfleu, which latter comes very near to the Latin *flevus*, called by Ptolemy *fleus*, and by Mela *fletio*. Again, in Brittany many names end in *pleu*, or *plou*, which seems to be very much like the Greek πλεω: *full*, *swollen*, which corresponds to our Anglo-Saxon Flede; Dutch Vliet.

But it has another, and a very pretty name, "The River of Wells," from the number of small tributaries that helped to swell its stream, and from the wells which bordered its course; such as Sadler's Wells, Bagnigge Wells, White Conduit, Coldbath, Lamb's Conduit, Clerkenwell—all of which (although all were not known by those names in Stow's times) were in existence.

Stow, in his "Survey of London" (ed. 1603, his last edition, and which consequently has his best corrections), says—

> "That the riuer of Wels in the west parte of the Citty, was of olde so called of the Wels, it may be proued thus, William the Conqueror in his Charter to the Colledge of S. Marten le Grand in London, hath these wordes: I doe giue and graunt to the same Church all the land and the Moore, without the Posterne, which is called Cripplegate, on eyther part of the Postern, that is to say, from the North corner of the Wall, as the riuer of the Wels, there neare running, departeth the same More from the Wall, vnto the running water which entereth the Cittie; this water hath beene long since called the riuer of the Wels, which name of riuer continued, and it was so called in the raigne of Edward the first; as shall bee shewed, with also the decay of the saide riuer. In a fayre Booke of Parliament recordes, now lately restored to the Tower,[6] it appeareth that a Parliament being holden at Carlile in the yeare 1307, the 35 of Edward the I. Henry Lacy Earle of Lincolne, complayned that whereas, in times past the course of water, running at *London* vnder *Olde bourne* bridge, and *Fleete* bridge into the Thames, had beene of such bredth and depth, that 10 or 12 ships, Nauies at once with marchãdises, were wõt to come to the foresaid bridge of Fleete, and some of them to Oldborne bridge: now the same course by filth of the Tanners & such others, was sore decaied; also by raising of wharfes, but specially by a diversiõ of the waters made by them of the new *Temple*, for their milles standing without *Baynardes Castle*, in
>
> *Riuer of Wels.*
>
> *Decay of the Riuer of the Wels.*
>
> *Parliament Record.*
>
> *Riuer of Wels bare ships.*

the first yeare of King *John*, and diuers other impediments, so as the said ships could not enter as they were wont, & as they ought, wherefore he desired that the Maior of London, with the shiriffs, and other discrete Aldermen, might be appointed to view the course of the saide water, and that by the othes of good men, all the aforesaide hinderances might be remoued, and it to bee made as it was wont of old: wherupon *Roger le Brabazon*, the Constable of the Tower, with the Maior and Shiriffes, were assigned to take with them honest and discrete men, and to make diligent search and enquirie, how the said riuer was in old time, and that they leaue nothing that may hurt or stop it, but keepe it in the same estate that it was wont to be. So far the record. Wherupon it folowed that the said riuer was at that time cleansed, these mils remoued, and other things done for the preseruation of the course thereof, not withstanding neuer brought to the olde depth and breadth, whereupon the name of riuer ceased, and was since called a Brooke, namely Turnmill or Tremill Brooke, for that diuers Mils were erected vpon it, as appeareth by a fayre Register booke, conteyning the foundation of the Priorie at Clarkenwell, and donation of the landes thereunto belonging, as also by diuers other records.

Patent Record. *Mils by Baynards Castel, made in the first of King John.*

Turnemill Brooke.

"This brooke hath beene diuers times since clensed, namely, and last of all to any effect, in the yeare 1502 the 17th of Henrie the 7. the whole course of Fleete dike, then so called, was scowred (I say) downe to the Thames, so that boats with fish and fewel were rowed to Fleete bridge, and to Oldburne bridge, as they of olde time had beene accustomed, which was a great commoditie to all the inhabitants in that part of the Citie.

"In the yeare 1589, was granted a fifteene, by a common Councell of the citie, for the cleansing of this Brooke or dike: the money amounting to a thousand marks collected, and it was undertaken, that, by drawing diuerse springes about Hampsted heath, into one head and Course, both the citie should be serued of fresh water in all places of want, and also that by such a follower, as men call it, the channell of this brooke should be scowred into the riuer of Thames; but much mony being therein spent, y^{e} effect fayled, so that the Brooke by meanes of continuall incrochments vpon the banks getting ouer the water, and casting of soylage into the streame, is now become woorse cloyed and that euer it was before."

Fleete dyke promised to be clensed; the money collected, and the Citizens deceiued.

From this account of Stow's we find that the stream of the Fleet, although at one time navigable, had ceased to be so in his time, but we see, by the frontispiece, which is taken from a painting (in the Guildhall Art Gallery) by Samuel Scot, 1770 (?) that the mouth of the Fleet river, or ditch, call it which you like, was still, not only navigable, but a place of great resort for light craft.

The name "River of Wells" is easily to be understood, if we draw again upon Stow, who, in treating of "Auncient and present Riuers, Brookes, Boorns, Pooles, Wels, and Conduits of fresh water seruing the Citie," &c., says—

"Aunciently, vntill the Conquerors time, and 200 yeres after, the Citie of London was watered besides the famous Riuer of Thames on the South part; with the riuer of the WELS, as it was then called, on the west; with water called WALBROOKE running through the midst of the citie into the riuer of Thames, seruing the heart thereof. And with a fourth water or Boorne, which ran within the Citie through LANGBOORNE ward, watering that part in the East. In the west suburbs was also another great water, called OLDBORNE, which had his fall into the riuer of Wels: then was there 3 principall Fountaines or wels in the other Suburbs, to wit, Holy Well, Clements Well, and Clarkes Well. Neare vnto this last named fountaine were diuers other wels, to wit, Skinners Wel, Fags Wel, Loders Wel, and Rad Well; All which sayde Wels, hauing the fall of their ouerflowing in the foresayde Riuer, much encreased the streame, and in that place gaue it the name of Wel. In west Smithfield, there was a Poole in Recordes called HORSEPOOLE, and one other Poole neare vnto the parish Church of Saint GILES without CRIPPLEGATE. Besides all which they had in euerie streete and Lane of the citie diuerse fayre Welles and fresh Springs; and, after this manner was this citie then serued with sweete and fresh waters, which being since decaid, other means haue beene sought to supplie the want."

Here, then, we have a list of Wells, which are, together with those I have already mentioned, quite sufficient to account for the prettier name of the "River of Wells." Of these wells Stow writes in his deliciously-quaint phraseology:—

"There are (saith *Fitzstephen*) neare London, on the North side special wels in the Suburbs, sweete, wholesome, and cleare, amongst which *Holy well*, Clarkes wel, and Clements wel are most famous, and frequented by Scholers, and youthes of the Cittie in sommer evenings, when they walke forthe to take the aire.

Fitzstephen. Holy well.

"The first, to wit, Holy well, is much decayed, and marred with filthinesse laide there, for the heightening of the ground for garden plots.

"The fountaine called S. Clements well, North from the Parish

Church of S. Clements, and neare vnto an Inne of *Chancerie*, called *Clements* Inne, is faire curbed square with hard stone, kept cleane for common vse, and is alwayes full.

Clements well.

"The third is called Clarkes well, or Clarkenwell, [7] and is curbed about square with hard stone, not farre from the west ende of Clarkenwell Church, but close without the wall that incloseth it; the sayd Church tooke the name of the Well, and the Well tooke the name of the Parish Clarkes in London, who of old time were accustomed there yearely to assemble, and to play some large hystorie of holy Scripture. And, for example, of later time, to wit, in the yeare 1390, the 14 of Richard the Second, I read the Parish Clarks of London, on the 18 of July, playd Enterludes at *Skinners well*, neare vnto *Clarkes well*, which play continued three dayes togither, the King, Queene, and Nobles being present. Also the yeare 1409, the 10 of Henrie the 4. they played a play at the *Skinners well*, which lasted eight dayes, and was of matter from the creation of the worlde. There were to see the same, the most part of the Nobles and Gentiles in England, &c.

Clarks well.

Playes by the Parish Clarks at Clarks well.

Players at the Skinners well.

"Other smaller welles were many neare vnto Clarkes well, namely *Skinners well*, so called for that the Skinners of London held there certaine playes yearely playd of holy Scripture, &c. In place whereof the wrestlings haue of later yeares beene kept, and is in part continued at *Bartholomew tide*.

Skinners well.

Wrestling-place.

"Then was there Fagges well, neare vnto *Smithfield* by the *Charterhouse*, now lately dammed vp, *Tod well*, *Loders well*, and *Rad well*, all decayed, and so filled vp, that there places are hardly now discerned.

Fagges well.

"Somewhat North from *Holy well* is one other well curbed square with stone, and is called *Dame Annis the Cleare*, and not farre from it, but somewhat west, is also one other cleare water called *Perillous pond*[8], because diuerse youthes by swimming therein haue beene drowned; and thus much bee said for Fountaines and Wels.

"*Horse poole* in *Westsmithfield*, was sometime a great water, and because the inhabitants in that part of the Citie did there water their Horses, the same was, in olde Recordes, called *Horspoole*, it is now much decayed, the springs being stopped vp, and the land waters falling into the small bottome, remayning inclosed, with Bricke, is called *Smithfield pond*.

"By S. Giles Churchyard was a large water, called a *Poole*. I read in the year 1244 that Anne of Lodburie was drowned therein; this poole is now for the most part stopped vp, but the spring is preserued, and was cooped about with stone by the Executors of *Richard Wittington*."

Poole without Cripplegate.

Footnotes

[1] The name of this church has been Latinized as "Sancta Maria de Ossibus"!

[2] Swollen.

[3] The real quotation in Orosius is "þa wearð Tiber seo eâ swa fledu."

[4] A bag, or purse, a fold of a garment; a bay, bight, or gulf.

[5] I cannot find this quotation in " Boedoe Historia Ecclesiastica," &c., in any edition I have seen, but in 1.33. I do find Amfleet, and in John Smith's edition (Cambridge, 1722) as a note to Amj-leor he says "Vulgo Ambleteau or Ambleteuse, about 2 miles north of Boulogne"

[6] The Records were kept in the Tower, and at the Rolls Office, in a very neglected state, until they were removed to the present Record Office in Fetter Lane.

[7] This is the only one left whose position is a matter of certainty.

[8] Afterwards known as "Peerless Pool," an unmeaning cognomen.

CHAPTER II.

LONDON, for its size, was indeed very well supplied with water, although, of course, it was not laid on to every house, as now, but, with the exception of those houses provided with wells, it had to be fetched from fixed public places, which were fairly numerous. When the waters of the Fleet, and Wallbrook, in the process of time, became contaminated, Henry III., in the 21st year of his reign (1236), granted to the Citizens of London the privilege of conveying the waters of the Tye-bourne through leaden pipes to the City, "for the poore to drinke, and the rich to dresse their meate." And it is only a few years since, that close by what is now called "Sedley Place," Oxford Street, but which used to be the old hunting lodge of bygone Lord Mayors, some of these very pipes were unearthed, a fine cistern being uncovered at the same time.

For public use there were the great Conduit in West Cheape: the Tonne or Tun in Cornhill, fountains at Billingsgate, at Paul's Wharf, and St. Giles', Cripplegate, and conduits at Aldermanbury, the Standard in Fleet Street, Gracechurch Street, Holborn Cross (afterwards Lamb's Conduit), at the Stocks Market (where the Mansion House now stands), Bishopsgate, London Wall, Aldgate, Lothbury—and this without reckoning the supply furnished from the Thames by the enterprising German, or Dutchman, Pieter Moritz, who in 1582 started the famous waterworks close to where Fishmongers' Hall now stands.

The Fleet river (I prefer that title to the other cognomen, "Ditch"), flowing through London, naturally became somewhat befouled, and in Henry the VII.'s time, *circa* 1502, it was cleansed, so that, as aforesaid, "boats with fish and fewel were rowed to Fleete bridge, and to Oldburne bridge." We also know, as Stow records, that more springs were introduced into the stream from Hampstead, without effect, either as to deepening or purifying the river, which had an evil reputation even in the time of Edward I., as we see in Ryley's "Placita Parliamentaria" (ed. 1661), p. 340—

> "*Ad peticionem Com. Lincoln.* querentis quod cum cursus aque, que currit apud *London* sub *Ponte* de *Holeburn*, & *Ponte* de *Fleete* usque in *Thamisiam* solebat ita largus & latus esse, ac profundus, quod decem Naves vel duodecim ad predictum Pontem de *Fleete* cum diversis rebus & mercandisis solebant venire, & quedam illarum Navium sub illo Ponte transire, usque ad predictum Pontem de *Holeburn* ad predictum cursum mundanmum & simos exinde cariand, nunc ille cursus per fordes & inundaciones Taunatorum & p varias perturbaciones in predicta aqua, factas & maxime per exaltationem Caye & diversionem aque quam ipsi de *Novo Templo* fecerunt ad Molendina sua extra Castra *Baignard*, quod Naves predicte minime intrare possunt sicut solebant, & facere debeant &c. unde supplicat quod *M̄aior de London* assumptis secum Vice com. & discretionibus Aldermannis cursum predc̄e aque videat, & quod per visum & sacrm̃ proborum & legalium hominum faciat omnia nocumenta predicte aque que invinerit ammovere & reparare cursum predictum, & ipsum in tali statu manutenere in quo antiquitus esse solebat &c. *Ita responsum est, Assignentur Rogerus le Brabazon & Constabularius Turris, London Maior & Vice Com. London, quod ipsi assumptit secum discretionibus Aldermannis London, &c., inquirant per sacramentum &c., qualiter fieri consuevit & qualis cursus. Et necumenta que invenerint ammoveant & manueri faciant in eadem statu quo antiquitus esse solebat.*"

Latin for which a modern schoolboy would get soundly rated, or birched, but which tells us that even as far back as Edward I. the Fleet river was a nuisance; and as the endorsement (Patent Roll 35 Edward I.) shows—"De cursu aquæ de Fleta supervivendo et corrigendo," *i.e.*, that the Fleet river should be looked after and amended. But the Commission issued to perfect this work was discontinued, owing to the death of the king. (Patent Roll 1 Edward II., pars 1. m. dorso.) "De Cursu Aquæ Flete, &c., reducend et impedimenta removend."

And Prynne, in his edition of Cotton's "Records" (ed. 1669, p. 188), asks "whether such a commission and inquiry to make this river navigable to Holborn Bridge or Clerkenwell, would not now be seasonable, and a work worthy to be undertaken for the public benefit, trade, and health of the City and Suburbs, I humbly submit to the wisdom and judgment of those whom it most Concerns."

So that it would appear, although otherwise stated, that the Fleet was not navigable in May, 1669, the date of the publication of Prynne's book.

As a matter of fact it got to be neither more nor less than an open sewer, to which the lines in Coleridge's "Table Talk" would well apply—

"In Cöln, that town of monks and bones,
And pavements fang'd with murderous stones,
And rags, and hags, and hideous wenches,
I counted two-and-seventy stenches;
All well-defined and genuine stinks!
Ye nymphs, that reign o'er sewers and sinks,
The river Rhine, it is well known,
Doth wash the City of Cologne;
But, tell me, nymphs, what power divine
Shall henceforth wash the River Rhine?"

The smell of the Fleet river was notorious; so much so, that Farquhar, in his *Sir Harry Wildair*, act ii., says, "Dicky! Oh! I was just dead of a Consumption, till the sweet smoke of *Cheapside*, and the dear perfume of *Fleet Ditch* made me a man again!" In Queen Anne's time, too, it bore an evil reputation: *vide The Tatler* (No. 238, October 17, 1710) by Steele and Swift.[9]

"Now from all parts the swelling kennels flow,
And bear their trophies with them as they go:
Filth of all hues and odours seem to tell
What street they sail'd from, by their sight and smell.
They, as each torrent drives, with rapid force,
From Smithfield or St. Pulchre's shape their course,
And in huge confluent join'd at Snow Hill ridge,
Fall from the Conduit, prone to Holborn Bridge.
Sweepings from butchers' stalls, dung, guts, and blood,
Drown'd puppies, stinking sprats, all drench'd in mud,
Dead cats and turnip-tops come tumbling down the flood."

We get a glimpse of prehistoric London, and the valley of the Fleet, in Gough's "British Topography," vol. i. p. 719 (ed. 1780). Speaking of John Conyers, "apothecary, one of the first Collectors of antiquities, especially those relating to London, when the City was rebuilding.... He inspected most of the gravel-pits near town for different sorts and shapes of stones. In one near the sign of Sir J. Oldcastle, about 1680, he discovered the skeleton of an elephant, which he supposed had lain there only since the time of the Romans, who, in the reign of Claudius, fought the Britons near this place, according to Selden's notes on the Polyolbion. In the same pit he found the head of a British spear of flint, afterwards in the hands of Dr. Charlett, and engraved in Bagford's letter." We, now-a-days, with our more accurate knowledge of Geology and Palæontology, would have ascribed a far higher ancestry to the "elephant."

As a matter of course, a little river like the Fleet must have become the receptacle of many articles, which, once dropped in its waters, could not be recovered; so that it is not surprising to read in the *Mirror* of March 22, 1834 (No. 653, p. 180), an account of antiquarian discoveries therein, which, if not archæologically correct, is at least interesting.

> "In digging this Canal between Fleet Prison and Holborn Bridge, several Roman utensils were lately discovered at the depth of 15 feet; and a little deeper, a great quantity of Roman Coins, in silver, brass, copper, and all other metals except gold. Those of silver were ring money, of several sizes, the largest about the bigness of a Crown, but gradually decreasing; the smallest were about the size of a silver Twopence, each having a snip at the edge. And at Holborn Bridge were dug up two brazen lares, or household gods, about four inches in length, which were almost incrusted with a petrified matter: one of these was Bacchus, and the other Ceres; but the coins lying at the bottom of the current, their lustre was in a great measure preserved, by the water incessantly washing off the oxydizing metal. Probably the great quantity of coin found in this ditch, was thrown in by the Roman inhabitants of this city for its preservation at the approach of Boadicæa at the head of her army: but the Roman Citizens, without distinction of age or sex, being barbarously murdered by the justly enraged Britons, it was not discovered till this time.
>
> "Besides the above-mentioned antiquities, several articles of a more modern date were discovered, as arrow-heads, scales, seals with the proprietors' names upon them in Saxon characters; spur rowels of a hand's breadth, keys and daggers, covered over with livid rust; together with a considerable number of medals, with crosses, crucifixes, and Ave Marias engraven thereon."

A paper was read, on June 11, 1862, to the members of the British Archæological Association, by Mr. Ganston, who exhibited various relics lately recovered from the bed of the river Fleet, but they were not even of archæological importance—a few knives, the earliest dating from the fifteenth century, and a few knife handles.

Previously, at a meeting of the same Society, on December 9, 1857, Mr. C. H. Luxmore exhibited a green glazed earthenware jug of the sixteenth century, found in the Fleet.

And, before closing this antiquarian notice of the Fleet, I cannot but record some early mention of the river which occur in the archives of the Corporation of the City of London:—

> (17 Edward III., A.D. 1343, Letter-book F, fol. 67.) "Be it remembered that at the Hustings of Common Pleas, holden on the Monday next before the Feast of Gregory the Pope, in the 17th year of the reign of King Edward, after the Conquest, the Third, Simon Traunceys, Mayor, the Aldermen and the Commonalty, of the City of London, for the decency and cleanliness of the same city, granted upon lease to the butchers in the Parish of St. Nicholas Shambles, in London, a piece of land in the lane called 'Secollane' (sea coal), neare to the water of Flete, for the purpose of there, in such water, cleansing the entrails of beasts. And upon such piece of land the butchers aforesaid were to repair a certain quay at their charges, and to keep the same in repair; they paying yearly to the Mayor of London for the time being, at the Feast of our Lord's Nativity, one boar's head." [10]
>
> (31 Edward III., A.D. 1357, Letter-book G, fol. 72.) "Also, it is ordered, that no man shall take, or cause to be carried, any manner of rubbish, earth, gravel, or dung, from out of his stables or elsewhere, to throw, and put the same into the rivers of Thames and Flete, or into the Fosses around the walls of the City: and as to the dung that is found in the streets and lanes, the same shall be carried and taken elsewhere out of the City by carts, as heretofore; or else by the *raykers* [11] to certain spots, that the same may be put into the *dongebotes*, [12] without throwing anything into the Thames; for saving the body of the river, and preserving the quays, such as Dowegate, Quenhethe, and Castle Baynards, (and) elsewhere, for lading and unlading; as also, for avoiding the filthiness that is increasing in the water, and upon the banks of the Thames, to the great abomination and damage of the people. And, if any one shall be found doing the Contrary hereof, let him have the prison for his body, and other heavy punishment as well, at the discretion of the Mayor and of the Aldermen." [13]
>
> (7 Henry V. A.D. 1419, Journal 1, fol. 61.) "It is granted that the *risshbotes*[14] at the Flete and elsewhere in London shall be taken into the hands of the Chamberlain; and the Chamberlain shall cause all the streets to be cleansed."[15]

The northern heights of London, the "ultima Thule" of men like Keats, and Shelley, abound in springs, which form the bases of several little streams, which are fed on their journey to their bourne, the Thames (to which they act as tributaries), by numerous little brooklets and rivulets, which help to swell their volume. On the northern side of the ridge which runs from Hampstead to Highgate, birth is given to the Brent, which, springing from a pond in the grounds of Sir Spencer Wells, is pent up in a large reservoir at Hendon, and finally debouches into the Thames at Brentford, where, from a little spring, which it is at starting, it becomes so far a "fleet" as to allow barges to go up some distance.

SHEPHERD'S WELL, HAMPSTEAD.

On the southern side of the ridge rise the Tybourne, and the Westbourne. The former had its rise in a spring called Shepherd's Well, in Shepherd's Fields, Hampstead, which formed part of the district now known as Belsize Park and FitzJohn's Avenue, which is the finest road of private houses in London. Shepherd's Well is depicted in Hone's "Table Book," pp. 381, 2, and shows it as it was over fifty years since. Alas! it is a thing of the past; a railway tunnel drained the spring, and a mansion, now known as The Conduit Lodge, occupies its site. It meandered by Belsize House, through St. John's Wood, running into Regent's Park, where St. Dunstan's now is, and, close to the Ornamental Water, it was joined by a little rivulet which sprang from where now, is the Zoological Gardens. It went across Marylebone Road, and, as nearly as possible, Marylebone Lane shows its course; then down South Molton Street, passing Brook Street, and Conduit Street, by Mayfair, to Clarges Street, across Oxford Street and into a pond in the Green Park called the Ducking Pond, which was possibly used as a place of punishment for scolds, or may have been an ornamental pond for water-fowl. Thence it ran in front of Buckingham Palace, where it divided, which was the cause of its name. Twy, or Teo (double), and Bourne, Brook—one stream running into the Thames west of Millbank, doing duty by the way in turning the Abbey Mill (whence the name), and the other debouching east of Westminster Bridge, thus forming the Island of Thorns, or Thorney Isle, on which Edward the Confessor founded his abbey, and the City of Westminster.

The Westbourne took its rise in a small pond near "Telegraph Hill," at Hampstead; two or three brooklets joined it, and it ran its course across the Finchley Road, to the bottom of Alexandra Road, Kilburn, where it was met by another stream, which had its source at Frognal, Hampstead. It then became the West bourne, as being the most westerly of all the rivers near London, taking the Wallbrook, the Fleet, and the Tybourne.

Its course may be traced down Kilburn Park Road, and Shirland Road. Crossing the Harrow Road where now is Westbourne Park Station, *Eastbourne* and *Westbourne* Terraces mark the respective banks, and, after crossing the Uxbridge Road, it runs into the Serpentine at the Engine House. Feeding that sheet of water, it comes out again at the Albert Gate end, runs by Lowndes Square, Cadogan Place, &c., and, finally, falls into the river at Chelsea Hospital.

Footnotes

[9] *Journal to Stella*, October 17, 1710—"This day came out *The Tatler*, made up wholly of my Shower, and a preface to it. They say it is the best thing I ever writ, and I think so too."

[10] "Memorials of London and London Life in the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries," by H. J. Riley, 1868, p. 214.

[11] The street sweepers.

[12] Dung boats.

[13] See Riley, p. 299.

[14] This was probably because the rushes were spilt in the river. At that time the house-floors were strewn with rushes, which were brought to London in "Rush boats;" and an ordinance, *temp.* 4 Henry V., provides that "all rushes in future, laden in boats or skiffs, and brought here for sale, should be sold by the cart-load, as from of old had been wont to be done. And that the same cart-loads were to be made up within the boats and skiffs in which the said rushes are brought to the City, and not upon the ground, or upon the wharves, walls, or embankments of the water of Thames, near or adjacent to such boats or skiffs; under a heavy penalty upon the owner or owners of such boats, skiffs, and rushes, at the discretion of the Mayor and Aldermen."

[15] See Riley, p. 675.

CHAPTER III.

THE Fleet, as far as can be ascertained, owes its birth to an ornamental water, fed by springs—one of the numerous ponds in Highgate and Hampstead—in the park of Ken Wood, the seat of Earl Mansfield, now occasionally occupied by the fourth successor to that title; who, being keeper of the royal Castle of Scone, prefers, as a rule, his northern residence. In the No Popery riots of 1780, with which Lord George Gordon was so intimately connected, Ken Wood House was on the brink of being destroyed by the rioters, who had, already, wrecked his lordship's house in Bloomsbury Square, and destroyed his most valuable library. Tradition says that Ken Wood was saved owing to the landlord of "The Spaniards," well known to all pedestrian frequenters of Hampstead, giving them his beer, &c., until they were incapacitated, or unwilling, to fulfil their quest, meanwhile sending messengers for the Horse Guards, who opportunely arrived, and prevented the destruction of the mansion. It is quite possible that this is a true story, for a footnote (p. 69) in Prickett's "History of Highgate" says: "The following is copied from a receipt of one of the constables of the Hundred of Ossulston: 'Received 8s. 6d., being the proportion taxed and assessed for and towards the payment of the several taxations and assessments which have been made upon the said Parish (amounting to the sum of £187. 18s. 7d.) towards an equal contribution, to be had and made for the relief of the several inhabitants of said Hundred; against whom, the several persons who were damnified by rioters within the same Hundred, in the month of June, 1780, have obtained verdicts, and had their executions respectively.'"

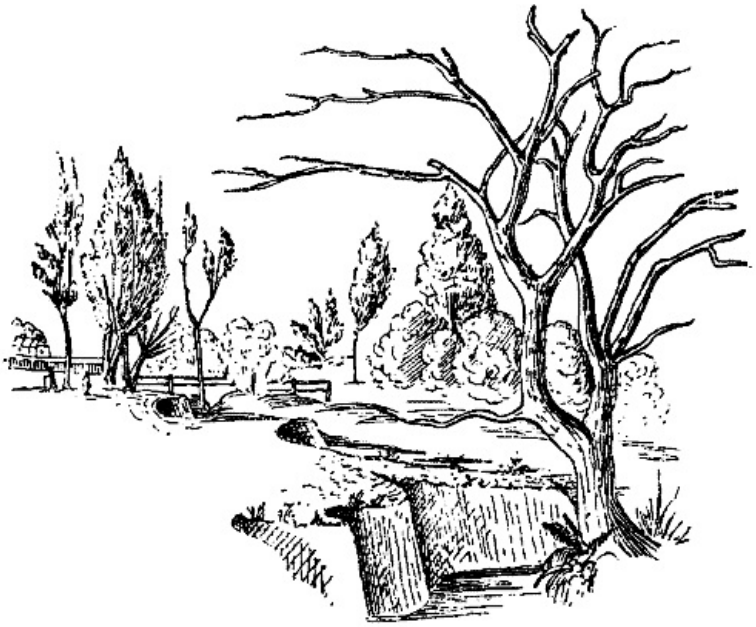
Commencing thus in one of the prettiest parts of the most picturesque suburbs of London, it flows from one to the other, right through the chain of the Highgate Ponds, fed by several rills, the first being near the Hampstead end of Millfield Lane—which is, by some, regarded as its source. From the lower pond it crossed the Highgate Road, and, for some distance, it ran parallel with it, although a little way eastward. It again crossed the Highgate Road not far from its junction with the Kentish Town Road, the course of which it followed, until it came to Hawley Road, where it was joined by a sister brook, whose source was the pond in the Vale of Health at Hampstead, flowing from which, it was fed by a brooklet, over which the abortive viaduct of Sir Thomas Marion Wilson's construction is carried. It ran into, and through, the Hampstead Ponds, which end at the lower east heath, near Pond Street (a locality easily recognized when once any one has seen St. Stephen's Church, Haverstock Hill, one of the most beautiful churches in London). These ponds are immortal, if they needed immortality, as the very first page of "Pickwick" gives an entry in the Transactions of the Pickwick Club:

> "*May 12, 1827.* Joseph Smiggers, Esq., P.V.P., M.P.C., presiding. The following resolutions unanimously agreed to—
>
> "'That this Association has heard read, with feelings of unmingled satisfaction, and unqualified approval, the paper communicated by Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G.C., M.P.C., entitled, "Speculations on the Source of the Hampstead Ponds, with some observations on the Theory of Tittlebats"; and that this Association does hereby return its warmest thanks to the said Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G.C., M.P.C., for the same.'"

Its memory is still retained in the Fleet Road.

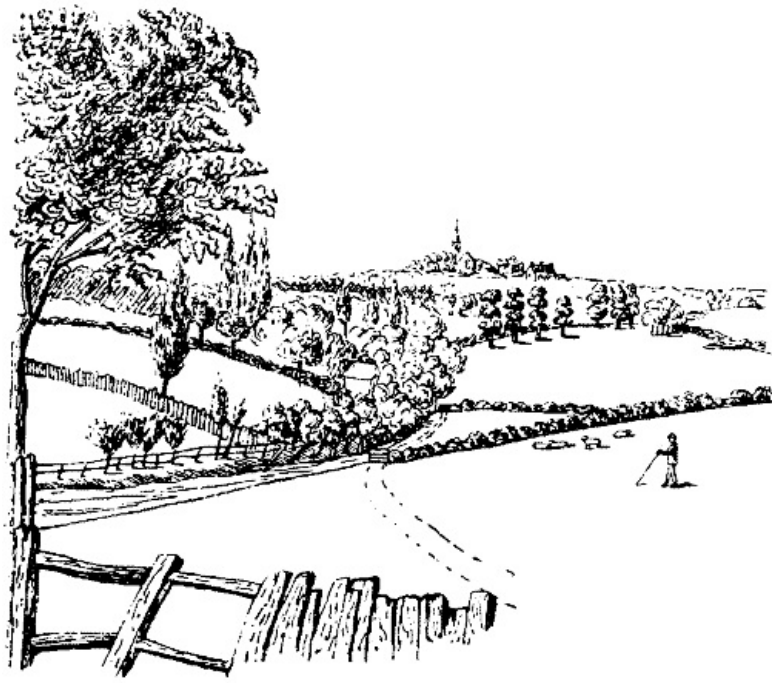
On its way through Kentish Town it passed through a purely pastoral country, such as we, who know the district only as covered with houses, can hardly reconcile with existing circumstances. The Guildhall Collection relating to the Fleet River, is very rich in water-colour drawings and pen-and-ink sketches of undoubted authenticity, and from them I have selected what, in my opinion, are the most suitable for this work. [16]

From the above, and this view of Highgate, so late back as 1845, we can fairly judge of the pleasant scenery which existed almost at our doors—before the iron roads brought population, which begat houses, which destroyed all rusticity, leaving bricks and mortar on the site of verdant meads, and millions of chimneys vomiting unconsumed carbon and sulphur, in the place of the pure fresh air which once was dominant.



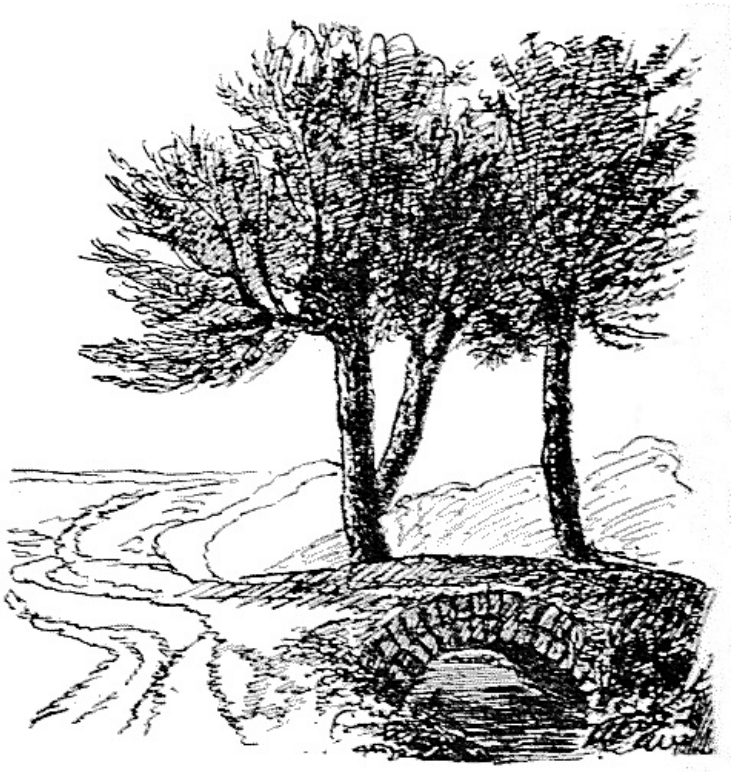
THE FLEET, KENTISH TOWN. *Circa* 1837.

Here we see the Fleet running its quiet course—and the other sketches bear witness to its rurality.



VIEW OF THE VALLEY OF THE FLEET AND HIGHGATE CHURCH, FROM FORTESS TERRACE, KENTISH TOWN,
SEPT. 28, 1845.
(*Water colour by A. Crosby.*)

After the Fleet had recrossed the Highgate Road near the junction of that road and the Kentish Town Road, it passed near the *Gospel Oak*, which now gives its name to a railway station in the locality. About this oak, there was a tradition that it was so called because St. Augustine preached underneath its boughs—a fact which is probably as correct as the story that the Church of St. Pancras was the first Christian Church in England. In truth, there are, or were, many Gospel Oaks and Elms throughout the country; for instance, there is an iron foundry near the parishes of Tipton and Wednesbury called *Gospel Oak Works*. It was, as a matter of fact, a traditionary custom, in many places, when, on Holy Thursday (Ascension Day), the parochial bounds were beaten, to read a portion of the Gospels under some well-known tree, and hence its name. One or two quotations will easily prove this.



THE FLEET AT KENTISH TOWN

In the "Bury Wills," p. 118, is the following passage in the will of John Cole of Thelnetham, dated May 8, 1527: "Item, I will haue a newe crosse made according to Trappett's crosse at the Hawe lanes ende, and set vp at Short Grove's end, where the gospell is sayd vpon Ascension Even, for y^{e} w^{ch} I assigne x^{s}."

And, in the poem of Herrick's "Hesperides," which is addressed "To Anthea."

Dearest, bury me
Under that holy Oke, or Gospel Tree;
Where, (though thou see'st not,) thou
may'st think upon
Me, when thou yerely go'st procession."

It also passed near Parliament, or Traitors', Hill—a name which is much in dispute; some maintaining that it was fortified by the Parliamentary Army, under Cromwell, for the protection of London, others that the 5th of November conspirators met here to view the expected explosion of the Houses of Parliament. This, which forms the most southern part of Hampstead Heath, and therefore the nearest, and most accessible to the great bulk of Londoners, has a beautiful view of Highgate and London, and has, I am happy to say, been preserved as an open space for the public.

THE FLEET AT KENTISH TOWN.

We have now followed the Fleet in its course to Kentish Town, the etymon of which is, to say the least, somewhat hazy. Being so, of course, an immense amount of theory has been expended upon it. Some contend that it springs from the Prebendary attached to St. Paul's Cathedral, of Cantelupe, or Cantelows, now (in *Crockford*, called Cantlers): one antiquary suggesting that it owes its name to the delta formed by the junction of the two branches of the Fleet—from *Cant* or *Cantle*, a corner;—whilst yet another authority thinks that, as the Fleet had its source from Ken Wood—it was called Ken-ditch—hence Kenditch or Kentish Town. Be it as it may, it was a very pleasant and rural suburb, and one of some note, for herein William Bruges, Garter King-at-Arms, had a country house, at which he entertained, in the year 1416, the Emperor Sigismund, who came over here, in that year, to try and mediate between our Henry V. and the King of France.

In still older times it formed part of the great Middlesex forest, which was full of wolves, wild

boars, deer, and wild oxen; but we find that, in 1252, Henry III. granted to Thomas Ive, permission to inclose a portion of the highway adjoining his mansion at Kentessetone. And in 1357, John of Oxford, who was Mayor of London in 1341, gave, amongst other things, to the Priory of the Holy Trinity, in London, a mill at Kentish Town—which, of course, must have been turned by the Fleet. The kind donor was one of the very few Mayors who died during his mayoralty.

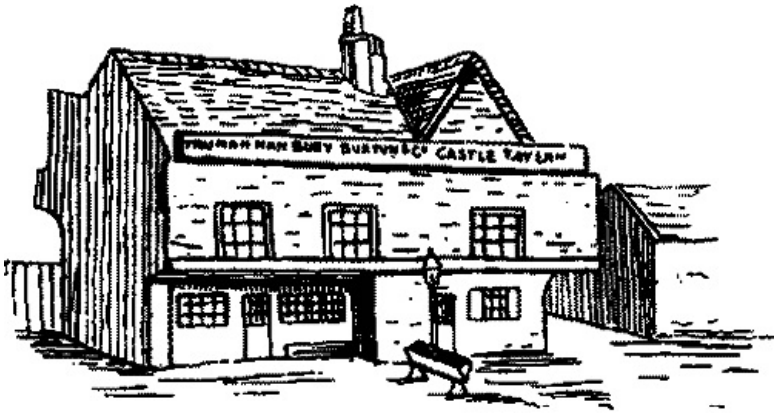
It is said, too, that Nell Gwynne had a house in Kentish Town, but I can find not the slightest confirmation of the rumour; still, as there is a very good pen-and-ink sketch of the old house said to be hers, I give it, as it helps to prove the antiquity of Kentish Town, now, alas! only too modern.

OLD HOUSE, KENTISH TOWN, SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN NELL GWYNNE'S.

And there was another old house close by the Fleet there, an old farmhouse known as Brown's dairy.

**THE FLEET AT KENTISH TOWN—BROWNE'S DAIRY FARM,
SEPT. 21, 1833.**

This old Farmhouse had, evidently, a nobler origin, for it was moated; and, in 1838, the moat existed on the east and north sides. It belonged to the College of Christ Church, Oxford, and was held of the Manor of Cantelows at a small fine. There was a good orchard, which at the above date (the time of its demolition) contained a large walnut tree and some mulberry trees. The building materials were sold for £60, so that it evidently had done its work, and passed away in the ripeness of old age.



CASTLE, KENTISH TOWN ROAD, 1848.

The Castle Inn is said to have been the oldest house in Kentish Town, and there is a tradition that Lord Nelson once lived here, "in order that he might keep his eye upon the Fleet," and planted a sycamore in the garden.

Before taking leave of Kentish Town, I cannot help recording a legal squabble, which resulted in a victory for the public.—*Times*, February 12, 1841:—

> "Court of Queen's Bench, *Thursday, February 11, 1841*. (Sittings at Nisi Prius, at Westminster, before Lord Denman and a special jury.)
>
> "The Queen *v.* Tubb.
>
> "This was an Indictment against the Defendant for obstructing a footpath leading from Pond Lane, at Hampstead, over Traitors' and Parliament Hill, to Highgate.
>
> "The case lasted the whole day.
>
> "The jury brought a verdict for the Crown, thus establishing the right of the Public to one of the most beautiful walks in the neighbourhood of the metropolis."

The Fleet babbled through the meadows, until its junction with that other stream which flowed from the pond in the Vale of Health at Hampstead, which took place where now is Hawley Street, and the united brook, or river, ran across what are now the Kentish, and Camden, Town Roads, and between Great College Street, and King Street; it then followed the course of the present road to King's Cross, passing by St. Pancras Church—which, originally, was of great antiquity, and close by which was a celebrated healing well, known as Pancras' Wells. These waters cured everything—scurvy, king's evil, leprosy, cancers, ulcers, rheumatism, disorders of the eyes, and pains of the stomach and bowels, colds, worms, &c., &c.

In the Church, and Churchyard, were interred many illustrious dead, especially Roman Catholics, who seem to have taken a particular fancy to have their remains buried there, probably on account of the tradition that this was the last church in which mass was celebrated. It was a favourite burial-place of the French clergy— and a story is told (how true I know not) that, down to the French Revolution, masses were celebrated in a church in the south of France, dedicated to St. Pancras, for the souls of the faithful interred here.

THE BRILL.

Many historical names are here preserved—amongst whom are Pasco de Paoli, the famous Corsican; Walker, whose dictionary is still a text book; the Chevalier d'Eon, respecting whose sex

there was once such a controversy; Count O'Rourke, famous in the world of fashion in 1785; Mrs. Godwin—better known, perhaps, as Mary Woolstencraft—who also was married here; William Woollett, the eminent landscape engraver, a branch of art in which he may be said to have been the father; Samuel Cooper, whose miniatures cannot be surpassed; Scheemaker the younger, a sculptor of no small note. Nor in this *campo santo* was Music unrepresented, for there, amongst others, lie the bodies of Mazzinghi, who brought the violin into fashion here in 1740; and Beard, a celebrated singer in 1753. The river flows hence to Battle Bridge, or King's Cross, as it is now termed, forming in its way a sort of pond called "Pancras Wash," and running through a low-lying district called "The Brill." [17] This peculiarly unsavoury neighbourhood has now been cleared away, in order to afford siding room, &c., for the Midland Railway.

But Dr. Stukeley, who certainly had Roman Camps on the brain, discovered one in the Brill. He planned it out beautifully. Here were the Equites posted, there the Hastati, and there were the Auxiliarii. He made the Fleet do duty for a moat which nearly surrounded Cæsar's Prætorium, and he placed a Forum close by St. Pancras' Church, to the northward of which he assigned a Prætorium to Prince Mandubrace. Is it not true? for is it not all written in his "Itinerary"? and does he not devote the first seventeen pages of the second volume of that work, entirely to the Brill, assuring us of the great pleasure he received in striding over the ground—following, in imagination, the footsteps of the Roman Camp Master, who *paced* out the dimensions of the Camp?

Footnotes

[16] See pages 28, 29, 30, 31, &c.

[17] See previous page.

CHAPTER IV.

THAT it was *countrified* about this part of London, is shown by the accompanying Copy of an engraving, by J. T. Smith, of a view "near Battle Bridge."[18]

The etymology of Battle Bridge, which consists of only one arch, and now forms a part of the Fleet Sewer, is a much vexed question. At one time it was an article of faith, not to be impugned, that here, A.D. 61, was fought the famous battle between the Romans, under Suetonius Paulinus, and the Britons, under Boadicea, Queen of the Iceni, which ended so disastrously for the natives —eighty thousand of whom are said to have been killed. But there seems to be a doubt, as to whether this was the exact spot where this historical contest took place, for Tacitus makes no mention of the little river Fleet, which must then have been navigable for light and small craft, for an anchor was found, in its bed, at Kentish Town. He only describes it (Tacit. Ann. lib. xiv. c. 34) a spot of ground, "narrow at the entrance, and sheltered in the rear by a thick forest." No remains have ever been exhumed, nor have Roman, or British, relics been found near the spot.

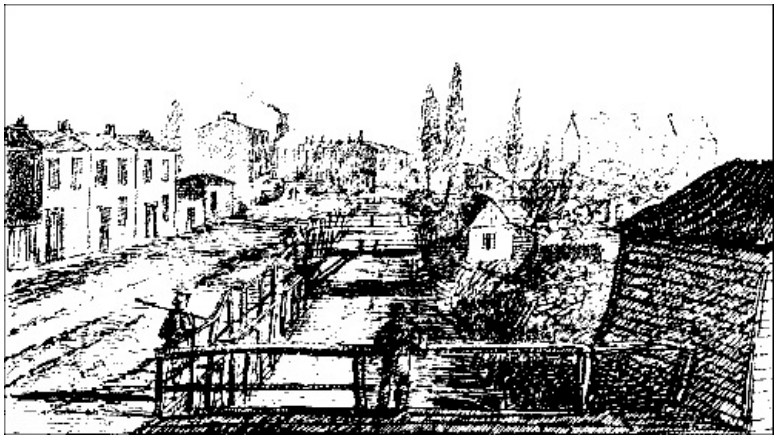
BATTLE BRIDGE.

In the first quarter of this century the Fleet, for the greater part of its time, ran placidly along, as we see by these two pen-and-ink sketches, taken at Battle Bridge. [19] But, occasionally, it forgot its good manners, and overflowed its banks, flooding portions of Kentish Town, Somers Town, and Battle Bridge, as we read in the *Gentlemans Magazine*, vol. lxxxviii. part i. p. 462, Saturday, May 9, 1818:—

> "From the heavy rain, which commenced yesterday afternoon at six o'clock, and continued pouring incessantly till four this morning, Battle Bridge, St. Pancras, and part of Somers Town were inundated. The water was several feet deep in many of the houses, and covered an extent of upwards of a mile. The carcases of several sheep and goats were found near Hampstead Reservoir, and property was damaged to a very considerable amount."

BATTLE BRIDGE.

There must have been a Mill here, for Stow tells us that in the reign of Edward VI. "A Miller of Battaile Bridge was set on the Pillory in Cheape, and had both his eares cut off, for seditious words by him spoken against the Duke of Somerset."



BATTLE BRIDGE.

Here, as elsewhere, just outside London, the road was not too safe for travellers, as the following account of a highway robbery will show. It was committed by one John Everett, whose career in life had been rather chequered. As an apprentice he ran away, and enlisted in Flanders, rising to the rank of sergeant. When the troops returned, he purchased his discharge, and got a situation in the Whitechapel Debtors' Court, but had to leave it, and he became a companion of thieves, against whom he turned king's evidence. He got into debt, and was locked up in the Fleet Prison, but was allowed to reside within the Rules, a district round about the prison, out of which no prisoner might wander; and there, in the Old Bailey, he kept a public-house. But he could not keep away from evil doing, and was sent to Newgate. On the expiration of his sentence, he turned highwayman. In the course of his professional career he, on December 24, 1730, stopped a Coach at Battle Bridge, which coach contained two ladies, a child, and a maidservant, and he despoiled them, but not uncivilly. The husband of one of the ladies coming up, pursued him, and next day he was caught. It was not then, any more than it is now, that every rogue got his deserts, but this one did, for he was hanged at Tyburn, February 20, 1731.

The name of "Battle Bridge" is well-nigh forgotten, and "King's Cross" reigns in its stead. Yet how few Londoners of the present generation know whence the name is derived! If they ever trouble their heads about it at all, they probably imagine that it was a cross, like the Eleanor Crosses, raised to the memory of some king.

And what king, think you, was it intended to keep in perpetual remembrance? None other than his Most Gracious Majesty King George the Fourth, of pious memory. Why this monument was raised I have never been able to learn, unless it was to celebrate his death, which took place in 1830, and probably to hold up his many virtues, as bright exemplars, to ages yet unborn; but a mad fit came over the inhabitants of Battle Bridge, and the hideous structure arose. It was all shoddy; in the form of an octagon building ornamented with pilasters, all substantially built of brick, and covered over with compo or cement, in order to render it more enduring. It was used as a police-station, and afterwards as a public-house, whilst the pediment of the statue was utilized as a camera obscura. I don't think they knew exactly what they were about, for one party wanted it to be called Boadicea's Cross, another went in for it being nationally named St. George's Cross; but the goodness of the late king was more popular, and carried the day, and we now enjoy the *nominis umbra* of King's Cross, instead of the old cognomen of Battle Bridge. It had a very brief existence. It was built between 1830 and 1835, and was demolished in 1845; the stucco statue only having been *in situ* for ten years. It is said that the nose of this regal statue had, for its base, an earthen draining tile, and that it was offered to a gentleman for sixpence!

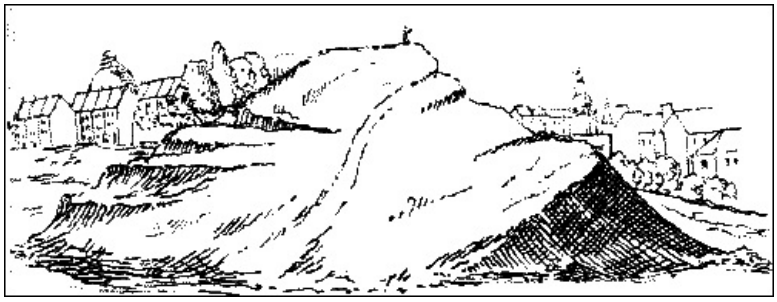
There hardly seems to be any connection between "the first gentleman in Europe" and dustmen, but there is a slight link. Battle Bridge was peculiarly the home of the necessary dustman, and in a song called "The Literary Dustman," commencing—

"They call me Adam Bell, 'tis clear
That Adam vos the fust man,
And by a co-in-side-ance queer
Vy I'm the fust of dustmen,"

is the following verse:—

"Great sculptors all conwarse wi' me,
And call my taste divine, sirs,
King George's statty at King's Cross,
Vos built from my design, sirs."

Close by here, in Gray's Inn Road, was a mountain of refuse and dust; but it was as profitable as were the heaps of Mr. Boffin in Charles Dickens's "Our Mutual Friend." This mound once had a curious clearance, so it is said. It was bought in its entirety, and sent over to Russia, to help make bricks to rebuild Moscow; and the ground on which it stood was, in 1826, sold to a Company for £15,000.



DUST HEAP AT BATTLE BRIDGE.

"My dawning Genus fust did peep,
Near Battle Bridge,'tis plain, sirs:
You recollect the cinder heap,
Vot stood in Gray's Inn Lane, sirs?"

Let us turn to a sweeter subject, and gossip about St. Chad's Well, the site of which is now occupied by the Metropolitan Railway at King's Cross. St. Chad is a saint in the English calendar, and might have been a distinguished temperance leader, if the number of wells dedicated to him, is any criterion. He lived in the seventh century, and was educated at Lindisfarne (at least so Bede says), and afterwards became Bishop of Lichfield, and, at his death, his soul is said to have been accompanied to heaven by angels and sweet music.

A good modern account is given in Hone's "Every Day Book," vol. i. pp. 323, 4, 5, which, as it was taken from actual observation about fifty years since, may well be transcribed. Speaking of the aforesaid dust-heap he says:—

> "Opposite to this unsightly site, and on the right hand side of the road, is an anglewise faded inscription—

> "It stands, or rather dejects, over an elderly pair of wooden gates, one whereof opens on a scene which the unaccustomed eye may take for the pleasure-ground of Giant Despair. Trees stand as if made not to vegetate, clipped hedges seem unwilling to decline, and nameless weeds straggle weakly upon unlimited borders. If you look

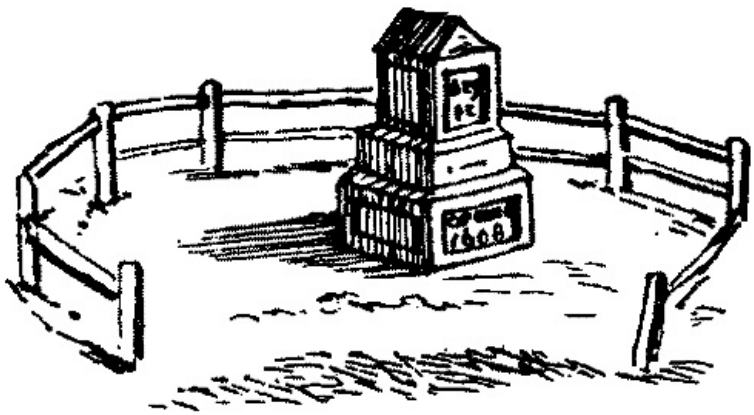
upwards you perceive, painted on an octagon board, 'Health restored and preserved.' Further on, towards the left, stands a low, old-fashioned, comfortable-looking, large-windowed dwelling, and, ten to one, but there also stands at the open door, an ancient ailing female, in a black bonnet, a clean, coloured cotton gown, and a check apron, her silver hair only in part tucked beneath the narrow border of a frilled cap, with a sedate and patient, yet somewhat inquiring look. She gratuitously tells you that 'the gardens' of 'St. Chad's Well' are for 'Circulation' by paying for the waters, of which you may drink as much, or as little, or nothing, as you please, at one guinea per year, 9s. 6d. quarterly, 4s. 6d. monthly, or 1s. 6d. weekly. You qualify for a single visit by paying sixpence, and a large glass tumbler, full of warm water, is handed to you. As a stranger, you are told, that 'St. Chad's Well was famous at one time.'

"Should you be inquisitive, the dame will instruct you, with an earnest eye, that 'people are not what they were,' 'things are not as they used to be,' and she 'can't tell what'll happen next.' Oracles have not ceased. While drinking St. Chad's water, you observe an immense copper, into which it is poured, wherein it is heated to due efficacy, and from whence it is drawn by a cock, into glasses. You also remark, hanging on the wall, a 'tribute of gratitude,' versified, and inscribed on vellum, beneath a pane of glass stained by the hand of time, and let into a black frame. This is an effusion for value received from St. Chad's invaluable water. But, above all, there is a full-sized portrait in oil, of a stout, comely personage, with a ruddy countenance, in a coat or cloak, supposed scarlet, a laced cravat falling down the breast, and a small red nightcap carelessly placed on the head, conveying the idea that it was painted for the likeness of some opulent butcher, who flourished in the reign of Queen Anne. Ask the dame about it, and she refers you to 'Rhone.' [20] This is a tall old man, who would be taller if he were not bent by years. 'I am ninety-four,' he will tell you, 'this present year of our Lord, one thousand, eight hundred, and twenty-five.' All that he has to communicate concerning the portrait is, 'I have heard say it is the portrait of St. Chad.' Should you venture to differ, he adds, 'this is the opinion of most people who come here.' You may gather that it is his own undoubted belief.

"On pacing the garden alleys, and peeping at the places of retirement, you imagine the whole may have been improved and beautified, for the last time, by some countryman of William III., who came over and died in the same year with that king, and whose works here, in wood and box, have been following him piecemeal ever since.

"St. Chad's Well is scarcely known in the neighbourhood save by its sign-board of invitation and forbidding externals; ... it is haunted, not frequented. A few years, and it will be with its waters, as with the water of St. Pancras' Well, which is enclosed in the garden of a private house, near old St. Pancras Churchyard."

But, although the prophecy in "Hone" was destined to be fulfilled, yet it was twelve years before it came about, and it was not until September 14, 1837, that Messrs. Warlters and Co. sold, at Garraway's Coffee House, Change Alley, Cornhill, the "valuable Copyhold Property, situate in Gray's Inn Lane, near King's Cross, Battle Bridge," which consisted of "The well-known and valuable Premises, Dwelling-house, Large Garden, and Offices, with the very celebrated Spring of Saline Water called St. Chad's Well, which, in proper hands, would produce an inexhaustible Revenue, as its qualities are allowed by the first Physicians to be unequalled."



ST. CHAD'S WELL.

It was a good sized piece of ground; in shape of a somewhat irregular triangle, of which the base measured about 200 feet, and from apex to base 95 feet. It was Copyhold. The vendor was not to be asked for a title prior to 1793, and it was held of the Manor of *Cantlowes* or *Cantlers*, subject to a small fine, certain, of 6s. 8d., on death or alienation, and to a Quit Rent of 5d. per annum. We should say, nowadays, that the assessment was very small, as, including the large gardens, both back and front, the whole was only valued, including the *Saline Spring*, at £81 10s. per annum, of which £21 10s. was let off, but which formed but a small portion of the property.

What would not the waters of St. Chad's Well cure? Really I think the proprietor hardly knew

himself, for a handbill I have before me commences— "The celebrity of these waters being confined chiefly to its own immediate vicinity for a number of years; the present proprietor has thought proper to give more extensive publicity to the existence of a nostrum provided by Nature, through Divine Providence, approaching nearest that great desideratum of scientific men and mankind in general, throughout all ages; namely, an Universal Medicine.... The many cures yearly performed by these waters does not come within the limits of a handbill, but, suffice it to say, that here, upon trial, the sufferer finds a speedy and sure relief from Indigestion and its train, Habitual Costiveness, the extensive range of Liver Complaints, Dropsy in its early stages, Glandular Obstructions, and that bane of life, Scrophula; for Eruptions on the Face or Skin its almost immediate efficacy needs but a trial." This wonderful water, with use of garden, was then, say 1835, supposed to be worth to the sufferer £1 per annum, or threepence a visit, or you might have it supplied at eightpence per gallon.

And yet it seems only to have been a mild aperient, and rather dear at the price. In the *Mirror* of April 13, 1833, Mr. Booth, Professor of Chemistry, professed to give an analysis of the "Mineral Waters in the neighbourhood of London," and he thus writes of St. Chad's Well: "It is aperient, and is yet much resorted to by the poorer classes of the metropolis, with whom it enjoys considerable reputation. From an examination, I find it to be a strong solution of sulphate of soda and sulphate of magnesia"— but he does not favour us with a quantitative analysis.

Neither does the proprietor, one Wm. Lucas, who not only propounded the handbill from which I have quoted, but published a pamphlet on the healing virtues of the spring, and he also adds to Mr. Booth's qualitative analysis, "a small quantity of Iron, which is held in Solution by Carbonic Acid."

"The Well from which the Waters are supplied, is excluded from the external air; the Water when freshly drawn is perfectly clear and pellucid, and sparkles when poured into a glass; to the taste it is slightly bitter, not sufficiently so to render it disagreeable; indeed, Persons often think it so palatable as to take it at the table for a common beverage."

This, however, is slightly at variance with the following, "As a Purgative, more so than could be inferred from their taste, a pint is the ordinary dose for an Adult, which operates pleasantly, powerfully, and speedily:" qualities which are scarcely desirable for a Table water.

That, at one time, this Well was in fashion, although in 1825 it was in its decadence, I may quote from the pamphlet (which, however, must be taken by the reader, *quantum valeat*):

> Jonathan Rhone, who was Gardener and Waiter at these Wells upwards of Sixty Years, says, that when he first came into office at about the middle of the eighteenth Century, the Waters were in great repute, and frequently were visited by eight or nine hundred Persons in a morning: the charge for drinking the Waters was Three pence each Person, and they were delivered at the Pump Room for exportation, at the rate of Twenty-four pint bottles, packed in hamper, for One Pound Cash."

Footnotes

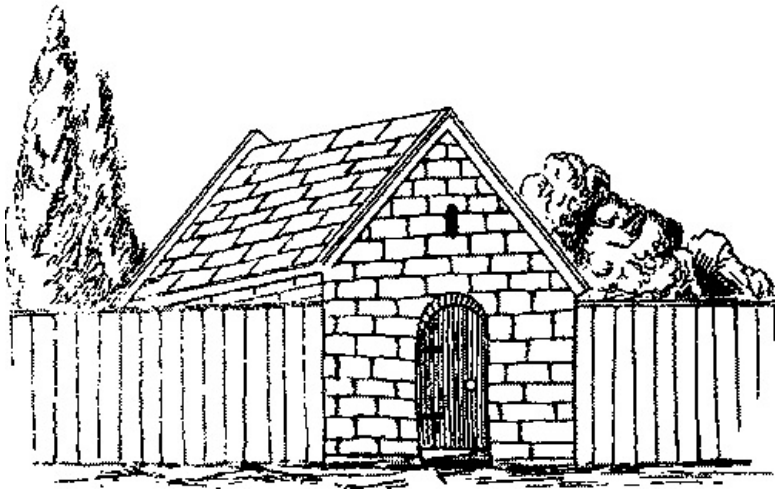
[18] See next page.

[19] See pages 41, 42.

[20] Rhone was an old waiter at the Well. See p. 51.

CHAPTER V.

AS the Fleet was "the River of Wells" it may be as well to notice the Wells, which, although not absolutely contributing towards swelling its volume, are yet closely adjacent—namely, White Conduit, and Sadlers Wells. Both of these, as indeed were all the other Wells about London, were first known as mineral springs, a fact which drew the middle classes to seek relief from real, or fancied, ailments, by drinking the medicinal waters, as at Bath, Epsom, Cheltenham, Harrogate, Brixton, and elsewhere. Wherever people congregate, the mere drinking of salutary water, is but tame work, and the animal spirits of some of them must find an outlet in amusements, which materially assist, to say the least, in the agreeable passing of time. But the mere drinking of waters must have been irksome—even if people took to it as well as *Shadwell* in his play of "Epsom Wells" describes:—



THE WHITE CONDUIT.

"*Brisket.* I vow it is a pleasurable Morning: the Waters taste so finely after being fudled last Night. Neighbour *Fribbler* here's a Pint to you.

"*Fribbler.* I'll pledge you, Mrs. *Brisket*; I have drunk eight already.

"*Mrs. Brisket.* How do the Waters agree with your Ladyship?

"*Mrs. Woodly.* Oh, Sovereignly: how many Cups have you arrived to?

"*Mrs. Brisket.* Truly Six, and they pass so kindly."

By degrees these medicinal waters, or Spas, as they were termed in later times, fell into desuetude, possibly because medical knowledge was advancing; and the Wells, with their gardens attached, became places of outdoor recreation, where the sober citizen could smoke his pipe, and have his beer, or cider, whilst his wife, and her gossips, indulged in tittle tattle over their Tea—which, although much dearer than at present, was a very popular beverage, and so, from health resorts, they imperceptibly merged into the modern Tea Garden—which, in its turn, has become nearly extinct, as have the Ranelagh and Vauxhall of a former age; which, however, we have seen, in our time, somewhat resuscitated in the outdoor portion of the several Exhibitions which have taken place, in the few past years, at South Kensington.

The White Conduit had a history of its own, which we can trace back, at all events, to the fifteenth century, for it was built as a reservoir to supply what was, afterwards, the Charterhouse.

This we can see by a royal licence, dated December 2, 9 Henry VI. an. 1431,[21] which granted to John Feryby, and his wife Margery, that they might grant and assign to the Prior and Convent of the House of the Salutation of the Blessed Mary of the Carthusian Order, by London, a certain well spring (*fontein*) and 53 perches of land in length, and 12 feet in breadth, in the vill of Iseldon (Islington) to have to them and their successors for ever, and to the same Prior and Convent, to take the said land, and construct a certain subterraneous aqueduct from the aforesaid well spring, through the aforesaid land, and through the King's highway aforesaid, and elsewhere, as it may seem best &c., *non obstante* the Act against mortmain (*Teste Humfride Duce Gloucestr' Custode Angliæ apud Westm.*).

As we know, Henry VIII. put an end to the Monastic Orders in England, and, at the dissolution of

the Priory, the reversion of the site, and house thereof, was granted, on April 14, 1545, [22] to Sir Roger North, in fee, together with "all that the Head and original Well Spring of one Channel or Aqueduct situate and being in a certain field in the parish of Islington"—and it also gave, all the channels, aqueducts, and watercourses under ground "up to the site of the said House of the Carthusians."

But, although the spring might, and did, supply the Charter House, yet it is possible that the Conduit House, from which it got the name of *White* Conduit, from its being built of white stone—was built by Thomas Sutton, who founded the Hospital of the Charter House,—in 1611. It was either built by him, or repaired in 1641, for, incorporated in the building, was a stone containing his arms—and initials. [23]

The other initials have not been identified. As the "White Conduit" it was known well into this century, but it fell somewhat into decay, about 1812—was never repaired, and, finally, was pulled down in 1831—to make way for the completion of some new buildings in Barnsbury Road, as a continuation of Penton Street: and the stone was broken up, and used in making the New Road.

STONE IN THE WHITE CONDUIT.
***Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lxxi. p. 1161, A.D. 1801.**

So much for the Conduit itself; but it, although inert, exercised a large share in the amusements of Londoners down to a comparatively recent period. It was pleasantly situated in the fields, and, until this century, during the latter half of which, the modern Babylon has become one huge mass of bricks and mortar, it served as a pleasant place of recreation for the Cits. There was an uninterrupted prospect of Hampstead and Highgate—which bounded the northern view, and which was purely pastoral, with the exception of sparsely-dotted farmhouses. There is a tradition that, on the site of the comparatively modern *White Conduit House*, was (in the reign of Charles I.), a tavern in the course of erection, and that, being finished, the workmen were carousing at the very moment of the monarch's decapitation.

Doubtless, in these suburban fields, there was, for very many years, a place for refreshment, which probably took the form, in the Arcadian age of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, of new milk, curds and whey, and syllabubs, for Islington was famous for its dairy produce, [24] as we know by the account of the entertainment given to Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth Castle in 1575 by the Earl of Leicester, when the Squier Minstrel of Middlesex made a long speech in praise of Islington, whose motto was said to be, "Lactis Caseus infans."

The earliest really authentic notice of the White Conduit House, I can find, is in the *Daily Advertiser* August 10, 1754. "This is to acquaint the public, that, at the White Conduit House, the proprietor, for the better accommodation of the gentlemen and ladies, has completed a long walk, with a handsome circular Fish-pond, a number of shady, pleasant arbours inclosed with a fence 7 feet high to prevent being the least incommoded from the people in the fields. Hot loaves, [25] and butter every day, milk directly from the Cows; coffee and tea, and all manners of liquors in the greatest perfection: also a handsome Long Room, from whence is the most Copious prospects and airy situation of any now in vogue. I humbly hope the continuance of my friends' favours, as I make it my chief study to have the best accommodations, and am, Gentlemen and Ladies, your obliged humble servant, Robert Bartholomew. *Note.* My Cows eat no grains, neither any adulteration in the Milk or Cream. Bats and Balls for Cricket, and a convenient field to play in."

This gives us a very fair insight into the sober relaxations of our great-great-grandfathers: and that the White Conduit House was, about this time, a resort for harmless recreation; and, certainly, it would rejoice the modern temperance enthusiasts to find that the principal beverages there drank were "non-intoxicants." Oliver Goldsmith used frequently to go there, walking from his house at Islington; and, in his "Citizen of the World," letter 122, he writes, "After having surveyed the Curiosities of this fair and beautiful town, I proceeded forward, leaving a fair stone building on my right; here the inhabitants of London often assemble to celebrate a feast of hot rolls and butter. Seeing such numbers, each with their little tables before them, employed on this occasion, must no doubt be a very amusing sight to the looker-on, but still more so to those who perform in the Solemnity."

And the same story of simplicity of amusement, and refreshment, is amusingly told in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for May, 1760, vol. xxx. p. 242, in a short poem by William Woty, the author of the "Shrubs of Parnassus, consisting of a variety of poetical essays, moral and comic, by I. Copywell, of Lincoln's Inn, Esq. 1760."

"*And to* White Conduit *House*
We will go, will go, will go."
Grub Street
Register.

"Wish'd Sunday's come—mirth brightens ev'ry face,
And paints the rose upon the housemaid's cheek
Harriot, or *Mol* more ruddy. Now the heart
Of prentice resident in ample street,
Or alley, Kennel-wash'd *Cheapside*, *Cornhill*
Or *Cranborne*, thee, for calcuments renown'd,
With joy distends. His meal meridian o'er,
With switch in hand, he to *White Conduit* house
Hies merry hearted. Human beings here
In couples multitudinous assemble,
Forming the drollest groupe, that ever trod
Fair Islingtonian plains. Male after male,
Dog after dog, succeeding—husbands—wives—
Fathers and mothers—brothers—sisters—friends—
And *pretty little boys and girls*. *Around, Across, along*, the garden's shrubby maze,
They walk, they sit, they stand. What crowds press on,
Eager to mount the stairs, eager to catch
First vacant bench or chair in *long-room* plac'd.
Here prig with prig holds conference polite,
And indiscriminate, the gaudy beau,
And sloven mix. Here *he*, who all the week
Took bearded mortals by the nose, or sat
Weaving dead hairs, and whistling wretched strain,
And eke the sturdy youth, whose trade it is
Stout oxen to contend, with gold bound hat,
And silken stocking strut. The red-arm'd belle
Here shews her *tasty* gown, proud to be thought
The butterfly of fashion: and, forsooth,
Her haughty mistress deigns for once to tread
The same unhallow'd floor. 'Tis hurry all,
And ratling cups and saucers. Waiter here,
And waiter there, and waiter here *and* there,
At once is call'd—*Joe*—*Joe*—*Joe*—*Joe*—*Joe*—
Joe on the right—and *Joe* upon the left,
For ev'ry vocal pipe re-ecchoes *Joe*.
Alas, poor *Joe*! Like *Francis* in the play
He stands confounded, anxious how to please
The many-headed throng. But shou'd I paint
The language, humours, customs of the place,
Together with all curtsy's lowly bows,
And compliments extern, 'twould swell my page
Beyond it's limits due. Suffice it then,
For my prophetic muse to say, 'So long
As fashion rides upon the Wing of time,
While tea and cream, and buttered rolls can please,
While rival beaux, and jealous belles exist,
So long *White Conduit* house, shall be thy fame.
W. W."

Later on in the century, it was still a reputable place of resort. In 1774, there was a painting at one end of the garden, the perspective of which served, artificially, to augment its size; the round fish-pond in the centre of the garden, still existed, and the refreshment-rooms, or boxes, were hung with Flemish and other pictures.

Hone ("Every Day Book," vol. ii. p. 1201, &c.) says, "About 1810, the late celebrated Wm.

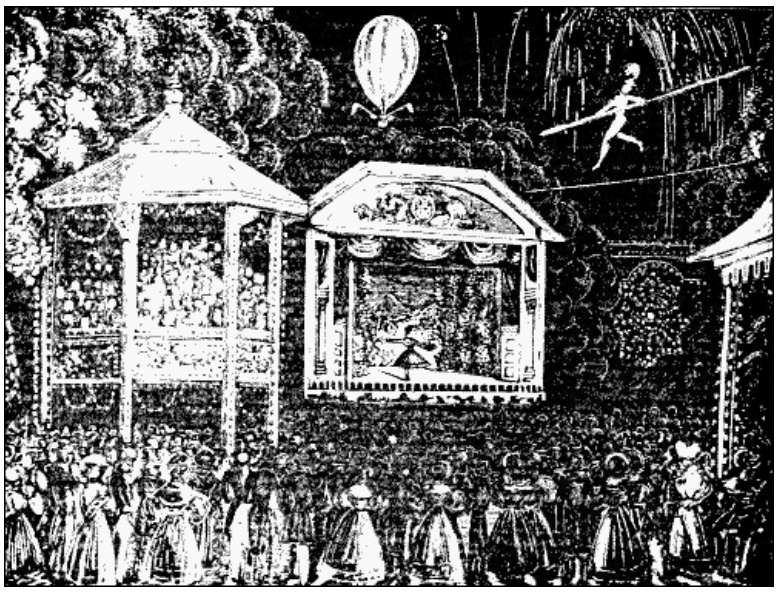
Huntingdon S.S.[26] of Providence Chapel, who lives in a handsome house within sight, was at the expense of clearing the spring for the use of the inhabitants; but, because his pulpit opinions were obnoxious, some of the neighbouring vulgar threw loads of soil upon it in the night, which rendered the water impure, and obstructed its channel, and, finally, ceasing to flow, the public was deprived of the kindness he proposed. The building itself, was in a very perfect state at that time, and ought to have been boarded up after the field it stood in was thrown open. As the new buildings proceeded, it was injured, and defaced, by idle labourers and boys, from mere wantonness, and reduced to a mere ruin. There was a kind of upper floor or hayloft in it, which was frequently a shelter to the houseless wanderer. A few years ago some poor creatures made it a comfortable hostel for the night with a little hay. Early in the morning a passing workman perceived smoke issuing from the crevices, and as he approached, heard loud cries from within. Some mischievous miscreants had set fire to the fodder beneath the sleepers, and, afterwards, fastened the door on the outside: the inmates were scorched by the fire, and probably they would all have been suffocated in a few minutes, if the place had not been broken open.

THE WHITE CONDUIT.

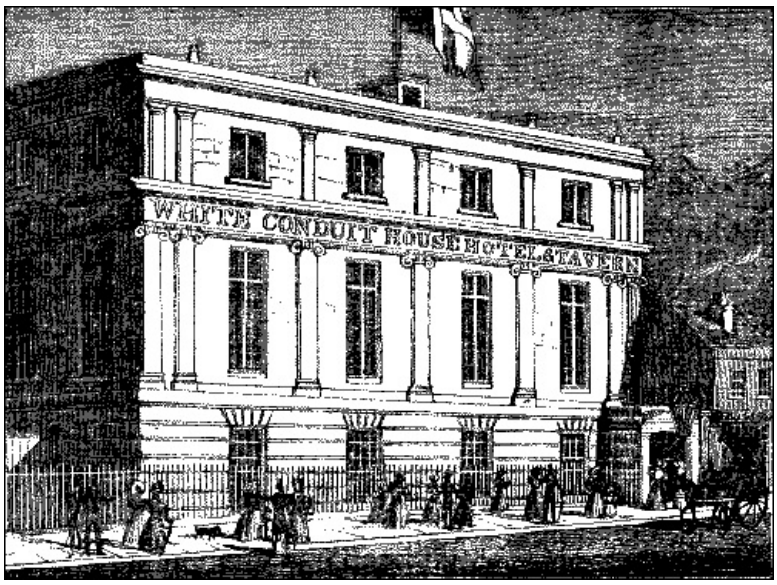
"The 'White Conduit' at this time (1826) merely stands to those who had the power, and neglected to preserve it.

"To the buildings grown up around, it might have been rendered a neat ornament, by planting a few trees, and enclosing the whole with an iron railing, and have stood as a monument of departed worth.

"'White Conduit House' has ceased to be a recreation in the good sense of the word. Its present denomination is the 'Minor Vauxhall,' and its chief attraction during the passing summer has been Mrs. Bland.[27] She has still powers, and, if their exercise here, has been a stay and support to this sweet melodist, so far the establishment may be deemed respectable. It is a ground for balloon flying and skittle playing, and just maintains itself above the very lowest, so as to be one of the most doubtful places of public resort. Recollections of it some years ago are more in its favour. Its tea gardens then, in summer afternoons, were well accustomed by tradesmen and their families; they are now comparatively deserted, and, instead, there is, at night, a starveling show of odd company and coloured lamps, a mock orchestra, with mock singing, dancing in a room which decent persons would prefer to withdraw their young folks from, if they entered, and fireworks 'as usual,' which, to say the truth, are, usually, very good."



WHITE CONDUIT GARDENS (INTERIOR).



WHITE CONDUIT GARDENS (EXTERIOR).

As time went on, the place did not improve, as we may see by the *New Monthly Magazine* for 1833, in an article—part of "Four Views of London." Speaking of the White Conduit—"Here too is that Paradise of apprentice boys, White *Cundick Couse*, as it is cacophoniously pronounced by its visitors, which has done much to expel the decencies of the district. Thirty years ago this place was better frequented—that is, there was a larger number of respectable adults—fathers and mothers, with their children, and a smaller moiety of shop lads, and such like Sunday bucks, who were awed into decency by their elders. The manners, perhaps, are much upon a *par* with what they were. The ballroom gentlemen then went through country dances with their hats on, and their coats off:—hats are now taken off, but coats are still unfashionable on these gala nights. The belles of that day wore long trains to their gowns: it was a favourite mode of introduction to a lady there, to tread on it, and then, apologizing handsomely, acquaintance was begun, and soon ripened into an invitation to tea, and the hot loaves for which these gardens were once celebrated. Being now a popular haunt, those who hang on the rear of the march of human nature, the suttlers, camp followers, and plunderers, know that where large numbers of men and boys are in pursuit of pleasure, there is a sprinkling of the number to whom vice and debauchery are ever welcome: they have, therefore, supplied what these wanted; and Pentonville may now hold up its head, and boast of its depravities before any part of London."[28]

It got more and more disreputable, until it was pulled down in 1849, and the present White Conduit Tavern was built upon a portion of its site.

Footnotes

[21] Cart. Antiq. in Off. Augm. vol. ii. No. 43.

[22] Pat. 36 Henry VIII. p. 13, m. 31.

[23] See next page.

[24] In an early sixteenth century book (unique) printed by Wynkyn de Worde, called "Cocke Lorelles Boke" the dairy farming at Islington is mentioned—

"Also mathewe to the drawer of London,
And sybly sole mylke-wyfe of Islington."

[25] These Rolls were as famous as Chelsea Buns. "White Conduit loaves" being a familiar street cry.

[26] This revivalist used these initials as meaning "Sinner Saved."

[27] A somewhat famous singer in the latter part of the eighteenth and first quarter of the nineteenth centuries. She sang and acted at Drury Lane and the Haymarket—and also sang at Vauxhall. She became poor, and on July 5, 1824, she had a benefit at Drury Lane, which, with a public subscription, produced about £800. Lord Egremont also allowed her £80 a year. She was somewhat related to Royalty: her husband, Bland, an actor at Drury Lane, being the brother of Mrs. Jordan, who was the wife of William the Fourth.

[28] A frequent visitor at these gardens was the late George Cruikshank, and many subjects were transferred to his sketch book. He was so well known, as to become a sort of terror to the habitués of the place, and children were threatened, when fractious, "that if they made such ugly faces, Mr. Cruikshank would put them in his book."

CHAPTER VI.

SADLER'S WELLS does not really feed the Fleet River, but I notice the spring, for the same reason that I noticed the White Conduit.

A very fair account of its early history is given in a little pamphlet entitled "A True and Exact Account of Sadlers Well: or the New Mineral Waters. Lately found out at Islington: Treating of its nature and Virtues. Together with an Enumeration of the Chiefest Diseases which it is good for, and against which it may be used, and the Manner and Order of Taking of it. Published for publick good by T. G. (Thomas Guidot) Doctor of Physick. Printed for *Thomas Malthus* at the *Sun* in the *Poultry*. 1684."

It begins thus:—"The New Well at *Islington* is a certain Spring in the middle of a Garden, belonging to the Musick House built by Mr. *Sadler*, on the North side of the Great Cistern that receives the New River Water near Islington, the Water whereof was, before the Reformation, very much famed for several extraordinary Cures performed thereby, and was, thereupon, accounted sacred, and called *Holy Well*. The Priests belonging to the Priory of *Clarkenwell* using to attend there, made the People believe that the virtues of the Waters proceeded from the efficacy of their Prayers. But upon the Reformation the Well was stopt up, upon a supposition that the frequenting it was altogether superstitious, and so, by degrees, it grew out of remembrance, and was wholly lost, until found out, and the Fame of it revived again by the following accident.

"Mr. *Sadler* being made Surveyor of the High Ways, and having good Gravel in his own Gardens, employed two Men to Dig there, and when they had Dug pretty deep, one of them found his Pickax strike upon some thing that was very hard; whereupon he endeavoured to break it, but could not: whereupon thinking with himself that it might, peradventure, be some Treasure hid there, he uncovered it very carefully, and found it to be a Broad, Flat Stone: which, having loosened, and lifted up, he saw it was supported by four Oaken Posts, and had under it a large Well of Stone Arched over, and curiously carved; and, having viewed it, he called his fellow Labourer to see it likewise, and asked him whether they should fetch Mr. *Sadler*, and shew it to him? Who, having no kindness for *Sadler*, said no; he should not know of it, but as they had found it, so they would stop it up again, and take no notice of it; which he that found it consented to at first, but after a little time he found himself (whether out of Curiosity, or some other reason, I shall not determine) strongly inclined to tell *Sadler* of the Well; which he did, one Sabbath Day in the Evening.

"*Sadler*, upon this, went down to see the Well, and observing the Curiosity of the Stone Work, that was about it, and fancying within himself that it was a Medicinal Water, formerly had in great esteem, but by some accident or other lost, he took some of it in a Bottle, and carryed it to an Eminent Physician, telling him how the Well was found out, and desiring his Judgment of the Water; who having tasted and tried it, told him it was very strong of a Mineral taste, and advised him to Brew some Beer with it, and carry it to some Persons, to whom he would recommend him; which he did accordingly. And some of those who used to have it of him in Bottles, found so much good by it, that they desired him to bring it in Roundlets."

Sadler's success, for such it was, provoked the envy of others, and one or two satires upon the Wells were produced.

Soon after he opened the Wells, Evelyn visited them, as we read in his invaluable diary. "June 11, 1686. I went to see Middleton's receptacle of water [29] and the New Spa Wells, near Islington." The Spring was still known as Sadler's up to 1697 as we find in advertisements in the *Post Boy* and *Flying Post* of June, in that year. But the "Musick House" seems to have passed into other hands, for in 1699 it was called "Miles's Musick House." They seem to have had peculiar entertainments here, judging by an account in *Dawk's Protestant Mercury* of May 24, 1699. "On Tuesday last a fellow at Sadler's Wells, near Islington, after he had dined heartily on a buttock of beef, for the lucre of five guineas, eat a live cock, feathers, guts, and all, with only a plate of oil and vinegar for sawce, and half a pint of brandy to wash it down, and afterwards proffered to lay five guineas more, that he could do the same again in two hours' time."

That this was a fact is amply borne out by the testimony of Ned Ward, who managed to see most of what was going on in town, and he thus describes the sight in his rough, but vigorous language.

"With much difficulty we crowded upstairs, where we soon got intelligence of the beastly scene in agitation. At last a table was spread with a dirty cloth in the middle of the room, furnished with

bread, pepper, oil, and vinegar; but neither knife, plate, fork, or napkin; and when the beholders had conveniently mounted themselves upon one another's shoulders to take a fair view of his Beastlyness's banquet, in comes the lord of the feast, disguised in an Antick's Cap, like a country hangman, attended by a train of Newmarket executioners. When a chair was set, and he had placed himself in sight of the whole assembly, a live Cock was given into the ravenous paws of this ingurgitating monster."

In the same year, in his "Walk to Islington," Ward gives a description of the people who frequented this "Musick House."

"——mixed with a vermin trained up for the gallows,
As Bullocks[30] and files,[31] housebreakers and padders.[32]
With prize fighters, sweetners,[33] and such sort of traders,
Informers, thief-takers, deer-stealers, and bullies."

It seems to have been kept by Francis Forcer, a musician, about 1725, and the scene at the Wells is graphically described in "The New River, a Poem, by William Garbott."

"Through Islington then glides my best loved theme
And Miles's garden washes with his stream:
Now F—r's Garden is its proper name,
Though Miles the man was, who first got it fame;
And tho' it's own'd, Miles first did make it known,
F—r improves the same we all must own.
There you may sit under the shady trees,
And drink and smoak, fann'd by a gentle breeze;
Behold the fish, how wantonly they play,
And catch them also, if you please, you may,
Two Noble Swans swim by this garden side,
Of water-fowl the glory and the pride;
Which to the Garden no small beauty are;
Were they but black they would be much more rare:
With ducks so tame that from your hand they'll feed,
And, I believe, for that, they sometimes bleed.
A noble Walk likewise adorns the place,
To which the river adds a greater grace:
There you may sit or walk, do which you please,
Which best you like, and suits most with your ease.
Now to the Show-room let's awhile repair,
To see the active feats performed there.
How the bold Dutchman, on the rope doth bound,
With greater air than others on the ground:
What capers does he cut! how backward leaps!
With Andrew Merry eyeing all his steps:
His comick humours with delight you see,
Pleasing unto the best of company," &c.

But a very vivid description of Sadler's Wells is given in "Mackliniana, or Anecdotes of the late Mr. Charles Macklin, Comedian" in the *European Magazine* for 1801 (vol. xl. p. 16):—

"Being met one night at Sadler's Wells by a friend, who afterwards saw him home, he went into a history of that place, with an accuracy which, though nature generally denies to the recollection of old age in recent events, seems to atone for it in the remembrance of more remote periods.

"Sir, I remember the time when the price of admission *here* was but *threepence*, except

a few places scuttled off at the sides of the stage at sixpence, and which was usually reserved for people of fashion, who occasionally came to see the fun. Here we smoked, and drank porter and rum and water, as much as we could pay for, and every man had his doxy that liked it, and so forth; and though we had a mixture of very odd company (for I believe it was a good deal the baiting place of thieves and highwaymen) there was little or no rioting. There was a *public* then, Sir, that kept one another in awe.

"*Q.* Were the entertainments anything like the present? *A.* No, no; nothing in the shape of them; some hornpipes and ballad singing, with a kind of pantomimic ballet, and some lofty tumbling—and all this was done by daylight, and there were four or five exhibitions every day.

"*Q.* How long did these continue at a time? *A.* Why, Sir, it depended upon circumstances. The proprietors had always a fellow on the outside of the booth, to calculate how many people were collected for a second exhibition, and when he thought there were enough, he came to the back of the upper seats, and cried out, 'Is *Hiram Fisteman* here?' This was the cant word agreed upon between the parties, to know the state of the people without—upon which they concluded the entertainment with a song, dismissed that audience, and prepared for a second representation.

"*Q.* Was this in Rozamon's time? *A.* No, no, Sir; long before—not but old Rozamon improved it a good deal, and, I believe, raised the price generally to sixpence, and in this way got a great deal of money."

Space prevents one going into the merits of the Theatre here, but it may not be out of place if I mention some of the singers, and actors, who have appeared on those boards—Joey Grimaldi, Braham, Miss Shields (afterwards Mrs. Leffler), Edmund Kean, the great traveller Belzoni, Miss Tree, Phelps, of Shakespearian fame, Marston, and others, testify to the talent which has had its home in this theatre. One peculiarity about Sadler's Wells Theatre was the introduction of real water as a scenic effect. It seems to have been first used on Easter Monday, April 2, 1804, in an entertainment called *Naumachia*. A very large tank was made under the stage, and filled with water from the New River; and in this tank mimic men o' war bombarded Gibraltar, but were repulsed, with loss, by the heroic garrison. Afterwards, it was frequently used for *Spectacles*, in which water was used as an adjunct.

After this digression let us follow the course of the River Fleet. Leaving St. Chad's Well, and before coming to Bagnigge Wells, there stood in Gray's Inn Road an old public-house called the Pindar of Wakefield, the pounder, or keeper of the pound at that town, the famous George à Green, who gave Robin Hood a notable thrashing, extorting from that bold outlaw this confession —

"For this was one of the best
pinders
That ever I tryed with sword."

This old house was destroyed by a hurricane in November, 1723, when the two daughters of the landlord were killed by the falling walls. It was, however, at once rebuilt, and a public-house, bearing the same sign, exists at 328, Gray's Inn Road—most probably occupying the original site.

Footnotes

[29] The New River Head.

[30] A hector, or bully.

[31] A pickpocket.

[32] A tramp.

[33] A Sharper.

THE PINDAR OF WAKEFIELD.

CHAPTER VII.

BETWEEN this house, and Bagnigge Wells, was Bagnigge Wash, or Marsh, and Black Mary's Wells, or Hole. The etymology of this place is contested. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1813, part ii. p. 557, in an "Account of various Mineral Wells near London," is the following: "Lastly, in the same neighbourhood, may be mentioned the spring or conduit on the eastern side of the road leading from Clerken Well to Bagnigge Wells, and which has given name to a very few small houses as *Black Mary's Hole*. The land here was, formerly, called Bagnigg Marsh, from the river Bagnigg,[34] which passes through it. But, in after-time, the citizens resorting to drink the waters of the conduit, which then was leased to one Mary, who kept a black Cow, whose milk the gentlemen and ladies drank with the waters of the Conduit, from whence, the wits of that age used to say, 'Come, let us go to Mary's black hole.' However, Mary dying, and the place degenerating into licentiousness, about 1687, Walter Baynes Esqre, of the Inner Temple, enclosed the Conduit in the manner it now is, which looks like a great oven. He is supposed to have left a fund for keeping the same in perpetual repair. The stone with the inscription was carried away during the night about ten years ago. The water (which formerly fed two ponds on the other side of the road) falls into the old Bagnigge river."

This etymon, however, is contested in a pamphlet called *An experimental enquiry concerning the Contents, Qualities, Medicinal Virtues of the two Mineral Waters of* Bagnigge Wells, &c., by John Bevis, M.D. This pamphlet was originally published in 1767, but I quote from the third edition of 1819. "At what time these waters were first known cannot be made out with any degree of evidence. A tradition goes that the place of old was called Blessed Mary's Well; but that the name of the Holy Virgin having, in some measure, fallen into disrepute after the Reformation, the title was altered to Black Mary's Well, as it now stands upon Mr. Rocque's map, and then to Black Mary's Hole; though there is a very different account of these latter appellations; for there are those who insist they were taken from one Mary Woolaston, whose occupation was attending at a well, now covered in, on an opposite eminence, by the footway from Bagnigge to Islington to supply the soldiery, encamped in the adjacent fields, with water. But waving such uncertainties, it may be relied on for truth, that a late proprietor, upon taking possession of the estate, found two wells thereon, both steaned in a workmanlike manner; but when, or for what purpose, they were sunk, he is entirely ignorant."

But Black Mary's Hole, during the first half of the last century, had a very queer reputation. There was a little public-house with the sign of "The Fox at Bay," which probably had something to do with the numerous highway robberies that occurred thereabouts.

In Cromwell's "History of Clerkenwell," pp. 318, 319, we hear of the last of Black Mary's Hole. He says, "Beneath the front garden of a house in SPRING PLACE, and extending under the foot-pavement almost to the turnpike gate called the Pantheon Gate, lies the capacious receptacle of a *Mineral Spring*, which in former times was in considerable repute, both as a chalybeate, and for its supposed efficacy in the cure of sore eyes.... About ten years back, when Spring Place was erected, the builder removed every external appearance of Walter Baynes's labours, and converted the receptacle beneath into a cesspool for the drainage of his houses. The spring thus degraded, and its situation concealed, it is probable that the lapse of a few more years would have effaced the memory of it for ever, had not an accident re-discovered it in the summer of 1826. Its covering, which was only of boards, having rotted, suddenly gave way, and left a large chasm in the footpath. After some efforts, not perfectly successful, to turn off the drainage, it was then arched with brickwork, and a leaden pump placed over it, in the garden where it chiefly lies. But the pump being stolen during the following winter, the spring has again fallen into neglect, and possibly this page alone will prevent its being totally forgotten."

Still following the Fleet to its outfall, we next come to Bagnigge Well, a chalybeate spring, first used medicinally, and then, like all these Spas, merely as a promenade, and place of out-of-door recreation.

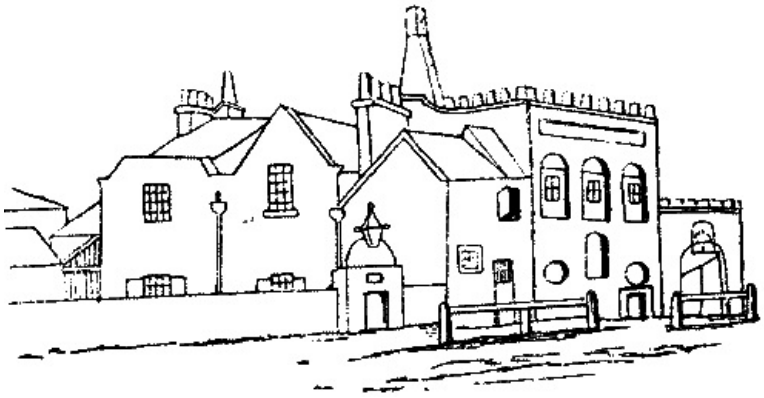
Originally, this spring probably belonged to the Nunnery at Clerkenwell, and may possibly be the "Rode Well" mentioned in the Register of Clerkenwell. But we are indebted to Dr. Bevis, from whose pamphlet I have already quoted, for a history of its modern rise and development (p. 38).

"In the year 1757, the spot of ground in which this well is sunk was let out to a gentleman curious in gardening, who observed that the oftener he watered his flowers from it the worse they throve. I happened, toward the end of that summer, to be in company with a friend who made a transient visit to Mr. HUGHES, and was asked to taste the water; and, being surprised to find its flavour so near that of the best German chalybeates, did not hesitate to declare my opinion, that it might be made of great benefit both to the public and himself. At my request, he sent me some of the water, in a large stone bottle, well corked, the next day; a gallon whereof I immediately set over a fire, and by a hasty evaporation found it very rich in mineral contents, though much less so than I

afterwards experienced it to be when more leisurely exhaled by a gentle heat. Whilst this operation was carrying on, I made some experiments on the remainder of the water, particularly with powdered galls, which I found to give, in less than a minute, a very rich and deep purple tincture to it, that lasted many days without any great alteration. I reported these matters to Mr. Hughes, but, soon after, a very dangerous illness put a stop to my experiments, which I did not resume for a considerable time, when the proprietor called, and told me his waters were in very great repute, and known by the name of Bagnigge Wells; which I remembered to have seen in the newspapers, without so much as guessing it had been given to these springs. Mr. Hughes took me to his wells, where I was not a little pleased with the elegant accommodations he had provided for company in so short a time."

The house attached to the Spa is said to have been the residence of Nell Gwyn, but tradition has assigned her so many houses; at Chelsea, Bagnigge Wells, Highgate, Walworth, and Filberts, near Windsor—nay, one enterprising tradesman in the Strand has christened a milk shop "Nell Gwyn's Dairy," and has gone to some expense, in pictorial tiles, to impress on passers-by the genuineness of his assertion.

Still, local tradition is strong, and, in a book called "The Recreations[35] of Mr. Zigzag the elder" (a pseudonym for Mr. John Wykeham Archer, artist and antiquary), which is in the Library of the City of London, and which is profusely "Grangerised" by the author, is a small water colour of Bagnigge House, the reputed dwelling of Nell Gwyn, which I have reproduced in outline, and on this drawing is a note, "Moreover several small tenements at the north end of the Garden were formerly entitled Nell Gwynne's Buildings, which seems to verify the tradition." [36]



BAGNIGGE HOUSE. (Said to have been Nell Gwyn's.)

But the evidence is all of a *quasi* kind. In the long room, supposed to have been the banqueting room, was, over the mantel, a bust, an *alto relievo*, of a female, supposed to be Nell Gwyn, and said to be modelled by Sir Peter Lely, enclosed in a circular border of fruit, which, of course, was at once set down as a delicate allusion to the actress's former calling of orange wench in the theatres. The bust and border were painted to imitate nature, and on either side were coats of arms—one the Royal arms, and, on the other side, the Royal arms quartered with others, which were supposed to be those assumed by the actress. When the old house was pulled down, the bust disappeared, and no one knows whither it went.

I give a quotation from the *Sunday Times*, July 5, 1840, not as adding authority, or weight, to the idea that Bagnigge House was Nell's residence, but to show how deeply rooted was the tradition. It is a portion of the "*Maximms and Speciments of William Muggins, Natural Philosopher, and Citizen of the World*"—

> "Oh! how werry different London are now to wot it war at the time as I took my view on it from the post; none of them beautiful squares and streets, as lies heast and west, and north of the hospital, war built then; it war hall hopen fields right hup to Ampstead an Ighgate and Hislington. Bagnigge Well stood by itself at the foot of the hill, jist where it does now; and then it looked the werry pictur of countryfiedness and hinnocence. There war the beautiful white washed walls, with the shell grotto in the hoctagon summer house, where Nell Gwynne used to sit and watch for King Charles the Second. By the by, a pictur done by a famous hartist of them days, Sir Somebody Neller I thinks war his name, represents the hidentical ouse (it war a fine palace then) with the hidentical hoctagon summer house, with the beautiful Nelly leaning hout of the winder, with her lilly white hand and arm a-beckoning, while the King is seed in the distance galloping like vinking across the fields a waving his hat and feathers; while a little page, with little tobacker-pipe legs, in white stockings, stands ready to hopen a little door in the garden wall, and let hin the royal wisitor, while two little black and tan spanels is frisking about and playing hup hold gooseberry among the flower beds.
>
> That ere pictur used to hang hup in the bar parlor; its wanished now—so are the bust as were in the long room; but there's another portrait pictur of her, all alone by herself, done by Sir Peter Lely, still to be seen. (This here last coorosity war discovered honly a year or two ago, rolled hup among sum rubbige in the loft hunder the roof.)"

The old house, however, was evidently of some importance, for, over a low doorway which led into the garden, was a stone, on which was sculptured a head in relief, and the following inscription—

X
THIS IS BAGNIGGE
HOUSE NEARE
THE PINDAR A
WAKEFIELDE
1680.

thus showing that the Pindar of Wakefield was the older house, and famous in that locality. This doorway and stone were in existence within the last forty years, for, in a footnote to page 572 of the *Gentleman's Magazine* of June, 1847, it says, "The gate and inscription still remain, and will be found, where we saw them a few weeks since, in the road called Coppice Row, on the left going from Clerkenwell towards the New Road."

The following illustration gives Bagnigge Wells as it appeared at the end of last century.

BAGNIGGE WELLS, NEAR BATTLE BRIDGE, ISLINGTON

We have read how these gardens were first started in 1757, but they soon became well known and, indeed, notorious, as we read in a very scurrilous poem called "Bagnigge Wells," by W. Woty, in 1760—

"Wells, and the place I sing, at early dawn
Frequented oft, where male and female meet,
And strive to drink a long adieu to pain.
In that refreshing Vale with fragrance fill'd,
Renown'd of old for Nymph of public fame
And amorous Encounter, where the sons
Of lawless lust conven'd—where each by turns
His venal Doxy woo'd, and stil'd the place
Black Mary's Hole—there stands a Dome superb,
Hight Bagnigge; where from our Forefathers hid,
Long have two Springs in dull stagnation slept;
But, taught at length by subtle art to flow,
They rise, forth from Oblivion's bed they rise,
And manifest their Virtues to Mankind."

The major portion of this poem (?) is rather too *risque* for modern publication, but the following extract shows the sort of people who went there with the view of benefiting their health—

"Here ambulates th' Attorney looking grave,
And Rake from Bacchanalian rout uprose,
And mad festivity. Here, too, the Cit,
With belly, turtle-stuff'd, and man of Gout,
With leg of size enormous. Hobbling on,
The Pump-room he salutes, and in the chair
He squats himself unwieldy. Much he drinks,
And much he laughs to see the females quaff
The friendly beverage. He, nor jest obscene,
Of meretricious wench, nor quibble quaint,
Of prentic'd punster heeds, himself a wit
And dealer in conundrums, but retorts
The repartee jocosely. Soft! how pale
Yon antiquated virgin looks! Alas!
In vain she drinks, in vain she glides around
The Garden's labyrinth. 'Tis not for thee,
Mistaken nymph! these waters pour their streams," &c.

And in the prologue to "Bon Ton: or *High* Life above Stairs," by David Garrick, acted at Drury Lane for the first time, for the benefit of Mr. King, in 1775, not much is said as to the character of its frequenters.

"Ah! I loves life and all the joy it yields,
Says Madam Fupock, warm from Spittlefields.
Bon Ton's the space 'twixt Saturday and Monday,
And riding in a one-horse chaise on Sunday,
'Tis drinking tea on summer's afternoons
At Bagnigge Wells, with china and gilt spoons."

Footnotes

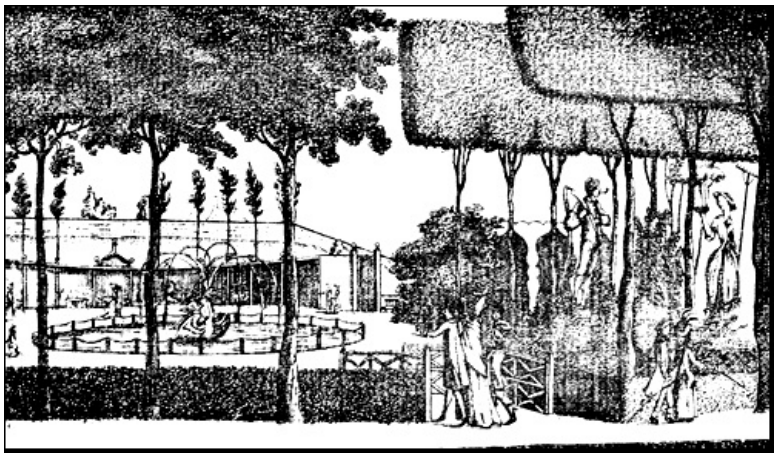
[34] Otherwise the Fleet.

[35] These papers appeared in the *Illustrated Family Journal*.

[36] In Cromwell's "History of Clerkenwell," p. 322, we read, "In memory of its supposed proprietor, the owner of some small tenements near the north end of the gardens styled them 'Nell Gwynn's Buildings;' but the inscription was erased before 1803."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE gardens were pretty, after the manner of the times; we should not, perhaps, particularly admire the formally cut lines and hedges, nor the fountain in which a Cupid is hugging a swan, nor the rustic statuary of the haymakers. Still it was a little walk out of London, where fresh air could be breathed, and a good view obtained of the northern hills of Hampstead and Highgate, with the interlying pastoral country, sparsely dotted with farmhouses and cottages. The Fleet, here, had not been polluted into a sewer as it was further on, and there were all the elements of spending a pleasant, happy day, in good air, amid rural scenes.



A VIEW TAKEN FROM THE CENTER BRIDGE IN THE GARDENS OF BAGNIGGE WELLS

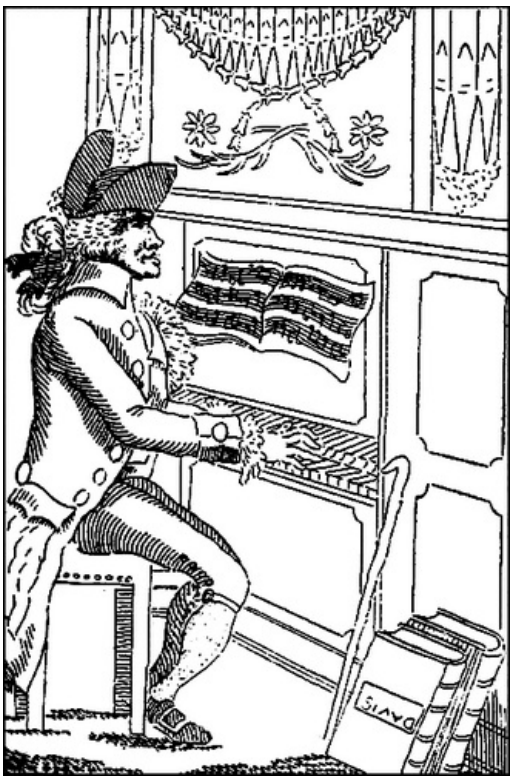
WAITER FROM THE BREAD AND BUTTER MANUFACTORY; OR, THE HUMOURS OF BAGNIGGE WELLS.

THE BREAD AND BUTTER MANUFACTORY; OR, THE HUMOURS OF BAGNIGGE WELLS.

The place, however, rapidly became a disreputable *rendezvous*, and we get an excellent glimpse of the costumes of *circa* 1780 in the two following engravings taken from mezzotints published by Carington Bowles; although not dated, they are of that period, showing the Macaronis and Belles of that time. The first is called "The Bread and Butter Manufactory, [37] or the Humours of Bagnigge Wells," and the second "A Bagnigge Wells Scene, or no resisting temptation," which gives a charming representation of the ultra fashion of dress then worn.

A BAGNIGGE WELLS SCENE; OR, NO RESISTING TEMPTATION.

Yet another glance at the manners of the time is afforded by the boy waiter, who hurries along with his tray of tea-things and *kettle of hot water*.[38]



THE BAGNIGGE ORGANIST.

And there was good music there, too—an organ in the long room, on which Charles Griffith performed, as may be seen in the accompanying illustration. The name of Davis on the music books, is that of the then proprietor, and the lines underneath are parodied from Dryden's "Song for St. Cecilia's day, 1687."

"What passion cannot music raise and quell!
When Jubal struck the corded shell,
His listening brethren stood around,
And, wondering, on their faces fell."

It went on with varying fortunes, and under various proprietors. First of all Mr. Hughes, then, in 1792, Davis had it; in 1813 it was in the hands of one Salter; in 1818, a man named Thorogood took it, but let it to one Monkhouse, who failed, and it reverted to Thorogood. Then came as tenant, a Mr. Chapman, who was bankrupt in 1833, and, in 1834, Richard Chapman was proprietor. I fancy he was the last, as public house, and gardens, combined.

Mr. William Muggins, before quoted, laments its decadence thus: "Besides the whitewashed walls, and hoctagon shell grotto, there war the tea garden, with its honey suckle and sweet briar harbours, where they used to drink tea hout of werry small cups, and heat the far famed little hot loaves and butter; then there war the dancing plot, and the gold and silver fish ponds, and the bowling green, and skittle alley, and fire work ground hall so romantic and rural, standing in the middle of a lot of fields, and shaded around with trees. Now it's a werry different concarn, for it's surrounded with buildings—the gardens is cut hoff to nuffin, and the ouse looks tumble down and miserable." That was in 1840.

It was about this time that a song appeared in "The Little Melodist," 1839—dilating on the delights of the neighbourhood of Islington, and the first verse ran thus:

"Will you go to Bagnigge Wells,
Bonnet builder, O!
Where the Fleet ditch fragrant smells,
Bonnet builder, O!
Where the fishes used to swim,
So nice and sleek and trim,
But the pond's now covered in,
Bonnet builder, O!

Punch, too, when it was young, and had warm blood coursing through its veins, visited Bagnigge Wells, and recorded the visit in its pages (Sept. 7, 1843). After a description of the walk thither, it says, "We last visited Bagnigge Wells about the beginning of the present week, and, like many travellers, at first passed close to it without seeing it. Upon returning, however, our eye was first

arrested by an ancient door in the wall over which was inscribed the following:— [39]

"This inscription, of which the above is a *fac simile* was surmounted by a noseless head carved in stone; and, underneath, was a cartoon drawn in chalk upon the door, evidently of a later date, and bearing a resemblance to some of the same class in Gell's 'Pompeii.' Underneath was written in letters of an irregular alphabet, 'CHUCKY'—the entire drawing being, without doubt, some local pasquinade.

"Not being able to obtain admittance at the door, we went on a short distance, and came to the ruins of the ancient 'Wells,' of which part of the banqueting room still exists. These are entirely open to the public as well as the adjoining pleasure grounds, although the thick layer of brick-bats with which they are covered, renders walking a task of some difficulty. The adjacent premises of an eminent builder separate them by some cubits from the road of Gray's Inn, near which, what we suppose to be the 'Well' is still visible. It is a round hole in the ground behind the ruins, filled up with rubbish and mosaics of oyster shells, but, at present, about eighteen inches deep.

"It is very evident that the character of Bagnigge Wells has much altered within the last century. For, bearing that date, we have before us the 'Song of the 'Prentice to his Mistress' in which the attractions of the place are thus set forth:—

"'Come, come, Miss Priscy, make it up,
And we will lovers be:
And we will go to *Bagnigge Wells*,
And there we'll have some tea.
And there you'll see the ladybirds
All on the stinging nettles;
And there you'll see the water-works,
And shining copper kettles.
And there you'll see the fishes, Miss,
More curious than whales;
They're made of gold and silver, Miss,
And wag their little tails.' [40]

"Of the wonders recounted in these stanzas, the stinging nettles alone remain flourishing, which they do in great quantity. The Waterworks are now confined to two spouts and a butt against the adjacent building; and the gold and silver fishes separately, in the form of red herrings and sprats, have been removed to the stalls in the neighbourhood, with a great deal more of the wag in the dealer, than in themselves.

"The real Bagnigge Wells, where company assemble to drink, at the present day, is next door to the ruins. The waters are never drank, however, now, without being strongly medicated, by a process carried on at the various brewers and distillers of the Metropolis: without this, they are supposed, by some classes, to be highly injurious. Their analysis have produced various results. Soda has been detected in one species, analogous to the German *Seltzer*, and designated 'Webb's'; others contain iron in appreciable quantities, and institute a galvanic circle, when quaffed from goblets formed from an alloy of tin and lead: in some constitutions quickening the circulation, and raising the animal temperature—in others, producing utter prostration.

"Flannel jackets, and brown paper caps appeared to be the costume of the valetudinarians who were drinking at the Wells, during our stay. We patronized the tepid spa by ordering 'Sixpennyworth warm,' as the potion was termed in the dialect of Bagnigge, for the purpose of drawing the proprietor into conversation. But he was, evidently, reluctant to impart much information, and told us nothing beyond what we already knew—a custom very prevalent at all the springs we have visited.

"Lodgings, provisions, clothing, &c., are to be had at low rates in the neighbourhood, and there are several delightful spots in the vicinity of Bagnigge Wells.

"The Excursion to Battle Bridge will be found highly interesting, returning by the Brill; and, to the admirers of nature, the panorama from the summit of King's Cross, embracing the Small Pox Hospital, and Imperial Gas Works, with the very low countries surrounding them, is peculiarly worthy of especial notice."

Two years previous to this notice, there was a paragraph in the *Times* (April 6, 1841) which shows how the Wells had fallen into decadence.

"The Old Grotto, which had all the windows out, and was greatly dilapidated, and the upper part of the Garden Wall, was knocked down by some persons going along Bagnigge Road, early this morning."

The old place had fulfilled its mission. It had ministered to the recreation and amusement, harmless, or otherwise, of generations of Londoners, and it came to final grief, and disappeared in 1844. Its name is still preserved in "The Bagnigge Wells" Tavern, 39, King's Cross Road, and that is all the reminiscence we have of this once famous place of recreative resort.

FOOTNOTES

[37] An allusion to the hot buttered rolls, which were in vogue there.

[38] See p. 89

[39] See ante-p. 84

[40] With all due deference to *Punch*, I think his version is slightly, only slightly, inaccurate. I have before me five copies, two MS. and three printed, all of which run—

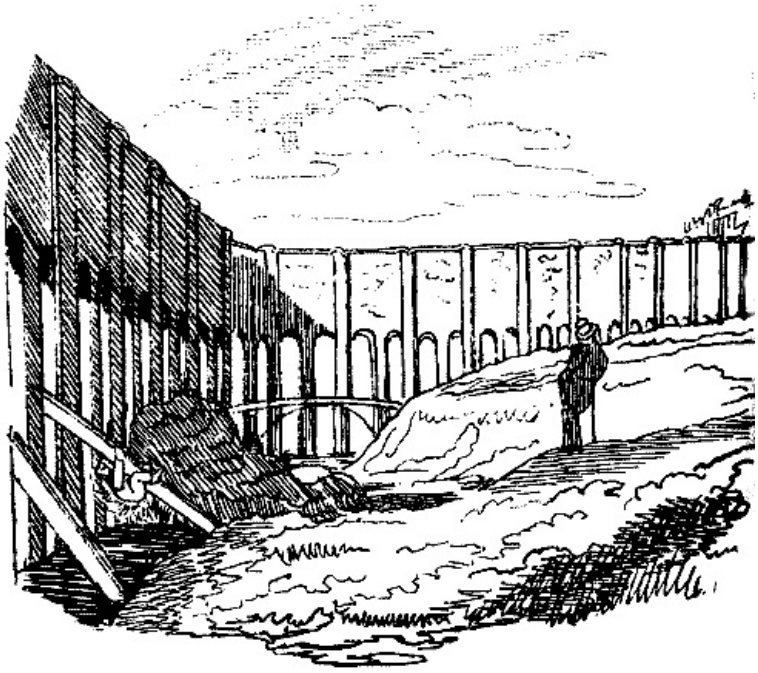
"Come, prithee make it up, Miss,
And be as lovers be,
We'll go to Bagnigge Wells, Miss,
And there we'll have some tea.
It's there you'll see the Lady-birds
Perch'd on the Stinging Nettles;
The Chrystal water Fountain,
And the Copper, shining Kettles.
It's there you'll see the Fishes,
More curious they than Whales,
And they're made of Gold and Silver, Miss,
And wags their little tails.
Oh! they wags their little Tails
—They wags their little Tails
Oh! they're made of gold and silver, Miss, and they wags their little Tails.
Oh! dear! Oh! la! Oh! dear! Oh! la!
Oh! dear! Oh! la!
How funny!"

CHAPTER IX.

A LITTLE farther on, it washed the walls of Cold Bath Fields Prison, the *House of Correction*, and we get a view of it in Hone's "Table Book,"[41] p. 75. Here he says,

"In 1825, this was the first open view, nearest London, of the ancient River Fleet: it was taken during the building of the high arched walls connected with the House of Correction, Cold Bath Fields, close to which prison the river ran, as here seen. At that time, the newly erected walls communicated a peculiarly picturesque effect to the stream flowing within their confines."

This "House of Correction" was indebted for its birth to the famous John Howard, who had made an European tour, not to mention a home one, inquisitorially inspecting prisons. We all know the result of his labours; how he exposed abuses fearlessly, and made men's hearts soften somewhat towards those incarcerated.



THE ANCIENT RIVER FLEET, AT CLERKENWELL, 1825.

Howard, writing in 1789, held that capital punishment should be abolished except for *murder*, *setting houses on fire*, and for *house breaking, attended with acts of cruelty*. And speaking of his Penitentiaries, he says:

"To these houses, however, I would have none but old, hardened offenders, and those who have, as the laws now stand, forfeited their lives by robbery, house breaking, and similar Crimes, should be committed; or, in short, those Criminals who are to be confined for a long term or for life....

"The *Penitentiary houses*, I would have *built*, in a great measure, *by the convicts*. I will suppose that a power is obtained from Parliament to employ such of them as are now at work on the Thames, or some of those who are in the county gaols, under sentence of transportation, as may be thought most expedient. In the first place, let the surrounding wall, intended for full security against escapes, be completed, and proper lodges for the gate keepers. Let temporary buildings, of the nature of barracks, be erected in some part of this enclosure which would be wanted the least, till the whole is finished."

This was a portion of his scheme, and he suggested that it should be located, where it was afterwards built, in Cold Bath Fields—because the situation was healthy, that good water could be obtained from the White Conduit, as the Charter House no longer required that source of supply, it being well served by the New River Company—that labour was cheap—and so was food, especially the coarse meat from the shambles at Islington.

The prisoners were to have separate cells, so as to prevent the promiscuous herding of all, which had previously produced such mischievous results, and these cells were to be light and airy. The

convicts of both sexes were to *work*, and their food was to be apportioned to the work they had to do. Also—a very great step in the right direction—they were all to wear a prison uniform. Howard, philanthropist as he was, was very far from lenient to the rogue. He was fully aware of the value of *work*, and specially provided that his rogues, in their reformation, should pass through the purifying process of hard labour. In later times, the way of transgressors was hard in that place, and it became a terror to evildoers, being known by the name of the *English Bastile*—which, however, amongst its patrons, was diminished, until it finally was abbreviated into "the Steel" by which name it was known until its abolition.[42]

This cognomen was so well known, that, in 1799, a book was written by "A Middlesex Magistrate" entitled "The Secrets of the English Bastile disclosed"—which was a favourable story of the management of the prison in Cold Bath Fields. Still, it was the subject of a Parliamentary inquiry, as we find in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1798-9, under date of Dec. 31, 1798, p. 398, that, in the House of Commons, Sir Francis Burdett gave notice of his intention of moving, at some future day, for a report relative to the system practised in the prison, called the House of Correction, Cold Bath Fields, with regard to the persons therein confined.

In the "Parliamentary History of England," vol. xxxiv. p. 566, we learn that on Mar. 6, 1799, Mr. W. Dundas moved that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the state of his Majesty's prison in Cold Bath Fields, Clerkenwell, and report the same, as it shall appear to them, together with their opinion thereupon, to the House; and a Committee was appointed accordingly. Unfortunately, the pages of what, afterwards, become *Hansard's*, do not record the result.

But in the *Annual Register* for the same year on Dec. 21st there was a long report respecting it during a debate on the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. Mr. Courtenay said, that, "having visited the prisons, he found the prisoners without fire, and without candles, denied every kind of society, exposed to the cold and the rain, allowed to breathe the air out of their cells only for an hour, denied every comfort, every innocent amusement, excluded from all intercourse with each other, and, each night locked up from all the rest of the world. He supposed it was scarcely necessary to inform the House, that the prison of which he had been speaking, was that in Cold Bath Fields, known by the name of the Bastille." There was a lot more nonsense of the same type talked by other M.P.'s and, it is needless to say, that the exaggerated statements were anent a political prisoner—who afterwards suffered death for treason. And in the remainder of the debate even the very foundation for the libel was destroyed. It is a curious fact, that people have an idea that political prisoners, who have done as much harm to the commonweal as they have the possibility of doing, are to be treated daintily, and with every consideration for their extremely sensitive feelings. We, perhaps, in these latter days, may read a profitable lesson in the suppression of treason, from the proper carrying out of the sentences legally imposed upon those who resist the law out of pure malice (legal).

In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1796, is the following letter to—

Dec. 10, 1795.

> Mr. URBAN.—Your respect for the memory of Mr. Howard, will induce you to insert the inclosed view of the House of Correction for the County of Middlesex, formed principally on his judicious suggestions. It is situated on the North side of London, between Cold Bath Fields, and Gray's Inn Lane. The spot on which it is erected having been naturally swampy, and long used for a public lay-stall, it was found prudent to lay the foundation so deep, and pile it so securely, that it is supposed there are as many bricks laid underground as appear to sight. What is more to the purpose, the internal regulations of this place of security are believed to be perfectly well adapted to the salutary purposes to which the building is appropriated.
>
> "Yours, &c.,
> "EUGENIO."

Still Cold Bath Fields Prison had an evil name—in all probability, because prisoners there, were treated as if they had sinned against the social canons, and were not persons to be coaxed and *petted* into behaviour such as would enable them to rank among their more honest fellows, and in this way wrote Coleridge and Southey in "The Devil's Walk," which was suggested by the *pseudo Christos* BROTHERS who as these gentlemen wrote:—[43]

"He walked into London leisurely,
The streets were dirty and dim:
But there he saw Brothers, the Prophet,
And Brothers the Prophet saw him."

Well, in the Devil's rambles he came across Cold Bath Fields Prison—which, as I have said, was not beloved of the criminal class, and, simply, as I think, for the sake of saying something smart, and not that they ever had experienced incarceration, or is there any evidence that they had even seen the prison, they write:

"As he passed through Cold Bath
Fields he look'd
At a solitary Cell;
And he was well-pleased, for it gave
him a hint
For improving the prisons of Hell.

He saw a turnkey tie a thief's hands
With a cordial try and a jerk;
Nimbly, quoth he, a man's fingers
move
When his heart is in his work.

He saw the same turnkey unfettering
a man
With little expedition;
And he chuckled to think of his dear
slave trade,
And the long debates, and delays that
were made
Concerning its abolition."

There is very little doubt, however, that, in the closing year of last, and the commencing one of this, century, the conduct of the Governor—a man named Aris—was open to very grave censure. People outside imagined that all sorts of evils were being perpetrated within its walls, and, either through laxity, or too great severity, of discipline, something nigh akin to mutiny occurred in the prison in July, 1800—which was promptly stopped by the presence of a company of the Clerkenwell Volunteers. In August of the same year, there was another outbreak in the prison, the occupants shouting "Murder," and that they were being starved, in tones loud enough to be heard outside, and, once more the Volunteers were the active agents in enforcing law and order. This latter "seething of the pot" lasted a few days, and it culminated in the discharge of the obnoxious Governor Aris.

There is nothing noteworthy to chronicle of this prison from that date,[44] all prison details being, necessarily, unsavoury—and this particular one was not watered with rose water. It was a place of hard work, and not likely to impress the unproductive class, with a wish to be permanent inhabitants thereof. Yet, as this present year witnessed its demolition, something more must be said respecting it. In the *Globe* newspaper of January 1, 1887, is this short paragraph: "Notices were yesterday posted on the walls of Coldbath Fields Prison, intimating that it is for sale. Tenders are invited for the site, and all buildings, &c., contained within the boundary walls. The prison covers an area of eight acres and three quarters."

There ought to be some record of its dying days, for the demolition of a prison in a large community of people, like ours in London, must mean one of two things, either a diminution of crime, or, that the prison is not suitable to the requirements of the age.

The Ninth Report of the Commissioners of Prisons, for the Year ended March 31, 1886, speaking of Pentonville Prison, says:

"In November, 1885, the majority of the prisoners confined in Coldbath Fields Prison were transferred to this Prison; and since that date, the remainder have also been removed here, that prison being now vacated, and in charge of a warder acting as caretaker.

"The tread-wheel[45] has been taken down at Coldbath Fields Prison, and is in process of re-erection here.

"The behaviour of the officers has been good, with the exception of four, discharged by order of the Prison Commissioners.

"The conduct of the prisoners has been generally good.

"The materials and provisions supplied by the Contractors have been good, and have given satisfaction.

"To meet the requirements of the local prison service, a room is being completed for the convenience of the members of the Visiting Committee who attend here, also a room for the daily collection of prisoners to see the medical officer, and other purposes, as well as various minor alterations found necessary since the transfer.

"A bakehouse has been completed, and is in working order, supplying bread to all metropolitan prisons.

"The routine and discipline have been carried out in the same general manner as heretofore.

"The industrial labour continues to be attended with satisfactory results; the greater portion is still devoted to supplying the wants of other prisons or Government establishments instead of the market.

"Uniform clothing for officers is cut out here for all local prisons, and made up for a considerable number of the smaller prisons, also prisoners' clothing and bedding, hospital slippers for the Admiralty, as well as a large number of Cases and other articles for the General Post Office have

been supplied.

"The duties of the Chaplain's department have been performed uninterruptedly during the year, morning prayers have been said daily, and Divine Service has been performed on Sundays, Good Friday, and Christmas day, in the morning and afternoon, with a sermon at both services. The Holy Communion has been celebrated from time to time on Sundays and on the great Sunday Festivals. The hospital has been daily visited; special attention has been paid to the prisoners confined in the punishment Cells, and constant opportunity has been offered to all of private instruction and advice. Books from the prisoners' library have been issued to all who are entitled to receive them, all prisoners who cannot pass standard three, as set forth by the Education Committee have been admitted to school instruction.

"School books and slates and pencils are issued to prisoners in their cells.

"The medical officer states that the health of the prisoners at Coldbath Fields, and since the transfer to this prison, has been good. One case of smallpox occurred at Coldbath Fields; as the prisoner had been some months in gaol, it was clear that he had caught the disease, either from a warder, or from some prisoner recently received; he had been a cleaner in the rotunda, and, of course, had been coming into contact with warders and prisoners alike, in the busiest part of the prison, the presumption is that the disease had been carried by the uniform of some warder. There were five cases of erysipelas at Coldbath Fields, and one at this prison, at the former place the cases came from all parts of the prison, new and old. The air shafts were thoroughly swept and limewashed, and disinfected as far as could be reached, and there is no doubt that it checked the disease.

"The dietary has been satisfactory during the year, and the new pattern clothing a great improvement.

"Every precaution is taken in classing prisoners for labour suited to their age, physique and health.

"The sanitary arrangements are most carefully supervised; the ventilation in the cells is very good."

I offer no apology for intruding this report of Prison life, which, if one took the trouble to look up the yearly reports, he would find they are all couched in almost identical language.[46] I simply give it for the consideration of my readers—who, with myself, do not belong to the criminal classes—to show them how those who have preyed upon them, and have deservedly merited punishment, meet with treatment such as the indigent and industrious poor, when, fallen upon evil times, can not obtain, and the sooner these pampered criminals feel, through their flesh—either by the whip, hard labour, or hunger—that the wages of sin are not paid at a higher rate than that procurable by honest labour, the probability is that the community at large would be considerably benefited, and the criminal classes would be in a great measure deprived of clubs to which there is neither entrance fee, nor annual subscription, in which everything of the best quality is found them free of charge, and the health of their precious carcases specially looked after, and gratuitously attended to.

Footnotes

[41] See next page.

[42] J. T. Smith in his "Vagabondiana," ed. 1815-1817, p. 51, alludes thus to the prison: "Perhaps the only waggery in public-house customs now remaining, is in the tap room of the Appletree, opposite to Cold Bath Fields Prison. There are a pair of hand cuffs fastened to the wires as bell-pulls, and the orders given by some of the company, when they wish their friends to ring, are, to 'Agitate the Conductor.'"

[43] "After this I was in a vision, having the angel of God near me, and saw Satan walking leisurely into London" ("Brothers' Prophecies," part i. p. 41).

[44] I have met with a Newspaper Cutting, with no clue to its authenticity or date. "Dreadful Ravages of the Influenza in the House of Correction.—Yesterday afternoon, Inquests were holden by William Baker, Esq., one of the Coroners for the County of Middlesex, at the House of Correction, Coldbath Fields, on no less than five individuals, namely, Peter Griffiths, Michael Hughes, James Jones, Thomas Lillie, and Ann Connard, all of whom had died from the effects of the present prevalent epidemic, or influenza, and who were inmates of that prison, and had been sentenced to different periods of imprisonment. It is a fact that, for the last two months, more prisoners have died in this prison, principally from the effects of influenza, than had died there during the whole of the preceding year." Possibly the poor Fleet River, at that time hardly degraded to the level of the Sewer—which now it is—may have had something to do with the unsanitary condition of the prison.—J. A.

[45] Adopted at Coldbath Fields Prison, July, 1822.

[46] Let any one compare, for instance, reports for 1884 and 1886.

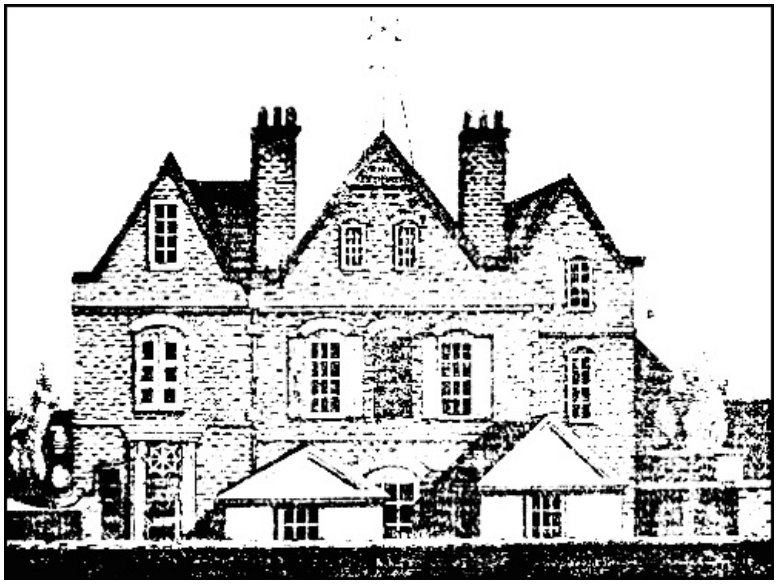
CHAPTER X.

COLDBATH FIELDS were, a hundred and twenty years ago, fairly rural, for (although it certainly is recorded as an abnormal occurrence) we find, in the *Daily Courant*, November 12, 1765, "Friday afternoon, about two o'clock, a hare crossed the New Road, near Dobney's Bowling green, ran to the New River Head, and from thence to Coldbath Fields, where, in some turning among the different avenues, she was lost. She appeared to have been hard run, by her dirty and shabby coat."

These fields took their name from a spring (part of the River of Wells) which had its source there. A Mr. Walter Baynes of the Temple, who was, for his day, far-seeing, and made the most of the "town lots" which were in the market, bought this plot of land, and at once utilized it to his profit. It was of some note, as we read in a book published in Queen Anne's reign, "A New View of London," 1708, vol. ii. p. 785. "Cold Bath. The most noted and first[47] about *London* was that near *Sir John Oldcastle's*, where, in the Year 1697, Mr. *Bains* undertook and yet manages this business of Cold Bathing, which they say is good against Rheumatisms, Convulsions of the Nerves, &c., but of that, those that have made the Experiments are the best judges. The Rates are 2s. 6d. if the Chair is used,[48] and 2s. without it. Hours are from five in the morning to one, afternoon."

We learn two things from this—the pristine existence of "tub," and the fact that it was purely matutinal. Nay, from the same book we learn more, for, under the heading of "Southwark Cold Bath," we find that the "utmost time to be in, three minutes." At this latter places were "ex votos," so frequently seen at shrines on the Continent. "Here are eleven Crutches, which they say, were those of persons cured by this Water." Bathing was a luxury then—water was bought by the pailful, and a warm bath at the *Hummums* cost 5s., equal to between 10s. and 15s. of our money.

Walter Baynes, Esq., of the Middle Temple, seems to have been a pushing man of business, and willing to make the most of his property. He traded on the uncleanliness of the times, when baths were mostly used in case of illness, and daily ablution of the whole body was unknown. Ladies were quite content to dab their faces with some "fucus" or face wash, or else smear them with a greasy larded rag. The shock of a veritable cold bath from a spring, must have astonished most of those who endured it, and no doubt invested it with a mysterious merit which it did not possess, otherwise than by cleansing the skin, both by the washing, and the subsequent rubbing dry.



SOUTH VIEW OF THE COLD BATHS.

However, we find Mr. Baynes advertising in the _Post Boy_, March 28, 1700, the curative effects of his wonderful spring. "This is to give notice that the Cold Baths in Sir John Oldcastle's field near the north end of Gray's Inn Lane, London, in all seasons of the year, especially in the spring and summer, has been found, by experience, to be the best remedy in these following distempers, viz., Dizziness, Drowsiness, and heavyness of the head, Lethargies, Palsies, Convulsions, all Hectical creeping Fevers, heats and flushings. Inflammations and ebullitions of the blood, and spirits, all vapours, and disorders of the spleen and womb, also stiffness of the limbs, and

Rheumatick pains, also shortness of the breath, weakness of the joints, as Rickets, &c., sore eyes, redness of the face, and all impurities of the skin, also deafness, ruptures, dropsies, and jaundice. It both prevents and cures colds, creates appetite, and helps digestion, and makes hardy the tenderest constitution. The coach way is by Hockley in the Hole."

Of course, viewed by the light of modern medical science, Mr. Baynes was a charlatan, and a quack, but he acted, doubtless, according to his lights, in those days; and, if a few were killed, it is probable that many more were benefited by being washed.

Sir Richard Steele, writing in 1715, says thus:

"**On the Cold Bath at Oldcastle's.**"

"Hail, sacred Spring! Thou ever-living Stream,
Ears to the Deaf, Supporters to the Lame,
Where fair Hygienia ev'ry morn attends,
And with kind Waves, her gentle Succour lends.
While in the Cristal Fountain we behold
The trembling Limbs, Enervate, Pale and Cold;
A Rosy Hue she on the face bestows,
And Nature in the chilling fluid glows,
The Eyes shoot Fire, first kindled in the Brain,
As beds of Lime smoke after showers of Rain;
The fiery Particles concentred there,
Break ope' their Prison Doors and range in Air;
Hail then thou pow'rful Goddess that presides
O'er these cold Baths as Neptune o'er his Tides,
Receive what Tribute a pure Muse can pay
For Health that makes the Senses Brisk and Gay,
The fairest Offspring of the heavenly Ray."

At one time there was a famous house of refreshment and recreation, either called the Cobham's Head, or the Sir John Oldcastle—or there were one of each. Authorities differ, and, although I have spent some time and trouble in trying to reconcile so-called facts, I have come to the conclusion that, for my reader's sake, *le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle*. There is a tradition that Sir John Oldcastle who was a famous Lollard in the time of Henry V., either had an estate here, or hid in a house of entertainment there, during his persecution for faith. But the whole is hazy.

We know that there was a Sir John Oldcastle, who was born in the fourteenth century, and who was the fourth husband of Joan, Lady Cobham, in whose right he took the title of Lord Cobham. We know also, that he enjoyed the friendship of Henry V., and was of his household. But he got imbued with the doctrines of Wyclif, was cited to appear, more than once, before the ecclesiastical authorities, declined the invitations, and was duly excommunicated. He wrangled with the priests, got committed to the Tower, escaped and hid in Wales, was accused of heading a trumpery insurrection, and was, finally, captured, tried, and hanged in chains alive, upon a gallows in St. Giles' Fields, when, fire being put under him, he was slowly roasted to death in December, 1417. A pious nobleman, like the late Lord Shaftesbury, for instance, was not popular at that time, if we may believe a few lines from "Wright's Political Songs from Edward II. to Henry VI."

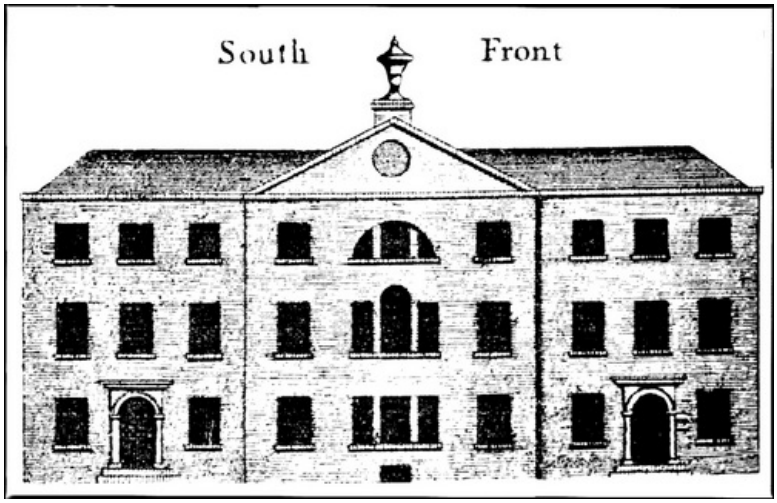
"Hit is unkindly for a Knight
That shuld a kynges castel kepe,
To bable the Bible day and night,
In restyng time when he shuld slepe,
And carefoly away to crepe;
For alle the chefe of chivalrie,
Wel ought hym to wail and wepe,
That swyche [49] lust is in Lollardie."

The English were always famous bowmen, and archery—although gunpowder has long superseded bows and arrows in warfare—still is a favourite and fashionable pastime, witness the Toxopholite Society in Regent's Park, and the various Archery associations throughout the

kingdom; so that it is not remarkable that an open space like Coldbath Fields should vie with the Artillery ground at Finsbury, in favour with the citizens, as a place for this sport; and we find, in Queen Anne's reign, that the *Sir John Oldcastle* was frequented by Archers. And for this information we may thank that old sinner, John Bagford (who spoilt so many books for the sake of their title-pages) for preserving. It tells its own story:—[50]

> "All gentlemen of the ancient and noble exercise of Archery, are invited to the annual dinner of the Clerkenwell Archers, Mrs. Mary Barton's, at the sign of Sir John Oldcastle (Cold Bath Fields) on Friday, July 18, 1707, at one o'clock, and to pay the bearer, Thomas Beaumont, Marshall, 2s. 6d., taking a sealed ticket, that a certain number may be known, and provision made accordingly. Nath. Axtall, Esq., and Edward Bromwich, Gent., Stewards."

There were very pleasant gardens attached to this tavern, and, like all the suburban places of recreation, they were well patronized, and they gave a very decent amusement in the shape of music—instrumental and vocal—and, occasionally, fireworks. But there seems to have been the same difficulty then, as now, as to keeping outdoor amusements, if not select, at least decorous, for, acccording to the *Daily Advertisement* of June 3, 1745, "Sir John Oldcastle's Gardens, Cold Bath Fields. This evening's entertainment will continue the Summer Season. The Band consists of the best masters. Sixpence for admission, for which they have a ticket, which ticket will be taken as sixpence in their reckoning. Particular care will be taken that the provisions shall be the very best in their separate kinds; likewise to keep a just decorum in the gardens. Note.—Several ladies and gentlemen that come to the gardens give the drawers their tickets, which is no benefit to the proprietor; therefore it's humbly desired that if any gentlemen or ladies don't chuse to have the value of their tickets in liquor, or eating, they will be so kind as to leave them at the bar."



THE SMALLPOX HOSPITAL IN COLD BATH FIELDS.

As a place of amusement, it seems, even in 1745, to have been on the wane. In 1758 the Smallpox Hospital was built close to it, and in 1761 the Sir John Oldcastle was bought by the trustees of the hospital, in order to enlarge it, and was pulled down in 1762. Noorthouck ("New History of London," ed. 1763, p. 752), speaking of Cold Bath Square, in which was the famed cold bath, says, "The North side of this square is, as yet, open to the fields, but a little to the east stands the Small Pox Hospital for receiving patients who catch the disease in the natural way; and is a very plain, neat structure. The Center, which projects a little from the rest of the building, is terminated on the top by an angular pediment, on the apex of which is placed a vase upon a small pedestal. This excellent charity was instituted in the year 1746, and is supported by a subscription of noblemen, gentlemen, and ladies, who were desirous that a charity useful in itself, and so beneficial to the public, might be begun near this great metropolis, there not being any hospital of the kind in Europe. A neat hospital for inoculating this disorder has been lately built clear of the town on the north side of the New Road."[51]

In 1791 this hospital wanted extensive repairs, which would need an outlay of about £800; and the trustees, not willing to incur this expense, built another on the site of the Inoculating Hospital at Islington; and thither, when it was finished, all the patients were removed from Cold Bath Fields. But their new home was wanted for the Great Northern Railway, and another place was built, and still is, on Highgate Hill. The old building in Cold Bath Fields was first of all used as a distillery, and afterwards subdivided. Quoting again from Noorthouck: "Eastward from the Small Pox Hospital, on the south side of the Spawfield, is an humble imitation of the Pantheon in Oxford Road; calculated for the amusement of a suitable class of company; here apprentices, journeymen, and clerks dressed to ridiculous extremes, entertain their ladies on Sundays; and to the utmost of their power, if not beyond their proper power, affect the dissipated manners of their superiors. Bagnigge Wells and the White Conduit House, two other receptacles of the same kind, with gardens laid out in miniature taste, are to be found within the compass of two or three fields, together with Sadler's Wells, a small theatre for the summer exhibition of tumbling, rope-dancing, and other drolls, in vulgar stile. The tendency of these cheap, enticing places of pleasure

just at the skirts of this vast town is too obvious to need further explanation; they swarm with loose women, and with boys, whose morals are thus depraved, and their constitution ruined, before they arrive at manhood; indeed, the licentious resort to the tea-drinking gardens was carried to such excess every night, that the magistrates lately thought proper to suppress the organs in their public rooms."

There is no doubt but that some of these tea-gardens needed reform; so much so, that the grand jury of Middlesex, in May, 1744, made a presentment of several places which, in their opinion, were not conducive to the public morality; and these were two gaming-houses near Covent Garden, kept by the ladies Mordington and Castle; *Sadler's Wells near the New River head*, the New Wells in Goodman's Fields, the New Wells near the London Spaw in Clerkenwell; and a place called Hallam's Theatre in Mayfair.

A possibly fair account of these gardens is found in the *St. James's Chronicle*, May 14-16, 1772:

"To the Printer of the S. J. Chronicle.

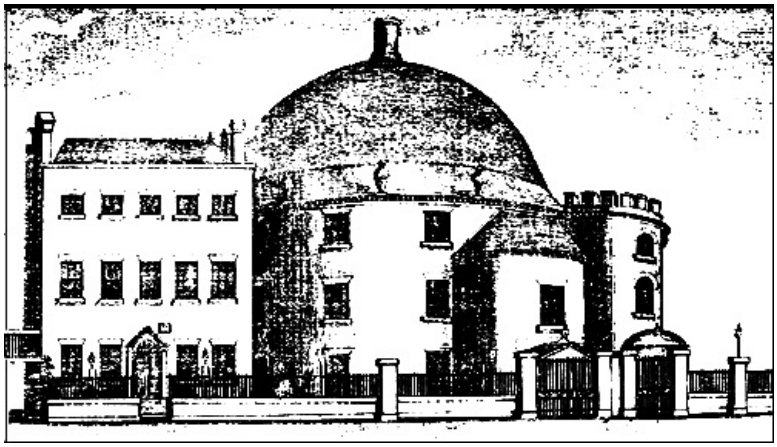
"Sir,—Happening to dine last Sunday with a Friend in the City, after coming from Church, the Weather being very inviting, we took a walk as far as Islington. In our Return home towards Cold Bath Fields, we stepped in, out of mere Curiosity, to view the Pantheon there; but such a Scene of Disorder, Riot, and Confusion presented itself to me on my Entrance, that I was just turning on my Heel, in order to quit it, when my friend observing to me that we might as well have something for our Money (for the Doorkeeper obliged each of us to deposit a *Tester* before he granted us Admittance), I acquiesced in his Proposal, and became one of the giddy Multitude. I soon, however, repented of my Choice; for, besides having our Sides almost squeezed together, we were in Danger every Minute of being scalded by the Boiling Water, which the officious Mercuries[52] were circulating with the utmost Expedition thro' their respective Districts: We began therefore to look out for some Place to sit down in, which, with the greatest Difficulty, we at length procured, and, producing our Tickets, were served with Twelve pennyworth of Punch. Being seated towards the Front of one of the Galleries, I had now a better Opportunity of viewing this dissipated Scene. The Male Part of the Company seemed to consist chiefly of City Apprentices, and the lower Class of Tradesmen. The Ladies, who constituted by far the greater Part of the Assembly, seemed, most of them, to be Pupils of the Cyprian Goddess, and appeared to be thoroughly acquainted with their Profession, the different Arts and Manœuvres of which they played off with great Freedom, and I doubt not with equal Success. Whatever Quarter I turned my Eyes to, I was sure to be saluted with a Nod, a Wink, or a Smile; and was even sometimes accosted with, 'Pray, Sir, will you treat me with a Dish of Tea?'... A Bill, I think, was in Agitation this Session of Parliament for enforcing the Laws already made for the better Observance of Sunday. Nothing, in my Opinion, tends more to its Profanation, among the lower Class of People, than the great Number of Tea Houses, in the Environs of London; the most exceptionable of which that I have had Occasion to be in, is the *Pantheon*. I could wish them either totally suppressed or else laid under some Restrictions, particularly on the Sabbath Day.

"I am,
"Sir,
"Your Constant Reader,
"and occasional Correspondent,
"*Chiswick*, May 5. Speculator."

This Pantheon was a large circular building surmounted by a statue of Fame. It was well warmed by a stove in its centre, and the grounds were prettily laid out. There were the usual walks, flower-beds, and pond, in the centre of which was a statue of Hercules, and, of course, the usual out-of-door refreshment boxes, or arbours. But it is just possible that it was owing to its somewhat disreputable conduct that the landlord became bankrupt in 1774, and the Pantheon was offered for sale. It was closed as a place of amusement in 1776, and the famous Countess of Huntingdon had some idea of utilizing it for the propagation of her peculiar religious views. However, the sum necessary for alterations, proved too much for her ladyship, yet by a strange mutation of fortune, somewhat akin to what we have seen in our time, in the Grecian Theatre in the City Road, being taken by the Salvation Army, the Pantheon was turned into a Proprietary Chapel, called Northampton Chapel, which was served by clergymen of the Church of England of strictly Evangelical principles, and it filled so well, that the incumbent of the parish church asserted his right to preach there whenever he liked, and also to nominate its chaplains. This the proprietors did not quite see, and they closed the chapel. Then Lady Huntingdon bought it, and, henceforth, it was called Spa Fields Chapel.

The illustration[53] is taken from the *New Spiritual Magazine*, and I do not think that an uglier building could be produced. Probably the statue of Fame was obliged to be removed, but the ventilator in its place was certainly not an improvement. However, it is now pulled down; but, before its demolition, it had to pass through the ordeal of more proceedings at law. As long as the chapel was served by clergy, nominally belonging to the Church of England, so long did the incumbent of St. James's, Clerkenwell, assert his right to the patronage of it. The Countess relied on her privilege as a peeress, to appoint her own Chaplain, but this was overridden by competent legal opinion, and nothing was left but for the officiating clergy to secede from the Church of England, and take the oath of allegiance as Dissenting Ministers. This the Countess did not

relish; she would fain be in the fold, and yet not of the fold, as do many others of this age, but she had to eat the leek. She had the proud privilege of founding a religious sect, and she left the bulk of her large property, after very generous legacies, to the support of sixty-four chapels which she had established throughout the kingdom. She died at her house in Spa Fields, and was buried at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, in Leicestershire, "dressed in the suit of white silk which she wore at the opening of a chapel in Goodman's Fields."[54]



VIEW OF NORTHAMPTON OR SPA FIELDS CHAPEL, WITH THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON'S HOUSE ADJOINING.

FOOTNOTES

[47] Conduit.

[48] This, I take it, refers to a practice mentioned in a pamphlet, "A Step to the Bath" (London, 1700), which I think is by Ned Ward. "The usual time being come to forsake that fickle Element, *Half Tub Chairs*, Lin'd with Blankets, Ply'd as thick as *Coaches* at the *Play House*, or *Carts* at the *Custom House*." It has been suggested that the Chair was used for debilitated patients; but, knowing the use of the term "Chair" at that epoch, I venture to propose my solution.

[49] Such pleasure.

[50] Harl. MSS., 5961.

[51] Noorthouck (book i. p. 358) says, "It is to be observed that in 1746, an hospital was founded by subscription between London and Islington, for relieving poor people afflicted with the smallpox, and for inoculation. This is said to be the first foundation of the kind in Europe, and consisted of three houses; one in Old Street for preparing patients for inoculation; another in Islington" (Lower Street) "when the disease appeared, and the third in Cold Bath fields for patients in the natural way."

[52] See p. 89.

[53] See next page.

[54] *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lxi. (1791), p. 589. The Chapel was pulled down in January or February, 1887.

CHAPTER XI.

IT is almost impossible to write about anything connected with Spa Fields, without mentioning the famous "Spa Fields Riots," which occurred on Dec. 2, 1816. In every great city there will always be a leaven of disquietude: demagogues who have nothing to lose, but all to gain, will always find an audience for their outpourings; and, often, the ignorant, and unthinking, have only to be told, by any knave, that they are underpaid, downtrodden, or what not, and they are ready to yell, with their sweet breaths, that they are. So was it then in 1816.

And it is also remarkable how history repeats itself; for, part of the scheme proposed by the agitators on that day, was exactly similar to the proposals of certain Irishmen and Socialists of our time—*teste* the following handbill, taken from the *Times*, the newspaper of Dec. 7, 1816.

> "SPENCE'S PLAN. For Parochial Partnerships in the Land, is the only effectual Remedy for the Distresses and Oppression of the People. The Landowners are not Proprietors in Chief; they are but the *Stewards* of the Public; For the LAND is the PEOPLE'S FARM. The Expenses of the Government do not cause the Misery that surrounds us, but the enormous exactions of these '*Unjust Stewards*.' Landed Monopoly is indeed equally contrary to the benign spirit of Christianity, and destructive of the Independence and Morality of Mankind.
>
> "'The Profit of the Earth is for all.'
>
> "Yet how deplorably destitute are the great Mass of the People! Nor is it possible for their situations to be radically amended, but by the establishment of a system, founded on the immutable basis of Nature and Justice. Experience demonstrates its necessity and the rights of mankind require it for their preservation.
>
> "To obtain this important object, by extending the knowledge of the above system, the Society of Spencean Philanthropists has been instituted. Further information of it's principles may be obtained by attending any of it's sectional meetings, where subjects are discussed, calculated to enlighten the human understanding, and where, also, the regulations of the society may be procured, containing a Complete development of the Spencean system. Every individual is admitted free of expense, who will conduct himself with decorum.
>
> First Section every Wednesday at the Cock, Grafton Street, Soho.
> Second " " Thursday " Mulberry Tree, Mulberry Ct., Wilson Street, Moorfields.
> Third " " Monday " Nag's Head, Carnaby Mrkt.
> Fourth " " Tuesday " No. 8, Lumber St., Mint, Borough."

There! does not that read exactly like a modern speech delivered in Trafalgar Square, Hyde Park, or Dublin? Of course it was the old story of Demagogy. The pot boiled, the scum came to the top, and it boiled over, so that, one fine day, there was a riot. It was a period of distress for the working classes, who did not then, as now, swarm into London from all parts of England, and expect Jupiter to help them; but then, as now, the rich were ever willing to help their poorer brethren, for, in the very same *Times* newspaper that gives an account of this Spa Fields Riot, there is a list of subscriptions towards the relief of distress in Spitalfields alone, amounting to over £18,000.

The story is one that should be told, because it has its lesson and its parallel in all time. The ruling spirit of the movement was Henry Hunt, generally called Orator Hunt, a man fairly well to do, and who did not agitate for the sake of his daily bread. The occasion of the meeting in Spa Fields, at which some 10,000 people were present, was to receive the answer of the Prince Regent to a petition from the distressed mechanics of London and its vicinity for relief. It was held first of all in front of the "Merlin's Cave" (a name which still survives at 131, Rosomon Street, Clerkenwell), and afterwards in the adjacent fields. The following account of the riots is from the *Times* of Dec. 3, 1816:

> "As a prelude to the scene that followed, and with the spirit of the ruling demagogue, a person mounted a coal waggon with three flags, on which were inscribed certain mottoes; and, after having harangued a small audience, draughted off from the general body, proceeded to the city, where the acts of violence were perpetrated, which will be found in another part of our paper.
>
> "The speech of this orator, and the conduct of his audience, we shall give in an extract from an evening paper as we were not present at the first part of the drama ourselves.
>
> "'In the field was a Coal waggon, upon which were mounted about twenty persons,

chiefly in the dress of sailors. Several flags were displayed; two tricoloured ones, on one of which was the following inscription:

"'Nature, Truth, and Justice!
Feed the Hungry!
Protect the Oppressed!
Punish Crimes!'

"'On a second tricoloured flag, no inscription.

"'On a third white flag was inscribed in red letters the following:

"'The brave Soldiers are our Brothers; treat them kindly.'

"'Many had bludgeons, and others pockets full of stones. One person in the waggon then addressed the meeting in the following strain:—"I am sorry to tell you that our application to the Prince has failed. He, the father of his people, answered—'My family have never attended to Petitions but from Oxford and Cambridge, and the City of London.' And is this Man the father of the people? No. Has he listened to your petition? No. The day is come—(*It is, It is*, from the mob.) We must do more than words. We have been oppressed for 800 years since the Norman Conquest. If they would give ye a hod, a shovel, a spade, and a hoe, your mother earth would supply you. (*Aye, aye, she would.* Loud Applause.) Country men, if you will have your wrongs redressed, follow me. (*That we will.* Shouts.) Wat Tyler would have succeeded had he not been basely murdered by a Lord Mayor, William of Walworth. Has the Parliament done their duty? No. Has the Regent done his duty? No, no. A man who receives one million a year public money gives only £5,000 to the poor. They have neglected the starving people, robbed them of everything, and given them a penny. Is this to be endured? Four millions are in distress; our brothers in Ireland are in a worse state, the climax of misery is complete, it can go no farther. The Ministers have not granted our rights. Shall we take them? (*Yes, yes*, from the mob.) Will you demand them? (*Yes, yes.*) If I jump down will you follow me? (*Yes, yes*, was again vociferated.)."

"'The persons on the waggon then descended with the flags; the constables immediately laid hold of the flags. Some persons attempted resistance, and two were therefore taken up forthwith, and sent to prison. The constables succeeded in getting one of the flags.

"'When the second flag was displayed, it was supposed that it headed Mr. Hunt's procession, and there was a loud huzza, which stopped one of the waggon orators for five minutes.'

"[For all the rest we hold ourselves responsible, as it is our own report of what passed.]."

The *Times* then gives in detail a report of the meeting, commencing from the arrival of "Orator" Hunt, who read the correspondence between himself and Lord Sidmouth, and said: "The statement of Lord Sidmouth to him was, that neither any King of the House of Brunswick, nor the Prince Regent, since he had attained sovereign power, ever gave any answer to petitions except they came from the Corporation of the City of London, or from the two Universities which had the privilege of being heard, and answered from the throne. 'If I were to carry your present petition to the levée (added his lordship) I should deliver it into his Royal Highness's hand, make my bow, and walk on; and if you, yourself, Mr. Hunt, were to appear, you would do just the same thing; you would deliver your petition, make your bow, and pass on.' This, Gentlemen, is a little more about Court matters than I was aware of before. (Loud laughter and applause.) The meeting had the consolation to think, that, if their petition was not answered by the Prince Regent, it had met with no worse fate than other petitions presented to the House of Hanover since the accession of this family to the throne. (Applause.)

"He expected to have seen this day a deputation from the Soup Committee, for the purpose of returning thanks to this meeting for obtaining the £5,000 which the Prince Regent had granted. (Great applause.) He was convinced that it was owing to the exertions and patriotism of the last assembly in those fields that his Royal Highness was induced to give this pittance: but his Royal Highness had not gone the full length of the requests which had then been made. It was required that he should bestow on the inhabitants of the metropolis £2 or 300,000 out of the Civil List; but, instead of this, what had been done? Some enemy to his country, some corrupt minister had persuaded his Royal Highness to send £5000 out of the Droits of the Admiralty, which properly belonged to the sailors: those droits, the piratical seizing of which had caused so much bloodshed, and the loss of so many British lives."

This was the sort of fustian that was talked then, as now, and probably always will be, to an ignorant mob; and, as a natural sequence, words begot actions. Blind—foolishly blind—the idiotic mob marched towards the City, not knowing why, or what advantage they were to gain by so doing. Naturally, there were thieves about, and they plundered the shop of Mr. Beckwith, a gunmaker, in Skinner Street, Snow Hill, shooting a gentleman, named Platt, who happened to be in the shop, at the time.

At the Royal Exchange, the Lord Mayor, Sir James Shaw, with his own hands, seized a man, who was bearing a flag, and the mob, unable to force the gates, fired inside; but as far as I can learn, without effect. Foiled in the attempt to sack, or destroy the Exchange, by the arrival of some civil force to the assistance of his Lordship, they moved on, seemingly aimlessly, towards the Tower: why—unless it was to supply themselves with arms—no one can guess. Of course, if they had tried to take it, they could not have accomplished their purpose, but it never came to that. They stole a few guns from two gunmakers in the Minories, Messrs. Brander and Rea; and then this gathering of rogues and fools dispersed, and the nine days' wonder was over.

As usual, nothing was gained by violence. Socialism certainly did not advance—nor was any more employment found for anybody—and the thing fizzled out. But it was not the fault of the agitators. Let us read a short extract from a leading article in the *Times* of December 4, 1816:—

> "As to the *foreseeing* what was to happen—have we forgotten Mr. Hunt's advice on the first day to petition, then, if that failed to resort to *physical force*. They did petition, and he calls them together to tell them that their petition has failed; and yet it is to be supposed that he foresees on their part no resort to physical force! Why! this would be trifling with the understanding of an infant. But the second time Mr. Hunt said nothing about physical force! Oh, no. Whilst the bloody business was in hand by his myrmidons in Newgate Street, and at the Royal Exchange—whilst an innocent gentleman was in the hands of his assassins—whilst the life of the Chief Magistrate of the city was attacked by ruffians, the first inciter to the use of physical force was coolly haranguing on the comparative merits of himself and his hunter, in Spa Fields. What! did anybody expect that he would get up, and accuse himself openly of high treason? Did Catilina, in the Roman Senate, avow his parricidal intentions against his country? But, to quit Mr. Hunt for awhile, let us recall to the recollection of our readers, the incendiary handbills thrust under the doors of public houses, several weeks ago. A copy of one of them was inserted in our paper of the 1st of last month; but, at the time it did not command that attention which its real importance perhaps deserved. It was of the following tenour:—'Britons to arms! *Break open all gun and sword shops*, pawnbrokers, and other likely places to find arms. No rise of bread, &c. No CASTLEREAGH. Off with his head. No National Debt. *The whole country waits the signal from London* to fly *to arms*. Stand firm now or never.—N.B. *Printed bills containing further directions*, will be circulated as soon as possible.'"

I have dwelt thus at length on these Spa Fields riots because the Socialistic and Communistic development therein contained, runs fairly parallel with our own times; and it is comforting to know, that in this case, as in all others in England, the movement was purely evanescent; the love of law and order being too deeply seated in the breasts of Englishmen. Nay, in this case, the butchers from the shambles in Whitechapel attacked the mob, and compelled them to give up their arms, "which the butchers express a wish to retain, as trophies and proofs of their loyalty and courage." Hunt fizzled out, and returned to his previous nonentity.

CHAPTER XII.

STILL continuing the downward course of the Fleet, an historical place is reached, "Hockley-in-the-Hole," or Hollow, so famous for its rough sports of bear baiting and sword and cudgel playing. The combative nature of an Englishman is curious, but it is inbred in him; sometimes it takes the form of "writing to the papers," sometimes of going to law, sometimes of "punching" somebody's head; in many it ends in a stubborn fight against difficulties to be overcome—but, anyhow, I cannot deny that an Englishman is pugnacious by nature. Hear what Misson, an intelligent French traveller, who visited England in the reign of William III., says: "Anything that looks like fighting is delicious to an Englishman. If two little Boys quarrel in the Street, the Passengers stop, make a Ring round them in a Moment, and set them against one another, that they may come to Fisticuffs. When 'tis come to a Fight, each pulls off his Neckcloth and his Waistcoat, and give them to hold to some of the Standers by: then they begin to brandish their Fists in the Air; the Blows are aim'd all at the Face, they Kick at one another's Shins, they tug one another by the Hair, &c. He that has got the other down may give him one Blow or two before he rises, but no more; and, let the Boy get up ever so often, the other is obliged to box him again as often as he requires it. During the Fight, the Ring of Bystanders encourage the Combatants with great Delight of Heart, and never part them while they fight according to the Rules. The Father and Mother of the Boys let them fight on as well as the rest, and hearten him that gives Ground, or has the Worst."

This was about 1700; and, if it was so in the green tree (or boy), what would it be in the dry (or man)? I am afraid our ancestors were not over-refined. They did not all cram for examinations, and there were no Girton girls in those days, neither had they analytical novels: so that, to a certain extent, we must make allowances for them. Tea and coffee were hardly in use for breakfast, and men and women had a certain amount of faith in beer and beef, which may have had something to do in forming their tastes. Anyhow, the men were manly, and the women not a whit worse than they are now; and woe be to the man that insulted one. A code of honour was then in existence, and every gentleman carried with him the means of enforcing it. Therefore, up to a certain limit, they were combative, and not being cigarette-smoking *mashers*, and not being overburdened with novels and periodicals, and club smoking and billiard rooms being unknown, they enjoyed a more physical existence than is led by the young men of the theatrical stalls of the present day, and attended Sword and Cudgel playing, and Bull and Bear baiting, together with fighting an occasional main of Cocks. It might be very wrong; but then they had not our advantages of being able to criticize the almost unhidden charms of the "chorus," or descant on the merits of a "lemon squash," so that, as man must have some employment, they acted after their lights, and I do not think we can fairly blame them.

For Londoners, a favourite place, early in the eighteenth century, for rough sports, was Hockley-in-the-Hole. Here was bear and bull baiting for the public, a fact that was so well known, according to Gay,[55] that

"Experienc'd Men, inur'd to City Ways,
Need not the *Calendar* to count their Days.
When through the Town, with slow and solemn Air,
Led by the Nostril walks the muzzled Bear;
Behind him moves, majestically dull,
The Pride of *Hockley Hole*, the surly Bull;
Learn hence the Periods of the Week to name,
Mondays and *Thursdays* are the Days of Game."

Even earlier than Gay, Hockley-in-the-Hole is mentioned by Butler in his "Hudibras"[56] in somewhat gruesome fashion:—

"But Trulla straight brought on the
Charge,
And in the selfsame Limbo put
The Knight and Squire, where he was
shut,
Where leaving them in Hockley-i'-th'-
Hole,
Their Bangs and Durance to condole."

But Butler also talks of Bear baiting, both in the first and second cantos of "Hudibras," especially in canto the first, where, beginning at line 675, he says:

"But now a Sport more formidable
Had rak'd together Village
Rabble:
'Twas an old Way of recreating—
Which learned Butchers call Bear-
Baiting:
A bold advent'rous Exercise,
With ancient Heroes in high
Prize;
For Authors do affirm it came
From Isthmian or Nemean Game;
Others derive it from the Bear
That's fix'd in Northern
Hemisphere,
And round about the Pole does
make
A Circle like a Bear at Stake.
That at the Chain's End wheels
about,
And overturns the Rabble Rout.
For, after solemn Proclamation
In the Bear's Name (as is the
Fashion
According to the Law of Arms,
To keep men from inglorious
Harms)
That none presume to come so
near
As forty Foot of Stake of Bear;
If any yet be so foolhardy
T' expose themselves to vain
Jeopardy;
If they come wounded off, and
lame,
No honour's got by such a Maim;
Altho' the Bear gain much; b'ing
bound
In Honour to make good his
Ground,
When he's engag'd and takes no
Notice,
If any press upon him, who 'tis,
But let's them know, at their own
Cost,
That he intends to keep his Post."

Bear baiting was so identified, as a sport, to the London Citizens who frequented Hockley-in-the-Hole, that we read that in 1709 Christopher Preston, who then kept the Bear Garden, was attacked and partly eaten by one of his own bears.

Bear Gardens are proverbially rough, and this place was no exception; but there were two others in London where bears were baited, one at Marrybone Fields (at the back of Soho Square), and at Tuttle or Tothill Fields, at Westminster—thus showing the popularity of the Sports, which was not declared illegal until 1835.

Of course in these our days, we know nothing of bear baiting, and if a Pyrenean bear were now taken about the country, as I have frequently seen them, even if he "danced to the genteelest of tunes," his proprietor would be in danger of the judgment—some dear mollycoddling old woman in trousers, belonging to some special "faddy" society, being always ready to prosecute.

Bears not, at present, being indigenous to Britain, were naturally scarce, so the homely and offensive Bull had to afford rough sport to the multitude, and several towns now bear testimony to the popularity of the sport of bull baiting in their "Bull rings" (Birmingham, to wit). In the

fourteenth century we know that even horses were baited with dogs, and as long as fox hunting, coursing, or wild stag hunting, are recognized as sports among us, I fail to see the superior cruelty of our ancestors. It may be that people imagine that the larger the animal, the greater the cruelty; but I cannot see it. Anyhow, far earlier than the Bear garden of Hockley-in-the-Hole, both bear and bull baiting were not only popular, but aristocratic amusements. Erasmus, who visited England in Henry VIII.'s time, speaks of many herds of bears being kept for baiting; and when Queen Mary visited her sister the Princess Elizabeth, they were "right well content" with the bear baiting. Nay, when she became Queen, Elizabeth was a great patron of the *sport*; for when, on May 25, 1559, she entertained the French Ambassadors, as an after-dinner spectacle, she gave them some bull and bear baiting. Her delight in this diversion did not decrease with age, for, twenty-seven years later, she provided the same amusement for the delectation of the Danish Ambassador. Paul Hentzner, who visited England in 1598, speaking of this sport, says:— "There is still another Place, built in the Form of a Theatre, which serves for the baiting of Bulls and Bears; they are fastened behind, and then worried by the great *English* Bull dogs; but not without great Risque to the Dogs, from the Horns of the one, and the Teeth of the other; and it sometimes happens they are killed upon the Spot; fresh ones are immediately supplied in the Place of those that are wounded, or tired. To this Entertainment there often follows that of whipping a blinded Bear, which is performed by five or six Men standing circularly with Whips, which they exercise upon him without any Mercy, as he cannot escape from them because of his Chain; he defends himself with all his Force and Skill, throwing down all who come within his Reach, and are not active enough to get out of it, and tearing the Whips out of their Hands, and breaking them."

And, again are we indebted to a foreigner for a description of a bull baiting, thus realizing Burns' aspiration seeing "oursen as others see us," *vide Misson*.

"Here follows the Manner of those Bull Baitings which are so much talk'd of: They tie a Rope to the Root of the Ox or Bull, and fasten the other End of the Cord to an Iron Ring fix'd to a Stake driven into the Ground; so that this Cord being 15 Foot long, the Bull is confin'd to a Sphere of about 30 Foot Diameter. Several Butchers, or other Gentlemen, that are desirous to exercise their Dogs, stand round about, each holding his own by the Ears; and, when the Sport begins, they let loose one of the Dogs; The Dog runs at the Bull: the Bull immovable, looks down upon the Dog with an Eye of Scorn, and only turns a Horn to him to hinder him from coming near: the Dog is not daunted at this, he runs round him, and tries to get beneath his Belly, in order to seize him by the Muzzle, or the Dew lap, or the pendant Glands: The Bull then puts himself into a Posture of Defence; he beats the Ground with his Feet, which he joins together as close as possible, and his chief Aim is not to gore the Dog with the Point of his Horn, but to slide one of them under the Dog's Belly (who creeps close to the Ground to hinder it) and to throw him so high in the Air that he may break his Neck in the Fall. This often happens: When the Dog thinks he is sure of fixing his Teeth, a turn of the Horn, which seems to be done with all the Negligence in the World, gives him a Sprawl thirty Foot high, and puts him in danger of a damnable Squelch when he comes down. This danger would be unavoidable, if the Dog's Friends were not ready beneath him, some with their Backs to give him a soft Reception, and others with long Poles which they offer him slant ways, to the Intent that, sliding down them, it may break the Force of his Fall. Notwithstanding all this care, a Toss generally makes him sing to a very scurvy Tune, and draw his Phiz into a pitiful Grimace: But, unless he is totally stunn'd with the Fall, he is sure to crawl again towards the Bull, with his old Antipathy, come on't what will. Sometimes a second Frisk into the Air disables him for ever from playing his old Tricks; But, sometimes, too, he fastens upon his Enemy, and when he has seiz'd him with his Eye teeth, he sticks to him like a Leech, and would sooner die than leave his Hold. Then the Bull bellows, and bounds, and Kicks about to shake off the Dog; by his Leaping the Dog seems to be no Manner of Weight to him, tho in all Appearance he puts him to great Pain. In the End, either the Dog tears out the Piece he has laid Hold on, and falls, or else remains fix'd to him, with an Obstinacy that would never end, if they did not pull him off. To call him away, would be in vain; to give him a hundred blows would be as much so; you might cut him to Pieces Joint by Joint before he would let him loose. What is to be done then? While some hold the Bull, others thrust Staves into the Dog's Mouth, and open it by main Force. This is the only Way to part them."

But the dogs did not always get the best of it—many a one was gored and killed by the bull. Cruelty, however, would scarcely rest content with simple bull baiting. It was improved upon, as we see in the following advertisement. "At the *Bear Garden* in *Hockley in the Hole*, 1710. This is to give notice to all Gentlemen, Gamsters, and Others, That on this present *Monday* is a Match to be fought by two Dogs, one from *Newgate* Market against one of *Honey Lane* Market, at a Bull, for a Guinea to be spent. Five Let goes out off Hand, which goes fairest and farthest in, Wins all; like wise a *Green Bull* to be baited, which was never baited before, and a Bull to be turned loose with Fire works all over him; also a Mad Ass to be baited; With variety of Bull baiting, and Bear baiting; and a Dog to be drawn up with Fire works." [57]

I cannot, however, consider this as an ordinary programme, and it was evidently so considered at the time; for a book was advertised in the *Tatler*, January 3-5, 1709 (1710):— "This Day is published The Bull Baiting or Sach——ll[58] dressed up in Fire works; lately brought over from the Bear Garden in Southwark, and exposed for the Diversion of the Citizens of London: at 6d. a piece." But Steele in No. cxxxiv. of the *Tatler*, condemns the cruelty of the age, and says he has "often wondered that we do not lay aside a custom which makes us appear barbarous to nations much more rude and unpolished than ourselves. Some French writers have represented this diversion of the common people much to our disadvantage, and imputed it to natural fierceness and cruelty of temper, as they do some other entertainments peculiar to our nation: I mean those

elegant diversions of bull baiting and prize fighting, with the like ingenious recreations of the Bear-garden. I wish I knew how to answer this reproach which is cast upon us, and excuse the death of so many innocent cocks, bulls, dogs, and bears, as have been set together by the ears, or died untimely deaths, only to make us sport."

Of all the places where these cruel pastimes were practised, certainly Hockley-in-the-Hole, bore off the palm for blackguardism; and it is thus mentioned in an essay of Steele's in the *Tatler* (No. xxviii.),

"I have myself seen Prince Eugene make Catinat fly from the backside of Grays Inn Lane to Hockley-in-the-Hole, and not give over the pursuit, until obliged to leave the Bear Garden, on the right, to avoid being borne down by fencers, wild bulls, and monsters, too terrible for the encounter of any heroes, but such as their lives are livelihood." To this mention of Hockley-in-the-Hole, there is, in an edition of 1789, a footnote (p. 274), "There was a sort of amphitheatre here, dedicated originally to bull-baiting, bear-baiting, prize fighting, and all other sorts of *rough-game*; and it was not only attended by butchers, drovers, and great crowds of all sorts of mobs, but likewise by Dukes, Lords, Knights, Squires, &c. There were seats particularly set apart for the quality, ornamented with old tapestry hangings, into which none were admitted under half a crown at least. Its neighbourhood was famous for sheltering thieves, pickpockets, and infamous women; and for breeding bulldogs."

Bull baiting died hard, and in one famous debate in the House of Commons, on 24th of May, 1802, much eloquence was wasted on the subject, both *pro.* and *con.*, one hon. gentleman (the Right Hon. W. Windham, M.P. for Norwich), even trying to prove that the bull enjoyed the baiting. Said he, "It would be ridiculous to say he felt no pain; yet, when on such occasions he exhibited no signs of terror, it was a demonstrable proof that he felt some pleasure." Other hon. gentlemen defended it on various grounds, and, although Wilberforce and Sheridan spoke eloquently in favour of the abolition of the practice, they were beaten, on a division, by which decision Parliament inflicted a standing disgrace, for many years, upon the English Nation.

Hockley-in-the-Hole was not only the temple of *S. S. Taurus et Canis*; but the genus *Homo*, type *gladiator*, was there in his glory. It was there that sword play was best shown, but we do not hear much of it before William the Third, or Anne's reign, or that of George I., when the redoubtable Figg was the Champion swordsman of England. As Hockley-in-the-Hole belongs to the Fleet River, so do these gladiatorial exhibitions belong to Hockley-in-the-Hole. I have treated of them once,[59] and on looking back, with the knowledge that many of my readers may not have seen that book, and having nothing better in the space allotted to this peculiar spot, to offer them (for I then drew my best on the subject) I quote, with apologies, from myself.

"In those days, when every one with any pretensions to gentility wore a sword, and duelling was rife, it is no wonder that exhibitions of skill in that weapon were favourites. Like modern prize fights, they drew together all the scum and riff-raff, as well as the gentry, who were fond of so-called *sport*. They were disreputable affairs, and were decried by every class of contemporary. The preliminaries were swagger and bounce, as one or two out of a very large number will show. [60]

"'At the Bear Garden in Hockley-in-the-Hole.

"'A Tryal of Skill to be Performed between two Profound Masters of the Noble Science of Defence on *Wednesday* next, being this 13th of the instant July, 1709, at Two of the Clock precisely.

"'I, *George Gray*, born in the City of Norwich, who has Fought in most Parts of the *West Indies*, viz., *Jamaica*, *Barbadoes*, and several other Parts of the World; in all Twenty-five times, upon a Stage, and was never yet Worsted, and now lately come to *London*; do invite *James Harris*, to meet and Exercise at these following Weapons, viz.:

Back Sword,
Sword and Dagger,
Sword and Buckler,
} { *Single Falchon and Case of Falchons*.'

"'I, *James Harris*, Master of the said Noble Science of Defence, who formerly rid in the Horse Guards, and hath Fought a Hundred and Ten Prizes, and never left a Stage to any Man; will not fail, (God Willing) to meet this brave and bold Inviter, at the Time and Place appointed, desiring Sharp swords, and from him no Favour.

"'☞ *Note.* No persons to be upon the Stage but the Seconds. *Vivat Regina.*'"

This is not the only available advertisement, but it is a typical one, and will serve for all.

"The challenger would wager some twenty or thirty pounds, and the stakes would be deposited and delivered to the Challenged: the challenger receiving the money [61] taken at the door, or as we should term it, *gate money*; which, frequently, twice or thrice exceeded the value of the stakes.

"There is one remarkable exception, I have found, to this monetary arrangement, but it is the only one in my experience. For, in an advertisement of the usual character, there comes: 'Note.—That John Stokes fights James Harris, and Thomas Hesgate fights John Terriwest, three Bouts each at Back Sword, for Love.'

"Preliminaries arranged, handbills printed and distributed, the Combat duly advertised in at least one newspaper, and the day arrived; like the bull and bear, the combatants paraded the streets, preceded by a drum, having their sleeves tucked up, and their Swords in hand. All authorities

agree that the fights were, to a certain extent, serious.[62] 'The Edge of the Sword was a little blunted, and the Care of the Prize-fighters was not so much to avoid wounding each other, as to avoid doing it dangerously: Nevertheless, as they were oblig'd to fight till some Blood was shed, without which no Body would give a Farthing for the Show, they were sometimes forc'd to play a little ruffly. I once saw a much deeper and longer Cut given than was intended.' "Ward[63] gives a short description of one of these fights: 'Great Preparations at the Bear Garden all Morning, for the noble Tryal of Skill that is to be play'd in the Afternoon. Seats fill'd and crowded by Two. Drums beat, Dogs yelp, Butchers and Foot soldiers clatter their Sticks; At last the two heroes, in their fine borrow'd *Holland* Shirts, mount the Stage about Three; Cut large Collops out of one another, to divert the Mob, and Make Work for the Surgeons: Smoking, Swearing, Drinking, Thrusting, Justling, Elbowing, Sweating, Kicking, Cuffing, all the while the Company stays.'

Steele gives a good account of a prize fight: [64] 'The Combatants met in the Middle of the Stage, and, shaking Hands, as removing all Malice, they retired with much Grace to the Extremities of it; from whence they immediately faced about, and approached each other. *Miller*, with an Heart full of Resolution, *Buck*, with a watchful, untroubled Countenance; *Buck* regarding principally his own Defence, *Miller* chiefly thoughtful of his Opponent. It is not easie to describe the many Escapes and imperceptible Defences between Two Men of Quick Eyes, and ready Limbs; but *Miller's* Heat laid him open to the Rebuke of the calm *Buck*, by a large Cut on the Forehead. Much Effusion of Blood covered his Eyes in a Moment, and the Huzzas of the Crowd undoubtedly quickened his Anguish. The Assembly was divided into Parties upon their different ways of Fighting: while a poor Nymph in one of the Galleries apparently suffered for *Miller*, and burst into a Flood of Tears. As soon as his Wound was wrapped up, he came on again in a little Rage, which still disabled him further. But what brave Man can be wounded with more Patience and Caution? The next was a warm eager Onset, which ended in a decisive Stroke on the Left Leg of *Miller*. The Lady in the Gallery, during the second Strife, covered her face; and for my Part, I could not keep my thoughts from being mostly employed on the Consideration of her unhappy Circumstances that Moment, hearing the Clash of Swords, and apprehending Life or Victory concerned her Lover in every Blow, but not daring to satisfie herself on whom they fell. The Wound was exposed to the View of all who could delight in it, and sowed up on the Stage. The surly Second of *Miller* declared at this Time, that he would, that Day Fortnight, fight Mr. *Buck* at the Same Weapons, declaring himself the Master of the renowned *German*; but *Buck* denied him the Honour of that Courageous Disciple, and, asserting that he himself had taught that Champion, accepted the Challenge."

In No. 449, of the *Spectator*, is the following letter *re* Hockley-in-the-Hole:—

> "Mr. Spectator,—I was the other day at the Bear-garden, in hopes to have seen your short face; but not being so fortunate, I must tell you by way of letter, that there is a mystery among the gladiators which has escaped your spectatorial penetration. For, being in a Box at an Alehouse, near that renowned Seat or Honour above mentioned, I overheard two Masters of the Science agreeing to quarrel on the next Opportunity. This was to happen in the Company of a Set of the Fraternity of Basket Hilts, who were to meet that Evening. When that was settled, one asked the other, Will you give Cuts, or receive? the other answered, Receive. It was replied, Are you a passionate Man? No, provided you cut no more, nor no deeper than we agree. I thought it my duty to acquaint you with this, that the people may not pay their money for fighting, and be cheated.
>
> "Your humble servant,
>
> "Scabbard Rusty."

It was not sword play alone that was the favourite pastime at Hockley-in-the-Hole, there was cudgel playing—and fighting with "the Ancient Weapon called the Threshing Flail." There is an advertisement extant of a fight with this weapon between John Terrewest and John Parkes of Coventry, whose tombstone affirms that he fought three hundred and fifty battles in different parts of Europe. Fisticuffs also came prominently into vogue early in the eighteenth century, and it is needless to say that Hockley was a favourite place with its professors. The site of the Bear Garden is said to be occupied by the "Coach and Horses," 29, Ray Street, Farringdon Road.

Footnotes

[55] "Trivia," book ii.

[56] Book iii. line 1,000, &c.

[57] Harl. MSS. 5931, 46.

[58] Dr. Sacheverell.

[59] "Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne," by John Ashton (*Chatto and Windus*).

[60] Harl. MSS. 5931, 50.

[61] De. Sorbière.

[62] Misson.

[63] "Comical View of London and Westminster."

[64] *Spectator*, No. 436.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN connection with the Fleet, I have omitted to mention one locality, in this immediate neighbourhood, which certainly deserves notice from its associations, namely Laystall Street and Mount Pleasant; for here it was, that a fort to command Gray's Inn Road, was built, when the lines for the protection of the City were formed by order of Parliament in 1643—at the time when it was feared that Prince Rupert was coming to attack it. For nearly, if not quite, a hundred years those lines of defence were partially visible; and, certainly, among others, one was at Mount Pleasant. It is a somewhat curious thing that the names survive. A Laystall meant a dung or dust heap, and, after this artificial mound was utilized for the community its name was euphemised into Mount Pleasant, which it bears to this day.

This work of intrenchment was almost impressment, for we can hardly consider that it was voluntary, when we read in a newspaper of 1643, that, by order of the Parliament, "many thousands of men and women (good housekeepers), their children, and servants, went out of the several parishes of London with spades, shovels, pickaxes, and baskets, and drums and colours before them; some of the chief men of every parish marching before them, and so went into the fields, and worked hard all day in digging and making of trenches, from fort to fort, wherebie to intrench the citie round from one end to the other, on this side of the Thames; and late at night the company came back in like manner they went out, and the next day a many more went, and so they continued daily, with such cheerfulnesse that the whole will be finished ere many dayes." And so these works of fortification went on, encouraged by the presence of a member of the Common Council, and some of the Trained Bands (the City Militia of that time) and it was a work in which all classes joined—willingly, or not, I know not—but the latter, probably, as the City of London was generally loyal to its king, although on occasion, the dwellers therein, knew how to hold their own in defence of their prerogatives. But the fear of Prince Rupert, and his familiar spirit—the white poodle dog "Boy" (who was killed, after passing through many a battle-field unscathed, at Marston Moor, July 2, 1644), may possibly have had something to do with it. Of course we know that tailors and shoemakers, are mostly radicals, and socialists in politics, probably on account of their sedentary work, where political discussion is rife, and from their constant inter-association, not mixing much with the outer world; therefore we can scarcely wonder that on the 5th of June, 1643, that some five thousand or six thousand Tailors went out to help intrench the City against the redoubted Prince, and that, afterwards, the shoemakers followed their example. Two thousand porters also helped in the work. Most probably, a moral "shrewd privie nipp" was administered to most people by those then in power, and they were forced into taking an active part in raising the fortifications, irrespective of their being either *Cavaliers* or *Roundheads*.

At all events, the fort at Mount Pleasant was raised, although never used, and it belongs to the history of the Fleet River—as, close by, a little affluent joined it. Gardens sloped down to its banks, notably those of the great Priory of St. John's Clerkenwell, and, like Bermondsey, with its "Cherry Gardens"—the names of "Vineyard Walk" and "Pear Tree Court" bear testimony to the fruitfulness of this part of London. There is also "Vine Street" in Saffron Hill, which latter name is extremely suggestive of the growth of a plant which, in old times, was much used both in medicine and cooking. It was called "The Liberty of Saffron Hill, Hatton Garden, and Ely Place"—which was in the Manor of Portpool.

Saffron Hill, nowadays, is the home of the Italian organ-grinder, who, although not unknown to the police, is undoubtedly a better citizen than previous dwellers therein. Specially was West Street, or Chick Lane, as it was formerly called, a neighbourhood to be avoided by all honest men. It ran both east and west of the Fleet, which it crossed by a bridge. Stow calls it Chicken Lane, but it certainly was not inhabited by young and innocent birds. It ran into Field Lane, of unsavoury memory, and now done away with.

This was the state of West Street, as exemplified by a cutting from the *Morning Herald* of Feb. 11, 1834:

> "Yesterday an inquest was held at the Horse Shoe and Magpie, Saffron Hill, before THOMAS STIRLING, Esq., Coroner, on the body of James Parkinson, aged 36, who came by his death under the following circumstances.
>
> "The Jury proceeded to view the body of the deceased, which lay in the upper part of a low lodging-house for travellers, in West Street, Saffron Hill. It was in a high state of decomposition, and a report was generally circulated that he had come by his death by unfair means.
>
> "Mary Wood being sworn, deposed that she was the landlady of the house in West Street, which she let out in lodgings. The deceased occasionally lodged with her, and he

was a dealer in cat's meat. On Tuesday night last he came home and asked her for a light, and proceeded to his bedroom. On the Wednesday witness proceeded upstairs to make the beds, when she saw the deceased lying on his bed apparently asleep, but she did not speak to him. On the Thursday she proceeded to the upper part of the house for the same purpose, when she again saw the deceased lying as if asleep, but she did not disturb him, and he was ultimately discovered to be a corpse, and his face quite black.

"*Juror.* Pray, how many beds are there in the room where the deceased slept?

"*Witness.* Only eight, and please you, Sir.

"Indeed, and how many persons are in the habit of sleeping in the same apartment?—There are generally two or three in a bed, but the deceased had a bed to himself.

"Very comfortable truly. Is it not strange that none of his fellow lodgers ascertained that he was dead?—No, Sir, they go in and out without seeming to care for each other.

"Do you mean to say, if a poor man was to take a lodging at your house, you would let him lie for upwards of 48 hours without inquiring whether he required nourishment?—Why, Sir, I have known some of my lodgers, who have been out *upon the spree* to *lay* in bed for three and four days together, without a bit or a sup, and then they have gone out to their work as well and as hearty as ever they *was* in their lives; I have known it often to have been done. There was plenty of *grub* in the house if he liked to have asked for it; but I thought if I asked him to have victuals he would be offended, as he might receive it as a hint for the few nights' lodging that he owed me.

"Mr. Appleby, the parish surgeon, proved that the deceased died a natural death, and the Jury returned a verdict of 'Died by the visitation of God.'"

There was an old house in West Street, pulled down in April, 1840, which tradition affirmed to have been the residence of the infamous Jonathan Wild, and, when destroyed, its age was considered to be about three hundred years. At one time it was the Red Lion Inn; but for a hundred years prior to its demolition it was a low lodging-house. Owing to the numerous facilities for secretion and escape, it was the haunt of coiners, secret distillers, thieves, and perhaps worse. There were trap doors connected with the Fleet River through which booty might be thrown, or a man get away, if hard pressed; a secret door in a garret led to the next house, and there were many hiding places—in one of which a chimney sweep named Jones, who had escaped from Newgate, lay hidden for about six weeks, although the house was repeatedly searched by the police.

And there was Field Lane too, which was the house of the "Fence," or receiver of stolen goods. It was from this interesting locality that Charles Dickens drew that wonderful study of Fagin—who was a real character. Cruikshank has made him as immortal, but Kenny Meadows tried to delineate him in a clever series which appeared in *Bell's Life in London*, under the title of "Gallery of Comicalities."

FAGIN, THE JEW.

"Welcome, Old Star, of Saffron hill.
Of villainy a sample bright,
Awake to Prigs, and plunder still,
Thou merry, ancient Israelite!

Thy face is rough, with matted shag,
Foul is thy form, old shrivell'd wretch.
How cunningly you eye the swag,
Harden'd purveyor to Jack Ketch!

Incrusted with continued crime,
Your hopeful pupils still employ—
Thou wert indeed a Tutor prime
To Oliver, the Workhouse Boy.

Poor Lad! condemn'd to fate's hard stripes,
To herd with Fagin's plundering pack;
And learn the art of filching wipes,
From Charley Bates, and Dawkins Jack.

To hear 'The Dodger' patter slang,
With knowing wink, and accent glib,
Or learn from 'Sikes's' ruffian gang,
In slap up style to crack a crib.

Hail, Fagin! Patriarch of the whole!
Kind Patron of these knowing ones —
In thee we trace a kindred soul
Of honest Ikey Solomon's!

We leave you to your courses vile,
For conscience you have none, old Codger!
And in our next we'll trace in style,
The mug of Jack, the *artful dodger*."

FIELD LANE NEGOTIATIONS; OR, A SPECIMEN OF "FINE DRAWING."

The artistic merit of this poetry is *nil*, and my only excuse is the introduction of a forgotten sketch by a dead artist, who, in his day was popular and famous. Who, for instance, remembering Leech's pictures in *Punch*, would think that this illustration ever came from his pencil? but it did, and from *Bell's Life in London*; and so did another, of two children fighting in Chick Lane, whilst their parents, the father with a broken nose, and the mother with a black eye, look on approvingly.

"Field Lane Negotiations; or, a Specimen of 'Fine Drawing.' Thish ish vot I callsh 'caushe and effect;' caushe if vee thidn't buy, no bothy vood shell, and if vee thidn't shell, nobothy vood buy; and vot's more, if peoplesh thidn't have foglesh, vy, nobothy could prig em" (*See* Abrahams on the "Economy of Wipes").

Those were the days of large and valuable silk Bandana handkerchiefs, and the story used to be told that you might have your pocket picked of your handkerchief at one end of Field Lane, and buy it again at the other end, with the marking taken out.

Long before Fagin's time, however, there was a school for young thieves in this neighbourhood, *vide Gentleman's Magazine* (1765), vol. xxxv. p. 145.

> "Four boys, detected in picking pockets, were examined before the Lord Mayor, when one was admitted as evidence, who gave an account, that a man who kept a public-house near *Fleet Market*, had a club of boys, whom he instructed in picking pockets, and other iniquitous practices; beginning first with teaching them to pick a handchief out of his own pocket, and next his watch; so that, at last, the evidence was so great an adept, that he got the publican's watch four times in one evening, when he swore he was as perfect as one of twenty years' practice. The pilfering out of shops was his next art; his instructions to his pupils were, that as many chandlers, or other shops, as had hatches, [65] one boy was to knock for admittance for some trifle, whilst another was lying on his belly, close to the hatch, who when the boy came out, the hatch on jar, and the owner withdrawn, was to crawl in, on all fours, and take the tills or anything else he could meet with, and to retire in the same manner. Breaking into shops by night was another article which was to be effected thus: as walls of brick under shop windows are very thin, two of them were to lie under a window as destitute beggars, asleep to passers by, but, when alone, were provided with pickers to pick the mortar out of the bricks, and so on till they had opened a hole big enough to go in, when one was to lie, as if asleep, before the breach, till the other accomplished his purpose."

Footnotes

[65] Dwarf doors.

CHAPTER XIV.

CLOSE by Saffron Hill, and Fleet Lane, is Hatton Garden, or Ely Place, formerly the seats of the Bishops of Ely; which Shakespeare has made so familiar to us in *Richard III.* act iii. sc. 4. "My Lord of Ely, when I was last in Holborn, I saw good strawberries in your garden there; I do beseech you, send for some of them."[66] In Queen Elizabeth's time an arrangement was effected so that her favourite Chancellor Hatton, who "led the brawls, the Seal and Maces danc'd before him,"[67] should have this little estate, the gardens of which sloped down to the Fleet River. Hence the Bishop of Ely's place assumed the name of Hatton Garden.

There is a legend—and I give it as such—that this Sir Christopher Hatton married a beautiful gipsy girl, who bewitched him; and the price she had to pay, according to her compact with the Evil One, was her soul, and body, after a given time. When that arrived, the Devil duly came for her, and seizing her, bore her aloft, and, whilst in the air, he rent her in pieces, and threw her still palpitating heart to earth. Where it fell was, for years, known as *Bleeding Heart Yard*; but now, the authorities, whoever they may be, have altered it to *Bleeding Hart*, which, in all probability was the cognizance of the family who resided there.

This Ely Place had very extensive premises, consisting of numerous buildings, a Hall, Quadrangle, Cloisters, Chapel, a field, the historic garden, *cum multis aliis*; and they occupied a large space. Only the Chapel now remains, and that has had a curious career. At one time marriages were celebrated there, as at the Fleet, presumably that it was not under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London, but this fiction was overruled in the case of *Barton* v. *Wells* in the Consistory Court, Nov. 17, 1789, when Sir Wm. Scott (afterwards Lord Stowell) decided that Ely Chapel was under the authority of the Bishop of London, and that Curates thereto must be licensed by him.

The Bishops came to London in former times, as now, and their residences, in several cases were known as *Places*, or *Palaces*. Thus, there was Winchester Place, in Southwark, now the headquarters of the Fire Brigade—formerly the palace of the Bishops of Winchester, a city which was once the metropolis of England, where Parliaments were held, and whose Bishops to this day are titular Prelates of the Garter. The Bishop of Bangor, who, although his see claims to be as old as any, has not the richest bishopric, had a palace in Shoe Lane, Holborn, and the Bishop of Lincoln also lived in Holborn.

The first mention of the connection of the Bishops of Ely, is in the will of John de Kirkeby (who was appointed Bishop in 1286), and whose will was proved in 1290, or 18 Edward I., and in the Close Roll of that year, is the following (in Latin, of course):

"*For the Executors of the Will of the Bishop of Ely.*

> "Whereas the King hath understood that John, late Bishop of Ely, deceased, of pious memory, hath in his last will bequeathed his houses which he had in the parish of St. Andrew near Holeburn, in the suburbs, and within the liberty of the city of London, to God, and the Church of St. Etheldreda[68] of Ely, and his successors, bishops of the same place, so that they should pay the debts which the same deceased owed for those houses to Gregory de Rokesle, the King's Citizen, of London; Ralph de Sandwich, warden of the said City, is commanded, that, without delay, he deliver the aforesaid houses, with appurtenances, which are in the King's hand and custody, by reason of the death of the aforesaid bishop, thereof to make execution of the said will.

"Witness the King at Westminster on the 18th day of July."

The next bishop—William de Luda (who must have been a person of some distinction, for he had previously held the Deanery of St. Martin's le Grand, and the Archdeaconry of Durham, besides being Chamberlain, Treasurer, and Keeper of the Wardrobe to the King) bequeathed more property to the See, and in all likelihood, built the Chapel of St. Etheldreda, which, however, was most probably considerably modified by a later Bishop, Thomas de Arundel, who held the See from 1374 to 1388—as the windows, mouldings, &c., now existing show, being about as good an example, as possible, of *Decorated*, or *Second Pointed* architecture.

"Old *Iohn of Gaunt*, time-honoured Lancaster" lived at Ely Place for a time—in all likelihood after his palace in the Savoy, had been destroyed by rioters. This fact is noted by Shakespeare in "The life and death of King Richard the Second," act i. sc. 4:

"*Busby.* Old Iohn of Gaunt is verie sick, my Lord,
Sodainly taken, and hath sent post haste
To entreat your Majesty to visit him.

Richard. Where lyes he?
Busby. At Ely house."

Hollinshed, also, under date 1399, says: "In the meane time, the Duke of Lancaster departed out of this life at the Bishop of Elie's place, in Holborne, and lieth buried in the Cathedrall Church of St. Paule, in London, on the north side of the high altar, by the Ladie Blanche, his first wife."

The premises were of very great extent, as appears by plans taken before its almost total demolition in 1772. Under the Chapel was a cellar, or under croft—divided into two—and this seems to have caused some inconvenience in the seventeenth century, for Malcolm, in his "Londinium Redivivum" (vol. ii. p. 236) says: "One half of the crypt under the chapel, which had been used for interments, was then frequented as a drinking-place, where liquor was retailed; and the intoxication of the people assembled, often interrupted the offices of religion above them." And this statement seems to be borne out by a reference to Harl. MSS. 3789, *et seq.*, where it says: "Even half of the vault or burying place under the Chapel is made use of as a public cellar (or was so very lately) to sell drink in, there having been frequently revellings heard there during Divine Service."

More curious things than this happened to Ely Place, for the Journals of the House of Commons inform us how, on January 3, 1642-3, "The palace was this day ordered to be converted into a prison, and John Hunt, Sergeant-at-arms, appointed keeper during the pleasure of the House." He was, at the same time, commanded to take care that the gardens, trees, chapel, and its windows, received no injury. A sufficient sum for repairs was granted from the revenues of the see.

Again, on March 1, 1660: "Ordered that it be referred to a Committee to consider how, and in what manner, the said widows, orphans, and maim'd soldiers, at Ely House, may be provided for, and paid, for the future, with the least prejudice, and most ease to the nation; and how a weekly revenue may be settled for their maintenance; and how the maimed soldiers may be disposed of, so as the nation may be eased of the charge, and how they may be provided of a preaching minister."

There were always squabbles about this property, and it nearly fell into ruin; but in 1772 an Act of Parliament was passed (Geo. III., an. 12, cap. 43) entitled "An Act for vesting *Ely House*, in *Holbourn*, in His Majesty, his Heirs and Successors, and for applying the Purchase Money, with another Sum therein mentioned, in the purchasing of a Freehold Piece of Ground in *Dover Street*, and in the building, and fitting up another House thereon, for the future Residence of the Bishops of *Ely*, and the Surplus to the Benefit of the See; and for other Purposes therein mentioned." And the town residence of the Bishop of Ely is now 37, Dover Street, Piccadilly. This little bargain was the sale to the Crown of Ely Place for £6,500, and a perpetual annuity of £200 to the Bishop of Ely and his successors.

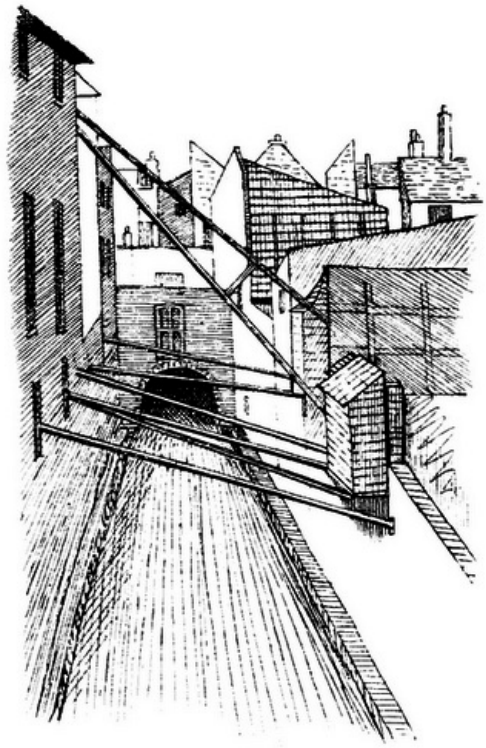
The site and materials were purchased by a Mr. Charles Cole, an architect and builder, and he built Ely Place, Holborn. The chapel was let, and, eventually, to the Welsh Episcopalians of London. But the property got into Chancery, and the estate was ordered to be sold; and it was sold on January 28, 1874, and the chapel alone fetched £5,250. As there was no stipulation as to its purchase by any particular religious body, it was bought by the Roman Catholics, and is now St. Etheldreda's Church, Convent, and schools.

ELY HOUSE, 1784.

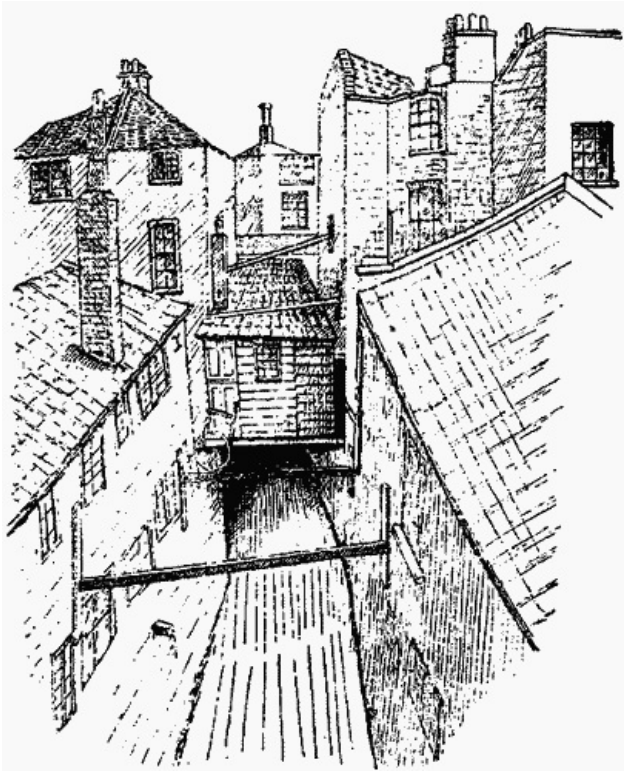
Apropos of Ely House, when Bishop Coxe demurred at surrendering the property of his see to Hatton, Queen Elizabeth wrote him that famous letter, beginning "Proud Prelate," and telling him that, if he did not do as he was told, she, who had made him what he was, could unmake him, and if he did not immediately comply, she would unfrock him—signing this very characteristic and peremptory epistle, "Yours, as you demean yourself, ELIZABETH."

On the other or east side of the Fleet was a tributary brook called Turnmill brook—a name now surviving in Turnmill Street—which, even in this century, drove flour and flatting mills, and we have indisputable evidence of its industrial powers, in an advertisement in the *Daily Courant* September 17, 1714, which calls attention to a house in Bowling (Green) Alley, [69] Turnmill

Street, which had the power of utilizing "a common sewer with a good stream, and a good current, for purposes of a Mill;" and it was on Turnmill Brook that Cave, the publisher, in 1740, went into an unprofitable partnership with one Lewis Paul, of Birmingham, to work a mill for the utilization of a patent taken out by Paul for a "Machine to spin wool or cotton into thread, yarn, or worsted." This experiment, however, was not a success.



The Fleet flowing to its bourne, [70] the Thames, was bridged over at Holborn. Stow says: "Oldbourne bridge, over the said river of Wels more towards the north, was so called, of a bourn that sometimes ran down Oldbourne hill into the said river. This bridge of stone, like as Fleet bridge from Ludgate West, serveth for passengers with Carriage, or otherwise, from Newgate toward the west and by north." This was written in 1598.



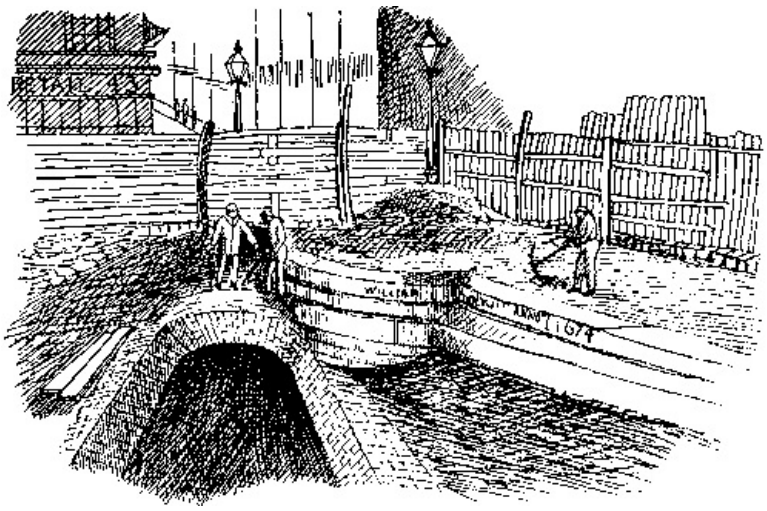
After the great fire of 1666 the Fleet was widened, and canalized, from the Thames, to Holborn Bridge; thence, to its source, it took its natural course, and, although there were then three bridges over it, from Holborn to Newgate Street, set close, side by side, yet it was considered too narrow for the traffic, as we see in an Act of Parliament passed in 1670 (22 Car. II., cap. 11), entitled "An additional Act for the Rebuilding of the City of *London*, Uniting of Parishes, and Rebuilding of the Cathedral and Parochial Churches within the said City." Section 7 says: "And,

whereas the Way or Passage of *Holborn-Bridge* is now too strait, or incommodious for the many Carriages and Passengers daily using and frequenting the same, and is therefore necessary to be enlarged; Be it therefore likewise enacted, That it shall and may be lawful for the said Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons, so to enlarge and make wider the same, as that the said Way and Passage may run in a Bevil Line from a certain Timber house on the North side thereof, commonly called or known by the Name or Sign of the *Cock*, into the Front of the Buildings of a certain Inn called the *Swan* Inn, situate on the North side of *Holborn Hill*, as aforesaid."

Sir Christopher Wren built this bridge, which was meant to be the ornamental end of "The New Canal," as it is described in the map of Farringdon Ward in Stow's "Survey" (ed. 1720). It must have taken some time to complete, for it was not finished until the Mayoralty of Sir William Hooker, whose name appeared carved upon it (although somewhat mutilated) when it was uncovered in March, 1840. Sir William Tite, C.B., M.P., F.S.A., &c., Architect to the City of London, writing at that date, says: "The Sewer at Holborn Hill was opened, and as I was passing, I saw the southern face of the Bridge which crossed the Fleet at this place uncovered to some extent. It was built of red brick, and the arch was about twenty feet span. The road from the east intersected the bridge obliquely, which irregularity was obviated from a moulded and well-executed stone corbel arising out of the angle thus formed, which carried the parapet. On the plinth course of the parapet was cut the inscription following, recording the fact of the erection of the bridge, with the name of the Lord Mayor at the period:—"William Hooke(r). (A)nno D. 1674."

Sir William Tite says it was a red brick bridge; Hatton, in his "New View of London" (1708), says it was of stone; but then, probably, he never really saw it, and Tite did. Hatton's description is: "*Holbourn Bridge* is built of Stone, it leads from *Holbourn* to *Snow Hill*, over the N. end of the *Fleet Brook*, where a little rivulet called *Wells*, falls by *Hockley Hole*, running a little E'd of *Saffron Hill*, crossing near the W. end of *Chick Lane*, and so into this Brook."

The canalization of the Fleet after 1666 was a useful work, as it enabled barges to go up to Holborn Bridge; and that it was availed of, we can judge by the frontispiece, which was painted in the middle of the eighteenth century; but it was not much used, if we can trust Ned Ward, whose sharp eyes looked everywhere, and whose pen recorded his scrutiny [71] : "From thence we took a turn down by the Ditch side, I desiring my Friend to inform me what great Advantages this costly Brook contributed to the Town, to Countervail the Expence of Seventy four Thousand Pounds, which I read in a very Credible Author, was the Charge of its making: He told me he was wholly unacquainted with any, unless it was now and then to bring up a few Chaldron of Coles to two or three Pedling *Fewel-Marchants*, who sell them never the Cheaper to the Poor for such a Conveniency: and, as for those Cellars you see on each side design'd for Ware-Houses, they are render'd by their dampness so unfit for that purpose that they are wholly useless, except ... or to harbour Frogs, Toads, and other Vermin. The greatest good that ever I heard it did was to the Undertaker, who is bound to acknowledge he has found better Fishing in that muddy Stream, than ever he did in clear Water."



END OF HOLBORN BRIDGE, TAKEN FROM THE SOUTH, AND PART OF HOLBORN HILL. JUNE 2, 1840.

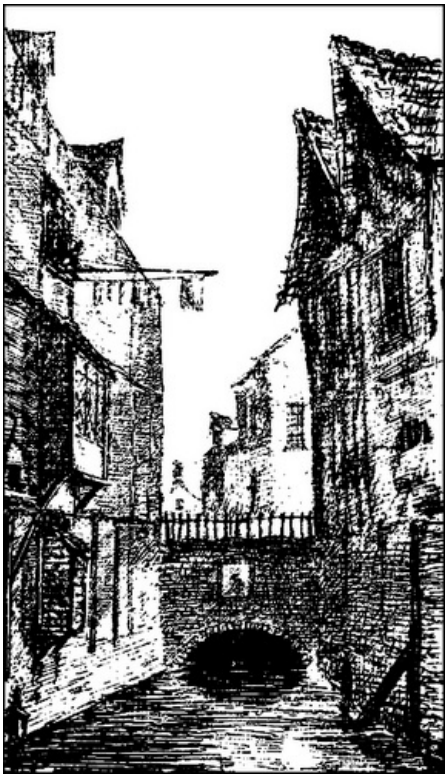
Gay, too, in his "Trivia," more than once mentions the foulness of the Fleet in book ii.

"Or who that rugged street[72] would
traverse o'er,
That stretches, O Fleet-Ditch, from thy
black shore
To the Tour's moated walls?"

And again:

"If where Fleet-Ditch with muddy current flows."

Here is a pen-and-ink sketch of Holborn Bridge—from some old engraving or painting (Crosby does not give his authority), which gives an excellent idea of old London—squalid and filthy according to our ideas. How different from that noble viaduct which now spans the course of the Fleet River! which her Majesty opened on November 6, 1869.



HOLBORN BRIDGE.

FOOTNOTES

[66] Hollinshed says—speaking of a Council at the Tower, relative to the Coronation of Edward V., at which the Protector presided, "After a little talking with them, he said unto the Bishop of Ely, 'My Lord, you have verie good strawberries at your garden in Holborne, I require you let us have a messe of them.' 'Gladlie, my Lord,' quoth he, 'would God I had some better thing as readie to your pleasure as that!' And there withall, in all haste, he sent his servant for a messe of strawberries."

[67] Gray, "*A long Story*."

[68] Afterwards Anglicised into Audrey.

[69] There is now *Bowling Green Street*, Farringdon Street.

[70] See next two pages.

[71] "London Spy," part vi.

[72] Thames Street.

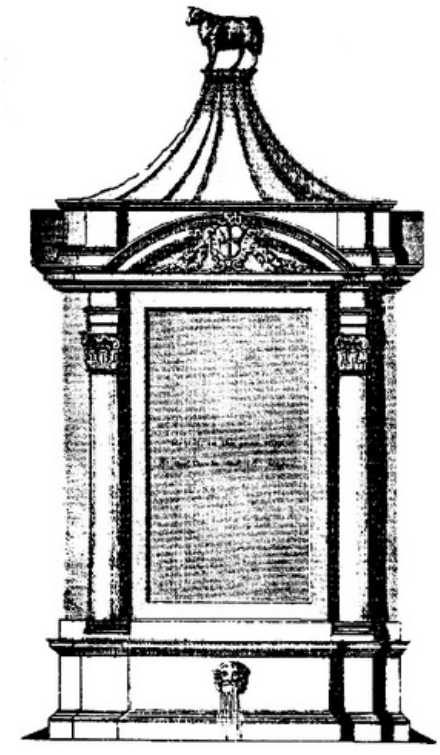
CHAPTER XV.

THEN, close by (still keeping up its title of the River of the Wells) was Lamb's Conduit, on Snow Hill, which was fed from a little rill which had its source near where the Foundling Hospital now stands, its course being perpetuated by the name of Lamb's Conduit Street, where, according to the "Old English Herbal," watercresses used to flourish. "It groweth of its own accord in gardens and fields by the way side, in divers places, and particularly in the next pasture to the Conduit Head, behind Gray's Inn, that brings water to Mr. Lamb's Conduit in Holborn."

William Lamb was a citizen of London, and of the Guild of Cloth-workers, besides which, he was some time Gentleman of the Chapel to Henry VIII. He benefited his fellow-citizens by restoring a conduit in 1577, which had been in existence since the fifteenth century; and, after the Great Fire, the busy Sir Christopher Wren was employed to design a covering for the spring, which he did, putting a *lamb* on the top, with a very short inscription on the front panel, to the effect that it was "Rebuilt in the year 1677 S^{r} Tho^{s} Davis Kn^{t} L^{d} Mayor."

It is curious to learn how the suburbs of London have grown within the memory of living men. Take, for instance, the following, from *Notes and Queries* (April, 1857, p. 265), referring to Lamb's Conduit. A correspondent writes that "About sixty years since, I was travelling from the West of England in one of the old stage coaches of that day, and my fellow-travellers were an octogenarian clergyman and his daughter. In speaking of the then increasing size of London, the old gentleman said that when he was a boy, and recovering from an attack of smallpox, he was sent into the country to a row of houses standing on the west side of the present Lamb's Conduit Street; that all the space before him was open fields; that a streamlet of water ran under his window; and he saw a man snipe-shooting, who sprung a snipe near to the house, and shot it."

It was no small gift of William Lamb to the City, for it cost him £1,500, which was equivalent to thrice that sum at present, and, to make it complete, he gave to one hundred and twenty poor women, pails wherewith to serve and carry water, whereby they earned an honest, although a somewhat laborious, living. Lamb left many charitable bequests, and also founded a chapel, by Monkwell Street, now pulled down. This Conduit existed until about 1755, when it was demolished, and an obelisk with lamps erected in its place, but, that being found a nuisance, was, in its turn, soon done away with.



LAMB'S CONDUIT, SNOW HILL.

Lamb was buried in the Church of St. Faith's, under St. Paul's, and on a pillar was a brass to his memory, which is so quaint, that I make no apology for introducing it.

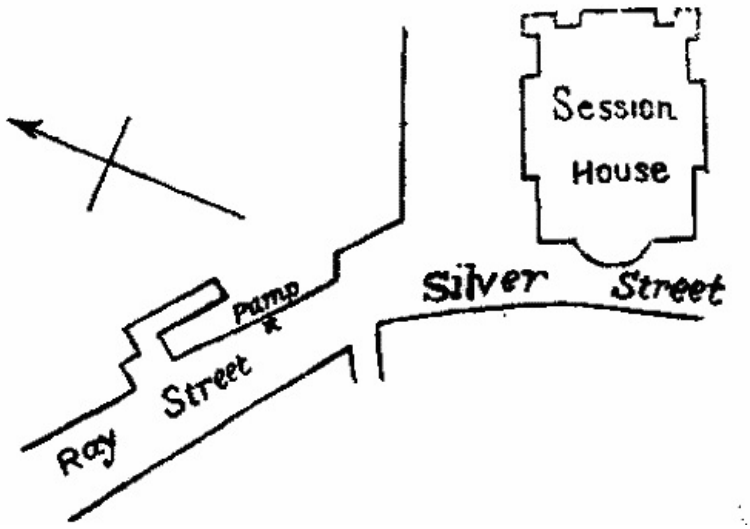
"William Lambe so sometime was my name,
Whiles alive dyd runne my mortall race,
Serving a Prince of most immortall fame,
Henry the Eight, who of his Princely grace
In his Chapell allowed me a place.
By whose favour, from Gentleman to Esquire
I was preferr'd, with worship, for my hire.
With wives three I joyned wedlock band,
Which (all alive) true lovers were to me,
Joane, Alice, and Joane; for so they came to hand,
What needeth prayse regarding their degree?
In wively truth none stedfast more could be.
Who, though on earth, death's force did once dissever,
Heaven, yet, I trust, shall joyn us all together.
O Lambe of God, which sinne didst take away;
And as a Lambe, was offred up for sinne,
Where I (poor Lambe) went from thy flock astray,
Yet thou, good Lord, vouchsafe thy Lambe to winne
Home to thy folde, and holde thy Lambe therein;
That at the day, when Lambes and Goates shall sever,
Of thy choice Lambes, Lambe may be one for ever.
I pray you all, that receive Bread and Pence,
To say the Lord's Prayer before ye go hence."

It is said, also, that the old verses, so well known, were appended to the brass, or, rather, engraved on his tombstone.

" As I was, so are ye,
As I am, you shall be,
That I had, that I gave,
That I gave, that I have.
Thus I end all my cost,
That I felt, that I lost."

But there is one well must not be lost sight of; for, in its small way, it was tributary to the Fleet—and that is Clerk's Well, or Clerkenwell, which gives its name to a large district of London. It was of old repute, for we see, in Ralph Aggas' Map of London, published about 1560, a conduit spouting from a wall, into a stone tank or trough. This is, perhaps, the earliest pictorial delineation of it; but FitzStephen mentions it under "*fons Clericorum*" so called, it is said, from the Parish Clerks of London, who chose this place for a representation of *Miracle Plays*, or scenes from Scripture realistically rendered, as now survives in the Ober Ammergau Passion Play. This little Company, which still exists as one of the City Guilds, has never attained to the dignity of having a livery, but they have a Hall of their own (in Silver Street, Wood Street, E.C.), and in their time have done good service in composing the "Bills of Mortality;" and gruesome pamphlets they were—all skulls, skeletons, and cross-bones—especially during the great Plague.

These plays were, as I have said, extremely realistic. One, played at Chester A.D. 1327, [73] represented Adam and Eve, both stark naked, but, afterwards, they wore fig leaves. The language used in them, would to our ears be coarse, but it was the language of the time, and, probably, men and women were no worse than they are now. But, at all events this Guild, which was incorporated in the 17 Henry III. A.D. 1232, used occasionally to delight their fellow Citizens with dramatic representations in the open air (as have lately been revived in the "Pastoral plays" at Wimbledon) at what was then an accessible, and yet a rural, suburb of London.



Hence the name—but the well, alas, is no more—but when I say that, I mean that it is no longer available to the public. That it does exist, is well known to the occupier of the house where it formerly was in use, for the basement has frequently to be pumped dry. The neighbourhood has been so altered of late years, that its absolute site was somewhat difficult to fix; yet any one can identify it for themselves from the accompanying slight sketch of the locality as it existed over sixty years since. Ray Street (at least this portion of it) is now termed Farringdon Road, and what with Model lodging-houses, and underground railways, its physical and geographical arrangement is decidedly altered.

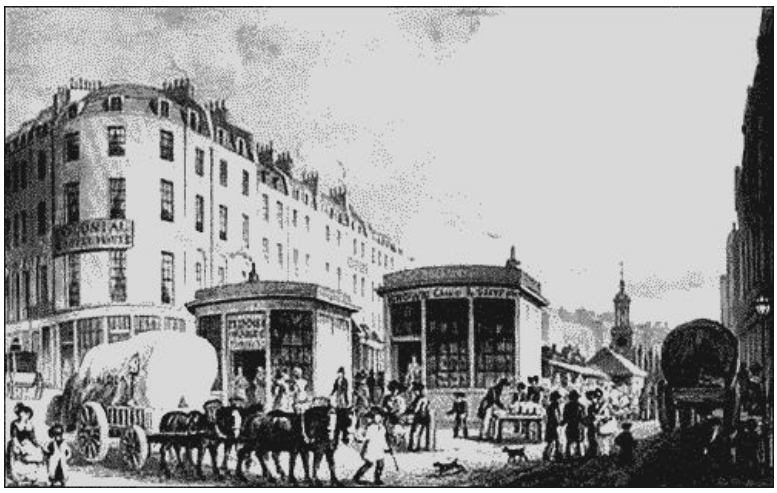
Early in the last century, in Queen Anne's time, the Spring had ceased to be a conduit, as shown in Ralph Aggas' Map, but had been turned into a pump; and this pump even was moved, in 1800, to a more convenient spot in Ray Street, where it was in existence (which I rather doubt), according to Pink's History of Clerkenwell in 1865. However, there is very good evidence of its being, in an engraving dated May 1, 1822, of the "Clerk's Well"—which shows the pump, and a stone tablet with the following inscription:

"A.D. 1800.
WILLM. BOUND } CHURCH-
JOSEPH BIRD } WARDEN.

For the better accommodation of the Neighbourhood, this Pump was removed to the Spot where it now Stands. The Spring by which it is supplied is situated four Feet eastward, and round it, as History informs us, the Parish Clerks of London in remote Ages annually performed sacred Plays. That Custom caused it to be denominated Clerks' Well, and from which this Parish derives its Name. The Water was greatly esteemed by the Prior and Brethren of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, and the Benedictine Nuns in the Neighbourhood."

In later days, the Fleet, as every other stream on whose banks houses are built, became a sewer, and "behaved as sich;" so that it was deemed prudent to cover some portion of it, at all events, and that part where now is Farringdon Street, was arched over, and made into the Fleet *Market*. Our ancestors were far more alive to the advantages of ready cash, and consequent keen competition among dealers, than we are, although through the medium of Co-operative Stores, &c., we are beginning to learn the lost lesson, but, at all events, they had the acumen to know that large centres of supply were cheaper to the consumer than small, isolated shops, and *the Market*, was the outcome. It is next to impossible to make a Market—witness in our own times, the Central Fish Market, and Columbia Market, both of which are not absolute failures, but, to use a theatrical slang term, *frosts*—and this was an example.

The Canal, up to Holborn Bridge, was expensive to keep up, and as we saw, by the quotation from Ned Ward, it was next door to worthless. Meantime, sewage and silt played their work, as the stream was neglected, and, becoming a public nuisance, it was arched over, pursuant to an Act 6 Geo. II. cap. 22, entitled "An Act for filling up such Part of the Channell of *Bridewell Dock*, and *Fleet Bridge*, as lies between *Holborn Bridge* and *Fleet Bridge*, and for converting the Ground, when filled up, to the use of the City of *London*." The works were begun in 1734 and was arched over and finished in 1735; but, as buildings are necessary for a market, it was not opened, as such, until Sept. 30, 1737. For nearly a century it remained a market for meat, fish, and vegetables, although, of course, the largest meat market was Newgate, as being near Smithfield; and for fish, Billingsgate, which still maintains its pre-eminence But in 1829 it was pulled down, in order to make a wider street from Holborn to Blackfriars Bridge; and this part of the Fleet was called, and now is, Farringdon Street.



FLEET MARKET, FROM HOLBORN BRIDGE.

The Vegetable Market, for it had come to that only, was swept away, and a site found for it, nearly opposite the Fleet prison. It is still so used, but it is not much of a financial help to the City, as it only brings in an annual income (according to the last return I have been able to obtain) of between £700 and £800. It was thought that trade might be encouraged, and revived, if it were worthier housed, so what is now, the Central Fish Market, was erected; but, before the vendors of vegetables could enter into possession, a great cry had arisen as to the supply of fish to London, and the monopoly of Billingsgate, and the market was given over to the fishmongers. But it is not a success in a monetary point of view; is a great loss to the City, and, as a fish market, a very doubtful boon to the public.

The Fleet Prison, which was on the east side of Farringdon Street, will be noticed in its place; and, as we have seen, the river was arched over from Holborn to Fleet Bridge, after which it still flowed, an open sewer, into the Thames.

But, before going farther, we must needs glance at a curious little bit of Fleet history, which is to be found in "The Secret History of the Rye House Plot, and Monmouth's Rebellion," written by Ford. Lord Grey who was a party to the plot, addressed it to James the Second, 1685, but it was not printed until 1754. In p. 28 it states, "About the latter end of Oct. Monmouth s'd to Sir Thos. Armstrong and Lord Grey, that it was necessary for them to view the passage into the City, which, accordingly they did, from the lower end of *Fleet-ditch*, next the river, to the other end of it, by Snow Hill." And again (p. 34): "Sunday night was pitched upon for the rising in London, as all shops would be shut. Their men were to be armed at the Duke of Monmouth's in Hedge Lane, Northumberland House, Bedford House, and four or five meeting houses in the City.

"The first alarm was designed to be between eleven and twelve at night, by attacking the train bands at the Royal Exchange, and then possessing ourselves of Newgate, Ludgate, and Aldersgate. The first two gates we did not design to defend, unless we were beaten from Fleet Bridge and Snow Hill, where we intended to receive the first attack of the King's Guards. At Snow Hill, we intended to make a Barricade, and plant three or four pieces of Cannon, upon Ship's Carriages; at Fleet Bridge we designed to use our Cannon upon the carriages, and to make a breast-work for our musqueteers bridge next us, and to fill the houses on that side the ditch with men who should fire from the windows, but the bridge to be clear."

As a matter of fact, there seem to have been two bridges over the Fleet, crossing it at Fleet Street and Ludgate Hill, both side by side, as at Holborn. Crosby, upon whose collection I have so largely drawn, says that it is so, from personal observation, one bridge being 24 ft. 6 in., and the other, 24 ft. wide, making in all, a roadway of 48 ft. 6 in. presumably including parapets. From his measurements, the span of the bridge was 12 ft., and the height of the arch was 11 ft. 6 in., but he does not say whence he takes his measurement—from the bottom of the Fleet, or from the river level.

To this measurement hangs a tale, which is best told in Crosby's own words, from a memo of his in the Guildhall Library:—

> "Fleet Bridge, *Tuesday*, July 28th, 1840. As I could not depend upon the admeasurements which, at the beginning of the year, I had taken in a *hurried manner*, at Fleet Bridges, while bricklayers were placing in a brick bottom in place of the original one of alluvial soil, I determined to obtain them the first opportunity. This evening, therefore, at ten o'clock, I met Bridgewater, one of the workmen employed in constructing the New Sewer from Holborn Bridge to Clerkenwell, by appointment, at the Hoard there, water boots being in readiness. I lighted my lamps, and, assisted by the watchmen, King and Arion, we descended the ladder, and got into that branch of the sewer which joins Wren's bridge, at Holborn. We then walked carefully till we reached Fleet Bridge. I suspended my Argand lamp on the Breakwater of the Sewer, and with my Lanthorn light we proceeded towards the Thames. We got a considerable distance, during which the channel of the Sewer twice turned to the right, at a slight angle, the last portion we entered, was barrelled at the bottom, the middle so full of

holes, and the water so deep, as we approached the Thames, that we thought it prudent to return to Fleet bridge." (Here they lit up and took measurements). "All went well till about a quarter to twelve o'clock, when to our surprise we found the Tide had suddenly come in to the depth of two feet and a half. No time was to be lost, but I had only one more admeasurement to make, viz., the width of the north bridge. I managed this, and we then snatched up the basket, and holding our Lamps aloft, dashed up the Sewer, which we had to get up one half before out of danger. The air was close, and made us faint. However we got safe to Holborn Bridge...."

Footnotes

[73] Harl. MSS. 2013.

CHAPTER XVI.

HATTON, writing in 1708, says: "*Fleet Bridge* is even with the Str(eet); it leads from *Fleet Street* over the *Fleet Ditch* to *Ludgate Hill*; is accommodated with strong Battlements which are adorned with six Peers and enriched with the Arms of *London*, and Supporters Pine-apples, &c., all of Stone; and bet(wee)n the Peers are Iron Rails and Bannisters, on the N. & S. sides of the Bridge."

On either side of where the Bridge used to be, are two obelisks, one on the North, or Farringdon Street side, to Alderman Waithman, and on the South, or Bridge Street side, to John Wilkes the notorious. The first bears the following inscription:—

ERECTED
TO THE MEMORY
OF
ROBERT
WAITHMAN
BY
HIS FRIENDS AND
FELLOW CITIZENS,
M.D.C.C.C.XXXIII.

This Alderman Waithman was almost one of the typical class so often held up as an example for all poor boys to follow, *i.e.*, he began life with simply his own energy, and opportunity to help him. And, as a virtuous example of industry, when the times were not so pushing as now; and half, and quarter, or less commissions on transactions were unknown, we may just spend a minute in reading about him. Wrexham was his birthplace in 1764, and his father dying soon after, he was adopted by his uncle and sent to school. No one was then left very many years in *statu pupillari*, and, consequently, he had to join his uncle in business, as a linendraper at Bath. The uncle died in 1788, and he took a place at Reading, whence he came to London, and lived as a linendraper's assistant until he came of age. He then married, and opened a shop at the South end of the Fleet Market, nearly precisely on the spot where his monument now stands.

He prospered in business, and moved to other, and larger premises, became Common Councilman, tried to get into Parliament for the City, and ultimately succeeded in 1818. Next election he lost it, but in all subsequent ones he was the favoured candidate. He was Alderman of Farringdon Without, Sheriff, and filled the office of Mayor in 1823-4. The obelisk to his memory remains, but he has dropped out of general memory, and this revival of his life, for imitation, in industry and rectitude of conduct, must be my excuse for taking up my readers' time.

Far different is it with John Wilkes, about whom every one knows, and I have only to say that his obelisk bears the inscription—

A.D.
M.D.C.C.LXXV.
THE RIGHT
HONORABLE
JOHN WILKES,
Lord Mayor.

This inscription became effaced through the weather, and was, within the last few years, replaced with a new stone; but it was grumbled at for not having the original word "Esquire" after John Wilkes, which was surely a work of supererogation.

Close by was Ludgate, with its debtors' prison of Lud-gate, which was rather aristocratic, being "purely for Insolvent Citizens of *London*, Beneficed Clergy, and Attorneys at Law," and which was even peculiar in the time when it existed; for Maitland, in his "History of London" (ed. 1775, pp. 28, 29) says:—

> "The domestick Government of this Prison having something very singular and remarkable in it, I presume an Account thereof will not be unacceptable to the Reader. I shall, therefore, insert a compendious Abstract thereof from an Account published some Time ago by one who had been a long Time Prisoner there.
>
> "For the quiet and good Government of this Prison, and the Punishment of Crimes and Misdemeanors therein committed, the Master Keeper and Prisoners from among themselves chuse the following Officers, viz., A Reader of Divine Service; an upper Steward, called the Master of the Box; an Under Steward; seven Assistants, who by

Turns officiate daily; a Running Assistant; two Churchwardens; a Scavenger; a Chamberlain; a Running Post; and the Criers or Beggars at the Gates, who are generally six in number.

"The Reader is chosen by the Master Keeper, Stewards, and Assistants, and not at a General Election, as the other Officers are. The Reader, besides reading Prayers, was, originally, obliged to Ring the Bell twice a Day for Prayers, and also for the Space of a Quarter of an Hour before Nine at Night, as a Warning for all Strangers to depart the Prison; but for the Dignity of his Office, he is now exempt from those Services, and others in his stead are appointed to perform them. This Officer's salary is two Shillings and eight Pence *per* Month, and a Penny of every Prisoner at his Entrance, if his Garnish[74] amount to sixteen Pence; and a Dish of Meat out of the Lord Mayor's Basket.

"The Upper Steward, or Master of the Box, is, by all the Prisoners held in equal Esteem with the Keeper of the Prison; and to his Charge is committed the keeping of all the several Orders of the House, with the Accounts of Cash received upon Legacies; the Distribution of all the Provisions sent in by the Lord Mayor, and others; the cash received by Garnish, and begging at the Grates, which he weekly lays out in Bread, Candles, and other Necessaries. He likewise keeps a List of all the Prisoners, as well those that are upon the Charity, as those that are not; to each of whom, by the Aid of the Assistant for the Day, he distributes their several proportions of Bread and other Provisions. He receives the Gifts of the Butchers, Fishmongers, Poulterers, and other Market People, sent in by the Clerk of the Market, by the Running Post, for which he gives a Receipt, and, afterwards, in the Presence of the Assistant for the Day, exposes for Sale to the Charity Men, by Way of Market; and the Money arising thereby is deposited in the Common Stock, or Bank.

"This Officer, with the Under Steward, Assistants, and Churchwardens, are elected monthly by the Suffrages of the Prisoners; but all the other Officers, except the Chamberlain, are appointed by the Master-Keeper, Stewards, and Assistants. The Design of these frequent Elections, is to prevent Frauds and Abuses in the respective Officers; but, when they are known to be Men of Probity, they are generally reelected, and often continue in such Posts many Months. The *Monday* after every Election, the Accounts are audited and passed, and the Balance divided; and, if it amount to three Shillings and four Pence *per* Man, the Keeper of the Prison arbitrarily extorts from each Prisoner two Shillings and Four Pence, without the least Colour of Right: But, if the Dividend arises not so high, then he only takes one Shilling and two Pence; the other Moiety being charged to the Prisoner's Account, to be paid at the Time of his Discharge; which new and detestable Impositions are apparently contrary to the Intention of the Founder.

"Another great Grievance the distressed and miserable Prisoners are subject to, is, their being obliged to pay the Turnkey twelve Shillings *per* Month, for no other Service than that of opening the Door to let in Gifts and Charities sent to the Prison, which often amount to little more than what he receives.

"The Under Steward is an Assistant, or Deputy, to the Upper Steward, in whose Absence or Indisposition he performs the several Functions of his Office.

"The Assistants, being seven in Number, are chosen Monthly with the Stewards; one whereof, officiating daily, his Business is to attend in the Hall, to enter all Charities, and keep an Account of the Money taken out of the Boxes, which are opened at five o'Clock in the Afternoon, and at Nine at Night; which Money he pays to the Upper Steward, at the passing of whose Accounts the Assistants are Auditors.

"Every Person put in Nomination for the Office of an Assistant, refusing to serve, forfeits one Shilling to the Use of the Publick, or, in lieu thereof, to be put in Fetters for three Days. The officiating Assistant is invested with a magisterial Power, whereby he can commit a Prisoner to the Stocks or Shackles, for the Abuse of any Person. This Officer is to see the Cellar cleared every Night, by ten o'Clock of all the Prisoners; for which he receives six Pence out of the Charity Money; two Pence whereof to his own Use, two Pence to the Upper Steward, and two Pence to the Running Assistant. This Office was anciently in such Esteem, that the Assistant, at his entering upon it, used nightly, at Eight o'Clock, to be ushered into the Hall, by an Illumination of forty or fifty great Candles, carried by so many Prisoners.

"The Running Assistant's Business is, to attend upon the Criers at the Gates, to change Money; and open the Boxes: to put up Candles in their respective Places, attend upon the Stewards and Assistants, look after the Clock, ring the Bell for Prayers; and to be Crier at the Sale of Provisions. His Salary is four Shillings and eight Pence *per* Month, and an eighth part of the Garnish Money.

"The Churchwardens are chosen from among the youngest Prisoners. The Upper Warden's Office is, to call to Prayers on *Sundays*, after the Bell has done ringing; and the Under Warden's is to call the Prisoners to Prayers all other Days. They are likewise to take cognizance of all Persons who are upon the Charity Foundation; who in default of Attendance are fined one Penny each. The Under Warden's Salary for this Service is four Pence *per* Month; and the Penalty for not serving, when duly elected, is four

Pence.

"The Scavenger's Office is, to keep clean the Prison, and to fetter, and put in the Stocks all Offenders; for which he is intitled to receive from each Criminal one Penny, together with a Salary of five Shillings and eight Pence *per* Month, and two Pence out of every sixteen Pence of the Garnish Money.

"The Chamberlain is chosen by the Keeper of the Prison, whose Office it is to take Care of all the Bedding and Linen belonging to the Keeper; to place Men at their coming in, and to furnish them with Sheets, and to give Notice to Strangers to depart the Prison by Ten o'Clock at Night. This Officer, formerly, was obliged to make the Charity-Men's Beds, for which he received two Pence *per* Month.

"The Running Post's Business is, to fetch in a Basket the broken Meat from the Lord-Mayor, Clerk of the Market, private Families, and Charities given in the Streets, which are often so inconsiderable as not to admit of a Dividend; wherefore it is disposed of by Sale or publick Market, as aforesaid. The Salary annexed to this office, is four Shillings *per* Month; one Penny *per* Month out of each Man's Dividend, and one Penny out of every sixteen Pence of Garnish money.

"The Criers are six in Number; two whereof daily beg at the Grates; he at the Grate within is allowed one Fourth of what is given, and he at that on *Blackfriars* Side one Moiety of what is given there."

This custom is alluded to in the *Spectator*, No. lxxxii.:

"Passing under *Ludgate* the other Day I heard a Voice bawling for Charity, which I thought I had somewhere heard before. Coming near to the Grate, the Prisoner called me by my Name, and desired I would throw something into the Box. I was out of Countenance for him, and did as he bid me, by putting in half a Crown."

Of this Grate there is a pretty and romantic story told by Stow.[75]

"When the Prison was in this Condition, there happened to be Prisoner there one *Stephen Foster*, who (as poor Men are at this Day) was a Cryer at the Grate, to beg the benevolent Charities of pious and commiserate Benefactors that passed by. As he was doing his doleful Office, a rich Widow of *London* hearing his Complaint, enquired of him, what would release him? To which he answered, Twenty Pound, which she in Charity expended; and, clearing him out of Prison, entertained him in her Service; who, afterward, falling into the Way of Merchandize, and increasing as well in Wealth as Courage, wooed his Mistress, Dame *Agnes*, and married her.

"Her Riches and his Industry brought him both great Wealth and Honour, being afterwards no less than Sir *Stephen Foster*, Lord Mayor of the Honourable City of London: Yet whilst he lived in this great Honour and Dignity, he forgat not the Place of his Captivity, but, mindful of the sad and irksome Place wherein poor Men were imprisoned, bethought himself of enlarging it, to make it a little more delightful and pleasant for those who in after Times should be imprisoned and shut up therein. And, in order thereunto, acquainted his Lady with this his pious Purpose and Intention; in whom likewise he found so affable and willing a Mind to do Good to the Poor, that she promised to expend as much as he should do for the carrying on of the Work."

And they did spend their money on it right royally, building, amongst many other conveniences, a Chapel for the inmates, A.D. 1454, which they endowed, so as to maintain a "preacher" or chaplain. Sir Stephen Foster likewise provided that the place "should be free for all Freemen, and that they, providing their own Bedding, should pay nothing at their Departure for Lodging, or Chamber rent (as now they call it), which to many poor Men becomes oftentimes as burdensome as their Debts, and are by the Keeper detained in Prison as for Debt, only for their Fees, though discharged and acquitted of what they were committed for."

Nor did his charitable goodness end here, for he gave a supply of water *gratis* to the prisoners, as was recorded on a brass in the Chapel, very pithily—

"Devout Souls that pass this way
For Stephen Foster, late *Maior*, heartily pray,
And Dame Agnes, his Spouse, to God consecrate,
That of Pity this House made for Londoners in Ludgate.
So that for Lodging and Water, Prisoners have nought to pay,
As their Keepers shall all answer at dreadful Doomsday."

Dame Agnes survived her husband, but was ultimately buried by his side in the Church of St. Botolph, Billingsgate.

For a Prison, Ludgate compared more than favourably with every other in London. As we have seen, the prisoners were select; they were helped, in the matter of food, by the king of the City, the Lord Mayor: their fees were infinitesimal as compared with other debtors' prisons. Strype (ed. 1720, book ii. p. 179) says:—

"Formerly Debtors that were not able to satisfy their Debts, put themselves into this

Prison of *Ludgate*, for shelter from their Creditors. And these were Merchants and Tradesmen that had been driven to want by Losses at Sea. When King *Philip* in the Month of *August 1554* came first through *London*, these prisoners were Thirty in number; and owed £10,000, but compounded for £2,000. Who presented a well penned Latin Speech to that Prince, to redress their Miseries, and, by his Royal Generosity, to free them. 'And the rather, for that that Place was not *Sceleratorum Carcer, sed miserorum Custodia*; *i.e.*, a Gaol for Villains, but a Place of Restraint for poor unfortunate Men. And that they were put in there, not by others, but themselves fled thither; and that not out of fear of Punishment, but in hope of better Fortune.' The whole Letter was drawn by the curious Pen of *Roger Ascham*, and is extant among his Epistles, Lib. iii.

"If a Freeman or Freewoman of *London* be committed to *Ludgate*, they are to be excused from the ignominy of Irons, if they can find Sureties to be true Prisoners, and if the Sum be not above £100. There is another Custom of the liberal and mild Imprisonment of the Citizens in *Ludgate*, whereby they have Indulgence and Favour to go abroad into any place by *Baston*, as we term it, under the guard and superintendency of their Keeper, with whom they must return again to the Prison at Night."

Footnotes

[74] "Garnish" was the *footing* that every prisoner paid on his entrance, and woe become him if it were not forthcoming; he was simply stripped of his clothes.

[75] Strype's "Stow's Survey," ed. 1720, vol. ii. p. 26 appendix.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE Course of the Fleet is nearly run, but, before closing this account of the river, we should not forget the residence of the mighty King-maker, the Earl of Warwick, whose pleasant gardens ran down to the Fleet; and there, in Warwick Lane, after the great Fire, was built the College of Physicians, described thus by Dr. Garth, in his "Dispensary":—

"Not far from that most celebrated Place,
Where angry Justice shews her awful Face;
Where little Villains must submit to Fate,
That great ones may enjoy the World in State,
There stands a Dome, majestick to the sight,
And sumptuous Arches bear its oval height;
A golden Globe plac'd high with artful skill,
Seems, to the distant sight, a gilded Pill."

Here they were housed until 1825, and, from the Fleet, could be seen the Apothecaries' Hall, in Water Lane, Blackfriars,

"Nigh where *Fleet Ditch* descends in sable Streams
To wash his sooty *Naiads* in the *Thames*;
There stands a Structure on a Rising Hill,
Where *Tyro's* take their Freedom out to Kill."

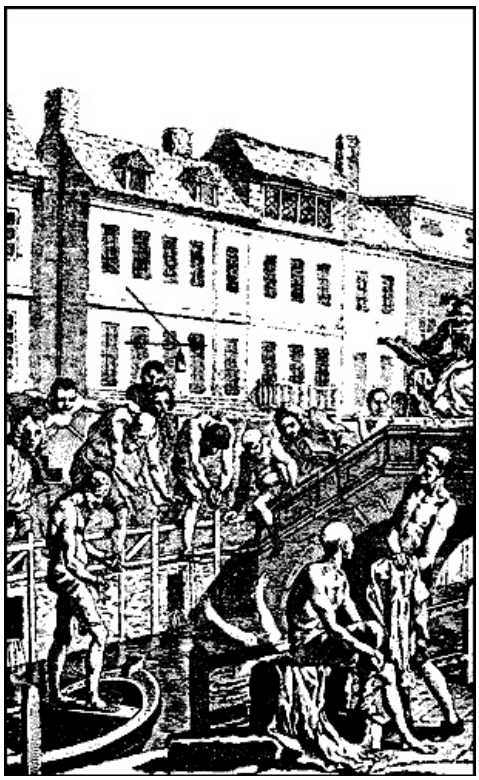
Then there was the Monastery of the Dominicans, or Blackfriars, which has given its name to a whole district; and there was a fortification, or postern, on the little river, near Ludgate Hill; and, close to its junction with the Thames, was Bridewell Bridge, so called from the Royal Palace of that name, which, in its turn, received its cognomen from another well, which went to form the "River of Wells," St. Bridget's or Bride's Well. This bridge is shown in the frontispiece, and was necessarily made very high in order to allow sailing craft to go under it.

It was here that Pope, in his "Dunciad" (book ii.), thus sings:

"This labour past, by Bridewell all descend,
(As morning pray'r, and flagellation end)
To where Fleet-ditch with disemboguing streams
Rolls the large tribute of dead dogs to Thames,
The King of Dykes! than whom, no sluice of mud,
With deeper sable blots the silver flood.
'Here strip, my children! here at once leap in,
Here prove who best can dash thro' thick and thin.'"[76]

Ward bursts into song over Bridewell, thus:—

"'Twas once the Palace of a Prince,
If we may Books Confide in;
But given was, by him long since,
For Vagrants to Reside in."



BRIDEWELL BRIDGE.

The Royal Palace of Bridewell stood on the site of the Castle of Montfichet, who is believed to have come over with William the Conqueror. Tradition assigns it a still earlier date, even Roman, but then, I don't say there was not a Roman fortress here, but I cannot say there was. Certainly Cardinal Wolsey lived here, and Henry VIII. held occasional Court.

Strype, in his edition of Stow (1720) says that after the destruction of Montfichet Castle and its Stone being given away:—

> "This Tower or Castle being thus destroyed, stood, as it may seem, in Place where now standeth the House called *Bridewell*. For, notwithstanding the Destruction of the said Castle or Tower, the House remained large, so that the Kings of this Realm long after were lodged there and kept their Courts. For, in the Ninth Year of *Henry* the Third, the Courts of Law, and Justice were kept in the King's House, wheresoever he was lodged, and not else where. And that the Kings have been lodged, and kept their Law Courts in this Place, I could shew you many Authorities of Record....
>
> "More, (as *Matthew Paris* hath) about the Year 1210, King *John*, in the Twelfth Year of his Reign, summoned a Parliament at *S. Brides* in *London*; where he exacted of the Clergy, and Religious Persons the Sum of One Hundred Thousand Pounds; And besides all this, the *White Monks* were compelled to cancel their Privileges, and to pay £4000 to the King, &c. This House of *S. Brides* (of later Time) being left, and not used by the Kings, fell to Ruin; insomuch that the very Platform thereof remained (for great part) waste, and as it were, but a Lay Stall of Filth and Rubbish, only a fair Well remained there. A great part whereof, namely, on the *West*, as hath been said, was given to the Bishop of *Salisbury*; the other Part toward the *East* remained waste, until King *Henry* the Eighth builded a stately and beautiful House, thereupon, giving it to Name, *Bridewell*, of the Parish and Well there. This House he purposely builded for the Entertainment of the Emperor *Charles* the Fifth;[77] who in the Year 1522 came into this City.... Being in Decay, and long disused, King Edward VI. gave it to the City in the Seventh[78] Year of his Reign.
>
> "It is seated near to *Blackfriars*; from which it is severed by the Canal of the *Fleet-ditch*. It was obtained of the King at first for an Harbour of poor Harbourless People, that lay abroad in the Streets. It was soon after improved to be a Workhouse, not only to give Lodging to poor, idle, wandring Persons, Beggars, and others; but to find them Work, to help to maintain themselves. But tho' this was granted in the Year 1553, yet it seems, it was not before Two Years after, that the City entred and took possession of it by *Gerard* their Maior, having obtained Queen *Mary's* Confirmation.
>
> "In the time of Queen *Elizabeth*, about the Year 1570 and odd, one *John Pain*, a Citizen, invented a Mill to grind Corn; which he got recommended to the Lord Maior, for the Use of *Bridewell*. This Mill had Two Conveniences: One was, That it would grind a greater Quantity considerably than any other Mills of that Sort could do. And the other (which would render it so useful to *Bridewell*) was, That the Lame, either in Arms or Legs, might work at it, if they had but the Use of either. And, accordingly, these Mills were termed *Hand-Mills* or *Foot-Mills*.

> "This Mill he shewed to the Lord Maior, who saw it grind as much Corn with the Labour of Two Men, as they did then at *Bridewell* with Ten. That is to say, Two Men with Hands, two Bushels the Hour; or Two Men with Feet, two Bushels the Hour. If they were Lame in their Arms, then they might earn their Livings with their Legs. If Lame in their Legs, then they might earn their Livings with their Arms."
>
> —This, perhaps, is the earliest mention of the treadmill, as a punishment.
>
> Still quoting Strype, (same edition):
>
> "The Use of this Hospital now is for an House of Correction, and to be a Place where all Strumpets, Night-walkers, Pickpockets, vagrant and idle Persons, that are taken up for their ill Lives, as also incorrigible and disobedient Servants, are committed by the Mayor and Aldermen, who are Justices of the Peace within the said City; And being so committed are forced to beat Hemp in publick View, with due Correction of whipping, according to their Offence, for such a Time as the President and Court shall see Cause."

Bridewell is well shown by Hogarth in the fourth picture of the "Harlot's progress," where both men and women are seen "beetling" hemp.[79]

In a very rare tract called "Mr. William Fullers Trip to Bridewell" (1703) he gives a fairly graphic description of a prisoner's entry therein. "As soon as I came there, the Word was *Strip, pull off your Cloaths*, and with much intreaty, I prevail'd to keep on my Westcoat; then I was set to a Block, a punny of Hemp was laid thereon, and *Ralph Cumpton* (a Journy Man in the Shop) presented me with a Beatle, bidding me knock the Hemp with that, as fast as I could. This Beatle is of Brazel, [80] and weigh'd about 12 pounds."

Previously to this, poor Fuller had to stand twice in the pillory, on one of which occasions he was nearly killed by the mob, and when taken to Bridewell, all black and blue as he was, he had a whipping:— "My Hands were put in the Stocks, and then Mr. *Hemings* the Whipper, began to noint me with his Instrument, that had, I believe, about a dozen Strings notted at the end, and with that I had Thirty Nine Stripes (so that according to a certain Almanack Maker, who reckoned Dr. *Oates's* Stripes by every String, I had twelve times Thirty Nine). I had given the Rascal Half a Crown, but he afforded me very little favour, but struck home at every stroak; I confess I could not forbear bawling out, but good Sir *Robert* [81] knockt at last, and I was let out of the Stocks."

The prisoners, if they chose, could find their own food, but they were kept strictly at work as is quaintly put by Fuller—

"I had, in each Shop, the Thieves for my Fellow-labourers, and the Journeymen, our Deputy Task Masters, were frequently calling to the Prisoners, *Why don't you Work there, strike hard*: Then threaten, and sometimes beat them with a small Cane. These Task-masters are so accustomed to keeping their Prisoners hard at Work, that I have heard themselves say, they have, frequently, (forgetting themselves) called out, when they had no Prisoner in the Shop, as before, *Why don't you work there*."

Ward (in the "London Spy") gives an almost too graphic account of this prison, but expresses unmitigated disgust at the whipping of women, which took place there, and solemnly protested against its continuance. His description of a woman being flogged, is as follows:—

> "My Friend Re-conducted me cc Quadrangle, and led me up a pair of Stairs into a Spacious Chamber, where the Court was sitting in great Grandeur and Order. A Grave Gentleman, whose Awful Looks bespoke him some Honourable Citizen, was mounted in the Judgement-Seat, Arm'd with a Hammer, like a *Change-Broker* at *Lloyd's Coffee House*, when selling Goods by Inch of Candle, and a Woman under the Lash in the next Room; where Folding doors were open'd, that the whole Court might see the Punishment Inflicted; at last down went the Hammer, and the Scourging ceas'd.... Another Accusation being then deliver'd by a Flat-Cap against a poor Wench, who having no Friend to speak in her behalf, Proclamation was made, *viz. All you who are willing E——th T——ll, should have present Punishment, pray hold up your hands.* Which was done accordingly:

WOMEN BEATING HEMP.

> And then she was order'd the Civility of the House, and was forc'd to shew her tender Back and Breasts to the Grave Sages of the August Assembly, who were mov'd by her Modest Mein, together with the whiteness of her Skin, to give her but a gentle Correction."

John Howard, in his "State of the Prisons in England and Wales" (ed. 1777) gives the following description of Bridewell:—

> "This building was formerly a Palace, near St. Bridget's (St. Bride's) Well; from whence it had the name; which, after it became a Prison, was applied to other Prisons of the same sort. It was given to the City by King Edward VI. in 1552.
>
> "That part of Bridewell which relates to my subject has wards for men and women quite separate. [82] The men's ward on the ground floor, is a day room in which they beat hemp; and a night room over it. One of the upper chambers is fitting up for an Infirmary.—The woman's ward is a day room on the ground floor, in which they beat hemp; and a night room over it. I was told that the chamber above this is to be fitted up for an Infirmary. The sick, have, hitherto, been commonly sent to St. Bartholomew's Hospital. All the Prisoners are kept within doors.
>
> "The women's rooms are large, and have opposite windows, for fresh air. Their Ward, as well as the men's, has plenty of water: and there is a Hand-Ventilator on the outside, with a tube to each room of the women's ward. This is of great service, when the rooms are crowded with Prisoners, and the weather is warm.

PASS ROOM, BRIDEWELL, 1808.

"The Prisoners are employed by a Hemp dresser, who has the profit of their labour, an apartment in the Prison, and a salary of £14. I generally found them at work: they are provided for, so as to be able to perform it. The hours of work are, in winter, from eight to four; in summer from six to six, deducting meal times. The Steward is allowed eightpence a day for the maintenance of each Prisoner; and contracts to supply them as follows:—On Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, a penny loaf, ten ounces of dressed beef without bone, broth, and three pints of ten shilling beer; on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, a penny loaf, four ounces of cheese, or some butter, a pint of milk pottage, and three pints of ten shilling beer.... In winter they have some firing. The night rooms are supplied with straw. No other Prison in *London* has any straw, or other bedding.... I found there in 1776:—

March	13.	Prisoners	20
May	1.	"	7
Dec.	3.	"	24."

It continued as a House of Correction for the City of London until its abolition, with other Civic prisons by an Act of 40 and 41 Vict. cap. 21, entitled "An Act to amend the Law relating to Prisons in England." But there was an exception made in its favour, and it still remains a House of Correction in a mild way—thanks to the very kindly and fatherly wishes and representations of the Civic Authorities.

The good old days of Apprenticing boys to some craft for seven years, during which he was to serve his master faithfully, and in return, was to be housed, fed, and taught his business, have all but passed away, but not quite. There are still some refractory apprentices, as there ever have been. We know the common saying of "Boys will be boys," which is applied in mitigation of juvenile indiscretion, but there is also another apothegm, "Little boys, when they are naughty, must be smacked, and sent to bed." Bridewell has always been a place where idle or refractory City apprentices have had the opportunity of pondering over the errors of their ways, and in passing this Act, a special exemption was made, and there still exist six cells, which, I am sorry to say, are frequently occupied by erring youths. It is all done in the kindest, and most fatherly way. The City Chamberlain from the time of the Indentures of the lad being signed, to giving him his Freedom, acts as his guardian, to a great extent. Has the lad any complaint to make against his master it is to the Chamberlain he must appeal, and *vice versâ*. The Cause is heard *in camerâ*, and every effort is made to reconcile the parties, but, as will sometimes happen with a boy who is obstinate, sullen, or vicious, all attempts to bring him to a better sense fail, then the Chamberlain, by virtue of his office commits the boy to Bridewell, where he eats the bread, and drinks the water, of affliction for a while, a treatment, which combined with the confinement, hard work, and enforced sequestration from society, largely aided by the good advice of the Chaplain, very seldom fails to effect its object, and render that lad a decent member of the commonweal. It just arrests him in his downward path, there is no publicity, the thing is never chronicled in any Newspaper, as it might be, supposing no Bridewell existed, and the case was brought before a police magistrate—it need never be known outside his family circle, and he escapes the taint of being a gaol bird.

Bridewell seems to have been long associated with apprentices, not all of them "*Thomas Idles*," I am happy to say; and Hatton in "The New View of London" (1708) writes, showing the tender care that the City of London have always had for their poor:

"It is also an Hospital for Indigent Persons, and where 20 Art Masters (as they are called) being decayed Traders as Shoemakers, Taylors, Flax-dressers, &c., have Houses, and their Servants, or Apprentices (being about 140 in all) have Cloaths at the House Charge, and their Masters having the Profit of their Work do often advance by this means their own Fortunes, and these Boys, having served their time faithfully, have not only their Freedom, but also £10 each towards carrying on their respective Trades, and many have even arrived from nothing to be Governors."

This arrangement has, of course, had to "march with the times," and in 1860 the Master of the Rolls approved of, and sanctioned, a scheme of the Charity Commissioners, whereby nearly all the funds appertaining to Bridewell are utilized by two industrial schools called "King Edward's Schools," most impartially divided—one at Witley, in Surrey, affording accommodation for two hundred and forty boys, and another in St. George's Fields, Lambeth, for two hundred and forty girls; so that, even in these latter days, Bridewell still exists, and, if the spirits of its numerous benefactors have the power to see the manner in which their money is being spent, I fancy they would not grumble.

Before leaving the topic of Bridewell, as a prison, I must not fail to mention a notorious, but naughty, old woman who lived in the time of Charles II., commonly known as "Old Mother Cresswell." It is no slander on her memory, to say that her sense of morality was exceedingly lax, and she died in Bridewell. She evidently had saved some money, and with that curious spirit which possesses some people, and produces adulatory epitaphs, she would fain be better thought of after her death, than she was estimated when alive, for, in her will, she left a legacy for a sermon at her funeral, the preacher's remuneration to be £10, on one condition, that he should say nothing but what was *well* of her. A clergyman having been found, he preached a sermon generally adapted to the occasion, and wound up by saying: "By the will of the deceased, it is expected that I should mention her, and say nothing but what was *well* of her. All that I shall say of her, however, is this: she was born *well*, she lived *well*, and she died *well*; for she was born

with the name of Cress*well*, she lived in Clerken*well*, and she died in Bride*well*."

There was a fine old Court-room, which is thus described in the "Microcosm of London" (1808):

"The Court-room is an interesting piece of antiquity, as on its site were held courts of justice, and probably *parliaments*, under our early kings. At the upper end are the old arms of England; and it is wainscotted with English Oak, ornamented with Carved work. This Oak was formerly of the solemn colour which it attains by age, and was relieved by the carving being gilt. It must have been no small effort of *ingenuity* to destroy at one stroke all this venerable, time-honoured grandeur: it was, however, *happily* achieved, by daubing over with paint the fine veins and polish of the old oak, to make a bad imitation of the pale modern wainscot; and other decorations are added in similar *taste*.

"On the upper part of the walls are the names, in gold letters, of benefactors to the hospital: the dates commence with 1565, and end with 1713. This is said to have been the Court in which the sentence of divorce was pronounced against Catherine of Arragon, which had been concluded on in the opposite monastery of the Black Friars.

"From this room is the entrance into the hall, which is a very noble one: at the upper end is a picture by Holbein,[83] representing Edward VI. delivering the Charter of the hospital to Sir George Barnes, then Lord Mayor; near him are William, Earl of Pembroke, and Thomas Goodrich, Bishop of Ely. There are ten figures in the picture, besides the king, whose portrait is painted with great truth and feeling: it displays all that languor and debility which mark an approaching dissolution, and which, unhappily, followed so soon after, together with that of the painter; so that it has been sometimes doubted whether the picture was really painted by Holbein—his portrait, however, is introduced; it is the furthest figure in the corner on the right hand, looking over the shoulders of the persons before him.

"On one side of this picture is a portrait of Charles II. sitting, and, on the other, that of James II. standing; they are both painted by Sir Peter Lely. Round the room are several portraits of the Presidents and different benefactors, ending with that of Sir Richard Carr Glyn. The walls of this room are covered with the names of those who have been friends to the institution, written in letters of gold."

This Hall was pulled down in 1862.

Footnotes

[76] See next page.

[77] Of Spain.

[78] A.D. 1553.

[79] A Beetle is a portion of a trunk of a tree, large or small as occasion demanded, sometimes more than one man could lift, *vide* Shakspeare (2 *Hen. IV.* act i. sc. 2), "Fillip me with a three-man beetle," *i.e.*, one with three handles. All exogenous fibres have to be crushed, in order to release the fibre from the wooden core, and this, which is now done by machinery, was then done by beetles, or wooden hammers.

[80] Brazil wood.

[81] Sir Robert Jeffries the President and Justice at Bridewell, when he knocked with a hammer the punishment ceased.

[82] In Hogarth's picture both men and women are working together.

[83] The writer is in error, as the event it represents took place some ten years after Holbein's death. The picture is now in Christ's Hospital.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BORDERING upon Bridewell, and almost part and parcel of it, was Whitefriars, which, westward, ran to the Temple, and eastward to the Fleet. It is so-called from a Carmelite monastery, established here in the reign of Edward I. Within its precincts was the right of sanctuary, and, like the Jewish Cities of Refuge, offenders against the law might flee thither, and be protected from arrest. Naturally, the very scum of London floated thither, to the Mint in Southwark, and the precincts of the Savoy in the Strand, in none of which the King's warrant ran, unless backed by a force sufficient to overawe the lawless denizens of these localities. Whitefriars we may take as its original name, but there was given it a nick-name, "Alsatia," from Alsace, or Elsass, on the frontier between France and Germany, which was always a battle-field between the two nations; and so, from the incessant fighting that went on in this unruly neighbourhood, it acquired its cognomen.

Sir Walter Scott, in "The Fortunes of Nigel," gives a vivid description of the utter lawlessness and debauchery of this quarter of the town, but his was second-hand. Perhaps one of the most graphic pictures of this sink of iniquity is given in Shadwell's "Squire of Alsatia," acted in 1688, and which was so popular, that it had a run of *thirteen* nights. Here we get at the manners and customs of the natives, without any glossing over; and, just to give an example of the real state of the district at that time, I make two or three extracts, showing how the denizens were banded together in mutual defence.

"*Cheatly.* So long as you forbear all Violence, you are safe;
but, if you strike here, we command the *Fryers*, and will raise the *Posse*....

[*A Noise of Tumult without, and blowing a Horn.*]

Cheatly. What is this I hear?

Shamwell. They are up in the Friers; Pray Heav'n the Sheriff's Officers be not come.

Cheatly. 'Slife, 'tis so! 'Squire, let me conduct you——This is your wicked Father with Officers.

Exit.

[*Cry without, the Tip-Staff! an Arrest! an Arrest! and the horn blows.*]

[*Enter Sir William Belfond, and a Tip-Staff, with the Constable, and his Watchmen; and, against them, the Posse of the Friers drawn up, Bankrupts hurrying to escape.*]

Sir Will. Are you mad, to resist the Tip-Staff, the King's Authority?

[*They cry out, An Arrest! several flock to 'em with all sorts of Weapons, Women with Fire-Forks, Spits, Paring Shovels, &c.*]

Tip-Staff. I charge you, in the King's Name, all to assist me.

Rabble. Fall on.

[*Rabble beat the Constable, and the rest run into the Temple. Tip-Staff runs away.*]."

So that we see how an ordinary sheriff's officer and the civil authorities were treated when they attempted to execute the law; but, further on in the play, we find a Lord Chief Justice's warrant, backed up by a military force—and then we see the difference.

"*Truman.* What do all these Rabble here?

Constable. Fire amongst 'em.

Sergeant. Present.

[*The Debtors run up and dozen, some without their Breeches, others without their Coats; some out of Balconies; some crying out, Oars! Oars! Sculler! Five Pounds for a Boat! The Inhabitants all come out arm'd as before; but as soon as they see the Musqueteers, they run, and every one shifts for himself.*]

And almost at the close of the play one of the characters, *Sir Edward Belfond*, moralizes thus:

"Was ever such Impudence suffer'd in a Government? *Ireland's* conquer'd; *Wales*

subdued; *Scotland* united: But there are some few Spots of Ground in *London*, just in the Face of the Government, unconquer'd yet, that hold in Rebellion still. Methinks 'tis strange, that Places so near the King's Palace should be no Parts of his Dominions. 'Tis a Shame to the Societies of the Law, to countenance such Practices: Should any Place be shut against the King's Writ, or Posse Comitatus?"

This right of sanctuary was taken from Whitefriars by William III., the nest of rogues, vagabonds, and thieves broken up, the occupants dispersed, and law reigned supreme in that once defiant place.

We have now traced the Fleet River to its junction with the Thames. Poor little river! its life began pure enough, but men so befouled it, that their evil deeds rose against themselves, and the river retaliated in such kind, as to become a malodorous and offensive nuisance, dangerous to the health of those men who would not leave it in its purity. So it was covered over, about 1764 (for it took some time to do it), and the present Bridge Street is over its foul stream, which was curbed, and bricked in, forming a portion of our vast and wonderful system of sewers. It has taken its toll of human life, in its time, though but few instances are recorded. In the *Gentleman's Magazine*, January 11, 1763, we read: "A man was found in the Fleet Ditch standing upright, and frozen to death. He appears to have been a barber at Bromley, in Kent; had come to town to see his children, and had, unfortunately, mistaken his way in the night, and slipt into the ditch; and, being in liquor, could not disentangle himself."

Bell's Weekly Messenger, August 2, 1835: "Some workmen have been for a few days past engaged in making a new sewer, communicating with the foulest of all streams, the Fleet Ditch. In consequence of the rain the men had left off work; and, soon afterwards, a young man named Macarthy, a bricklayer, proceeded to the sewer for the purpose of bringing away a ladder, when, owing to the slippery state of the works, he fell down the Sewer, but in his descent, caught hold of the ladder he was in search of, to which he hung for nearly a quarter of an hour, calling loudly all the time for assistance, though from some extraordinary cause or other, no person was able to afford him any. At length some of the labourers arrived—but too late; he had just before fallen into the Sewer, and was carried into the Fleet Ditch; and owing to its having been swollen by the heavy shower, floated along as far as the mouth of the Fleet Ditch, at Blackfriars, where his body was found, covered with the filth of the sewer, which the unfortunate man had met with in his progress to the Thames."

And the *Times* of October 3, 1839, records another fatal accident during some repairs.

Naturally, this River was celebrated in verse. There was a very foolish and dull poem by Arthur Murphy in 1761 called "Ode to the Naiads of Fleet Ditch;" and, previously, it had been sung by Ben Jonson, "On the famous Voyage," which will be found among his epigrams. This voyage was from Bridewell to Holborn, and describes very graphically the then state of the river. Too graphic, indeed, is it for the reading of the modern public, so I transcribe but a very small portion of it, showing its then state.

"But hold my torch, while I describe the entry
To this dire passage. Say, thou stop thy nose;
'Tis but light pains: indeed, this dock's no rose.
In the first jaws appear'd that ugly monster
Y'cleped mud, which, when their oars did once stir,
Belched forth an air as hot, as at the muster
Of all your night tubs, when the carts do cluster,
Who shall discharge first his merd-urinous load;
Through her womb they make their famous road."

1768. THE ARREST. (Drawn from a late real scene.)

"Sir Fopling Flutter through his Glass
Inspects the ladies as they pass,
Yet still the Coxcomb lacks the Wit
To guard against the Bailiff's Writ."

The Fleet Prison.

CHAPTER XIX.

THIS prison was of great antiquity, and its genealogy, like all respectable ones, dates back to William the Conqueror, at least; for we find, under date 1197, [84] "Natanael de Leveland & Robertus filius suus r.c. de LX marcis, Pro habenda Custodia Domorum Regis de Westmonasterio, & Gaiolæ de Ponte de Fliete, quæ est hæreditas eorum a Conquestu Angliæ; ita quod non remaneat propter Finem Osberto de Longo Campo." Or, in English, "*Nathaniel de Leveland and his son Robert, fined in sixty marks, to have the Custody of the King's Houses at Westminster, and the Prison at Fleet-bridge, which had been their inheritance ever since the Conquest of England; and that they may not be hindered therein by the Counterfine of* Osbert de Longchamp."

There seems to have been some double dealing in this transaction, in which, as was only natural in those days, money went into the King's pocket.[85] "And Osbert de Longchamp fined in five hundred marks, to have the King's favour, and seizin of all his lands and chatels whereof he was disseised by the King's Command, and to have seisin of the Custody of the Gaol of London, with the Appurtenances, and of the Custody of the King's Houses of Westminster: provided that Right be done therein in the King's Court, in case any one would implead him for the same." [86]

Robert de Leveland, the son of the foregoing Nathaniel, was bitten by the then fashionable craze for Crusading, for he is found, in 1201, petitioning King John for leave to delegate the care of the King's Houses at Westminster, and the Fleet Prison, to Simon FitzRobert, Archdeacon of Wells, for the space of three years, during which time he should be in the Holy Land. His prayer seems to have been granted; but he evidently drew a little money before he went away, for, in the Chancery Rolls of the same year, he was paid £15 10s. by the City of London, on account of the King's Prison of Flete, and he also received other sums of £10 12s. 10d. for the Custody of the King's Houses at Westminster, and £7 12s. 1d. for the Custody of the Gaol of *London*.[87] By which, and also by the foregoing notice of Osbert de Longchamps, it is evident that, at that time, the Fleet prison was the principal, if not the only, prison in London.

Robert de Leveland re-entered upon his duties after his three years' leave, and a document is extant[88] in which he is excused payment of £10 he had borrowed; but (possibly in lieu) he was bound to serve beyond the seas—*i.e.*, in foreign parts—with horses and arms. When he died is not known, but his widow evidently succeeded him as custodian, for in December, 1217, [89] his wife Margaret has the same allowance given her in regard of the King's Houses at Westminster "as the said Robert had been accustomed to during his life." Thus she was the first female Warden of the Fleet; there were others, as we shall see by and by.

It is a moot question, and I put it forward with all reserve, as to whether there was not even an earlier mention of the Fleet before the very authentic case of Nathaniel de Leveland; but as it is open to objection that there were more Fleets than one, I only give the cases, and make no comment. [90] 1189: "William de Flete gave a Mark to have his plea in the King's Court touching a hyde of land, versus Randolph de Broy." And again,[91] in 1193: "Richard de Flet fined in one hundred Marks, that his daughter might be delivered from Ralf de Candos, who said he had espoused her."

In the Rolls are many cases which mention the Fleet, but, although it was a House of Detention, for debtors, especially to the King, and persons committing minor crimes, it never seems to have been degraded into what we should now term "a Gaol." No felons seem to have been incarcerated there, and there is no mention of gyves or chains, but they were used in after years.

It would seem that another "lady" Warden of the Fleet existed in Edward II.'s time, for, in 1316, "Johanne, late Wife of John Schench deceased, who held of the King in chief the Serjeanties of the Custody of the King's Palace of Westminster, and of his Prison of Flete, married Edmund de Cheney, without licence obtained from the King, in that behalf. Whereupon the said serjeanties were taken into the King's hands, and straitway the Treasurer and the Barons committed the Custody of the Palace of Richard Abbot, who was sworn *de fideliter*, &c., and the Custody of the Flete Prison to John Dymmok, Usher of the Exchequer, who was sworn in the like manner. Afterwards the said Edmund made Fine for the said Trespass, and the said serjeanties were

restored." By which we see that thus early "women's rights" were fully recognized, and "employment for females" in occupations hitherto enjoyed exclusively by men, seems to have been in force.

Although not in Chronological Order, I may as well add another, and the only other mention that has come under my notice of a female Warden (1677): [92] "A Woman Guardian of the Fleet, marries her Prisoner in Execution; he is immediately out of Execution; for the Husband cannot be Prisoner to his Wife, it being repugnant that she, as jaylor, should have custody of him, and he, as husband, the custody of her."

Without some effective supervision, as is the case with our Prison Commissioners, abuses were bound to creep in, and the Governor or Warden of any Prison, (who doubtless had paid heavily for the appointment) had to recoup himself by squeezing the unfortunate prisoners, and we shall find several examples of this in the Fleet. The earliest seems to have been in the second year of Henry IV. (1400) when a petition was presented to Parliament [93] which prays, in its quaint Norman French that "les fees de Gardien de Flete sorént mys en certain" that the fees might be settled.

It is possible that extra fees were taken for a certain amount of liberty allowed to the prisoners by the Warden, who would allow him to go out of gaol on certain conditions, and we may be certain, for a *consideration* also. The Warden was answerable for his Prisoner, and if he escaped, he had to pay the debt, so that we may be certain that his ephemeral liberty was highly purchased. That this was the case we find in 7 and 8 Hen. IV. (1406)[94] "que si ascun Gaoler lesseroit tiel Prisoner aler a large par mainprise [95] ou en baile, que adonques le persone envers qi le dit Prisoner estoit condempne aureoit sa action et recoverir envers le dit Gaoler." Or in English, "*That if any Gaoler allowed such Prisoner to go at large, either by mainprize or bail, that, then, the Person to whom the Prisoner was indebted might have his action, and recover against the said Gaoler*." Yet, notwithstanding this, there were many actions brought against the Wardens for allowing their prisoners to escape. A relic of this power of the Wardens to accord a certain amount of liberty to their prisoners, obtained till the last hours of the Fleet. There was, in the *Rules*, a defined district surrounding the Prison, in which prisoners, on providing approved sureties for the amount of their debt, and paying some fee, might reside, on condition that they did not overstep the boundaries. That this custom of granting temporary *exeats* was very ancient, is indisputable, for, in the 1 Richard II. (1377) a complaint was made that the Warden of the Fleet "sometimes by mainprize, or by bail, and sometimes without any mainprize, with a Baston of the Fleet," *i.e.*, accompanied by a prison official, would allow his charges to go abroad, "even into the country."

It is impossible to give a list of all the prisoners of note who were committed to the Fleet, and they must only be glanced at, but with the accession of Mary, some illustrious and historical names appear. First, and foremost, and almost immediately after her accession to the throne, we read, thanks to the preservation and collation, of State Papers,[96] that on the 29th of July, 1553, a letter from the Privy Council was sent to the "Wardene of the Flete, for the apprehensyone and commyttyng of the Lord Russell, Anthonye Browne of Essex, and John Lucas." All these prisoners seem to have been treated with great leniency, for there is a letter (July 31) to the Warden of the Fleet bidding him to give Mr. Lucas and Mr. Cooke *the libertye of his Garden*, so that there must have been a garden then attached to the Fleet prison—and a postscript orders that "he shall delyuer Mr. Anthonye Browne, and suffer hym to goo to his awne Howse."

Nor were the others kept long in durance, for on the 3rd of Aug., 1553, the Council wrote to the Warden willing him "To set at libertye John Lucas, and John Cocke, Esquiers, giueing them Commaundement withall to repaire to their Mancion Howses and their to make theire aboode vntill they shall here further of the Queene's Pleasure." And even the incarceration of Lord Russell was mollified, for a letter was written on 9th Aug. to Mr. Garret, one of the Sheriffs of London, "whereby the Countesse of Bedforde is licensed to have free access twise or thrise in the week, unto the Lord Russell, her son, remayning in the said sheriff's custodie, so the sheriff be present at their Talke and Conference."

I give the above so as not to spoil the continuity of the story, but there is mention of the Fleet prison long before; for instance, in 1355, Edward III. wrote "to his well-beloved and trusty, Simon Fraunceys Mayor of the City of London, Hugh de Appleby, and Robert de Charwaltone, greeting. Whereas we have been given to understand that the Foss [97] by which the mansion of our Prison of Flete is surrounded, and which, for safety of the said prison was lately made, is now obstructed and choked up by filth from latrines built thereon, and divers others refuse thrown therein, that there is cause to fear for the abiding there of the persons therein detained, by reason of the same; and because that, by reason of the infection of the air, and the abominable stench which there prevails, many of those there imprisoned are often affected with various diseases and grievous maladies, not without serious peril unto themselves. We, wishing a befitting remedy to be applied thereto, and that the said Foss may be restored to its former state, in which it was when it was first made, and so improved; and, for making provision thereon, desiring upon the matters aforesaid more fully to be informed, have assigned you, and any two of you, to survey the Foss aforesaid, &c."

This warrant was followed by an Inquest held at the Church of St. Brigid in Fleet Street on Tuesday, the 9th of January, 1356, on the oath of Richard le Cok, (Cook) Nicholas le Sporière (Spurrier), and Thomas le Glaswrighte (Glassblower) and nine others. From it we learn that the "Foss of Flete" ought to be ten feet in breadth all round the Prison; that it ought to be so full of water that a boat laden with one tun of wine might easily float round it; and that the shelving

banks of the Foss were then covered with trees. Also that it was quite choked up with the filth of laystalls and sewers discharging into it; and that no less than eleven necessary houses (or *wardrobes*, as they seem very generally to have been called in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries) had been illegally built over it "to the corruption of the Water in the Foss aforesaid; and to such an extent is the flow of water obstructed and impeded thereby, that the said Foss can no longer surround the Prison with its waters, as it should do." [98]

The Acts of the Privy Council throw some light on the Fleet, giving several instances of Committals thereto, one of the first being 9 Hen. V. Oct. 14, 1421. [99] Wherein Hugo Annesley, who probably was then Warden of the Fleet, was directed to incarcerate therein one Grey de Codenore, who had been exiled, and having received his passport, remained in England, notwithstanding.

In 1 Henry VI.,[100] 19 May, 1423, the "gardein de notre prisone de Flete" was commanded to bring before the King some prisoners whom he had in custody, namely Huguelyn de Chalons, Johan Billy, Johan de Cheviers, Regnault de Graincourt, Hellyn de Bassiers, Pierre de Mombreham, and Pierre de Pauniers "noz prisoniers prisez a la reddicion de notre ville de Harefleu."

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are many notices of committals to the Fleet, so numerous that I can only mention a few, one only of which I give in the original spelling. 32 Hen. VIII. Sept. 9, 1540.

"Lr̃es was also brought from the Lord P^{i}vey Seale, declaring a certayn affray to be made by S^{r} Geoffrey Poole in Hampshyre upon one Mr. Gunter a justice of peax, for that (as Poole sayd) one of Gunter's srvants had spoken evill of hym, and for that also that hymself Gunter had disclosed to the King's Counsail in the tyme of Poole's trouble certain secret conference which Poole had w^{t} hym. And answer was made to the sayd Lord P^{i}vy Seale that calling the complaynt eftesones before hym the lordes and others the gen^{t} and justices of peax in the cūtrey to thentent the cryme of S^{r} Geffrey might be notorious to all the Cūtrey there he should c̃mytt the said S^{r} Geffrey to the Flette to remayne there until further knowledge of the Kings pleas^{r}."

Evidently great interest was made for this naughty Sir Geoffrey, for we learn on Sept. 24th that "It was declared to the Lady Poole, the wife of Sir Geoffrey Poole, that the King's higness had pardoned her husband of his imprisonment," and the Lord Privy Seal was directed to release him. But he seems to have been a very cantankerous knight, for we find him in hot water again next year. April 8, 1541, "Whereas Sir Geoffrey Poole, Knight, had violently and contrary to the King's Highness' peace assaulted and hurt [101] Sir John Mychaill clerk, parson of Racton in the County of Sussex," and he had to put in sureties to keep the peace towards the said parson, and to answer the bill preferred against him. But it seems that he had some provocation, for a letter was written to him requiring him to remember, as far as he could, the "haynous and traytorous woords spoken by S^{r} John Michaell."

On Nov. 7, 1540, Browne, the son and heir of Sir Matthew Browne of Surrey, was committed to the Fleet, together with some of his servants, for burning a certain stack of wood in Surrey. On Jan. 8, 1541, John Gough of London, printer, was sent to the Fleet for printing and selling a seditious book. On March 18, 1541, there seems to have been a riot among some of the servants of the Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber, and three of them were committed to the Fleet. On April 24, 1541, a smuggler was put into ward here, one Giles Hasebarde of Southampton, a "berebruer," who had put on board "a ship of Holland, named the Mary of Dordroyt," five pockets of wool, without a licence, intending to send them to Flanders. For this he was sent to the Fleet, the wool confiscated to the King's use, and the Master of the ship was mulcted in half the value of his vessel; but Hasebarde was not long in durance, as he was liberated on April 30th. To thoroughly understand the reason of this man's imprisonment in the Fleet, we must remember that he was sent there as being a *Debtor* to the King, and in the fifteenth century it was a very common practice for delinquents who were confined in other London prisons to confess themselves, by a legal fiction, debtors to the King, in order to get into the Fleet prison, which was more comfortable. But to show the variety of so-called crimes, or misdemeanours, which were punishable by imprisonment here, there is the case of John Barkley of Canterbury, innholder, who was committed to the Fleet for having molested the King's Highness with sundry troublous supplications, and it was found that he "appered manyfestly to be a cōmen barrater [102] and a malicious pōmoter of false and injust mattiers to the gret vexac̃on of the Kings faithfull subjects."

It was also used as a house of detention, for we find Oct. 17, 1541, that Cowley the Master of the Rolls in Ireland, was examined, but because the time was too short to do it thoroughly, the Lord Chancellor sent him to the Fleet "untill syche tyme as the King sholde com̃ to London." It seems to have been a refuge for misdemeanants, for April 3, 1542, John Bulmer Esquire, for his wilful disobeying of an order taken between him and his wife by the Council, was committed to the Fleet. And does not Shakespeare make Sir John Falstaff a denizen of this prison? (Second Part *King Henry the Fourth*, last scene).

"*Chief Justice.* Go, carry Sir *Iohn Falstaffe* to the Fleete
Take all his Company along with him.

Falstaffe. My Lord, my Lord.

Chief Justice. I cannot now speake, I will heare you soone:
Take them away."

Sir Rd. Empson, so well known in Henry the Seventh's time, was indicted for sending, without process, persons accused of murder, and other crimes, "to the late King's Prisons, to wit the Fleet, the Compter, and the Tower of London." And, from the Articles of Impeachment against Cardinal Wolsey, it would seem that he was in the habit of committing to the Fleet, those who thwarted him in his demands. One case (Article 38) is: "Also that the said Lord Cardinal did call before him Sir John Stanley K^{nt} which had taken a Farm by Cōvent Seal of the Abbot and Cōvent of Chester, and afterw^{ds} by his Power and Might, contrary to Right, committed the said Sir John Stanley to the Prison of the Fleet by the space of a Year, unto such time as he compelled the said Sir John to release his Cōvent Seal to one Leghe of Adlington, which married one Lark's daughter, which woman the said Lord Cardinal kept, and had with her two Children; whereupon the said Sir John made himself Monk in Westminster, and there died."

Here is another example of the Cardinal's highhanded method of dealing with those who did not exactly bend to his will, in Article 41 of his Impeachment: "Also where one Sir Edward Jones, Clerk, parson of Orewly in the County of Bucks, in the 18th year of your most noble reign, let his s^{d} parsonage with all tithes and other profits of the same to one William Johnson, for certain years; within which years, the Dean of the s$^{'d}$ Cardinal's College in [103] Oxenford pretended title to a certain portion of Tithes within the s^{d} parsonage, supposing the s^{d} portion to belong to the parsonage of Chichley, which was appointed to the Priory of Tykeford, lately suppressed, where (of truth) the Parsons of Orewly have been peaceably possessed of the s$^{'d}$ portion *out of the time of mind*: Where upon a Subpœna was directed to the said Johnson to appear before the Lord Cardinal at Hampton Court, out of any term, with an injunction to suffer the said Dean to occupy the said portion. Whereupon the said Johnson appeared before the said Lord Cardinal at Hampton Court, where without *any* Bill the said Lord Cardinal committed him to the Fleet, where he remained by the space of twelve weeks, because he would not depart with the said Portion: and at last, upon a Recognizance made, that he should appear before the said Lord Cardinal, whensoever he was commanded, he was delivered out of the Fleet. Howbeit, as yet, the said Portion is so kept from him that he dare not deal with it."

Footnotes

[84] Mag. Rot. 9 Ric. I. *Rot. 2a, Lond. & Midd.*

[85] Mag. Rot. 9 Ric. I. *Rot. 14b, Kent.*

[86] Liberate Rolls, p. 25. *Rot. Lit. Pat. Hardy*, p. 4.

[87] Rot. Cancell. 3 John, f. 100.

[88] Close Rolls, 6 John, f. 33.

[89] Close Rolls, 2 Hen. III., f. 346.

[90] Mag. Rot. 1 Ric. I. *Rot. 2b, Bedef.* Til de Oblatis Curiæ.

[91] Mag. Rot. 5 Ric. I. *Rot. 2a*, Nordfolch and Sudfolch.

[92] See Platt's Case cited Vaughan's Reports 1677, p. 243.

[93] Rolls of Parl. vol. iii. p. 469.

[94] Ibid. vol iii. p. 593a.

[95] Allowing a prisoner to go at liberty on finding sureties.

[96] Hayne's State Papers, vol. i.

[97] The moat or ditch fed by the Fleet, which washed the walls of the prison.

[98] See "Memorials of London and London Life in the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries," by H. T. Riley, 1847, pp. 279, 280.

[99] "Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England," edited by Sir H. Nicholas, 1834, vol. ii. p. 303.

[100] Ibid. vol. iii. p. 93.

[101] Beneficed Clergy were given the title of Dominus or Sir—as Sir Hugh Evans, in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*.

[102] A vexatious and litigious person—one who stirs up strife.

[103] Christ Church, Oxford.

CHAPTER XX.

THE Fleet was, evidently, a handy prison, elastic enough to suit all cases, for on Aug. 19, 1553, at the Star Chamber, "Roger Erthe, alias Kinge, servaunt to Therle of Pembroke, and William Ferror, servaunt to the Lord Sturton, were, for making of a Fraye, committed to the Charge of Warden of the Fleete."

In September, 1553, the Fleet received a prisoner whose name is historical wherever the English language is read, for the Privy Council being held at Richmond, on the 1st of Sept. "This day appered before the Lordes, John Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester, and Miles Coverdale, Bishop of Exon. And the said Hooper, for Considerations the Councell moving, was sent to the Fleete."

Turning from Mary's reign to that of Elizabeth, we find equal religious intolerance, for we read in Strype's "Annals of the Reformation, A.D. 1582, "that Fleetwood, the Recorder of London, sent a letter to the Lord Treasurer, informing him that one Osborn, a priest and Franciscan friar, had been examined, and confessed that "*in crastino Epiphaniæ*, he said Mass in the Fleet (where many recusants were committed) in the Lord Vaux's Chamber, (to whom he was related) before that Lord, Mr. Tresham, Mr. Tyrwhit, and others," which three, at the London Sessions, in Guildhall, were convicted on Osborn's evidence.

Fleet parsons were evidently an institution in the sixteenth century, for besides the above-mentioned Osborn, there was another committed to the Fleet, on May 27, 1584, one Sir R. Stapleton. His fault seems to have been that he had preached against the Archbishop of York, for which he was arraigned in the Star Chamber, and was, with others, ordered to read an apology—which he did—but in such a contemptuous manner, that he was sent to the Fleet.

In the seventeenth century, many Puritans were incarcerated here, especially after the Restoration, when their gloomy fanaticism ill accorded with the ideas of the age. The bow had been strung too tightly during the Commonwealth, and when it was unstrung the reaction was great. So many were put into prison for conscience' sake. Even in Elizabeth's reign there were many in prison, and we can hardly wonder at it when we consider it was an age of religious intolerance, and the religion professed by these devotees was of a most unattractive character. Strype, writing of A.D. 1588, says of them:

> "In the Summer Time they meet together in the Fields, a Mile or more.[104] There they sit down upon a Bank. And divers of them expound out of the Bible, so long as they are there assembled.
>
> "In the Winter Time they assemble themselves by five of the Clock in the Morning to the House where they make their Conventicle for the Sabbath Day, Men and Women together. There they continue in their kind of Prayers, and Exposition of Scriptures, all the Day. They Dine together. After Dinner make Collections to pay for their Diet. And what money is left, some of them carryeth to the Prisons, where any of their sort be committed.
>
> "In their prayers, one speaketh, and the rest do groan and sob, and sithe,[105] as if they could wring out Tears. But say not after him that prayeth. Their Prayer is *Extemporal*."

In January, 1600, Lord Grey of Wilton was committed to the Fleet, by Queen Elizabeth's order, for assaulting the Earl of Southampton, on horseback, in the public street.

There is a fair bibliography of the Fleet prison in the seventeenth century. In 1620-1 there was a broadsheet published "A briefe collection of the exactions, extortions, oppressions, tyrannies, and excesses towards the liues, bodies and goods of prisoners, done by *Alexander Harris*, Warden of the Fleete, in his foure yeares misgouernment, ready to be proued by oath and other testimonies." This was answered by Harris, and his MS., which is in the possession of the Duke of Westminster, was published by the Camden Society in 1879, entitled the "Œconomy of the Fleete; or an Apologeticall Answeare of Alexander Harris (late Warden there) unto XIX Articles set forth against him by the prisoners." Of which book more anon.

Then there was a "Petition to Parliament of the distressed prisoners in the King's Bench, Fleet and other prisons"—but this has no date. In 1647 was published "A Whip for the Marshal's Court by Robert Robins Gent, being his Petition to the House of Commons." The preface to the Reader, is dated from the Author's "Iron Cage in the Fleet." In 1653 there was "A Schedule; or, List of the Prisoners in the Fleet remaining in custody May 25, 1653."Some of them were very bad cases, as "*William Gregory* committed February 7, 1651, one Outlawry after Judgment, severall other Outlawries and Trespasses, no sums mentioned;" or "*Hustwayte Wright* committed June 29, 1650, for £31 1s., Execution, besides Outlawries, Latitats and Cap. no sum appearing."

"*Thomas Keneston* committed Nov. 4, 1646, for 51,000 Actions, and severall Orders of the Exchequer." In 1669 appeared "A Companion for Debtors and Prisoners, and advice to Creditors, with a description of Newgate, the Marshalsea, the two Counties, Ludgate, *the Fleet*, and King's Bench prison." In 1671 was published "A Short Narrative, or Anatomie of the Fleet Prison &c.," by John Knap, M.D. In 1690 there was "A plea for the City Orphans and Prisoners for Debt." In 1691 appeared a soul-harrowing little book, called "The Cry of the Oppressed, a tragicall Account of the unparalleled Sufferings of the poor imprisoned Debtors and Tyranny of their Gaolers, with the case of the Publisher (Moses Pitt)." Here the interest is much heightened by numerous engravings showing how prisoners were beaten, made to feed with hogs, were covered with boils and blains, the females outraged by their gaolers, and many other enormities. I would fain quote at length from this book, but space will not admit of it. In 1699 we find "An Argument that it is impossible for the nation to be rid of the grievances occasioned by the Marshal of the King's Bench and Warden of the Fleet, without an utter extirpation of their present Offices."

The Case as made out by the prisoners against the Warden, Alexander Harris, in 1620-1, was, if it could have been thoroughly substantiated, most damaging to him, but they overreached themselves by their manifest exaggeration. A few examples will suffice. There were nineteen counts against him all of grievous weight, but we will only take four as a fair sample. (1) Murder; (2) Felony; (3) Robbery; (4) Excessive Rates for Chambers. First, as to the Charge of Murder, this is the accusation: "After knowne quarrels and fightings between two prisoners, lodging them in one chamber, where, quarrelling and fighting againe, and notice to him thereof giuen, and of likely further mischiefe; this notwithstanding, continuance of them together, vntil the one murthered the other."

This referred to two prisoners, Sir John Whitbrooke and another named Boughton. According to the Warden's account Whitbrooke did not deserve much pity. In July, 1618, he was given into the Warden's Custody, by the order of two Courts, to be kept a close prisoner, but he soon developed "dangerous energy," for on the 10th of the same month, almost immediately after his committal, he "came into the Warden's studdy where the Warden (in his gowne) was wryteing, and fashioned his speech, sayeing that he came to speake with the Warden about his lodging, who answeared that he would willingly speake about that, and money for it, whereupon the Warden putting dust[106] upon the wryteings and turneing his back to lay them aside, Sir John Whitbrooke strooke him on the head with the sharpe ende of a hammer, whereof one Cleft was before broken off, and the other cleft newly whett, giveing fower wounds to the scull, and some bruses before the Warden could close with him; but then the Warden thrusting him out of the studdy, did throwe Whitbrooke on the back, and took away the hammer, Whitbrooke (being undermost) did hould the forepart of the Warden's gowne soe as he could not rise; att which tyme the Warden's blood abundantly gushed downe upon Whitbrooke, and the Warden could have beaten out Whitbrooke's braynes with the hammer, but that he was neither wrothfull nor daunted.

"Then after, two maydes servants (heareing the noyse) came into the roome, and one loosed Whitbrooke's hands from the Warden's gowne, or ells the Warden must have killed him to acquitt himselfe. Soe soone as the maydes came the Warden shewed them the hammer all bloody, telling them that Whitbrooke had wounded him therewith; the butler of the howse then alsoe comeing upp to cover the table, the Warden bidd him and others (which followed) to laye hands upon Whitbrooke &c.; but to take heed they hurt him not; soe they letting him rise and rest himselfe, he took a stiletto out of his pockett and stabbed the Warden's deputie cleane through the middle of his hand, which (notwithstanding it was presently dressed by a good chirurgion) did rankle upp to his shoulder, and was like to have killed him; he also stabbed the porter of the howse directly against the heart, and drewe blood, but it pierced not: he stabbed the gaoler into the hand and twice through the sleeve of his dublett, so as then they lay violent hands upon him, put on irons and carryed him to the strongest warde of the prison (called Bolton's warde)."

And a perfectly proper punishment for any one who ran *amuk* like Whitbrooke because there was an organized mutiny. "And upon this some three score prisoners breake upp all the strongest prisons and dores of the wards and Tower chamber, assaulting the Warden and his servants with weapons &c., according to a plott and purpose before resolved upon, as appeares by depositions."

The poor Warden had no bed of roses, more especially as the female element was afterwards introduced in the shape of Lady Whitbrooke, who of course, was a warm partisan of her husband. Harris writes:

> "The lady alledgeth that in September the quarrell betweene the Warden and Whitbrooke was renewed.
>
> "The Warden answeareth that in July, 1619, Whitbrooke and Boughton with six others (being lodged in a great Chamber) they and six more shutt out thirtie of their Companie and fortefied the gaole against the Warden, refused all perswasions of the Warden, constables, and Alderman's Deputie, the comands of the Lord Cheife Justice, of the Lord Chauncellor and his Serjeant at Armes; yet yeilded to the clarke of the councell sent from the Lords. Whitbrooke and Boughton being then in one humour; and, upon unblocking the prison, Whitbrooke desired liberty; it was offred him upon security, he would give none, then he made question where to lye, to which was answeared there were five other roomes he might make his election of, which he would; but he said he would none other but where he formerly laye (it being indeed the fayrest). They fortified these roomes againe when the Warden was out of towne, soe as during Whitbrooke's life and Boughton's being there with their adherents the Warden had noe

comand in that part of the prison."

It is almost needless to say that these peculiarly unquiet spirits quarrelled among themselves. We have heard enough of Whitbrooke to know that he was a quarrelsome cur—impatient of restraint, and thoroughly lawless in his habits; but it is evident that he persuaded his wife that he was an injured innocent; for, in poor Harris's "Apologia pro sua vita," a story which he tells so naively, and so nicely, he says:

"The lady alledgeth that the Warden (for revenge) resolved and reported he would send Whitbrooke to *Boulton* to keepe.

"The Warden answeareth that he for governement sake and to suppresse misdemeanours doth thretten to putt prisoners (offending) into *Boulton's Wards* (Many yeares familiarlie soe called as he thinketh of bolts or irons put on them), where Whitbrooke was put when he wounded the Warden and his servants; he continued there but a small tyme, and was removed to a roome called the Tower Chamber (where Henry Boughton and many others did lye), thence Boughton was removed into the common prison in December, 1618, and Whitbrooke was removed thither June 16, 1619, soe as to that tyme they lay five moneths within one lodging, and six moneths severed in other lodgings and noe quarrell stirred.

"The Lady alledgeth that presently at their comeing together Boughton suddenly stabbed and wounded Whitbrooke, whereof he dyed.

"The Warden answeareth that over and above the eleaven months aforesaid, yet from June 16th untill September 16, 1619, being 3 moneths, they two combyned in their exploits against the Warden without falling out (for ought the Warden knewe), but 16 September Boughton fell out with Harvey (one of his chamber felowes), whom Boughton assayled with his teeth, and bitt him by the thombe, whereof Whitbrooke, Willis, Harvey, and others there lodged, advised the Warden, wishing him to take some course. The Warden sent divers messages by the gaoler to Whitbrooke to remove thence and to lye elsewhere; he would not, sayeing none should remove him but by violence, and they were so strong there, as the Warden could doe nothing, none ells durst come amongst them. Holmes and Maunsell offered him libertie amongst other gentlemen upon bonds.

"The Warden acquainted the Lord Chauncellor of their fortifications, of some other stabbing there, of this particular brawle, and besought his lordshipp to send them to Newgate. The Lord Chauncellor comanded such motion to be made at the tyme of a seale; it was moved by Mr. Woomelayson, as appeares by his briefe, then his lordshipp wished oath to be made of this offence, and called for presidents [107] to remove them, in which meane tyme Boughton (being provoked and wounded by Whitbrooke) did stabb him, whereof he dyed within 13 dayes, and it was about 14 moneths after he wounded the Warden and stabbed his 3 servants as appeareth by the generall lodgeings and places where they laye, sometymes together, and sometymes severed, ensueing to be seene in the end of this answeare to this Article, and, if the testimony (which was long after delivered to the Warden, by a prisoner in the Fleete) be true, then the same Harvey, and one Tymothy Willis and Sir John Whitbrooke himselfe, did (of sett purpose) whett on Boughton to anger and quarrell, because they scorned Boughton and meant to assayle him.

"When Whitbrooke, Boughton, &c., ymured themselves upp in the wards as aforesaid, a view or survey of the roomes was given the Lordes of the Councell, and they (*were*) satisfied.

"After the tyme of the supposed quarrell (which was about Whitbrooke's and Boughton's fortifieing the house) they contynued lyeing where they were before, amongst others.

"Wheresoever they had lyen they might quarrell when they mett, as Whitbrooke many moneths before broke Willis his head with a pott or candlestick." These two ill-conditioned animals fell to loggerheads, and Boughton drew upon Whitbrooke, and so wounded him that eventually he died. And this shows the very lax discipline that then obtained in the Fleet. Of course, no weapons should have been allowed, but "It is alsoe alledged that Boughton did provide a sword, and it was brought him by a woeman from whom the porter of the Fleet tooke it, and delivered it to the Warden (as he did indeed) and therefore say their accusers that the Warden knew the same sword was to kill Whitbrooke.

"The Warden had it about a yeare and a halfe before this accident (of Whitbrooke's death) happened, and delivered it back againe to the woeman that brought it, with charge not to bring any thither whatsoever.

"It was avouched that the sword was Boughton's, and put to dressing to a Cutler, who sent it home againe, so as Boughton might have killed Whitbrooke with it before it went to dressing, if he had intended any such thing. Nay, Boughton had alwayes in his trunck (as appeared afterwards) a stilletto so keene, so cleane and ready, as would soone have done such a fact if he had meant it; yea, swords and other weapons want not in the Fleete, and the Warden cannot prevent it. This fact was mere accidentall, and not precogitate as the lawe hath founde it, which acquitted Boughton of Manslaughter upon his arraignement." Harris, I think, and, most probably, my readers will agree with me, has made out a very fair case in his own favour; but I must not deal with the other charges against him at such length.

Footnotes

[104] Presumably, *from the town*.

[105] Sigh.

[106] There was no blotting paper in those days, but *pounce* was used, which was either *powdered* resin, gum sandarach, or copal, or powdered cuttle fish. I believe that *pounce* may even now be bought at law stationers. It was dusted on to the wet ink by means of a pepper caster.

[107] Precedents.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE second count brought against him by his mutinous prisoners was "Remouing a prisoner out of his chamber, hauing 51 lib. 1 s. hid vnder his bed, which the prisoner required he might go to his chamber to dispose of, which was denied, and he thrust vp in another roome close prisoner, vntill the Warden and some of his seruants rifled his bed of that mony."

Hear the Warden's defence:— "By this is pretended that one Coppin (who euer did beare the name of a poore fellowe) lost 51 li., with takeing whereof, if he dare charge any person or persons the Lawe is and hath beene open for him theis two yeares past. But his abettors haue putt it here rather to infame, then that they can think it true, as by the ensueing answeare appeares.

"For Edward Coppin, liued as a poore prisoner in the Fleete for breach of a decree, and continueing above six yeares, would never be drawen to pay the Warden one penny for meate, drinke, lodging, or attendance; but at last he ran away, and was upon the Warden's pursuite taken againe, but before he ran away, he was sometymes restrayned of the libertye of the Fleete yards and walks (as is the custome of all prisons in England); and he lodging in the three Tower Chambers with sixteene persons, they often thretned their keeper to stabb him, to take away the keyes of the prison, to bind him, to hang him; lastly they fortefied that prison, soe that the Warden could not dispose or order them. And with two malletts and steele chissells they had cutt the stone workes of the dore, soe as noe locks or bolts could shutt them; and while they were thus doeinge Coppin came downe to fetch a mallett, wherewith he was taken beneath, and presentlie put into another warde aparte from his fellowes, about three a clock in the afternoone 15 July 1619, not speakeing of any money."

Master Coppin was one of Boughton's gang, but even that *malfaiseur* could not back up his claim, for "A rumour was spredd in the Fleete that Coppin had lost 50 li. The Warden heareing thereof, sent for Coppin, and asked him: he said he would say nothing except Sir Francis Inglefield were present. Then the Warden said, Nay, Coppin, if you have nothing to say to me, you may depart againe.

"Then the Warden was informed by Mr. Boughton and Wall, that the day before it happened that Coppin was removed, they had made meanes to borrowe some money upon a pawne, and Coppin professed and swore he had not so much (being fower (4) pounds) as they demanded. Then the Warden caused Coppin's trunck (being new and well locked) to be opened in Coppin's presence, and delivered it to him, in which Trunck within a Bagg put in a Box (as they said) there was about xxix^{s}; and then was sett on foote this rumour when Coppin had advised with Mr. Rookwood to doe it.

"About January 1620, Edward Coppin confessed that he never receaved any money since he came to Prison.

"Mr. Williams saith that he hath heard that Coppin hath confessed that he lost noe money."

So we may acquit the Warden on this count. Poor Man! he had a rough lot to deal with, but it is to our advantage that it was so, for his refutation of the charges brought against him throws a flood of light on the domestic manners of the time, and of the Fleet prison in particular.

The third count against the Warden was one of robbery, "11 lib. 6 s. taken out of the Trunk, and by violence, from the person of a close prisoner sicke in his bed, by the Warden and his seruants." And Harris meets this, as all others, fairly and straightforwardly. Says he:— "This toucheth money taken from one Thraske, then a Jewdaiser, or halfe Jewe, committed close prisoner by the Lords of the Councell, from whom, and such like, though in the Gatehouse, King's Bench, Fleete, &c., it hath beene used to take away and keepe their money, yet the Warden tooke not his until he abused it very dangerouslie, and whether this takeing away may be said Robbery, let the answeare followeing decide.

"And although the complainte be used with a Circumstance, as if the Prisoner were sick, thereby to make a shewe as if the Warden gaped at his death and money; that was most untrue for Thraske was in perfect health."

This prisoner was sent to the Fleet, to be put in the pillory, whipped and branded, and, besides, to suffer solitary confinement, but he found means to write letters to the King and the Lord Chancellor, and the Warden was much blamed for allowing him so to do. But poor Harris, who must have been plagued almost to death by his very recalcitrant charges, could not find out whence his prisoner procured his writing materials, and at last came to the correct conclusion that he was bribing the gaoler who waited upon him. So, with some servants, he personally searched Mr. Thraske's apartment and person, and found his pens, ink, and paper, and also £11

6s. in money, together with a bag and cord with which he used to receive supplies from outside, and by means of which he disseminated his pernicious literature. All of which the Warden very properly confiscated, but the money was kept, and used for the prisoner's benefit. "When Thraske had worne out his cloathes and desired other, the Lord Chauncellor bid the Warden buy for Thraske some cloathes, which was done accordingly, even soe much as Thraske desired; the Warden alsoe gave him money to buy wyne for his comforte at tymes." And, in the long run, the poor Warden declares that he was about £80 out of pocket by his prisoner.

The last charge we will investigate, is that of "Excessiue rates of Chambers." (No. 13 on the list of 19) "Whereby orders no man ought to pay for any Chamber, the Warden allowing bed and bedding, aboue 2s. 4d. a weeke, he exacteth 8s., 10s., 13s. 4d. and of some twentie shillings a weeke without bedding." The Warden replies to this that "the Orders of the Prison are, That noe Parlor Comoners and Hall Comoners must lye two in a Bedd like Prisoners, They of the Parlor at ijs. iiijd. the weeke. They of the Hall at xiiijd. If any such will lye in the Prison then there is noe question of their payment, nor any more required. But the missery is this that none there will pay at all, but stand upon it that they should pay nothing, which is contrary to right, to Custome, and to usage.... An^{o} 1597. The Prisoners then Articling against the Warden Sett forth that one Prisoner paid xxxs. others xxs., xvs., xiis., xs. a weeke for Chamber without Bedd. The Warden then made his Answeare to the Comittees that he took xs. a Chamber, and the rest was for more chambers than one, and in respect of Dyett, though they had none, but fetched it abroad.

"Soe if Prisoners will have more ease than ordinarie, and a Chamber or two for themselves and theirs in the Warden's howse, they are by the orders and Constitutions to Compound with the Warden for it, it being the Warden's freehould, and demyseable.... To such prisoners as lye two in a Bedd, the Warden is to find them Bedd, and for Bedd and Chamber they are to pay. Whether by Bedd is meant all furniture of Bedding, that is to be doubted, for it was never put in practise; but as for those which lye in the Warden's freehould by agreement he is not bound to find them Bedd or Bedding except it be so conditioned. And such will hardly vouchsafe to lye on the comon Bedding which passeth from Man to Man; And the Warden can as hardlie buy a new Bedd for every new prisoner which cometh, and therefore the lodgings of ease were provided for men of quality and not for the mean sorte of prisoners, as the accusation would seeme to inferre; And when Mr. Chamberlayne informed against the Warden touching Chambers, All the cheife gentlemen in the Fleete certified under their hands that they held their Chambers by agreement to have a Chamber alone to each, and were contented with the rates."

That the Wardenship of the Fleet was an onerous position, may be inferred from Harris's statement that "he hath had at one tyme the King's prisoners for two hundred thowsand[108] pounds debt, besides the affayres of State."

That the office of Warden of the Fleet was of very ancient origin we have seen in the case of Nathanael de Leveland, and he also proves that it was heritable, for he, and his family, had held it for 130 years, and more. And it had a far-reaching jurisdiction, for in the 3 Eliz.[109] we learn that "Upon an adjournment of the term to Hertford, several prisoners were committed to the Castle there. This Castle was part of the Duchy of Lancaster. The Queen had granted a patent to A. of the Custody of this Castle for his Life; resolved by the Judges that the Warden of the Fleet shall have the Custody *there* of the Prisoners committed by the Chancery, Common Pleas and Exchequer: For he is the Officer of those Corts; and although the Patentee has the Custody of the Castle, and though it be the Prison of the County, yet his interest ought to give place to the public weal, and common justice."

In course of time, the Wardenship became a position which was openly sold; and our old friend Harris makes no secret of it. "They likewise alledge that I^{o} Elizabeth it was purchased by Tirrell at the rate of 160 li. per annum and that long after it was held at 100 li. per annum, and refused for 200 li. But now that (thorough extortion) there is made 4,000 li. per annum by the relation delivered to one Mr. Shotbolt.

"To which is answeared, that the purchase paid by Tirrell, (as appears by the deed inrolled) was 6,000 markes or 4,000 li. which, if it be devided at tenne or twelve yeares purchase, being more than an office of that nature was worth in those dayes (which is above three score yeares past) it will bring 400 li. tenne yeares purchase, and therefore here is *sutor ultra crepidam*, for 160 li. at that rate would yeild but 1,600 li. in money, and there was not then the fift part of the buildings and lodgings which now are.

"Mr. Anslowe (as is credibly informed) held it by fyne (and otherwise) at 600 li. per annum, and had but some part of the benefitts of the prison, nothing of the pallace at Westminster. And as for this Warden's valuation of it at 4000 li. per annum, it might be, supposeing that if the benefitts of the pallace were had &c. But what if the one with the other cost in expences 4,000 li. per annum, what will be then advanced?" &c.

This selling of the Office of Warden, led to a great squabble in the early days of Queen Anne's reign, and it seems to have arisen in this way. A Warden of the Fleet, named Ford, in the reign of William and Mary, was found guilty of suffering one Richard Spencer to escape, but was acquitted of some minor charges, and a certain Col. Baldwin Leighton obtained a grant of the Office on April 6, 1690. On June 25, 1691, this grant was quashed, and Leighton soon after died. A Mr. Tilley, in the fifth year of William and Mary purchased the Inheritance of the said Office, together with the Mansion and Gardens thereto appertaining, but on Dec. 23, 1704, judgment was given in the Queen's Bench that the Office be seized into her Majesty's hands, and this was affirmed in Parliament.

The discipline in the prison at this time seems to have been very bad, so much so that many witnesses who could have spoken of Tilley's misdeeds were hindered from giving evidence, some by being put into dungeons; others, by violence, bribes, or other artifices. Take a case in point, which happened about this time. The case of Robert Elliot and others. "One Francis Chartyres was Arrested at the several Suits of the said several Persons, about the 4th of May last, all their Debts amounting to 140 l. and upwards, which cost them 20 l. to effect: And the said Francis Chartyres being a stubborn and an obstinate Man, and dangerous to Arrest, he having killed several Persons upon the like attempt, and at this Arrest run the Bayliffs through. And after he was taken, he by *Habeas Corpus* turned himself over to the said Fleet Prison. And Mr. Tilley, and the Turnkey, and one Whitwood, an Officer of the Fleet, were acquainted, by the persons above mentioned, what a dangerous Man he was, and what it cost them to take him; but they took no notice thereof, and declared they would let him out for all of them; and so they did, and the next Day the said Persons Arrested him again, and he went over to the Fleet a second time, and was immediately set at liberty; who coming to the Persons aforesaid, at whose Suit he was Arrested, bid them defiance; saying, *He was a Freeman, for that he had given 18 Guineas for it*, and they *should never have a farthing of their Debts*, which they now doubt of, the said Chartyres being gone for Scotland."

Hatton, in his "New View of London," 1708, gives, the boundary of the *Rules*, and also descants on the pleasantness of the Prison, as an abode. "Fleet Prison, situate on the East side of the Ditch, between Ludgate Hill and Fleet Lane, but the Rules extend Southward on the East side of Fleet Canal to Ludgate Hill, and thence Eastward to Cock Ally on the South side of Ludgate Hill, and to the Old Bayly on the North, and thence Northward in the Old Bayley both sides the Street, to Fleet Lane, and all that Lane, and from the West End, southward to the Prison again. It is a Prison for Debtors from any part of the Kingdom, for those that act or speak any thing in contempt of the Courts of Chancery and Common Pleas; and for the pleasantness of the Prison and Gardens, and the aforesaid large extent of its Rules, it is preferred before most other Prisons, many giving Money to turn themselves over to this from others."

Footnotes

[108] Equal in our currency to about three times the amount.

[109] Reports of Cases, &c., by Sir James Dyer (ed. 1794) vol. ii. p. 204 a.

CHAPTER XXII.

THINGS got so bad that Parliament ordered a Committee to inquire into it, and they began their sitting in Feb. 25, 1729. But, previously, the prisoners had petitioned the Lord Chief Justice and other justices without effect, and those petitions with Huggins' (who was the Warden) replies were published in a folio pamphlet, which contains much information.[110] The first petition was in 1723, and it was mainly addressed to the extortions of the Master, the sixth Article alledging that the fees exacted by the Warden were in excess of those settled by Law, Nov. 14, 1693—instanced as follows:

	Warden.	Legal.
For liberty of the House and Irons at first coming in	£2 4 4	1 6 8
Chaplain	0 2 0	
Entering every Name and Cause		0 0 4
Porter's fee	0 1 0	0 1 0
Chamberlain's Fee	0 3 0	0 1 0
The Dismission Fee for every Action	0 12 6	0 7 4
Turnkey's Dismission	0 2 6	
	£3 5 4	£1 16 4

The eleventh prayer of this Petition was, "And lastly, that for the better suppressing Prophaneness and Immorality among us, and that the Misery of Imprisonment may in some measure be alleviated by the Observance of good Manners, Cleanliness, and Quietude, we humbly pray your Lordships would enable us to regulate our selves in such Manner as the Prisoners in the King's Bench are empowered to do by a Rule of that Court, 20 *die post festim Sanctæ Trinitatis*. 11 Anne."

Huggins replied to all the petition, but his answer to No. 6 was "The Warden saith, That so soon as the Fees were settled by this Honourable Court, he caused a Copy thereof to be framed and hung up in the Common Hall of the House, signed by Sir George Cook; also a Copy of the Rules and Orders of the House, which said copies the Prisoners were pleased to burn, tear to Pieces, and obliterate; and the Warden denies that he has taken or receiv'd, or any for him, to his knowledge, more, or greater, Fees than were contained in the said Copy of Fees hung up in the said Prison."

And as to the Eleventh prayer of the Petitioners "The Warden saith, that the Prisoners in general, are so very ungovernable, that they have tore up the Trees around the Bowling Green, and cut down several of the Trees in the back part of the Prison, set by the Warden some years since, for the better Accommodation of the Prisoners; also broke down the Stocks in the said Prison, and the Houses of Easement were fitted up lately by the Warden, they have torn it almost to Pieces, and committed other Outrages, and most of them, altho' two Years in Arrears of Rent to the Warden, refuse to pay him any Part thereof, and will by Force, and in defiance of the Warden and his Officers, keep in Possession of the Rooms and Furnitures, Swearing to stand by each other."

Petition after petition was sent from the Prisoners to the Lord Chief Justice about the oppressions of Huggins and his myrmidons, and duly answered in some shape by the Warden, but there was one, in which the fourteenth Charge is as follows. "That the Warden, on the Death of any Prisoner detains the Body from his Friends and Relations untill they will pay him, what Chamber Rent was due from the Deceased; and in the mean Time his cruel and unchristian like Practice, is to make the best Bargain he can with the poor Family of the Deceased, for the Purchase of the Dead Body, in order to give it Christian Burial, at their own Expence, by which means he often extorts large Sums of Money, for granting the Relations the Liberty of taking away and burying the Dead Body; which tho' a very natural and reasonable Desire, is nevertheless often frustrated by their Inability to purchase it at his Price, and, rather than accept what may be in their Power to give him, he often suffers the Dead Body to lye above Ground seven or eight Days, and often Times eleven or twelve Days, to the great endangering of the Health of the whole Prison, by the nauseous Stench, which being often times the Case, is very offensive all over the House; and when he has refused what he thought not worth his Acceptance, he buries them in the common Burying place for Prisoners, when the Body is often taken up by their Friends to be bury'd their own Way, and the Warden seizes to his own Use the Cloaths, Furniture, and what ever else there is for Fees and Chamber Rent, which he pretends to be due from the said deceased Prisoner."

Huggins' reply to this was diabolically insolent. "For Answer thereto, My Lords, the Deputy Warden saith, That scarcely a Prisoner hath died on the Masters-Side, that was not largely

indebted to him; and therefore, possibly, he might have used endeavours to get what part of the Money was due to him, as he could fairly from the Deceased's Relations."

But the Cup of his iniquities was rapidly filling. He made one Thomas Bambridge "*A Newgate Sollicitor, and a Person of abandon'd Credit*" (as the petition in the case of Mr. Mackphreadris describes him) his deputy warden, and then, things came to a climax. As we have seen, Parliament took cognizance of the scandal, and issued a Commission to inquire into the matter, and their first sitting was on Feb. 25, 1729. Their report was presented to Parliament on March 20th of the same year—so that no time was lost in looking into the evils complained of.

It recites that Huggins by a gift of £5,000 to Lord Clarendon "did by his interest, obtain a grant of the said office (*i.e.*, *Warden of the Fleet*) for his own and his son's life.

"That it appeared to the Committee, That in the Year 1725, one Mr. Arne, an Upholder, was carried into a Stable, which stood where the strong room on the Master's side now is, and was there confined (being a place of cold restraint) till he died, and that he was in good state of health before he was confined to that room."

Huggins growing old, sold his interest in the Wardenship of the Fleet, and his Son's reversion therein, to Bambridge and Cuthbert, for the sum he had originally given for the place; and then Bambridge, being his own master, went somewhat ahead, and the Committee found that he connived at escapes, sent his prisoners to Spunging-houses, or private prisons, not so long ago done away with, where they were well, or badly treated, according to the money at their disposal.

And we read of one shocking case, which can best be given in the very words of the Report. "That these houses were further used by the said Bambridge, as a terror for extorting money from the prisoners, who, on security given, have the liberty of the rules; of which Mr. Robert Castell was an unhappy instance, a man born to a competent estate, but being unfortunately plunged into debt, was thrown into prison: he was first sent (according to custom) to Corbett's, [111] from whence he, by presents to Bambridge, redeemed himself, and, giving security obtained the liberty of the rules; notwithstanding which he had frequently presents, as they are called, exacted from him by Bambridge, and was menaced, on refusal, to be sent back to Corbett's again.

"The said Bambridge having thus unlawfully extorted large sums of money from him in a very short time, Castell grew weary of being made such a wretched property, and, resolving not to injure further his family or his creditors for the sake of so small a liberty, he refused to submit to further exactions; upon which the said Bambridge ordered him to be re-committed to Corbett's, where the smallpox then raged, though Castell acquainted him with his not having had that distemper, and that he dreaded it so much, that the putting him into a house where it was, would occasion his death, which, if it happened before he could settle his affairs, would be a great prejudice to his creditors, and would expose his family to destitution; and therefore he earnestly desired that he might either be sent to another house, or even into the gaol itself, as a favor. The melancholy case of this poor gentleman moved the very agents of the said Bambridge to compassion, so that they used their utmost endeavours to dissuade him from sending this unhappy prisoner to that infected house; but Bambridge forced him thither, where he (as he feared he should) caught the smallpox, and, in a few days, died thereof, justly charging the said Bambridge with his death; and unhappily leaving all his affairs in the greatest confusion, and a numerous family of small children in the utmost distress."

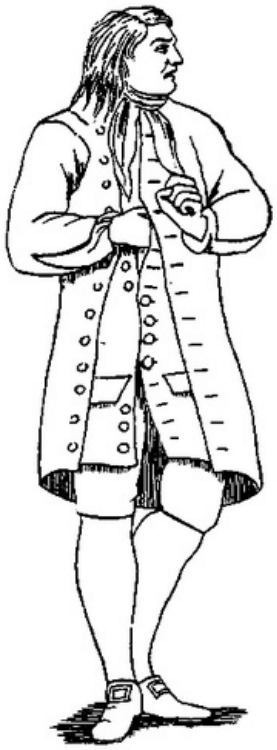
He squeezed everybody, made what rules he liked, and introduced new and pernicious customs, for, says the Report, "It appeared to the Committee, that the letting out of the Fleet tenements to Victuallers, for the reception of Prisoners, hath been but of late practised, and that the first of them let for this purpose was to Mary Whitwood, who still continues tenant of the same, and that her rent has, from 32 l. per. ann. been increased to 60 l. and a certain number of prisoners stipulated to be made a prey of, to enable her to pay so great a rent; and that she, to procure the benefit of having such a number of prisoners sent to her house, hath, over and above the increased rent, been obliged to make a present to the said Bambridge of forty guineas, as also of a toy (as it is called), being the model of a Chinese ship, made of amber, set in silver, for which fourscore broad pieces had been offered her....

"And, notwithstanding the payment of such large fees, in order to extort further sums from the unfortunate prisoners, the said Bambridge unjustly pretends he has a right, as warden, to exercise an unlimited power of changing prisoners from room to room; of turning them into the common side, though they have paid the master's side fee; and inflicting arbitrary punishments by locking them down in unwholesome dungeons, and loading them with torturing irons."

According to the Committee's report, Jacob Mendez Solas, a Portuguese, was, as far as they knew, the first prisoner that was ever loaded with irons in the Fleet. He was thrown into a noisome dungeon, which is described as a place "wherein the bodies of persons dying in the said prison are usually deposited, till the coroner's inquest hath passed upon them; it has no chimney, nor fireplace, nor any light but what comes over the door, or through a hole of about eight inches square. It is neither paved nor boarded, and the rough bricks appear both on the sides and top, being neither wainscotted, nor plastered; what adds to the dampness and stench of the place is, its being built over the common sewer, and adjoining to the sink and dunghill where all the nastiness of the prison is cast. In this miserable place the poor wretch was kept by the said Bambridge, manacled and shackled for near two months. At length, on receiving five guineas from Mr. Kemp, a friend of Solas Bambridge released the prisoner from his cruel confinement. But, though his chains were taken off, his terror still remained, and the unhappy man was prevailed upon by that terror, not only to labour *gratis* for the said Bambridge, but to swear also

at random all that he hath required of him: and the Committee themselves saw an instance of the deep impression his sufferings had made upon him; for on his surmising, from something said, that Bambridge was to return again, as Warden of the Fleet, he fainted, and the blood started out of his mouth and nose."

The upshot of this Committee was that the House petitioned the King to prosecute Huggins, Bambridge, and their satellites, who were all ordered to be committed to Newgate for trial. Huggins was tried, or rather the preliminaries of his trial were arranged on the 20th of May, 1729; but his trial for the murder of Edward Arne, a prisoner in the Fleet prison, by immuring him in the dungeon above described, from the effect of which confinement he subsequently died, did not take place until next day. After a long and patient trial, he was acquitted; and he managed, not only to survive his disgrace, but live to the age of 90.



BAMBRIDGE.

Bambridge was also tried, at the Old Bailey, for the murder of Robert Castell, as before described, but he was acquitted by the Jury. Upon this acquittal, Castell's widow brought an appeal against Thomas Bambridge, and Richard Corbett, for the murder of her husband; but here their luck still stood them in stead, for they were both acquitted. Bambridge, some twenty years after, committed suicide by cutting his throat.

Hogarth, in 1729, received a Commission from Sir Archibald Grant of Monnymusk, Bart., who was one of the Committee, to paint a portrait picture of his brother Commissioners with Bambridge, and the irons used by him in the Fleet. Bambridge is decidedly nervous—and a poor prisoner is introduced into the picture, though I cannot find, from the Report, that he really was before the Committee of the House.

A PRISONER IN IRONS.

These prosecutions somewhat purified the atmosphere of the Fleet, but still there were grumbles, as there naturally will be when men are restrained in their liberty, and are left to brood upon their miseries, and incarceration; but the little pamphlet,[112] which airs these grievances, deals principally with the hardships of fees, and the dilapidated state of the Common Side. The title-page prepares one for a not over cheerful ten minutes' reading.

"When Fortune keeps Thee Warm;
Then *Friends* will to Thee swarm,
Like Bees about a *Honey* pot:
But, if she chance to frown,
And rudely kick Thee down,
Why then—What then? *Lie there and ROT.*"

The writer says that after the reign of Huggins and Bambridge, the Chapel was adorned—and the great Hall adjoining, formerly for the Use of the Prisoners, "is now made into a commodious new Coffee House, and thought to be as Compleat a one, as any in Town (wherein one of the Warden's Servants is put, to be useful upon Occasion). *Part of the Pews in the Chapel being taken into it to make it compleat,* [113] *and serves for a Bar and Bedchamber.*

"Opposite to the Great Hall, or Coffee Room, is the Begging-Grate, where Prisoners had an Opportunity to speak with a Friend, and sometimes get Sight of one whose Inclinations did not lead him to pay a Visit to the Place, wou'd drop a Shilling, and perhaps some Beer to the Beggars; but now the same, altho' of an ancient standing, is Brick'd up, and the unhappy Persons who can't submit to beg, depriv'd of viewing the Street, or seeing their Chance Friends." So we see, that although the comforts of the inmates had been somewhat looked after, this little privilege, which they had long enjoyed, and, doubtless, as long abused, was taken from them. It was, afterwards, restored.

Footnotes

[110] "A True State of the Proceedings of the Prisoners in the Fleet Prison, in Order to the Redressing their Grievances before the Court of Common Pleas."

[111] A spunging-house.

[112] "Remarks on the Fleet Prison or Lumber-House for Men and Women. Written by a prisoner &c., published in the Fleet, 1733."

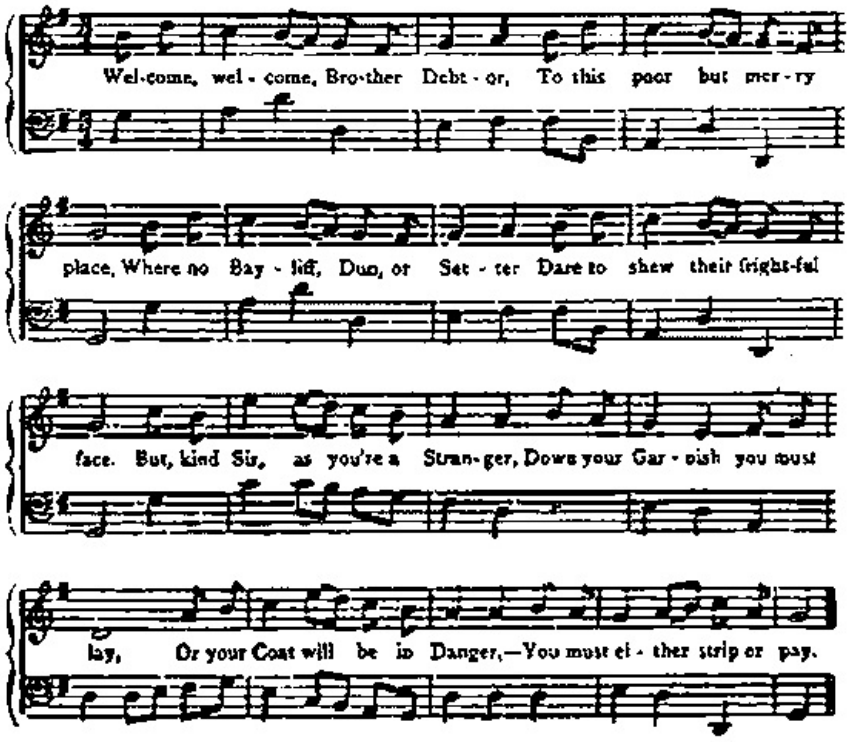
[113] The *italics* are mine.—J. A.

THE COMMON SIDE OF THE FLEET PRISON.

CHAPTER XXIII.

BUT enough of the miserables in connection with the Fleet Prison. We shall find that it is even possible for a prisoner to write pleasantly, nay, even somewhat humorously, upon his position, as we may see by the perusal of a poem entitled "The *Humours* of the Fleet. An humorous, descriptive Poem. Written by a Gentleman of the College" &c., Lond. 1749. Under the frontispiece, which represents the introduction of a prisoner into its precincts, is a poem of thirty-two lines, of which the following is a portion:—

THE DEBTORS' WELCOME TO THEIR BROTHER.



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Here we see, very vividly depicted, the introduction of a new prisoner; the Chamberlain is

introducing him to the Cook, whilst the Goaler and Tapster seem, already, to have made his acquaintance.

The notes appended to the Poem are in the original.

After a somewhat long exordium on prosperity and poverty, together with the horrors of a spunging-house, and imagining that the debtor has obtained his *Habeas*, which would permit him to choose his prison, the Poet thus sings:

"Close by the Borders of a slimy Flood,
Which now in secret rumbles thro' the Mud;
(Tho' heretofore it roll'd expos'd to Light,
Obnoxious to th' offended City's Sight.)[114]

"Twin Arches now the Sable Stream enclose
Upon whose Basis late a Fabrick rose;
In whose extended oblong Boundaries,
Are Shops and Sheds, and Stalls of all Degrees,
For Fruit, Meat, Herbage, Trinkets, Pork and Peas
A prudent City Scheme, and kindly meant;
The Town's oblig'd, their Worships touch the Rent.

"Near this commodious Market's miry Verge,
The Prince of Prisons Stands, compact and large;
When, by the Jigger's[115] more than magick Charm,
Kept from the Pow'r of doing Good—or Harm,
Relenting Captives only ruminate
Misconduct past, and curse their present State;
Tho' sorely griev'd, few are so void of Grace,
As not to wear a seeming chearful Face:
In Drinks or Sports ungrateful Thoughts must die,
For who can bear Heart-wounding Calumny?
Therefore Cabals engage of various Sorts,
To walk, to drink, or play at different Sports:
Here, on the oblong Table's verdant Plain,
The ivory Ball bounds, and rebounds again; [116]
There, at Backgammon, two sit *tete a tete*,
And curse alternately their Adverse Fate;
These are at Cribbage, those at Whist engag'd
And, as they lose, by turns become enrag'd:
Some of more sedentary Temper, read
Chance-medley Books, which duller Dullness breed;
Or Politicks in Coffee-Room, some pore
The Papers and Advertisements thrice o'er:
Warm'd with the *Alderman*, [117] some set up late,
To fix th' Insolvent Bill, and Nation's Fate;
Hence, knotty Points at different Tables rise,
And either Party's wond'rous, wond'rous wise:
Some of low Taste, ring Hand Bells, direful Noise!
And interrupt their Fellows' harmless Joys;
Disputes more noisy now a Quarrel breeds.
And Fools on both Sides fall to Loggerheads:
Till wearied with persuasive Thumps and Blows,
They drink, and Friends, as tho' they ne'er were Foes.

"Without Distinction, intermix'd is seen,
A 'Squire quite dirty, a Mechanick clean:
The Spendthrift Heir, who in his Chariot roll'd,
All his Possessions gone, Reversions sold

All his Possessions gone, Reversions sold,
Now mean, as once Profuse, the stupid Sot
Sits by a *Runner's* Side, [118] and *shules* [119] a Pot.

"Some Sots ill-manner'd, drunk, a harmless Fight!
Rant noisy thro' the Galleries all Night;
For which, if Justice had been done of late,
The Pump [120] had been three pretty Masters Fate.
With Stomacks empty, and Heads full of Care
Some Wretches swill the Pump and walk the Bare; [121]
Within whose ample Oval is a Court,
Where the more Active and Robust resort,
And glowing, exercise a manly Sport
(Strong Exercise with mod'rate Food is good,
It drives in sprightful Streams the circling Blood;)
While these with Rackets strike the flying Ball,
Some play at Nine Pins, Wrestlers take a Fall;
Beneath a Tent some drink, and some above
Are slily in their Chambers making Love;
Venus and *Bacchus* each keeps here a Shrine,
And many Vot'ries have to Love and Wine.

"Such the Amusement of this merry Jail,
Which you'll not reach, if Friends or Money fail:
For e'er its three-fold Gates it will unfold,
The destin'd Captive must produce some Gold:
Four Guineas, at the least, for diff'rent Fees,
Compleats your *Habeas*, and commands the keys;
Which done, and safely in, no more you're led,
If you have Cash, you'll find a Friend and Bed;
But, that deficient, you'll but Ill betide,
Lie in the Hall,[122] perhaps, or Common Side.[123]

"But now around you gazing *Jiggers*[124] swarm,
To draw your Picture, that's their usual Term;
Your Form and Features strictly they survey,
Then leave you, (if you can) to run away.

"To them succeeds the Chamberlain, to see
If you and he are likely to agree;
Whether you'll tip,[125] or pay your Master's Fee.[126]
Ask him how much? 'Tis one Pound six and eight;
And, if you want, he'll not the Twopence bate:
When paid, he puts on an important Face,
And shews *Mount Scoundrel* [127] for a charming Place:
You stand astonish'd at the darken'd Hole,
Sighing, the Lord have Mercy on my Soul!
And ask, have you no other Rooms, Sir, pray?
Perhaps enquire what Rent too, you're to pay:
Entreating that he wou'd a better seek;
The Rent (cries gruffly's)—Half a Crown a Week.
The Rooms have all a Price, some good, some bad;
But pleasant ones at present can't be had:
This Room, in my Opinion's not amiss;
Then cross his venal Palm with half a Piece [128]
He strait accosts you with another Face.

"Sir you're a Gentleman;—I like you well,
But who are such at first, we cannot tell;
Tho' your Behaviour speaks you what I thought,
And therefore I'll oblige you as I ought:

"How your Affairs may stand, I do not know,
But here, Sir, Cash does frequently run low.
I'll serve you,—don't be lavish,—only mum!
Take my Advice, I'll help you to a Chum! [129]
A Gentleman, Sir,—see, and hear him speak,
With him you'll pay but fifteen Pence a Week; [130]
Yet his Apartment's on the Upper Floor, [131]
Well furnish'd, clean and nice; who'd wish for more?
A Gentleman of Wit and Judgment too!
Who knows the Place; [132] what's what, and who is who;
My Praise, alas! can't equal his Deserts;
In brief,—you'll find him, Sir, a Man of Parts.

"Thus, while his fav'rite Friend he recommends,
He compasses at once their several Ends;
The new come Guest is pleas'd, that he should meet
So kind a Chamberlain, a Chum so neat:
But, as conversing thus, they nearer come,
Behold before his Door, the destin'd Chum.

"Why stood he there, himself could scarcely tell;
But there he had not stood, had Things gone well:
Had one poor Half-penny but blest his Fob,
Or, if in Prospect he had seen a Job,
H'had strain'ed his Credit for a Dram of Bo, [133]
But now, in pensive Mood, with Head down cast,
His Eyes transfix'd as tho' they look'd their last;
One Hand his open Bosom lightly held,
And one an empty Breeches Pocket fill'd.
His Dowlas Shirt no Stock or Cravat bore,
And on his Head, no Hat or Wig he wore;
But a once black shag Cap, surcharg'd with Sweat;
His Collar, here a Hole, and there a Pleat;
Both grown alike in Colour, that—alack!
This, neither now was White, nor that was Black;
But match'd his dirty yellow Beard so true,
They form'd a three-fold Cast of Brick dust Hue;
Meagre his Look, and in his nether Jaw
Was stuff'd an elemosynary Chaw;[134]
(Whose Juice serves present Hunger to asswage,
Which yet returns again with tenfold Rage;)
His Coat, which catch'd the Droppings from his Chin,
Was clos'd at Bottom with a Corking-Pin;
His Breeches Waistband a long Skewer made fast,
While he from *Scotland* Dunghill[135] snatch'd in Haste;
His Shirt-Tail thin as Lawn, but not so white,
Barely conceal'd his lank Affairs from Sight;
Loose were his Knee Bands, and unty'd his Hose,
Coax'd [136] in the Heel, in pulling o'er his

Toes;
Which spite of all his circumspective Care,
Did thro' his broken dirty Shoes appear.
"Just in this hapless Trim and pensive Plight,
The old Collegian[137] stood confess'd to Sight;
Whom, when our new-come Guest at first beheld,
He started back, with great Amazement fill'd;
Turns to the Chamberlain, says, bless my Eyes!
Is this the Man you told me was so nice?
I meant his Room was so Sir, he replies;
The Man is now in Dishabille and Dirt,
He shaves To-morrow tho', and turns his Shirt;
Stand not at Distance, I'll present you, come
My Friend, how is't? I've brought you here a Chum;
One that's a Gentleman; a worthy Man,
And you'll oblige me, serve him all you can.

"The Chums salute, the old Collegian first
Bending his Body almost to the Dust;
Upon his Face unusual Smiles appear
And long abandon'd Hope his Spirits chear
Thought he, Relief's at hand, and I shall eat;
Will you walk in, good Sir, and take a Seat!
We have what's decent here, tho' not compleat;
As for myself, I scandalize the Room,
But you'll consider, Sir, that I'm at Home;
Tho' had I thought a Stranger to have seen,
I should have ordered Matters to've been clean;
But here, amongst ourselves, we never mind,
Borrow or lend—reciprocally kind;
Regard not Dress;—tho' Sir, I have a Friend
Has Shirts enough, and, if you please, I'll send.
No Ceremony, Sir, you give me Pain;
I have a clean Shirt, Sir.—But have you twain?
O, yes, and twain to boot, and those twice told,
Besides, I thank my Stars, a Piece of Gold.
Why, then I'll be so free, Sir, as to borrow,
I mean a Shirt, Sir,—only till To-morrow.
You're welcome, Sir,—I'm glad you are so free.
Then turns the old Collegian round with Glee;
Whispers the Chamberlain with secret Joy,
We live to-night!—I'm sure he'll pay his Foy:
Turns to his Chum again with Eagerness,
And thus bespeaks him with his best Address;

"See, Sir, how pleasant, what a Prospect's there;
Below you see them sporting on the Bare;
Above, the Sun, Moon, Star, engage the Eye,
And those Abroad can't see beyond the Sky:
These rooms are better far than those beneath,
A clearer Light, a sweeter Air we breath;
A decent Garden does our Window grace,
With Plants untainted, undistain'd the Glass;
And welcome Showers descending from above
In gentle Drops of Rain, which Flowers love:
In short, Sir, nothing can be well more sweet:
But, I forgot—perhaps you chuse to eat;
Tho', for my part, I've nothing of my own,
To-day I scrap'd my Yesterday's Blade Bone;
But we can send—Ay, Sir, with all my Heart,
(Then very opportunely enters *Smart*). [138]

O, here's our Cook, he dresses all Things well;
Will you sup here, or do you chuse the Cell?
There's mighty good Accommodations there,
Rooms plenty, or a Box in Bartholm' Fair;
[139]
There, too, we can divert you, and may shew
Some Characters are worth your while to know,
Replies the new Collegian, nothing more
I wish to see, be pleas'd to go before;
And, *Smart*, provide a handsome Dish for Four.

"Too generous Man! but 'tis our hapless Fate
In all Conditions, to be wise too late;
For, even in Prison, those who have been free,
Will shew, if able, Generosity;
Yet find, too soon, when lavish of their Store,
How hard, when gone, it is to come at more;
And every Artifice in vain explore.
Some Messages Abroad, by Runners send.
Some Letters write to move an absent Friend;
And by Submission, having begg'd a Crown,
In one night's Revel here they'll kick it down.
[140]
'Tis true, this one Excuse they have indeed,
When others *Cole it*,[141] they as freely *bleed*;
[142]
When the Wind's fair, and brings in Ships with Store[143]
Each spends in turn, and trusts to Fate for more.

"The future Chums and Chamberlain descend
The Dirt[144] knot Stairs, and t'wards the kitchen bend;
Which gain'd, they find a merry Company,
Listening to Tales (from *Smart*) of Baudry,
All introduced with awkward Simile,[145]
Whose Applications miss the Purpose pat.
But in the Fire now burns th' unheeded Fat,
Whose sudden Blaze brings L—nd—r[146] roaring in;
Then *Smart* looks foolish, and forsakes his Grin.
The laughing Audience alter, too, their Tone,
For who can smile, that sees Tom L—nd—r frown?
He, magisterial rules the panic Cell,
And rivals *Belzebub*,—in looking well:
Indignant now, he darts malicious Eyes,
While each Dependant from the Kitchen flies;
Leaves *Smart* to combat with his furious Ire,
Who heeds him not, but strives to clear the Fire;
Blowing and stirring still, no Pains he spares,
And mute remains, while *Major Domo* swears;
Who bellows loud Anathemas on *Smart*,
And the last Curse he gives is D—n your Heart;
His trembling Lips are pale, his Eyeballs roll;
Till, spent with Rage, he quits him with a Growl.

"Now, as our new-come Guest observ'd this Scene,
(As odd an one, perhaps, as could be seen)
He first on *Smart*, next on his Master gaz'd,

And at the two extreams seem'd much amaz'd;
Which *Smart* perceiving, says in sober Mood,
Sir, I've a thousand Times his Fury stood;
But, yet, the Man tho' passionate, is good;
I never speak when he begins to bawl,
For, should I swear like him, the House would fall."

Here follow two or three pages of but little interest to the reader and the Story continues:

"But I forgot;—the Stranger and his Chum,
With t'other to, to *Barth'l'mew Fair* are come;
Where, being seated, and the Supper past,
They drink so deep, and put about so fast,
That 'ere the warning Watchman walks about,
With dismal Tone repeating,—Who goes out?[147]
'Ere St. *Paul's* Clock no longer will withold
From striking Ten, and the Voice cries,—All told.[148]
'Ere this, our new Companions, every one
In roaring Mirth and Wine, so far were gone,
That every Sense from ev'ry Part was fled,
And were with Difficulty got to Bed;
Where in the Morn, recover'd from his Drink,
The new *Collegian* may have Time to think;
And, recollecting how he spent the Night,
Explore his Pockets, and not find a Doit.

"Too thoughtless Man! to lavish thus away
A Week's Support in less than half a Day;
But 'tis a Curse attends this wretched Place,
To pay for dear bought Wit in little Space:
The Time shall come, when this new Tenant here,
Will in his Turn *shule* for a Pot of Beer;
Repent the melting of his Cash too fast,
And snap at Strangers for a Nights Repast."

Footnotes

[114] Where the *Fleet Market* is now, there was, a few Years since, a Ditch, with a Muddy Channel of Water. The Market was built at the expense of the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen, who receive the Rent for it.

[115] The Doorkeeper, or he who opens and shuts the *Jigg*, is call'd the *Jigger*.

[116] Billiards is a very common Game here.

[117] Fine Ale drank in the Coffee-Room, call'd the *Alderman*, because brew'd at Alderman *Parson's*.

[118] A *Runner*, is a Fellow that goes Abroad of Errands for the Prisoners.

[119] A common Cant word for Mumping.

[120] Persons who give any considerable Offence, are often try'd, and undergo the Discipline of the Pump. The Author was one of these in a drunken Frolick, for which he condemns himself.

[121] A spacious Place, where there are all Sorts of Exercises, but especially Fives.

[122] A Publick Place, free for all Prisoners.

[123] Where those lie who can't pay their Master's Fee.

[124] There are several of those *Jiggers* or Doorkeepers, who relieve one another, and when a Prisoner comes first in, they take a nice Observation of him, for fear of

his escaping.

[125] A cant Word for giving some Money in order to shew a Lodging.

[126] Which is One Pound Six Shillings and Eightpence, and then you are entitled to a Bed on the Master's Side, for which you pay so much per week.

[127] *Mount Scoundrel*, so call'd from its being so highly situated, and belonging once to the Common Side, tho' lately added to the Master's; if there be room in the House, this Place is first empty, and the Chamberlain commonly shews this to raise his price upon you for a better.

[128] Half a Guinea.

[129] A Bedfellow so call'd.

[130] When you have a Chum, you pay but 15 Pence per Week each, and, indeed, that is the Rent of the whole Room, if you find Furniture.

[131] The Upper Floors are accounted best here, for the same reason as they are at *Edinburgh*, which, I suppose, every Body knows.

[132] It is common to mention the *Fleet* by the Name of the *Place*, and I suppose it is call'd *the Place* by way of Eminence, because there is not such another.

[133] A Cant Word for a Drain of Geneva.

[134] A Chew of Tobacco, suppos'd to be given him.

[135] The Necessary House, is (by the Prisoners) commonly call'd *Scotland*, near which is a dunghill.

[136] When there are Holes above Heel, or the Feet are so bad in a Stocking, that you are forced to pull them to hide the Holes, or cover the Toes, it is called coaxing.

[137] As the Prison is often call'd the *College*, so it is common to call a prisoner, a *Collegian*; and this character is taken from a man who had been many Years in the Place, and like to continue his Life; but it is hard for those who had not seen him to judge of the Truth of the Draught.

[138] The name of the Cook in the Kitchen.

[139] A place in the Cellar, called *Bartholomew Fair*.

[140] A phrase for spending Money fast.

[141] *Cole*, signifies Money.

[142] *Bleed* also signifies spending.

[143] When a Messenger or Friend brings Money from abroad to the Prisoners, it is usual to say a Ship is arriv'd.

[144] Some of the Dirt upon the Stairs is trod into knots so hard it is almost impossible to break it.

[145] *Smart* generally begins his Stories with a *That's like*, &c., tho' it is not at all like the Story he tells.

[146] The Master of the Cellar, a Man of a variable Temper, very passionate, malicious, and ill-natur'd at some times, at others very well.

[147] *Who goes out?* is repeated by Watchmen Prisoners, from half an Hour after Nine, till St. Paul's Clock strikes Ten, to give Visitors Notice to depart.

[148] While St. Paul's Clock is striking Ten, the Watchmen don't call *Who goes out?* but when the last Stroke is given, they cry *All told!* at which Time the Gates are lock'd, and nobody suffer'd to go out upon any Account.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WE saw in the lines, under the Frontispiece to the foregoing poem, *Garnish* was mentioned, and the fact was stated as a Custom then in force of taking the prisoner's coat to pay for his fees on entrance.

"But kind Sir, as you'r a Stranger,
Down your Garnish you must lay,
Or your Coat will be in danger,
You must either Strip or pay."

In the Criminal prisons, the prisoners themselves demanded Garnish from a new-comer, that is, a trifle of money—to drink. In 1708, at Newgate, this sum seems to have been Six shillings and Eightpence "Which they, from an old Custom, claim by Prescription, Time out of Mind, for entring into the *Society*, otherwise they strip the poor Wretch, if he has not wherewithal to pay it." [149] And in the old Play of the *Lying Lover* we are introduced to a Scene in Newgate where the prisoners are demanding *Garnish* from some new-comers.

"*Storm.* Nay, nay, you must stay here.

Simon. Why, I am *Simon*, Madam *Penelope's* Man.

Storm. Then Madam *Penelope's* Man must strip for Garnish; indeed Master *Simon* you must.

Simon. Thieves! Thieves! Thieves!

Storm. Thieves! Thieves! Why, you senseless Dog, do you think there's Thieves in *Newgate*? Away with him to the Tap House (*Pushes him off*). We'll drink his Coat off. Come, my little Chymist, thou shalt transmute this Jacket into Liquor."

Yet although this custom was general, I have only once met with an engraving of the actual process, which, judging by the man's agonized countenance, was not a pleasant one to him. It

occurs in the frontispiece to a little pamphlet called "An Oration on the Oppression of Jailors; which was spoken in the Fleet Prison, on the 20th of February, 1730/1," &c. And under the engraving, are these lines.

"Unhappy, friendless Man! how hard thy Fate!
Whose only Crime is being Unfortunate.
Are Jailors suffer'd in such Acts as these?
To strip the Wretch, who cannot pay his Fees?
Is there no kind *Samaritan* will lend
Relief, and save him from th' accursed Fiend?"

Respecting this practice let us hear what Howard in his "State of the Prisons in England and Wales," 1777, says, in his Chapter on "Bad Customs in Prisons." "A cruel custom obtains in most of our Gaols, which is that of the prisoners demanding of a new-comer GARNISH, FOOTING, or (as it is called in some London Gaols) CHUMMAGE. 'Pay or strip' are the fatal words. I say *fatal*, for they are so to some; who having no money, are obliged to give up part of their scanty apparel; and, if they have no bedding or straw to sleep on, contract diseases, which I have known to prove mortal.

In many Gaols, to the Garnish paid by the new-comer, those who were there before, make an addition; and great part of the following night is often spent in riot and drunkenness. The gaoler or tapster finding his account in this practice, generally answers questions concerning it with reluctance. Of the Garnish which I have set down to sundry prisons, I often had my information from persons who paid it.... In some places, this demand has been lately waved: in others, strictly prohibited by the Magistrates" —so that we see that this custom was already in its death throes, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

But in the interval between Bambridge and Howard, the prison was not a pleasant place of residence, if we may judge from "The Prisoner's Song" published in 1738, of which I give an illustration and the Words.

THE FLEET PRISON.

"A Starving life all day we lead,
No Comfort here is found,
At Night we make one Common bed,
Upon the Boarded Ground;
Where fleas in troops and Bugs in shoals
Into our Bosoms Creep,
And Death watch, Spiders, round y^{e} Walls,
Disturb us in our Sleep.

Were Socrates alive, and Bound
With us to lead his life,
'Twould move his Patience far beyond
His crabbed Scolding Wife;
Hard Lodging and much harder fare,
Would try the wisest Sage,
Nay! even make a Parson Swear,
And curse the Sinful Age.

Thus, we Insolvent debtors live,
Yet we may Boldly say,
Worse Villains often Credit give,
Than those that never pay;
For wealthy Knaves can with applause
Cheat on, and ne'er be try'd,
But in contempt of human Laws,
In Coaches Safely ride."

When Howard visited this prison in 1774 and 1776, he found on the former occasion 171 prisoners in the House, and 71 in the Rules. On the latter there were 241 in the House and 78 in the Rules. And he says:

> "The Prison was rebuilt a few years since. At the front is a narrow courtyard. At each end of the building there is a small projection, or wing. There are four floors, they call them *Galleries*, besides the Cellar floor, called *Bartholomew-Fair*. Each gallery consists of a passage in the middle, the whole length of the Prison, *i.e.*, sixty six yards; and rooms on each side of it about fourteen feet and a half by twelve and a half, and nine and a half high. A chimney and window in every room. The passages are narrow (not seven feet wide) and darkish, having only a window at each end.
>
> "On the first floor, the *Hall Gallery*, to which you ascend eight steps, are a Chapel, a Tap room, a Coffee room (lately made out of two rooms for Debtors), a room for the Turnkey, another for the Watchman, and eighteen rooms for Prisoners.
>
> Besides the Coffee-room and Tap-room, two of those eighteen rooms, and all the cellar-floor, except a lock up room to confine the disorderly, and another room for the Turnkey, are held by the Tapster, John Cartwright, who bought the remainder of the lease at public auction in 1775. The cellar floor is sixteen steps below the hall Gallery. It consists of the two rooms just now mentioned, the Tapster's kitchen, his four large beer and wine Cellars, and fifteen rooms for Prisoners. These fifteen, and the two before mentioned, in the hall gallery, the Tapster lets to Prisoners for four to eight shillings a week.
>
> "On the *first Gallery* (that next above the hall-gallery) are twenty-five rooms for Prisoners. On the *second Gallery*, twenty seven rooms. One of them, fronting the staircase, is their Committee room. A room at one end is an Infirmary. At the other end, in a large room over the Chapel, is a dirty Billiard-table, kept by the Prisoner who sleeps in that room. On the highest story there are twenty seven rooms. Some of these upper rooms, *viz.*, those in the wings, are larger than the rest, being over the Chapel, the Tap-room, &c.
>
> "All the rooms I have mentioned are for the Master's side Debtors. The weekly rent of those not held by the Tapster, is one shilling and three pence unfurnished. They fall to the Prisoners in succession, thus: when a room becomes vacant, the first Prisoner upon the list of such as have paid their entrance-fees, takes possession of it. When the Prison was built, the Warden gave each Prisoner his choice of a room, according to his seniority as Prisoner.... Such of the Prisoners (on the Common Side) as swear in Court, or before a Commissioner that they are not worth five pounds, and cannot subsist without charity, have the donations which are sent to the Prison, and the begging box, and grate. Of them there were, at my last visit, sixteen....
>
> "I mentioned the billiard table. They also play in the yard at skittles, missisipi, fives, tennis, &c. And not only the Prisoners; I saw among them several butchers and others from the Market; who are admitted here, as at another public house. The same may be seen in many other Prisons where the Gaoler keeps or lets the tap. Besides the

inconvenience of this to Prisoners; the frequenting a Prison lessens the dread of being confined in one.

"On Monday night there is a Wine Club: on Thursday night a Beer Club; each lasting usually till one or two in the morning. I need not say how much riot these occasion; and how the sober Prisoners are annoyed by them.

"Seeing the Prison crowded with women and Children, I procured an accurate list of them; and found that on (or about), the 6th of April, 1776, when there were, on the Master's side 213 Prisoners; on the Common side 30. Total 243; their wives (including women of an appellation not so honorable) and children, were 475."

In Howard's time the fees payable by the Prisoners were the same as were settled in 1729 after the trials of Huggins and Bambridge; but the prisoners exercised a kind of local self-government, for he writes:—

"There is, moreover, a little Code of Laws, eighteen in number, enacted by the Master's-side Debtors, and printed by D. Jones, 1774. It establishes a President, a Secretary, and a Committee, which is to be chosen every month, and to consist of three members from each Gallery. These are to meet in the Committee room every Thursday; and at other times when summoned by the Cryer, at command of the President, or of a majority of their own number. They are to raise contributions by assessment; to hear complaints; determine disputes; levy fines; and seize goods for payment. Their Sense to be deemed the sense of the whole House. The President or Secretary to hold the cash; the Committee to dispose of it. Their Scavenger to wash the Galleries once a week; to water, and sweep them every morning before eight; to sweep the yard twice every week; and to light the lamps all over the House. No person to throw out water, &c., anywhere but at the sinks in the yard. The Cryer may take of a Stranger a penny for calling a Prisoner to him; and of a Complainant two pence for summoning a Special Committee. For blasphemy, swearing, riot, drunkenness, &c., the Committee to fine at discretion; for damaging a lamp, fine a shilling. They are to take from a New Comer, on the first Sunday, besides the two shillings Garnish, to be spent in wine, one shilling and sixpence to be appropriated to the use of the House.

"Common-side Prisoners *to be confined to their own apartments*, and not to associate with these Law Makers, nor to use the same conveniences."

In 1780 the famous Lord George Gordon, or "No Popery" Riots took place—those Riots which were so intensely Protestant, that (according to the Contemporary *Gentleman's Magazine*) "The very Jews in Houndsditch and Duke's Place were so intimidated, that they followed the general example, and unintentionally gave an air of ridicule to what they understood in a very serious light, by writing on their Shutters, "This House is a true Protestant."

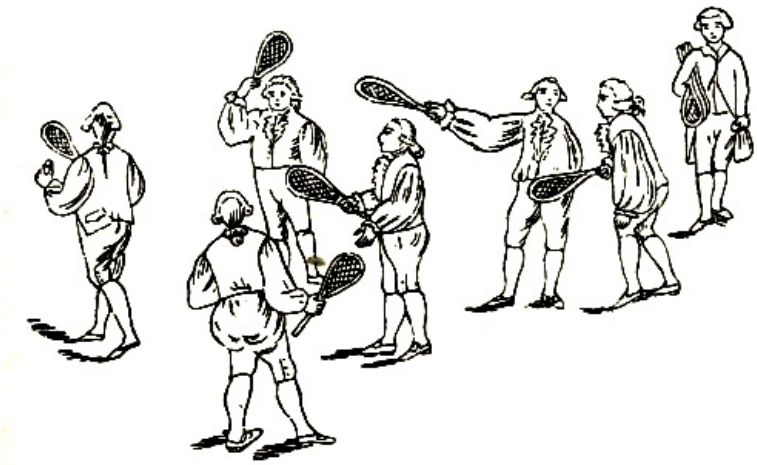
These Riots are very realistically brought before us in Charles Dickens' "Barnaby Rudge," but then, although the account is fairly historically faithful, yet the weaving of his tale necessarily interfered with strict historical details; which, by the way, are extremely meagre as to the burning of the Fleet prison. The fact was, that, for the few days the riot existed, the outrages were so numerous, and the Newspapers of such small dimensions, that they could only be summarized, and the burning of Newgate eclipsed that of the Fleet. But, on the Wednesday, June 7, 1780, the *Annual Register*, p. 261 (which certainly has the best description I have been able to see) absolutely breaks down, saying:—

"It is impossible to give any adequate description of the events of Wednesday. Notice was sent round to the public prisons of the King's Bench, Fleet, &c., by the mob, at what time they would come and burn them down. The same kind of infernal humanity was exercised towards Mr. Langdale, a distiller in Holborn, whose loss is said to amount to £100,000, and several other Romish individuals. In the afternoon all the shops were shut, and bits of blue silk, by way of flags, hung out at most houses, with the words "No Popery" chalked on the doors and window shutters, by way of deprecating the fury of the insurgents, from which no person thought himself secure.

"As soon as the day was drawing towards a Close, one of the most dreadful spectacles this country ever beheld was exhibited. Let those, who were not spectators of it, judge what the inhabitants felt when they beheld at the same instant the flames ascending and rolling in clouds from the King's Bench and Fleet Prisons, from New Bridewell, from the toll gates on Blackfriars Bridge, from houses in every quarter of the town, and particularly from the bottom and middle of Holborn, where the Conflagration was horrible beyond description."

The burning of the Fleet was done calmly and deliberately, as is well told in "A Narrative of the Proceedings of Lord Geo. Gordon," &c., 1780. "About one o'clock this morning (Tuesday, June 6), the Mob went to the Fleet Prison, and demanded the gates to be opened, which the Keepers were obliged to do, or they would have set fire to it. They were then proceeding to demolish the prison, but the prisoners expostulating with them, and begging that they would give them time to remove their goods, they readily condescended, and gave them a day for that purpose, in consequence of which, the prisoners were removing all this day out of that place. Some of the prisoners were in for life." And in the evening of the next day, they fulfilled their threat, and burnt it. This was the second time it had been burnt down, for the great fire of 1666 had

previously demolished it.



RACKETS IN THE FLEET PRISON, 1760.
(*Published by Bowles and Carver, 69, St. Paul's Churchyard.*)

It was rebuilt, and remained the same, with some few alterations and additions until its final destruction. We get a good view of "the Bare" or racket ground in 1808, an outline of which I have taken from Pugin and Rowlandson's beautiful "Microcosm of London," 1808, [150] according to which book, "The Fleet Prison, it is believed, after the fire of London in 1666, was removed to that site of ground upon which the almshouses through Vauxhall turnpike, on the Wandsworth road, now stand, until the old prison was rebuilt, Sir Jeremy Whichcott, then Warden, having his family seat there, which he converted into a prison; for which patriotic act, and rebuilding the old one at his own expence, he and his heirs were wardens as long as they lived. The Office of Warden of the Fleet was formerly of such consequence, that a brother of one of the Edwards is said to have been in the list of Wardens."

In this illustration we find the prisoners by no means moody, but playing at rackets and skittles. The Racket ground was under the superintendence of a Racket Master, who was elected by the Collegians, annually at Christmas. This post was eagerly sought after, as it was one to which some pecuniary profit was attached, a small fee being demanded from each person, the Racket Master having to find bats and balls. I have before me three printed handbills of aspirants for the post in 1841. One bases his claim on the fact that he is already Racket Master, and says, "I feel the situation is one that requires attention and unceasing exertion, not so much from the individual position, as from the circumstance that the amusement, and (what is more vitally important) the health of my fellow inmates is in some measure placed in the hands of the person appointed." Another candidate pleads as a qualification, that he has served as Watchman for Seven years, and at last election for Racket Master, he only lost the appointment by five votes. And the third publishes the caution "Collegians, Remember! All Promises that have been (*sic*) before the Vacancy, are Null and Void!!!" This gentleman was determined to secure, if possible, some of the good things going about, for, at this very same Annual Election, he issues another circular, "Having had many years experience in the Tavern Department and Eating House Business, I beg leave to offer myself for the Situation in the Public Kitchen, now about to become vacant." He, too, had an opponent, who had been engaged for nine years as a baker, and was, by

profession, a Cook. The Office of Skittle Master was also contested in that year; the holder of the place being opposed by one whose claim to the position seems to be that he had a wife and one child.

A WHISTLING SHOP IN THE FLEET, 1821.

They made themselves merry enough in the Fleet, as we read in Egan's "Life in London," where Jerry Hawthorn, and Corinthian Tom, visit Bob Logic, who was detained in the Fleet. Among other places there, they went to a Whistling Shop—of which the brothers Robert and George Cruikshank have given a faithful representation. Here at a table, screened off from the draught of the door we see, Tom, Jerry, and the unfortunate Logic, whilst the other frequenters of the place are excellently depicted. Spirits were not allowed in the prison, under any circumstances, other than by the doctor's order; but it is needless to say, the regulation was a dead letter. Of course it was not sold openly, but there were rooms, known to the initiated where it could be procured. It was never asked for, and if it were the applicant would not have received it, but if you whistled, it would be at once forthcoming.

Says Logic to his Corinthian friends, "'In the evening I will introduce you both to my friend the *Haberdasher*. He is a good *whistler*; and his shop always abounds with some prime articles which you will like to look at.' The TRIO was again complete; and a fine dinner, which the CORINTHIAN had previously ordered from a Coffee house, improved their feelings: a glass or two of wine made them as gay as larks; and a *hint* from JERRY to LOGIC about the *Whistler*, brought them into the shop of the latter in a *twinkling*. HAWTHORN, with great surprise, said, 'Where are we? this is no *haberdasher's*. It is a ——' 'No *nosing*, JERRY,' replied LOGIC, with a grin. 'You are wrong. The man is a dealer in *tape*.'" [151]

There was a class in the Fleet, who acted, as far as in their power lay, up to the Epicurean "*dum vivimus vivamus*," and among them the prison, however inconvenient it might have been, was made the best of, and the door of the Cupboard which contained the skeleton was shut as far as it would go. We have an exemplification of this in Robert Cruikshank's water colour drawing of "The Evening after a Mock Election in the Fleet Prison," June, 1835. In this drawing, which I have simply outlined (see previous page), we get a graphic glimpse at the uproarious fun that obtained among a certain set. The gradations in Society of this singular mixture is well shown in the following key to the picture:

1. Bennett the Candidate.
2. Mr. Fellowes of the Crown P. H. Fleet Street.
3. Mr. Houston, *alias* Jack in the Green.
4. Mr. Perkins, *alias* Harlequin Billy (Architect), who tried to sink a shaft at Spithead to supply the Navy with Water.
5. Mr. Shackleford (Linen Draper).
6. Mr. Bennett, the Watchman.
7. Geo. Weston, Esqr. (Banker, of the Boro').
8. Mr. Hutchinson (Dr. at Liverpool).
9. L. Goldsmith, Esqre.
10. Mr. Thompson (Irishman).
11. Robert Barnjum *alias* Rough Robin (Hammersmith Ghost).
12. Robert Ball, *alias* Manchester Bob (wore a Murderer's Cap).
13. Captain Wilde, R.N.
14. Mr. Hales, the Cook.
15. Mr. Walker.
16. Captain McDonnough, 11th Hussars (real gentleman).
17. Mr. Halliday (Manchester Merchant).
18. Harry Holt the Prize Fighter.
19. Captain Penniment (Trading Vessel, Yorkshire).
20. Mr. Palmer, Cutler to Geo. III., near the Haymarket Theatre.
21. Mr. Scrivener (Landlord of the Tap).
22. Captain Oliver, Smuggler and Tapster. Capias, £117,000.
23. Mr. Goldsbury, *alias* Jailsbury, driver of omnibus all round the Fleet.
24. Mr. George Kent.

As a souvenir of the talented Isaac Robert Cruikshank, I append a facsimile of his autograph, which was written in the Parlour, No. 16, Hall, in the Fleet Prison, June 24, 1842. His method of utilizing the blot of Ink is unique.

The remaining Notices of the Fleet must be taken as they come, as far as possible, chronologically—and first of all let us look at the enormous quantity of people who were imprisoned for debt. In the *Mirror*, No. 615, vol. xxii. July 20, 1833, is a cutting from the *Times*: "By the return of persons imprisoned for debt in 1832, in England and Wales, just printed by order of the House of Commons, it appears that the gross number was 16,470: of whom

maintained themselves 4,093, so that three fourths of the whole were too poor to provide themselves with bread."

The terrible destitution to which some prisoners were reduced is shown in an extract from the *Morning Herald* of August 12, 1833.

> "*Guild hall.* A Gentleman complained that the Overseers of St. Bride's had refused to relieve a distressed prisoner in the Fleet. The Prisoner was Mr. Timothy Sheldvake, who had been well known for his skill in treating deformities of the body. He once kept his carriage, and obtained £4,000 a year by his practice, but he was now quite destitute. He was eighty years of Age, and of that temper that he would rather starve than make a complaint. When applicant saw him he had actually fasted forty-eight hours. St. Bride's Parish had assisted the unfortunate Gentleman, but they denied that he was legally entitled to such relief. The Applicant contended that, as the Prison was in St. Bride's parish, and was rated at £70 a year, St. Bride's was bound to afford casual relief to those within the walls of the prison, and to recover it from the respective parishes to which those who have been relieved belonged.

AUTOGRAPH DONE AT THE PARLOUR NO 1, PALAIS DE LA FLETE, THIS 24 DAY JUNE.

> "The Vestry Clerk said, relief must be given out of the County rate.
>
> "Sir C. Marshall said he would take time to consider the Point, but he thought a sufficient relief should be afforded out of the County rate."

FOOTNOTES

[149] "*Memoirs of the Right Villanous John Hall*," &c.

[150] See next page.

[151] A cant word for gin.

CHAPTER XXV.

IN a Return of the number of persons in the several Gaols of England, confined for Debt, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, May 13, 1835, we have an "Account of the Number of Persons confined for Debt in the Fleet Prison during the following Years:

	1830	1831	1832	1833	1834
Number confined	742	700	884	746	769
Number charged in Execution	105	136	134	126	156

And the amount of the debt and costs for which each party was so charged varied from £2 to £18,017.

I look in vain in the *Times* for the paragraph to which the Warden alludes in the following letter:

> "The Warden presents his compliments to the Editor of the *Times*, and begs to state, that a paragraph having appeared in the paper of this morning, stating that the Fleet Prison is very full, and that a guinea and a half a week is paid for a single room, and that four, five, and six persons are obliged to live in a small apartment.
>
> "The Warden, not being aware of this, should it in any case exist, and which is contrary to the established regulations against any person so offending, the prison not being so full as in former years, there being considerably less, on an average, than two prisoners to each Room, and being also exceedingly healthy.
>
> "The Warden has also to add, that the rest of the paragraph relating to the Fleet is totally without foundation.
>
> "Fleet Prison, March 7, 1836."

In the outside sheet of the *Times*, February 21, 1838, occurs the following advertisement: "ONE HUNDRED POUNDS REWARD.—Escape.—ESCAPED from the Fleet Prison, on the evening of Wednesday the 14th day of February instant. ALFRED MORRIS, late of 22 Dean Street, Tooley Street, Southwark. The said Alfred Morris is about 30 years of Age, about 5 feet 6 inches high, dark complexion, and of a Jewish Caste, prominent Nose, somewhat flat pointed, dark, irregular whiskers, stout figure, and rather bow legged," &c., &c.

Anent this escape, the *Times* of February 16th has a paragraph such as we can hardly imagine ever could have appeared in a paper so steady and sober, as the *Times* now is: "THE WARDEN OF THE FLEET—(From a Correspondent). Yesterday a gentleman of some misfortune and of great appearance, for he wore a wig, moustaches, and a Spanish Cloak, was introduced as an inmate of Brown's Hotel, so called from the Warden having a license to sell wines, beer, and ale to his prisoners, through the 'patent never ending always improving Juddery spigot and fawcet tap,' &c. In about half an hour the said bewhiskered gentleman leaves cloak, wig, and moustaches in the room of a Mister Abrahams, a prisoner, and walks quietly out, very politely bidding the turnkey 'good morning.' At night the excellent crier of the Prison, Mr. Ellis, made the galleries echo, and the rooms re-echo, with his sometimes very cheering voice (when he announces to those who wish such things as a discharge, for it is not all who do), in calling, *altissimo voce*, 'Mr. Alfred Morrison! Mr. Alfred Morrison! Mr. Alfred Morrison!' but as no Mr. Alfred Morrison answered to the interesting call, every room was searched in the due performance of the crier's duty, but no Mr. Alfred Morrison was to be found. And the Worthy and excellent warder, the keeper of so many others in, is himself let in to the tune of £2,600; some say more, none say less.

> 'Go it, ye cripples! crutches are cheap!
> W. Brown is no longer asleep!'"

In a leading article in the *Times* of November 13, 1838, upon juvenile crime, and the incitors thereto, we read the following: "The Traders in crime do not wholly confine their seductions to the young; they often find apt scholars among the unfortunates of riper years, especially in the *debtor's prison*. Mr. Wakefield[152] says he knows many such victims; and he particularizes one 'Who was not indeed executed, because he took poison the night before he was to have been executed, who told me he had been, (and who I firmly believe was) first incited to crime when a Prisoner in the *Fleet* for debt. The crime into which he was seduced was that of passing forged

Bank of England Notes. He was a Man of very showy appearance, and he had been a Captain in the Army; a man of good family. He said this crime was first suggested to him by persons who were Prisoners in the Fleet; but he afterwards discovered, having been a Prisoner there more than once, that one of a gang of Utterers of forged Notes lived constantly in the *Fleet*, and for no other purpose but that of inducing reckless young men of good appearance, who could easily pass notes, to take Notes from them, and to dispose of them in transactions. I could hardly believe that that was true, and I got some inquiries to be made for the person whom he had pointed out to me as one of a Gang, and I found that that person was constantly in the *Fleet*. The Gang committed a robbery upon a Bank in Cornwall, and they were entirely broken up, and from that time forth the Person who had resided in the *Fleet* disappeared, though he was not one of the persons convicted, or suspected of that particular Crime. I never heard of him since, but the inquiries which I then made, convinced me that it was a fact that one of the Gang of what are termed 'family men,' that is, rich thieves and receivers of stolen goods, did reside continually in the *Fleet*, for the purpose of seducing young men into the commission of Crime. He was in and out of the Prison, but a Prisoner on a friendly arrest."

The time was coming, when imprisonment for debt was to be abolished. An Act of 1 & 2 Vict. cap. 110 had already abolished Arrest on Mesne Process in Civil Actions, so that no prisoners could be committed to the Fleet from the Courts of Chancery, Exchequer, and Common Pleas, and the Debtors and Bankrupts might as well be in the Queen's Bench. The Demolition of the Fleet was therefore confidently anticipated, as we find by the following paragraph from the *Times*, March 3, 1841. "Removal of Prisoners. On Saturday a deputation from the Woods and Forests, attended by the Marshal, visited the Queen's Bench Prison, preparatory to moving over the Debtors from the Fleet, which prison is about to be pulled down. By this arrangement the Country will save about £15,000 per annum, besides getting rid of an ugly object, and room being made for other contemplated improvements. It is supposed the Judges will find some difficulty in removing the Prisoners from the Fleet by Habeas Corpus, and that a short Bill will be necessary for that purpose. The expenses of the Queen's Bench Prison in its present profitless employment, is about £30,000 per annum to the Country."

This announcement was slightly premature, for the Act for its demolition (5 & 6 Victoriæ, cap. 22) was not passed until May 31, 1842. The Prisoners objected to the Transfer to the Queen's Bench, preferring their comparative liberty as they were, to the more stringent rules of the other prison: one clause in the new Act being: "And be it enacted, That after the passing of this Act, no Prisoner in the Queen's Prison shall be allowed to send for, or to have any Beer, Ale, Victuals or other Food, or to send for, have or use any Bedding, Linen, or other Things, except such as shall be allowed to be brought by them respectively under such Rules, to be made in the Manner directed by this Act, as may be reasonable and expedient to prevent Extravagance and Luxury, and for enforcing due Order and Discipline within the Prison."

I have before me the Original Subscription list of a scheme of

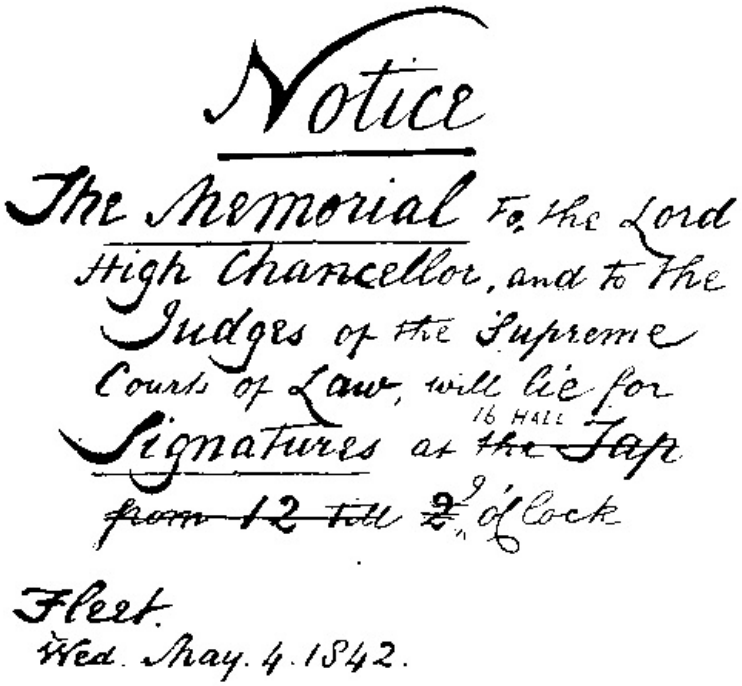
"Resistance

to

The Abolition of the Fleet Prison.

April 9th, 1842."

The author of the Letter of "Fleta to the Lords, calling upon them individually to Oppose the Bill *for transferring the Debtors in the Fleet* to the Queen's Prison, respectfully calls upon all Parties interested in an *Opposition to the said Bill*, to render him such pecuniary assistance in forwarding his Object, as may be consistent with their Views or Convenience." A list of Subscriptions follows, but although 25/- was promised, only 15/- appears to be paid. They held meetings, a notice calling one of which is facsimiled; but it was of no avail, and they had to go.



Memorial Notice

One Philip Ball, a Chancery Prisoner, composed

THE LAST DAYS OF THE FLEET!

A melancholy Chaunt,

Written by a COLLEGIAN, *on the occasion of the Queen's Prison Bill receiving the Royal Assent.*

Air. 'The Fine Old English Gentleman.'

1

I'll sing to you a bran new song
Made by my simple pate,
About the end of the good old Fleet,
Which on us now shuts its gate.
It has kept confin'd the choicest lads
That e'er together met—
Of merry, jolly, rattling dogs,
A regular slap up set.
Of jovial Fleet prisoners,
All of the present day.

2

This good old pris'n in every room
Contains a merry soul,
Who for his doings out of doors
Is now drop't 'in the hole.'
But surely this is better far
Than your simple plodding way,
Get deep in debt, go through the Court,
And whitewash it all away.
Like a jovial Fleet prisoner,
All of the present day.

3

Such right good hearts are rarely found,
As round me now I see;
With such, I'm 'most inclined to say,
Hang liberty for me.
For T——y, S——y, V——h,
In spirits who excel?
How could we better live than here,
Where friendship weaves her spell?
'Mongst jovial Fleet prisoners,
All of the present day.

4

To racquets, skittles, whistling shops,
We must soon say farewell;
The Queen's assent to her prison bill
Has rung their funeral knell;
And Bennett, Gray, and Andrew too
Must close their welcome doors,
For sing song and tape spinning now,
This damn'd new Act all floors,
For the jovial Fleet prisoner,
All of the present day.

5

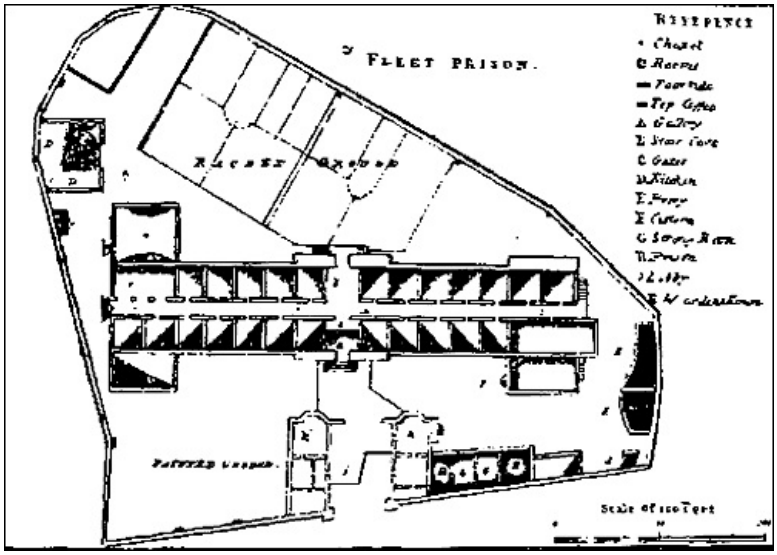
But to her gracious Majesty
You'll long be loyal and true,
Although this latest act of hers
Must be felt by some of you.
Speed through the Court, or compromise
Like gallant Captain T——h,
Or else you'll soon be sent to grieve
Your guts out in the Bench.
All melancholy prisoners[153]
Unlike those of the present day.

Much, however, as the prisoners might grieve, it was of no use kicking against an Act of Parliament, and those prisoners who did not take advantage of the Insolvent Debtors Act, were transferred to the Queen's Prison, which in its turn ceased to be a debtor's prison, and was used by Military offenders, until it was sold on Oct. 30, 1879, and pulled down in that and the following year. Now, legally speaking, there is no imprisonment for debt, but people are only committed for Contempt of Court.

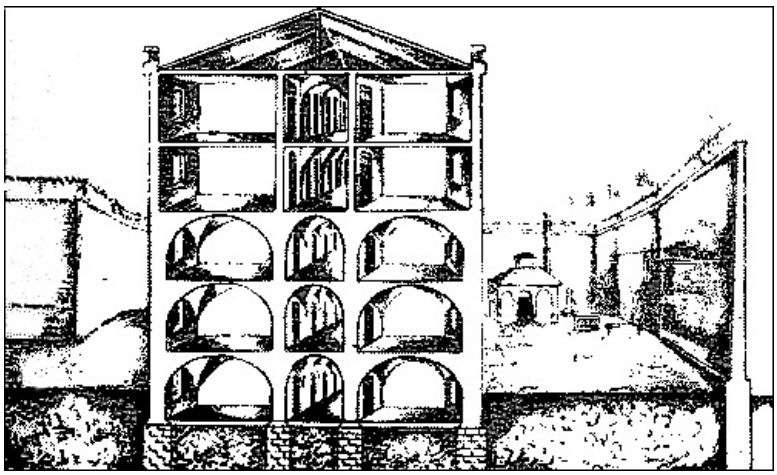
The Commissioners of Woods and Forests invited Tenders for the site and buildings of the late Fleet Prison, the estate of which contained above One Acre, with a frontage of about 251 feet, towards Farringdon Street, and a depth of about 230 feet. The tenders were returnable on Oct. 22, 1844, and the Corporation of the City of London became the owners of the property at a sum variously stated at £25,000 to £29,000, and the sale of its building materials commenced on April 5, 1845. Its exterior was not particularly attractive.

And so it passed away, and half the present inhabitants of London the Great do not even know its site, which was not finally cleared until 1846. As a guide to those who wish to know its locality I may mention that the CONGREGATIONAL MEMORIAL HALL AND LIBRARY, in Farringdon Street, stands on a portion of its site.

FARRINGDON STREET AND THE FLEET PRISON.

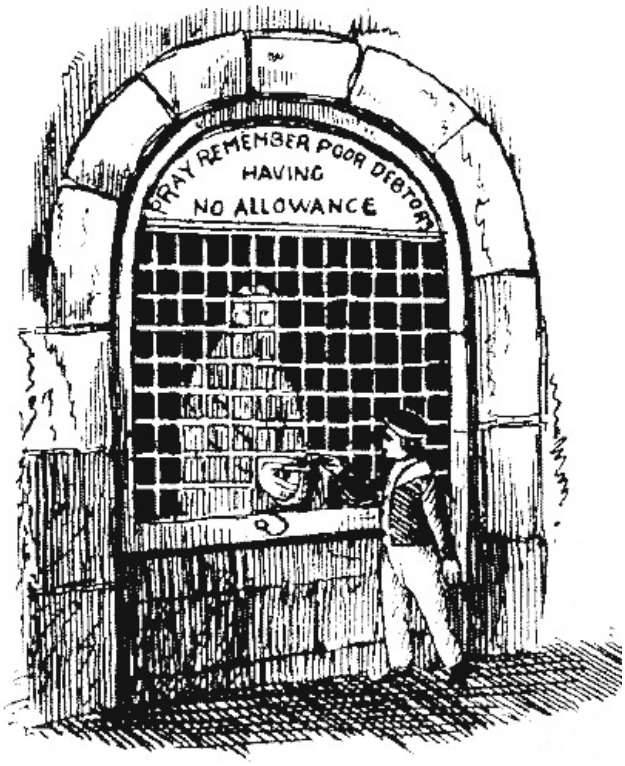


GROUND PLAN OF FLEET PRISON.



SECTION OF THE PRISON.

Before quitting the subject of the Fleet prison I cannot help referring to "the grate." Like Ludgate, it had a room open to the street, but furnished with a strong iron grating, behind which sat a prisoner, who called the attention of the passers-by monotonously chanting, "Pray Remember the poor Prisoners." A box was presented for the reception of contributions, but very little money was thus obtained.



EXTERIOR OF THE GRATE.

The begging grate was served by poor prisoners who had to swear that they were not worth £5 in the world. He was then entitled to share the contents of the begging box, and also be a partaker of the charities and donations to the Prison, which amounted to the magnificent sum of £39 19s., besides meat, coals, and bread.

Prisoners of all sorts and conditions met here, on one common basis, one of the last of any mark being Richard Oastler, who was the leader of the Ten Hours' Bill Movement, and from this prison he issued a series of "Fleet Papers" about Free Trade, Factories Acts, and the Amalgamation of the Prisons. He died in 1861, and a memorial to him was erected at Leeds.

Footnotes

[152] Evidence of Mr. Wakefield before Parliamentary Committee of 1837.

[153] When the prisoners were removed there were two who had been incarcerated upwards of thirty years, and were in the Queen's prison in 1845.

Fleet Marriages.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THERE is no doubt that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Marriage laws, as we now understand them, were somewhat lax, and it is possible that it was so long before that time, for in Edward VI.'s time an Act was passed (2 and 3 Ed. VI., c. 21, s. 3) entitled "An Act to take away all positive laws made against marriage of priests." Section 3 provides that it shall not "give any liberty to any person to marry without asking in the church, or without any ceremony being appointed by the order prescribed and set forth in the book intituled "*The Book of Common Prayer, and administration of the Sacraments*, &c." Mary, of course, repealed this Act, and it was revived and made perpetual by 1 Jas. 1. c. 25, s. 50.

It was only after the Council of Trent, that the offices of the Church were considered indispensable, for that Council decreed that a priest, and two witnesses were necessary for the proper celebration of the Nuptial tie. Still, the law of England, like the law of Scotland, allowed the taking of a woman as wife before witnesses, and acknowledging her position, which constituted at common law a good and lawful marriage, which could not be annulled by the Ecclesiastical Court. That many such took place among the Puritans and Sectarians of the time of Charles I. and the Commonwealth is undoubted, for it needed an Act of Parliament (12 Chas. II. c. 33) to render such marriages legal. This enacted "That all marriages had, or solemnized, in any of his Majesty's dominions since the first day of *May*, in the year of our Lord, one thousand six hundred forty and two, before any justice of the Peace, or reputed justice of the Peace of *England*, or *Wales*, or other his Majesty's dominions, ... shall be, and shall be adjudged, esteemed, and taken to be, and to have been of the same, and no other force or effect, as if such marriages had been had, and solemnized, according to the rites and ceremonies established, or used in the Church or kingdom of *England*; any law, custom, or usage to the contrary thereof notwithstanding."

This short synopsis of the Marriage law in England is necessary, in order to understand the subject of Fleet Marriages, which, however, were not all disreputable. The Fleet, as we have seen, had a Chapel of its own; and in old times, a Chaplain—so that Marriages might well be celebrated there, in as proper and dignified a manner as elsewhere. And, we must bear in mind that early in the seventeenth century, the prisoners were of a very different stamp to those of the latter half of the eighteenth century, until the demolition of the prison. Therefore we see no impropriety in the first Marriage known on record—which is that of Mr. Geo. Lester, then a prisoner in the Fleet, to a woman of fortune one Mistress Babbington. This is mentioned in a letter of September, 1613, from Alderman Lowe to Lady Hicks, and may be found in the Lansdowne MSS. 93-17. He writes: "Now I am to enform you that an ancyentt acquayntence of y^{e} and myne is yesterday marryed in the Fleete, one Mr. George Lester, and hath maryed M^{ris} Babbington, M^{r} Thomas Fanshawe mother in lawe. Itt is sayd she is a woman of goode wealthe, so as nowe the man wyll be able to lyve and mayntayne hymself in pryson, for hether unto he hath byne in poor estate. I praye God he be nott encoryged by his marige to do as becher doth, I meane to troble his frynds in lawe, but I hope he wyll have a better conscyence and more honestye than the other men hathe."

Towards the middle of the seventeenth century clandestine, and irregular marriage was prevalent, and it is easily accounted for. A public marriage had come to be a very expensive affair. There was a festival, which lasted several days, during which open house had to be kept; there were the Marriage Settlements, presents, pin money, music, and what not—so that the binding of their Children in the holy Estate of Matrimony was a serious matter to parents; who probably preferred giving the young couple the money that otherwise would go in useless waste and profusion. So they used to get married quietly: a custom which Pepys reprobates in the marriage of the daughter of Sir William Penn to Mr. Anthony Lowther. "No friends, but two or three relations of his and hers." The bride was married in "palterly clothes, and nothing new but a bracelet that her servant had given her." And he further says, remarking on the meanness of the whole affair, "One wonder I observed to day, that there was no musique in the morning to call up our new married people, which is very mean, methinks."

Misson, who visited England in the reign of William III., speaks of these private marriages. "The Ordinary ones, as I said before, are generally incognito. The *Bridegroom*, that is to say, the

Husband that is to be, and the *Bride*, who is the Wife that is to be, conducted by their Father and Mother, or by those that serve them in their room, and accompany'd by two Bride men, and two Bride Maids, go early in the Morning with a Licence in their Pocket, and call up Mr. Curate and his Clerk, tell them their Business; are marry'd with a low Voice, and the Doors shut; tip the Minister a Guinea, and the Clerk a Crown; steal softly out, one one way, and t'other another, either on Foot or in Coaches; go different Ways to some Tavern at a Distance from their own Lodgings, or to the House of some trusty Friend, there have a good Dinner, and return Home at Night as quietly as Lambs. If the Drums and Fiddles have notice of it, they will be sure to be with them by Day Break, making a horrible Racket, till they have got the Pence; and, which is worst of all, the whole Murder will come out."

This senseless custom survives, in a modified degree, in our times, when on the marriage of a journeyman butcher, his companions treat him to a performance of the "Marrow bones and Cleavers," and also in the case of marriage of persons in a superior station of life, in the playing, on the Organ, of a Wedding March.

The oldest entry of a Marriage in those Registers of the Fleet which have been preserved is A.D. 1674, and there is nothing to lead us to imagine that it was more irregular than that of Mistress Babbington; on the contrary, it is extremely probable that, previously, prisoners were married in their chapel, with the orthodox publication of banns, and by their own Chaplain. But marriages were performed without licence or banns in many churches, which claimed to be *peculiars*, and exempt from the Visitation of the Ordinary: as St. James', Duke's Place, now pulled down, denied the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London because the Mayor, Commonalty, and Citizens of London, were Lords of the Manor, and Patrons of the Church: but the Rector found that the Ecclesiastical Law was stronger than he, and that its arm was long and powerful, and the Rev. Adam Elliott was suspended (Feb. 17, 1686) for three years, *ab officio et beneficio*, for having married, or having suffered persons to be married, at the said Church, without banns or licence. He did not suffer the full term of his punishment, for he managed to get re-instated on May 28, 1687, and began his old practices the very next day.

The Chapel of Holy Trinity, Minories, pleaded privilege, on the ground that it was a Crown living, and as much a *peculiar* as Westminster Abbey, or the Deanery of Windsor; while the Chapels of the Tower and the Savoy sought exemption because they were Royal Chapels, and therefore the Bishop had no jurisdiction over them. Besides these, there were very many more chapels scattered over the Metropolis where irregular marriages were performed, a list of about ninety having been preserved.

These Marriages so increased that it was found necessary to legislate about them, and, in 1689, an Act (6 and 7 Will. III. c. 6, s. 24) was passed making it compulsory, under a penalty of One Hundred pounds, for every parson to keep an accurate register of births, Marriages, and deaths. Another Act was passed in 1696 (17 and 18 Will. III. c. 35, s. 2-3) whereby a penalty of £100 was imposed on any Clergyman who married, or permitted another to marry, couples, otherwise than by banns or licence. This was enforced by another Act in 1711 (10 Anne c. 19, s. 176), which confirmed the penalty, and moreover, this section shows that irregular marriages were getting to be common in prisons, for it provides that "if any gaoler, or keeper of any prison, shall be privy to, or knowingly permit any marriage to be solemnized in his said prison, before publication of banns, or licence obtained, as aforesaid, he shall, for every such offence, forfeit the sum of one hundred pounds," &c.

Of course, this did not stop the practice, although it prevented Marriages in the Fleet Chapel. Yet there were the *Rules*, and real and pretended clergymen for many years plied their illicit vocation with impunity.

But there seems to have been some compunctions of conscience even among this graceless lot, for one of them, Walter Wyatt, has left behind him, in a pocket-book dated 1736, the following moral reflections.

"Give to every man his due, and learn y^{e} way of Truth. This advice cannot be taken by those that are concerned in y^{e} Fleet Marriages; not so much as y^{e} Priest can do y^{e} thing y^{t} is just and right there, unless he designs to starve. For by lying, bullying, and swearing, to extort money from the silly and unwary people, you advance your business and gets y^{e} pelf, which always wastes like snow in sun shiney day."

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The Marrying in the Fleet is the beginning of eternal woe."

"If a clark or plyer [154] tells a lye, you must vouch it to be as true as y^{e} Gospel; and if disputed, you must affirm with an oath to y^{e} truth of a downright damnable falsehood—Virtus laudatur et alget."

That this custom of swearing prevailed at Fleet Marriages is borne out by contemporary evidence. The *Grub Street Journal* July 20, 1732, says: "On Saturday last, a Fleet Parson was convicted before Sir Ric. Brocas of forty three-oaths (on the information of a plyer for weddings there) for which a warrant was granted to levy £4 6s. on the goods of the said parson; but, upon application to his Worship, he was pleased to remit 1s. per oath; upon which the plyer swore he would swear no more against any man upon the like occasion, finding he got nothing by it."

And an anonymous Newspaper cutting dated 1734, says, "On Monday last, a tall Clergyman, who plies about the Fleet Gate for Weddings, was convicted before Sir Richard Brocas of swearing 42 Oaths, and ordered to pay £4 2s."

There were regular Chaplains attached to the Fleet Prison to serve the Chapel there, and, as we have seen, the Warder made every prisoner pay 2d. or 4d. weekly, towards his stipend. Latterly the Chaplaincy was offered to a Curate of St. Bride's Church—as is now done in the case of Bridewell.

A complete list of Chaplains cannot be given, because all documents were destroyed when the Fleet was burnt by the Lord George Gordon rioters; but Mr. Burn in his "History of Fleet Marriages" (a book to which I am much indebted, for it has all but exhausted the subject) gives the names of some, as Haincks in 1698; Robert Elborough, 1702; John Taylor, 1714; Dr. Franks, 1728; 1797, Weldon Champneys; 1815, John Manley Wood, and John Jones: and in 1834, the date of the publication of Mr. Burn's book, the Rev. Richard Edwards, was the Chaplain.

These Clergymen, of course, married couples according to Law, and probably used the Chapel for that purpose. We know that it was so used, for the *Original Weekly Journal* of Sept. 26, 1719, says: "One Mrs. Anne Leigh, an heiress of £200 per annum and £6000 ready cash, having been decoyed away from her friends in Buckinghamshire, and married at the Fleet chapel against her consent; we hear the Lord Chief Justice Pratt hath issued out his warrant for apprehending the authors of this contrivance, who have used the young lady so barbarously, that she now lyes speechless."

But it is not of the Chaplains I would speak, but of the irregular Clergy, or Lay men, who performed the Marriages. One thing they all agreed in, the wearing of the Cassock, Gown, and Bands. They would never have been believed in had they not. The accompanying illustration[155] gives an excellent idea of the Fleet Parson, and it is taken from an Engraving entitled "*The* Funeral *of Poor* Mary Hackabout, *attended by the Sisterhood of Drury Lane*" and it has a footnote calling attention to the "wry-necked" parson. "*The famous* Couple Beggar *in the Fleet, a* Wretch, *who there screens himself from the Justice due to his* Villanies, *and daily repeats them.*"

The lady holds a sprig of Rosemary in her hand, which in polite society was always presented by a servant, when the funeral cortége was about to leave the house:—In this case, a dish full of sprigs is placed upon the floor, and a child is playing with them. The Mourners carried them to the grave, and then threw them in, as we now do, flowers and wreaths of the same.

Perhaps one of the earliest notices of these irregular Fleet Parsons is in the first year of Queen Anne's reign, very soon after she came to the throne, as it appears, in the Registry of the Consistory Court,—that on June 4, 1702, the Bishop of London visited the common prison called the Fleet, London, and took Master Jeronimus Alley, clerk, to task, requiring him to exhibit to the Chancellor of the Diocese, before the 24th June instant, his letters of ordination, "and his Lords^{p} ordered him not to marry or perform any divine Office in y^{e} Chapell in y^{e} ffleet, or any place within y^{e} Dioces untill he has exhibited y^{e} same. Mr. Alley soon afterwards fled from y^{e} s^{d} Prison, and never exhibited his orders."

But if Alley fled, there were others left, and the practice of marrying without banns, or licence, brought forth the act of the 10th Anne, before quoted. It was probably before this, but certainly during her reign, that the following letter was written, which also is in the Bishop's Registry.

> "Sir,—I think it my Duty to God and y^e Queen to acquaint you with y^{e} illegal practices of y^{e} Ministers and Clark in y^{e} Fleet Chappell for marrying Clandestinely as they do

som weeks fifty or sixty couple. The Ministers that are there are as follows, Mr. Robt. Elborough, he is an ancient man and is master of y^{e} Chapple, and marries but very few now without Banns or Licence, but under a colour doth allow his Clark to do w^{t} he pleases, his name is Barth. Basset. There is there also one Mr. James Colton a Clergyman, he lives in Leather Lane next door to y^{e} Coach and horses, he hath bin there these four years to marry, but no Prisoner, he marries in Coffee houses, in his own house, and in and about y^{e} Fleet gate, and all y^{e} Rules over, not excepting any part of City and Suburbs. This Clark Basset aforesaid registers wherever Colton marries in y^{e} Fleet Register and gives him Certificates. Colton had a living in Essex till y^{e} Bishop of London deprived him for this and other ill Practices. There is also one Mr. Nehemiah Rogers, he is a prisoner but goes at larg to his P. Living in Essex, and all places else, he is a very wicked man, as lives for drinking, whoring, and swearing, he has struck and boxed y^{e} bridegroom in y^{e} Chapple, and damned like any com'on souldier; he marries both within and without y^{e} Chapple like his brother Colton. There was one Mr. Alley; he was a Prisoner, and y^{e} benefit of weddings, but is gone to some other preferm^{t}. The abovesaid Basset rents y^{e} sellers of y^{e} Fleet, and pays for y^{t} and two watchmen 100 and £20 p. ann. but he him pays but £20 per ann. for y^{e} Clergy pay all y^{e} rest, and if they do not, they are threatened to be confined or outed. This Clark hath bin sworn in D^{rs} Commons not to marry any without Banns or Licence, unless it be such poor people as are recommended by y^{e} Justices in case of a big belly, but have married since many hundreds, as I and many can testifie who are confined Prisoners. The Chief days to marry are Sundays, Tuesdays, and Saturdays, but evry day more or less. The Clark Basset keeps a Register book, altho he told y^{e} Bishop of London he had none; he also antidates as he pleases, as you may see when you look over y^{e} Registers; he hath another at his son's; he does what he pleases, and maintains a great family by these ill practices. £200 p. ann. he hath at least. The Ministers and Clark bribe one Mr. Shirley, I think him to be Collector for y^{e} Oueen's Taxes. I hope, Sir, you will excuse me for concealing my name, hoping y^{t} you will inspect into these base practices.

For
Dr. Newton Chancell^{rs}
to My Lord of London
at D^{rs} Commons
These."

Footnotes

[154] These were touts, like those white-aproned gentry who used to infest Doctors' Commons, telling people where they could procure Marriage licences—only these "plyers" touted for the parsons.

[155] See previous page.

CHAPTER XXVII.

BUT the Act of 1712 failed to stop these illicit marriages, for one John Mottram was tried at Guildhall, before Lord Chief Justice Parker, found guilty, was suspended from his ministerial functions for three years, and was fined £200. Of this case there is an account in the *Weekly Journal*, February 13, 1717. "John Mottram, Clerk, was tryed for solemnizing clandestine and unlawful marriages in the Fleet Prison, and of keeping fraudulent Registers, whereby it appear'd that he had dated several marriages several years before he enter'd into orders, and that he kept no less than nine several Registers at different houses, which contained many scandalous frauds. It also appeared, that a marriage was antedated because of pregnancy; and, to impose on the ignorant, there was written underneath this scrap of barbarous Latin, "Hi non nupti fuerunt, sed obtinerunt Testimonium propter timorem parentum," meaning that they were not marryed, but obtained this private Register for fear of their parents. It rather appeared from evidence, that these sham marriages were solemnized in a room in the Fleet they call the Lord Mayor's Chappel, which was furnished with chairs, cushions, and proper conveniences, and that a coal heaver was generally set to ply at the door to recommend all couples that had a mind to be marry'd, to the Prisoner, who would do it cheaper than any body. It further appear'd that one of the Registers only, contained above 2,200 entrys which had been made within the last year."

Pennant, writing at the end of the last century, gives us his personal reminiscences of Fleet Parsons ("Some Account of London," 3rd ed., 1793, p. 232), "In walking along the street, in my youth, on the side next to the prison, I have often been tempted by the question, *Sir, will you be pleased to walk in and be married?* Along this most lawless space was hung up the frequent sign of a male and female hand conjoined, with, *Marriages performed within*, written beneath. A dirty fellow invited you in. The parson was seen walking before his shop; a squalid profligate figure, clad in a tattered plaid night gown, with a fiery face, and ready to couple you for a dram of gin, or roll of tobacco."

Burn gives a list of Fleet Parsons, first of whom comes John Gaynam, who married from about 1709 to 1740. He rejoiced in a peculiar soubriquet, as will be seen by the following. In the trial of Ruth Woodward for bigamy, in 1737, he is alluded to by a witness:—

> "*John Hall.* I saw her married at the Fleet to Robert Holmes; 'twas at the Hand and Pen, a barber's shop.
>
> "*Counsel.* And is it not a wedding shop too?
>
> "*Hall.* Yes, I don't know the parson's name, but 'twas a man that once belonged to Creed Church, a very, lusty, jolly man.
>
> "*Counsel.* Because there's a complaint lodged in a proper court, against a Fleet Parson, whom they call The Bishop of Hell."

Some verses, however, absolutely settle the title upon Gaynam.

"THE FLEET PARSON

A Tale,

BY ANTI MATRIM.... OF LONDON.

Some errant Wags, as stories tell,
Assert the gloomy prince of Hell
In th' infernal Region has
His Officers of all degrees,
Whose business is to propagate
On Earth, the interests of his State,
Ecclesiastics too are thought
To be subservient to him brought;
And, as their zeal his service prize,
He never fails to make them rise
As Dignitaries in his Church,
But often leaves them in the lurch;
For, if their Fear surmount their Zeal,
(They) quickly his resentment feel;
(Are) sure to meet with dire disgrace,
(And) warmer Zealots fill their place.
(To) make these Vacancies repleat,
He borrows P——ns from the Fleet,
Long has old G——m with applause
Obeyed his Master's cursed Laws,
Readily practis'd every Vice,
And equall'd e'en the Devil for device.
His faithful Services such favour gain'd
That he, first B——p was of H—l ordain'd.
Dan. W——e (rose) next in Degree,
And he obtained the Deanery.
Ned Ash——ll then came into grace,
And he supplied th' Archdeacon's place,
But, as the Devil when his ends
Are served, he leaves his truest friends;
So fared it with this wretched three,
Who lost their Lives and Dignity."

There is mention of Gaynam in two trials for bigamy—first in chronological order coming that of Robert Hussey.

"*Dr. Gainham.* The 9th of September, 1733, I married a couple at the Rainbow Coffee House, the corner of Fleet Ditch, and entered the marriage in my register, as fair a register as any Church in England can produce. I showed it last night to the foreman of the jury, and my Lord Mayor's Clerk, at the London Punch House.

"*Counsel.* Are you not ashamed to come and own a clandestine marriage in the face of a Court of Justice?

"*Dr. Gainham* (bowing). *Video meliora, deteriora sequor.*

"*Counsel.* You are on your oath, I ask you whether you never enter marriages in that book, when there is no marriage at all?

"*Dr. Gainham.* I never did in my life. I page my book so, that it cannot be altered."

The other case is from the trial of Edmund Dangerfield in 1736.

"*Dr. Gainham.* I don't know the prisoner. I did marry a man and woman of these names. Here, this is a true register: *Edwd Dangerfield of St. Mary Newington Butts, Batchelor, to Arabella Fast*. When I marry at any house, I always set it down, for I carry one of the books in my pocket, and when I go home I put it in my great book.

"*Court.* Do you never make any alteration?

"*Gainham.* Never, my Lord. These two were married at Mrs. Ball's, at the Hand and Pen, by the Fleet Prison, and my name is to her book.

"*Counsel.* 'Tis strange you should not remember the prisoner.

"*Gainham.* Can I remember persons? I have married 2000 since that time."

We have heard of Alley, who married from 1681 to 1707; of Elborrow, 1698 to 1702; and of Mottram, who flourished between 1709 and 1725.

Of Daniel Wigmore, the Dean of the previous poem, we know little except that he married between 1723 and 1754. The *Daily Post* of May 26, 1738, says of him, "Yesterday Daniel Wigmore, one of the parsons noted for marrying people within the Rules of the Fleet, was convicted before the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, of selling spirituous liquors contrary to law."

The third dignitary, Edward Ashwell, the Archdeacon, was notorious, and some of his misdeeds are recounted in a letter from Wm. Hodgson, to his brother, a Clergyman. (Lansdowne MSS., 841, fol. 123).

June 21, 1725.

"Reverend Sir,—There was lately, at Southam, in Warwickshire, one Edward Ashwell, who, in my absence, got possession of our School, and preach'd in Several Churches in this Neighbourhood. I take the Liberty to Inform you, Since I hear he is at Kettering, that he is A Most Notorious Rogue and Impostor. I have now certificates on my hand, of his having two wives alive at this present time, and he was very Near Marrying the third, in this Town, but the fear of a prosecution upon the Discovery of the flaming and Scandalous Immoralities of his life, forc'd him away from us. In a short time Afterwards, in a Village not far from us, he attempted to Ravish a Woman, but was prevented by a Soldier then in the house. I Can assure you he is in no Orders, tho' the Audacious Villain preaches when he Can get a pulpit. I have a whole packet of Letters by Me, all tending to the Same Character, which I think Exceeds, for variety of all Manner of Inormous practices, what Can be Charg'd upon the very Scum of Mankind. The Accounts are from persons of integrity and known Reputation.

"I prevented him preaching one Day at Brawnstin, Mr. Somes's parish. It would be A very kind and Christian Office to give some information among the Clergy, that they may not be Impos'd upon by him, particularly to Mr. Heyrick, for I Married Mr. Allicock's sister of Loddington. I know you will pardon this trouble if the fellow be amongst you.

"I am, your affectionate Brother,

W. Hodgson."

We hear occasionally of this "professional beauty" in the Registers, and give two or three examples:—

"June 21st, 1740. John Jones of Eaton Sutton in Bedfordshire, and Mary Steward of the same, came to Wood's in Fleet Lane about six o'clock in the morning. Mr. Ashwell and self had been down the Market. Wood called him, and I went with him there, found the said man and woman, offer'd Mr. Ashwell 3 shilling to marry him; he would not, so he swore very much, and would have knocked him down, but for me. was not married. took this memorandum that they might not Pretend afterwards they was married, and not Register'd."

"July 15 (1744). Came a man and wooman to the Green Canister, he was an Irishman and Taylor to bee married. Gave Mr. Ashwell 2 : 6. but would have 5s., went away, and abused Mr. Ashwell very much, told him he was a Thief, and I was worse. Took this account because should not say they was married, and not Registered. N.B. The Fellow said Mr. Warren was his relation."

It was the custom for these Fleet Parsons to carry with them pocket books, in which were roughly entered the names of the Married Couple, and, occasionally, if they wished their names to be kept secret, and paid, of course, a proportionate fee, their full names were not transcribed into the larger Register, as the following shows:—

"September y^{e} 11th, 1745. Edwd. —— and Elizabeth —— were married, and would not let me know their names, y^{e} man said he was a weaver, and liv'd in Bandy leg walk in the Borough.

Pr. E. Ashwell."

He was so famous that he was honoured with an obituary notice in the press, *vide* the *General Advertiser*, Jan. 15, 1746. "On Monday last, died, in the Rules of the Fleet, Doctor Ashwell, the most noted operator in Marriages since the death of the never-to-be-forgotten Dr. Gaynam."

John Floud, or Flood, did a good business from the time of Queen Anne, 1709, to Dec. 31, 1729, when he died within the Rules of the Fleet. He was a very queer Character, keeping a mistress who played jackall to his lion, and touted for couples to be married. He died suddenly whilst celebrating a wedding. Yet even he seems to have had some compunction as to his course of life, like Walter Wyatt: for, in one of his pocket books is the following verse.

"I have Liv'd so long I am weary
Living,
I wish I was dead, and my sins
forgiven:
Then I am sure to go to heaven,
Although I liv'd at sixes and
sevens."

John Floud had a peculiarity; if ever he wanted to make memoranda, which were not convenient to introduce into his ordinary Register he partially used the Greek character, as being "Caviar to the general," thus:

"13 Jan. 1728. μαρρ: τhρηη ςhιλλινγς & ονη δ^{o} χηρτι*f*ιχατη. Τhη βριδηγροομ ωας τhη βροτhηρ o*f* τhη μημοραβλη Jονατhαν Wιλδ Εχηχυτηδ ατ Tyβυρν."

Marr.: three shillings and one ditto Certificate. The bridegroom was the brother of the memorable Jonathan Wild, Executed at Tyburn.

"8 Mar. 1728. Νοτhινγ βυτ α νοτη o*f* hανδ *f*ορ τhις μαρριαγη whιχh νηυηρ ωας φαιδ."

Nothing but a note of hand for this marriage, which never was paid.

"27 August, 1728. μαρριαγη τhιρτηην σhιλλινγς & ονη & ςιχπηνχη χηρτι*f*ιχατη. τhη ωομαν νοτ χαρινγ το βη μαρριηδ ιν τhη Φληητ I hαδ τhημ μαρριηδ ατ μρ Βρownς ατ μρ Hαρριςονς ιν φειδγηονη χουρτ ιν τhη Oλδ Βαιλην ατ *f*ουρ αχλοχχ ιν τhη μορνινγ."

Marriage thirteen shillings, and one and sixpence Certificate. The woman not caring to be married in the Fleet, I had them married at Mr. Brown's, at Mr. Harrison's in Pidgeone Court, in the Old Bailey at four a'clock in the morning.

"12 Aug. 1729. φδ *f*ιυη ςhιλλινγς φηρ τοταλ. N.B. Τhη 28th o*f* Αφριλ 1736 μρς Βηλλ χαμη ανδ Εαρνηςτλy ιντρηατηδ μη το Ερας Τhη μαρριαγη ουτ o*f* τhη βοοχ for τhατ hηρ hυςβανδ hαδ βηατ ανδ αβυςηδ hηρ ιν α βαρβαρους μαννηρ.... I μαδη hηρ βηλειυη I διδ ςο, *f*ορ whιχh I hαδ hαλ*f* α γυινηα, ανδ ςhη ατ τhη ςαμη τιμη δηλιυηρηδ μη υφ hηρ χηρτι*f*ιχατη. Νο φηρςον φρηςηντ (Αχχορδινγ το hηρ δηςιρη)."

Paid five shillings per total. N.B.—The 28th of April, 1736, Mrs. Bell came and earnestly intreated me to erase the Marriage out of the book, for that her husband had beat and abused her in a barbarous manner.... I made her believe I did so, for which I had half a guinea, and she, at the same time, delivered me up her certificate. No person present (according to her desire).

Perhaps, next to Dr. Gaynam, the bishop, no one did more business in Fleet Marriages than Walter Wyatt. We have already read some of his moral apothegms. He made a large income out of his Marriages, and, looking at the value of money, which was at least three times that of the present time, his profession was highly lucrative. Take one Month for instance. October, 1748—

Oct. y^{e}	1	at home	2	11	6	abroad	nil.
	2	"	5	13	6	"	11 6
	3	"	2	15	6	"	16 0
	4	"		12	3	"	10 0
	5	"	1	5	6	"	nil.
	6	"		10	6	"	1 4 6
	7	"	1	8	6	"	nil.

						Total ...	17 19 3
From	8th	to	15th	"	...	17	6 6
"	15th	"	21st	"	...	10	0 6
"	21st	"	27th	"	...	6	17 0
"	28th	"	31st	"	...	5	9 6
							£57 12 9

Or nearly £700 a year—equal to about £2,500 of our Currency. No wonder then, that when he died, March 13, 1750, he left a will behind him, which was duly proved; and by it he left his children in ward to his brother, and different legacies to his family—to his married daughter Mary, he bequeathed five pounds, and his estate at Oxford.

He describes himself, on the cover of one of the Registers, as "Mr. Wyatt, c, is removed from the Two Sawyers, the Corner of Fleet Lane (with all the Register Books), to the Hand and Pen near Holborn Bridge, where Marriages are solemnized without imposition." But there seem to have been other establishments which traded on Wyatt's sign, probably because he was so prosperous. Joshua Lilley kept the Hand and Pen near Fleet Bridge. Matthias Wilson's house of the same sign stood on the bank of the Fleet ditch; John Burnford had a similar name for his house at the foot of Ludgate Hill, and Mrs. Balls also had an establishment with the same title.

He seems to have attempted to invade Parson Keith's *peculiar* in May Fair, or it may only be an Advertising ruse on the part of that exceedingly keen practitioner, in order to bring his name prominently before the public. At all events there is an Advertisement dated August 27, 1748. "The Fleet Parson (who very modestly calls himself Reverend), married at the Fleet, in Mr. L——

yl's house, Mrs. C——k's, at the Naked Boy, and for Mr. W——yt, the Fleet Parson. And to shew that he is now only for Mr. W——yt, the Fleet Parson's deputy, the said W——yt told one in May Fair, that he intended to set up in opposition to Mr. Keith, and send goods to furnish the house, and maintains him and the men who ply some days at the Fleet, and at other times at May Fair. But not to speak of the men, if he himself was not a Fleet Parson, he could never stand in Piccadilly, and run after Coaches and foot people in so shameful a manner, and tell them Mr. Keith's house is shut up, and there is no Chapel but theirs; and to other people he says, their Fleet Chapel is Mr. Keith's Chapel, and this he hath said in the hearing of Mr. Keith's clerk, and it is known to most of the people about May Fair, and likewise Mr. Keith appeals to the generality of people about the Fleet and May Fair, for proof of Mr. Reverend's being only W——yts, the Fleet parson's deputy."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OF James Starkey, who married from 1718 to 1730, very little is known, except that he had run away to Scotland, and could not be produced when wanted at a trial in the Old Bailey. And also of Robert Cuthbert, 1723-30—very little is known except through the medium of his pocket books, and they recount his love of horse flesh, and the prices he paid for his mounts.

Of Thomas Crawford, 1723-1748, we hear something from a letter in that curious *mélange* of News, the *Grub Street Journal*, June 10, 1736:—

> "Gentlemen, Having frequently heard of the many abominable practises of the Fleet, I had the Curiosity, May 23, to take a view of the place, as I accidently was walking by.
>
> "The first thing observable was one J—— L——, [156] by trade a Carpenter (whose brother, it is said, keeps the sign of the B—— and G——r), [157] cursing, swearing, and raving in the street in the time of divine service, with a mob of people about him, calling one of his fraternity (J. E.), [158] a Plyer for Weddings, an informing rogue, for informing against one of their Ministers for profane cursing and swearing, for which offence he paid three pounds odd money: the hearing of which pleased me very well, since I could find one in that notorious place which had some spark of grace left; as was manifested by the dislike he shewed to the person that was guilty of the profanation of God's sacred name.
>
> "When the mob was dispersed, I walked about some small time, and saw a person, exceeding well-dress'd in flower'd morning gown, a band, hat and wig, who appeared so clean that I took him for some worthy divine, who might have, accidentally, be making the same remarks as myself; but upon inquiry was surpris'd at being assured he was one T—— C—— [159] a watchmaker, who goes in a Minister's dress, personating a Clergyman, and taking upon him the name of Doctor, to the scandal of the Sacred function. He may be seen any time at the Bull and Garter, or the Great Hand, and Pen and Star, with these words under written. '*The old and true Register*' near the Rainbow Coffee House.—T. S."

Peter Symson, who married 1731-1754, describes himself in his handbill, as "educated at the University of Cambridge, and late Chaplain to the Earl of Rothes."

His "Chapel" was at the Old Red Hand and Mitre, three doors from Fleet Lane, and next door to the White Swan. As were most of his fellows, he was witness in a bigamy trial in 1751. He was asked,

> "Why did you marry them without license?
>
> "*Symson.* Because somebody would have done it, if I had not. I was ordained in Grosvenor Square Chapel by the Bishop of Winchester—the Bishop of Lincoln. Can't say I am a prisoner in the Fleet. Am 43 years old. Never had a benefice in my life. I have had little petty Curacies about £20 or £30 per year. I don't do it for lucre or gain.
>
> "*Court.* You might have exposed your person had you gone on the highway, but you'd do less prejudice to your country a great deal. You are a nuisance to the public; and the gentlemen of the jury, it is to be hoped, will give but little credit to you."

When Keith of Mayfair was committed to the Fleet, Symson married for him from 1750 to 1754.

There was another Fleet Parson named William Dare, 1732-1746, who had such a large connection that he employed a Curate to help him; but then, his marriages were 150 to 200 a month.

James Lando is somewhat shrouded in mystery, for it is possible that he was identical with the gentleman who is described at the end of one of the Fleet Registers as "John Lando, a French Minister, in Church Street, Soho, opposite att a French pastry or nasty Cook's. His Landlord's name is Jinkstone, a dirty chandler's shop: he is to be heard of in the first flower next the skye."

He really was a "Chaplain of the Fleet," for he was Chaplain on board H.B.M.S. *Falkland* from May 29, 1744, to Jan. 17, 1746. He had a house in Half Moon Court, the first house joining to Ludgate, which was at the Corner of the Old Bailey. This he called St. John's Chapel, and here he not only solemnized marriages, but taught Latin and French three times a week.

An advertisement of his states that "Marriages with a Licence, Certificate, and a Crown Stamp, at a Guinea, at the New Chapel, next door to the China Shop, near Fleet Bridge, London, by a

regular bred Clergyman, and not by a Fleet Parson, as is insinuated in the public papers; and that the town may be freed (from) mistakes, no Clergyman being a prisoner in the Rules of the Fleet dare marry; and to obviate all doubts, this Chapel is not in the verge of the Fleet, but kept by a Gentleman who was lately on board one of his Majesty's men of war, and likewise has gloriously distinguished himself in defence of his King and Country, and is above committing those little mean actions that some men impose on people, being determined to have everything conducted with the utmost decency and regularity, such as shall be always supported in law and equity."

Burn gives a list of others who married in the Fleet, but does not pretend it to be exhaustive. Still, the list is a long one.

Bates ...	
Becket, John	1748
Buckler, Sam.	1732 to 1751
Brayfield, Sam.	1754
Bynes, Benj.	1698 to 1711
Barrett, Mich.	1717 " 1738
Colton, James	1681 to 1721
Callow, Jos.	1752
Clayton	1720
Colteman	1688
Draper	1689 to 1716
Denevan, Francis	1747 " 1754
Davis, Wm.	1718
Evans, John	1689 to 1729
Evans, Ed.	1727
Farren, John	1688
Gower, Henry	1689 to 1718
Hodgkins, Thos.	1674 " 1728
Hanson, Anthony	1731 " 1732
Jones, John	1718 " 1725
Loveday, Wm.	1750
Morton	1720
Marston, Edward	1713 to 1714
Marshall, John	1750
Murry, D.	1719
Nodes	1753
Oswald	1712
Oglesby	1728 to 1740
Privavaul	
Patterson	1732
Ryder, Thos.	1722 to 1743
Roberts, Edward	1698
Reynolds, E.	1749
Rogers, Nehemiah	1700 to 1703
Shadwell, Ralph	1733 " 1734
Shaw, James	1723
Sindrey, Richard	1722 to 1740
Stacy, Edmund	1719
Shelburn,	1722 to

Anthony	1737
Stainton, John	1730
Simpson, Anthony	1726 to 1754
Stanhope, Walter	1711
Standly	1747 to 1750
Skinner, Nathaniel	1716
Town, I.	1754
Tomkings	1740
Tarrant, John	1688
" "	1742 to 1750
Townsend, Jacob	1754
Vice, Jo.	1689 to 1713
Wagstaffe, James	1689 " 1729
Wise, J.	1709
Wilkinson	1740
Williams, Wm.	
Walker, Clem.	1732 to 1735
Wodmore, Isaac	1752

Which of these is the one referred to in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for April 1809? "I should be much obliged to you also, Mr. Urban, if you, or any of your numerous and intelligent correspondents, could acquaint me with the name of a tall black clergyman, who used to solicit the commands of the votaries of Hymen at the door of a public-house known by the sign of the Cock in Fleet Market, previously to the Marriage Act."

Before dismissing the subject of Fleet parsons, reference must be made to the Rev. Alexander Keith of Mayfair Chapel, who has a claim to be noticed here, as he was an inhabitant of the Fleet. The Chapel in Mayfair was built somewhere about 1736, to meet the wants of the increasing neighbourhood, which was then becoming fashionable, after the abolition of the fair in Brook-field, and the first incumbent was the Rev. Alexander Keith, who claimed to have been ordained priest by the Bishop of Norwich, acting on Letters Dimissory from the Bishop of London, in June, 1731. He also stated that at the time of his appointment as preacher in the Chapel, he was Reader at the Roll's Chapel. He did a roaring trade in irregular marriages, and it was at Mayfair Chapel that the Duke of Hamilton espoused the youngest of the beautiful Miss Gunnings, "with a ring of the bed curtain, at half an hour past twelve at night."

He had also a private chapel of his own, as we read in an advertisement of his, April, 1750. "Several persons belonging to Churches and Chapels, together with many others, supposing the Marriages at May Fair New Chapel to be detrimental to their interest, have made it their Business to rave and clamour, but in such a Manner, as not to deserve to Answer, because every Thing they have said tends to expose their own Ignorance and Malice, in the Opinion of People of good Sense and Understanding. We are informed, that Mrs. Keith's Corpse was removed from her Husband's House in May Fair, the Middle of October last, to an Apothecary's in South Audley Street, where she lies in a Room hung with Mourning, and is to continue there till Mr. Keith can attend her Funeral! The way to Mr. Keith's Chapel is thro' Piccadilly, by the End of St. James's Street and down Clarges Street, and turn on the Left Hand. The Marriages (together with a Licence on a Five Shilling Stamp, and Certificate) are carried on as usual, any time till Four in the Afternoon, by another regular Clergyman, at Mr. Keith's little Chapel in May Fair, near Hyde Park Corner, opposite the great Chapel, and within ten Yards of it. There is a Porch at the Door like a Country Church Porch."

His wife died in 1749 whilst he was in the Fleet prison, which accounts for his inability to attend her funeral. Why he was imprisoned is as follows. By advertising, and other means, his Marriages at Mayfair were very popular, and interfered greatly with the Vested Interests of the neighbouring clergy, one of whom, Dr. Trebeck, rector of St. George's, Hanover Square, brought a lawsuit against him, in the Ecclesiastical Court. He defended himself, but unsuccessfully, for a sentence of excommunication was promulgated against him on Oct. 27, 1742.

Two could play at that game, so Keith excommunicated, at his Chapel in Mayfair, his bishop, the judge who condemned him, and the prosecutor, Dr. Trebeck, but none of them seem to have been any the worse for the operation. Such, however, was not the case with Keith, for, on Jan. 24, 1743, a decree was issued for his apprehension. This did not take effect till April, 1743, when he was committed to the Fleet; the marriages at Mayfair being continued, as we have seen, by Symson and Denevan.

He lay in the Fleet about fifteen years, and in 1753, when Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act was being discussed, he thence issued a pamphlet of thirty-two pages, with his portrait attached, entitled, "Observations on the Act for preventing Clandestine Marriages." In it he gives what seems to be "a plain, unvarnished tale" of Fleet Marriages. "As I have married many thousands, and, consequently, have on those occasions seen the humour of the lower class of people, I have often asked the married pair how long they had been acquainted; they would reply, some more, some less, but the generality did not exceed the acquaintance of a week, some only of a day, half-a-day, &c.... Another inconveniency which will arise from this Act will be, that the expence of being married will be so great, that few of the lower class of people can afford; for I have often heard a Flete parson say, that many have come to be married when they have but half-a-crown in their pockets, and sixpence to buy a pot of beer, and for which they have pawned some of their cloaths.... I remember once on a time, I was at a public-house at Radcliffe, which was then full of Sailors and their girls, there was fiddling, piping, jigging, and eating; at length one of the tars starts up, and says, 'D—m ye, Jack, I'll be married just now; I will have my partner, and'.... The joke took, and in less than two hours ten couple set out for the Flete. I staid their return. They returned in coaches; five women in each coach; the tars, some running before, others riding on the coach box, and others behind. The Cavalcade being over, the couples went up into an upper room, where they concluded the evening with great jollity. The next time I went that way, I called on my landlord and asked him concerning this marriage adventure; he first stared at me, but, recollecting, he said those things were so frequent, that he hardly took any notice of them; for, added he, it is a common thing, when a fleet comes in, to have two or three hundred marriages in a week's time, among the sailors."

The Marriage Act was passed, and came into force on March 26, 1754. On the 25th Sixty-one Couples were married at Mayfair Chapel.

It was a death blow to the Reverend Alexander, although he tried to laugh it off, if Horace Walpole may be believed. In a letter to George Montagu, Esqr. (June 11, 1753), he says: "I shall only tell you a *bon mot* of Keith's, the marriage broker, and conclude. 'G—d d—n the Bishops,' said he (I beg Miss Montagu's pardon), 'so they will hinder my marrying. Well, let 'em, but I'll be revenged: I'll buy two or three acres of ground, and by G—d, I'll under bury them all.'"

This may have been true, but it was mere bravado, for he appealed from his prison to the benevolent, as we see by the following advertisement. "*To the Compassionate.* By the late Marriage Act, the Rev. Mr. Keith, from a great Degree of Affluence, is reduc'd to such a deplorable State of Misery in the Fleet Prison, as is much better to be conceiv'd than related, having scarce any other thing than Bread and Water to subsist on. It is to be hoped he will be deemed truly undeserving such a Fate, when the Publick are assured, that not foreseeing such an unhappy Stroke of Fortune, as the late Act, he yearly expended almost his whole Income (which amounted to several Hundred Pounds per Annum) in relieving not only single distress'd Persons, but even whole Families of wretched Objects of Compassion. This can be attested by several Persons of the strictest Character and Reputation, as well as by Numbers who experienced his Bounty. Mr. Keith's present calamitous Situation renders him perhaps as great an Object of Charity himself, as all Circumstances consider'd, as ever in his better Days partook of his own Assistance, or that of others equally compassionate; and is indeed sufficient to awaken Humanity in the most uncharitable. Any Gentleman or Lady may be satisfied of the above by applying to Mr. Brooke, Engraver, facing Water Lane, Fleet Street, by whom Donations from the Publick will be received for the Use of Mr. Keith."

Footnotes

[156] Joshua Lilly, who kept one of the Hand and Pen houses, and said that he had been appointed Registrar of Marriages, by the Lord Chancellor, and had paid £1,000 for the post. He did not marry people, but kept presumable Clergymen to do so. He is mentioned several times in the Registers and Pocket-books. Once, at all events, he was in danger of the judgment seat, as Ashwell writes in one of his pocket-books: "N.B. On Sunday, November y^{e} 6, 1740, at y^{e} hour of 9, in my house declared that, if he had not come home out of y^{e} country, being fled for punishment, having Cut of his hair (to prevent being known), y^{t} y^{e} indictment for marrying James Hussey to Miss Henrietta Arnold, he had (been) ruin'd but y^{t} he swore it off and y^{e} attorney promis'd to defend him, and it cost him only a treat of 10/; had I staid, says the s^{d} Joshua Lilley, where I was, viz. ——, the indictment would have stood good against me, but my taking y^{e} side of the prosecutor, y^{e} young ladies, I have got safe off." In a Register is a notice relating to him. "June y^{e} 13th, 1744. Whereas one Joshua Lilley, being a noted man for having more marriages at his house than the generality of y^{e} people could have, he the said Joshua Lilley keeping several plyars, as they are call'd, to gett these weddings, I have put his marriages down in a separate book, but findend ill-convenience arise thereby, fro' this 13th instant, do insert it wth y^{e} rest." And one of his handbills describes him as 'I. Lilley, at y^{e} Hand and Pen, next door to the china shop, Fleet Bridge, London, will be perform'd the solemnization of marriages by a gentleman regularly bred att one of our Universities, and lawfully ordain'd according to the institutions of the Church of England, and is ready to wait on any person in town or countrey."

[157] This was John Lilley, who kept a public-house, called the Bull and Garter. In 1717 he was found guilty, and fined five pounds, for acting as Clerk at a Fleet

Marriage. He was a turnkey at the Fleet Prison, and in his house he had a room for solemnizing marriages—which he called a Chapel—issuing certificates bearing the City Arms, and purporting to be the Lord Mayor's Certificates.

[158] Probably John Evans, who married from 1689 to 1729, both at the King's Bench and Fleet.

[159] I am unable to identify these initials.

A FLEET WEDDING.

CHAPTER XXIX.

KEITH'S written description of a Fleet Marriage is graphic, but a contemporary engraving brings it even more vividly before us. This was published Oct. 20, 1747, and gives an excellent view of the Fleet Market as it then was. It is called "A FLEET WEDDING, Between a brisk young Sailor, and his Landlady's Daughter at Rederiff."

"Scarce had the Coach discharg'd it's trusty Fare,
But gaping Crouds surround th' amorous Pair;
The busy Plyers make a mighty Stir!
And whisp'ring cry, d'ye want the Parson, Sir?
Pray step this way—just to the PEN IN HAND
The Doctor's ready there at your Command:
This way (another cries) Sir, I declare
The true and ancient Register is Here.
Th' alarmed Parsons quickly hear the Din!
And haste with soothing words t'invite them in:
In this Confusion jostled to and fro,
Th' inamour'd Couple knows not where to go:
Till slow advancing from the Coache's Side
Th' experienc'd Matron came (an artful Guide)
She led the way without regarding either,
And the first parson spliced 'em both together."

THE SAILOR'S FLEET WEDDING ENTERTAINMENT.

The Context to this is a companion Engraving of "THE SAILOR'S FLEET WEDDING ENTERTAINMENT," which most aptly illustrates Keith's description, but the poetry attached to it will scarcely bear modern reproduction.

But, if a poetical account of a Fleet Wedding is needed, it may be found in "THE BUNTER'S WEDDING."

"Good people attend, I'll discover,
A Wedding that happen'd of late,

I cannot tell why we should smother,
The weddings of poor more than great;
'Twixt Ben of the Borough so pretty,
Who carries a basket, 'tis said,
And dainty plump Kent street fair Kitty,
A Coney Wool Cutter by trade.

The guests were all quickly invited,
Ben order'd the dinner by noon,
And Kitty was highly delighted,
They obey'd the glad summons so soon:
An ox cheek was order'd for dinner,
With plenty of porter and gin,
Ben swore on the oath of a sinner,
Nothing should be wanting in him.

Joe the sandman, and Bessy the bunter,
We hear from St. Giles's did prance,
Dick the fiddler, and Sally the Mumper,
Brought Levi the Jew for to dance.
Tom the Chanter he quickly was present,
And squinting black Molly likewise,
With Billy the Dustman quite pleasant,
And Nell with no nose and sore eyes.

Ned the drover was also invited,
Unto this gay wedding to come,
From Smithfield he came quite delighted,
Before that the market was done.
And Fanny the pretty match maker,
A sister to young bunting Bess,
She wished the devil might take her
If she was not one of the guests.

Dolly the rag woman's daughter,
From Tyburn road she did stride,
And Jenny the quilter came after
Whose nose it stood all of one side;
There was Roger the chimney sweeper,
No soot he would gather that day,
But, because he would look the compleater,
His soot bag and brush threw away.

There was bandy leg'd sheep's head Susan
We hear from Field Lane she did hie,
And draggle tail'd Pat with no shoes on,
Who pins and laces doth cry;
Ralph the grinder he set by his barrow,
As soon as he heard of the news,
And swore he would be there to-morrow,
Atho' he'd no heels to his shoes.

Sam the grubber, he having had warning,
His wallet and broom down did lay,
And early attended next morning,
The bride for to give away;
And Peggy the mop yarn spinner,
Her Cards and her wheel set aside,
And swore as she was a sinner,
She'd go and attire the bride.

Nan the tub woman out of
Whitechapel,
Was also invited to go,
And, as she was 'kin to the couple,
She swore she the stocking would
throw;
So having all gather'd together,
As they appointed to meet,
And being all birds of a feather,
They presently flocked to the Fleet.

But when at Fleet Bridge they
arrived,
The bridegroom was handing his
bride,
The sailors [*? plyers*] they all to them
drived,
Do you want a Parson? they cry'd;
But as they down Fleet Ditch did
prance,
What house shall we go to? says Ben,
Then Kitty, in raptures, made answer
Let's go to the Hand and the Pen.

Then into the house they did bundle,
The landlady shew'd them a room,
The landlord he roar'd out like
thunder,
The parson shall wait on you soon:
Then so eager he came for to fasten,
He staid not to fasten his hose,
A fat bellied ruddy fac'd parson,
That brandy had painted his nose.

But before (he) the couple did fasten
He look'd all around on the men,
My fee's half a crown, says the
parson,—
I freely will give it, says Ben:
Then Hymen he presently follow'd
And the happy knot being ty'd
The guests they whooped and
hollow'd,
All joys to the bridegroom and bride.

Like Malt horses home they all
pranced,
The bride she look'd not like the
same,
And thus thro' the City they danced;
But, when to the Borough they came,
The bride to look buxom endeavour'd,
The bridegroom as brisk as an eel;
With the marrow bones and cleavers,
The butchers they rang them a peal.

And, as they were homewards
advancing,
A-dancing, and singing of songs,
The rough music met them all
prancing,
With frying pans, shovels, and tongs:
Tin Canisters, salt boxes plenty,
With trotter bones beat by the boys,
And they being hollow and empty,
They made a most racketting noise.

Bowls, gridirons, platters, and ladles,
And pokers, tin kettles did bruise,
The noise, none to bear it was able,
The warming pans beat with old
shoes:
Such a rattling racketting uproar,
Had you but have heard it, no doubt,
All hell was broke loose you'd have
swore,

And the devils were running about.

The Mob they all hollow'd and shouted,
In the streets as they passed along,
The people to see how they scouted,
Together in clusters did throng;
They made all the noise they was able,
And thus they were ushered in,
But e'er they all sat down to table,
They each had a glass of old gin.

Dinner being decently ended,
The table was cleared with speed,
And they to be merry intended,
So strait did to dancing proceed;
But Harry the night man so jolly,
With madness he almost cry'd,
And all the night sat melancholy,
For he had a mind for the bride."

There are four more verses, but they are not worth transcribing—besides, there is a very good prose account of the doings at the Fleet, which, certainly, bears the impress of truth. It is in No. 270 of the *Grub Street Journal*, Feb. 27, 1735:—

> "Sir, There is a very great evil in this town, and of dangerous consequence to our sex, that has never been suppressed, to the great prejudice, and ruin, of many hundreds of young people, every year; which I beg some of your learned heads to consider of, and consult of proper ways and means to prevent for the future: I mean the ruinous marriages that are practised in the liberty of the *Fleet*, and thereabouts, by a sett of drunken, swearing parsons, with their Myrmidons that wear black coats, and pretend to be clerks, and registers to the Fleet. These ministers of wickedness ply about Ludgate Hill, pulling and forcing people to some pedling alehouse, or brandy shop, to be married, even on a sunday, stopping them as they go to church, and almost tearing their cloaths off their backs. To confirm the truth of these facts, I will give you a case or two, which lately happened:—
>
> "Since midsummer last, a young lady of birth and fortune, was deluded and forced from her friends, by the assistance of a very wicked, swearing parson, married to an atheistical wretch, whose life is a continual practice of all manner of vice and debauchery. And, since the ruin of my relation, another lady of my acquaintance had like to have been trapanned in the following manner:—
>
> "This lady had appointed to meet a gentlewoman at the Old Play-house in Drury Lane; but extraordinary business prevented her coming. Being alone, when the play was done, she bade a boy call a coach for the City. One drest like a gentleman helps her into it, and jumps in after her. 'Madam,' says he, 'this coach was called for me: and since the weather is so bad, and there is no other, I beg leave to bear you company; I am going into the City, and will set you down wherever you please.' The lady begged to be excused; but he bade the coachman drive on. Being come to Ludgate hill, he told her his sister, who waited his coming, but five doors up the Court, would go with her in two minutes. He went, and returned with his pretended sister, who asked her to step in one minute, and she would wait upon her in the coach.
>
> "Deluded with the assurance of having his sister's company, the poor lady foolishly followed her into the house, when, instantly, the sister vanish'd; and a tawny fellow in a black coat and black wig appeared. 'Madam, you are come in good time, the doctor was just a going.' 'The doctor,' says she, horribly frighted, fearing it was a madhouse; 'What has the doctor to do with me?' 'To marry you to that gentleman: the doctor has waited for you these three hours, and will be payed by you or the gentleman before you go.' 'That gentleman,' says she, recovering herself, 'is worthy a better fortune than mine.' And begged hard to be gone. But doctor Wryneck swore she shou'd be married; or, if she wou'd not, he would still have his fee, and register the marriage from that night. The lady, finding she could not escape without money or a pledge, told them she liked the gentleman so well, she would certainly meet him to-morrow night, and gave them a ring as a pledge: which, says she, 'was my mother's gift on her deathbed, injoining that if ever I married, it should be my wedding ring.' By which cunning contrivance, she was delivered from the black doctor, and his tawny crew.
>
> "Some time after this, I went with this lady, and her brother, in a coach to Ludgate Hill, in the day time, to see the manner of their picking up people to be married. As soon as our coach stopt near Fleet Bridge, up comes on of the Myrmidons. 'Madam,' says he, 'you want a parson.' 'Who are you?' says I. 'I am the clerk and register of the Fleet.' 'Show me the Chapel.' At which comes a second, desiring me to go along with him. Says he, 'That fellow will carry you to a pedling alehouse. Says a third, 'Go with me, he will carry you to a brandy shop.' In the interim, comes the doctor. 'Madam,' says he, 'I'll do

your jobb for you presently.' 'Well, gentlemen,' says I, 'since you can't agree, and I can't be married quietly, I'll put it off 'till another time,' so drove away."

Some of the stories of Fleet Marriages read like romances, yet they are all taken from contemporary accounts. Here, for instance, is a fact, scarcely to be believed nowadays:— "Jan. 5, 1742. On Tuesday last two Persons, one of Skinner Street, and the other of Webb's Square, Spittle Fields, exchang'd Wives, to whom they had been married upwards of twelve Years; and the same Day, to the Content of all Parties, the Marriages were consummated at the Fleet. Each Husband gave his Wife away to the other, and in the Evening had an Entertainment together."

Or this from the *Whitehall Evening Post*, July 24, 1739:— "On Tuesday last a Woman indifferently well dress'd came to the sign of the Bull and Garter, next Door to the Fleet Prison, and was there married to a Soldier; in the afternoon she came again, and would have been married to a Butcher, but that Parson who had married her in the Morning refused to marry her again, which put her to the Trouble of going a few Doors further, to another Parson, who had no Scruple."

Here is another story indicative of the Manners and Morals of those days:— Oct. 1739. "Last Week, a merry Widow, near Bethnal Green, having a pretty many Admirers, not to be over Cruel, she equally dispensed her Favours between two, who were the highest in her Esteem. The one, a Butcher, meeting the good Woman, took the Advantage of the others Absence, and pleaded his Cause so successfully, that they tuck'd up their Tails, trudg'd to the Fleet, and were tack'd together. Home they both jogg'd to their several habitations, the Bridegroom to his, and the Bride to her's. Soon after came another of her Admirers, an honest Weaver, who, upon hearing of the Melancholy News, had no more Life in him for some time than one of the Beams of his Loom; but, recovering himself a little from the Surprize he was seized with a sudden Delirium, swore his Loom should be his Gibbet, and he'd hang himself pendant at the End of his Garter, if he also was not tack'd to his comfortable Rib: The good Widow, considering that the Butcher had not bedded with her, and desirous of preventing Murder, consented, and away she jogg'd to be coupled to the Weaver. On their return home, to Bed they went, and the Butcher coming to see his dear Spouse, found her in Bed with the Weaver; upon which a Quarrel ensued, and the Butcher being the best Man, she left the Weaver and went to the Butcher, being willing to please them both, as well as she could."

CHAPTER XXX.

THERE are several instances of Committal to the Fleet for meddling with Marriages. One or two will suffice:— 1731. "Thursday, the Master of the Rolls committed a Clergyman to the Fleet for marrying a young Gentleman about 17 years of Age at Eaton School, and intitled to an Estate of £1500 per Annum, to a Servant Maid: and at the same time committed the person who gave her in Marriage. His Honour had some days since sent as Prisoner to the Fleet, the Person who pretended to be the Youth's Guardian, and who had given a Bond to indemnify the Parson."

1735. "Two Sisters were committed to the Fleet prison, by an order of the high Court of Chancery, for drawing a young fellow into marriage, he being a ward of the said Court."

Dec. 28, 1734. "Last Saturday Night Mr. D—— late Valet de Chambre to a certain Noble Lord near Soho Square, went away, as was suspected, with his Lordship's Niece, a young Lady not yet of Age, and a Coheiress to a very large Estate. It seems they took a Hackney Coach soon after they got out of Doors, and upon strict Enquiry, the Coachman was found out, who declared that he took a Gentleman and a Lady up at such a Place, and set them down at the Fleet, and by the Description he gave it appeared to be the two Lovers, who may therefore be supposed to have been married and bedded that Night. A Warrant was immediately obtained for apprehending the Supposed Bridegroom, and he was accordingly taken in Bed with his Lady, at a house in Queen Street near Guildhall, on Wednesday Morning last, and immediately carried to Poultry Compter, and the Lady was carried off by her Friends. In the Afternoon he was examined, and afterwards re-committed to the same Prison. So that it seems he is to suffer for endeavouring to get himself a *Rich Wife*, which is a Practice followed by all the young *Gentlemen* of *Quality* in England; but the Difference is, *That this young fellow has married, or endeavoured to marry an Heiress without the Consent of her Friends, whereas the other generally marry or endeavour to marry Heiresses without their own Consent.* It has since been found out that they were married by a Roman Catholic Priest."

There was a faint-hearted protest on the part of the Fleet authorities, against the Marriages, but I can find no attempt at prosecution, other than for marrying without a stamped licence, in spite of the following advertisement:—

> "September, 1743. WHEREAS the Methods hitherto taken to prevent clandestine Marriages at the Fleet have prov'd ineffectual, though legal Notice hath been given by the Warden of the Fleet to such of his Tenants in whose houses it is reputed such Marriages have been suffer'd, to quit the Possession thereof; therefore, and as such Warning cannot immediately have the desir'd Effect, this Publick Notice is given, that, whoever shall make it appear to the Warden's Satisfaction that any of his Prisoners, shall at any time hereafter clandestinely marry, or be, in any manner however, concern'd in any clandestine Marriage, or suffer such Marriages to be performed in his, hers, or their Houses, or Lodgings, such Person or Persons making such Discovery, shall receive a Guinea Reward from the Turnkey of the said Prison.
>
> "WILLIAM MANNING, Turnkey."

There were several people of fortune married by Fleet parsons *vide Grub Street Journal*, September 18, 1735, "Married yesterday Will Adams, Esqr., to Miss Eleanor Watkins, a beautiful young lady, with a fortune of £15,000." And in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 6, 1735, "Married the Lord Robert Montagu, to Mrs. Harriet Dunch of Whitehall, with a fortune of £15,000."

Somewhat of a curiosity is recorded in "Notes and Queries," 4 series, vol. xii. p. 295. "I have before me an engraved medal, bearing the following inscription, about which I should be glad of information. 'May y^{e} 3, 1761. Thos. Wisely Maried Sarah Boswell in the Fleet Prison.'" This, in all probability, was a half-crown with one side made smooth, and the above engraved upon it.

There is no doubt but that, with a duly stamped licence and until they were specially done away with by Lord Hardwicke's Act of 1753, these marriages were legal; still there is an instance recorded in the *General Evening Post*, June 27/29, 1745, in which a Fleet marriage was ruled to be illegal. "Yesterday came on a cause at Doctor's Commons, wherein the plaintiff brought his action against the defendant for pretending to be his wife. She, in her justification, pleaded a marriage at the Fleet the 6th of February, 1737, and produced a Fleet Certificate, which was not allowed as evidence. She likewise offered to produce the minister she pretended married them, but he being excommunicate for clandestine marriages, could not be received as a witness. The Court thereupon pronounced against the marriage, and condemned her in £28, the costs of the suit."

The Registers in which these marriages were entered have mostly had an eventful and chequered

career. Many have, doubtless, disappeared for ever, and it is extremely probable that some are in private hands, one being in the Bodleian Library. They were to be bought by any one interested in them, and the present collection cannot be considered as being at all perfect. We learn the adventures of some of them through the evidence of a Mrs. Olive, who produced one at a trial at Shrewsbury in 1794. This woman was originally a servant to Joshua Lilly, and used to "ply" or tout for him, and at his death married one Owens, who succeeded to one of Lilly's marriage houses, and who, probably, bought his Registers from his representatives. At this Trial she said: "My first husband was Thos. Owens. I had the Register Books of Fleet Marriages in my possession from my Marriage in 1761 till I went to America eleven years ago. I then sold them to Mr. Panton. My husband Owens died about 1773. My husband made a will. I had the possession of the books myself, as my husband had other business. I heard my husband say he purchased these books. He had a Marriage House in Fleet Lane. I used the books to grant certificates upon parish affairs."

After her Marriage with Olive she still made use of these Registers, for we read in an Advertisement that "All the original Register Books containing the marriages solemnized at the Fleet, May Fair, and the Mint, for upwards of one hundred years past, may be searched by applying to George Olive, at the Wheat Sheaf, in Nicholls Square, near Cripplegate. The great utility of these Collections prevents any encomiums."

About 1783 a Mr. Benjamin Panton bought of Mrs. Olive some five or six hundred of these books, weighing more than a ton, and used to produce them occasionally on trials at law, and they were always accepted as evidence.

At his death in 1805 he left these to his daughter, who still utilised them as her father had done, as a handbill shows. "All the original Register Books of the Marriages in the Fleet, May Fair, and Mint, are now in the possession of M. Panton (Register Keeper), No. 50, Houndsditch, by whom they are examined, and Certificates of Marriages granted."

In 1813 she sold them to a Mr. William Cox, who, in 1821, sold them to the Government for £260 6s. 6d., and the following letter shows us what became of them.

"WHITEHALL, *April* 25, 1821.

"SIR,—It having been judged expedient to purchase a set of books containing the original Entries of Marriages solemnized in the Fleet Prison, and Rules thereof, from the year 1686 to the year 1754. I have been honoured with his Majesty's commands to desire that you will receive the said books from Mr. Maule the Solicitor to the Treasury, and give him a receipt for the same, and deposit them in the Registry of the Consistory Court of London.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,
"Your most obedient humble Servant,

"SIDMOUTH.

"The Registrar of the Consistory Court of London, or his Deputy."

Here they remained until the abolition of the Court in 1840, by Act of Parliament, 3 and 4 Vic. cap. 92, when they were declared inadmissible as evidence in law. Sec. 6 says, "And be it enacted That all Registers and Records deposited in the General Register Office by virtue of this Act, except the Registers and Records of Baptisms and Marriages at *The Fleet*, and *King's Bench* Prisons, at *May Fair*, at the *Mint* in *Southwark*, and elsewhere, which were deposited in the Registry of the Bishop of *London* in the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Twenty One, as hereinafter mentioned, shall be deemed to be in legal Custody, and shall be receivable in Evidence in all Courts of Justice, subject to the Provisions hereinafter contained."

And Section 20 provides thus, "And be it enacted, That the several Registers and Records of Baptisms and Marriages performed at the Fleet" (&c., &c., as in Section 6) "shall be transferred from the said Registry to the Custody of the Registrar-General, who is hereby directed to receive the same for safe custody." And it recapitulates that they shall not be received as evidence at law.

They are kept at Somerset House, where they can be examined for a small fee. A great number of them are memorandum books, and Burn, when he examined them at Doctors Commons, in 1833, did not much like his job. "It is to be wished that they were better arranged and indexed. There are several very large indexes, which only requires a little time and attention to ascertain to what Registers they refer. The Pocket books also, might be bound together, and preserved from dust and dirt; and if Government would give about £300 these objects might be attained. It was a labour of many months to go through so many hundreds of dusty, dirty, and sometimes ragged books."

The entries in the pocket-books are quainter than those in the registries, as they are the first impressions, and the others are polished up. We find from them that it was not infrequent to antedate the Registers, and Lilley did so on one occasion, "there being a vacancy in the Book suitable to the time." And, again, "These wicked people came this day, Peter Oliver, of St. Olave's, carpenter, and Elizabeth Overton, would have a certificate dated in 1729, or would not be married if it was not to be dated to this time—went to Lilley's and was married."

Perhaps the most extraordinary entries in these books are those of two women going through the ceremony of marriage with each other—

"20 May, 1737. J^no Smith, Gent. of S^t James West^r Batch^r & Eliz. Huthall of S^t Giles's Sp^r at Wilsons. By y^e opinion after Matrimony, my Clark judg'd they were both women, if y^e person by name John Smith be a man, he's a little short fair thin man, not above 5 foot. After marriage I almost c'd prove y^m both women, the one was dress'd as a man, thin pale face, & wrinkled chin."

"1734 Dec. 15. John Mountford of S^t Ann's Sohoe, Taylor. B., Mary Cooper. Ditto. Sp. Suspected 2 Women, no Certif."

"1 Oct. 1747. John Ferren, Gent, Ser. of S^t Andrew's Holborn B^r and Deborah Nolan. D^o Sp^n. The supposed John Ferren was discovered after y^e Ceremonies were over, to be in person a woman."

There is one entry, "The Woman ran across Ludgate Hill in her shift." In the *Daily Journal* of November 8, 1725, a woman went to be married in that sole garment, at Ulcomb, in Kent; and in the Parish Register of Chiltern All Saints in October 17, 1714, it says: "The aforesaid Anne Sellwood was married in her Smock, without any clothes or head gier on." This was a vulgar error, but the idea in so acting was that the husband was not liable for any of his wife's pre-nuptial debts.

The candidates for matrimony were occasionally not over-honest, as— "Had a noise for foure hours about the Money." "N.B. Stole a Silver Spoon."" Stole my Cloathes Brush." "N.B. Married at a Barber's Shop next Wilsons viz., one Kerrils for half a Guinea, after which it was extorted out of my pocket, and for fear of my life delivered." "They behaved very vilely, and attempted to run away with M^rs Crooks Gold Ring."

But then, again, these Fleet parsons had customers of a higher grade, as "Dec. 1, 1716. Dan Paul, S^t James's, Capt^n in y^e Horse Guards."

"March y^e 4^th 1740. William—and Sarah—he dress'd in a gold waistcoat like an Officer, she a Beautifull young Lady with 2 fine diamond Rings, and a Black high Crown Hat and very well dressed. "

"Nov. y^e 24, 1733 att y^e Baptized hed Tavern to go to M^r Gibbs for to marry him in y^e countrey—Wife worth £18,000."

"Septr^5, 1744 Andrew Mills, Gent. of the Temple, & Charlotte Gail lairdy of S^t Mildred, Poultry at M^r Boyce's, King's head. N.B. One gentleman came first in a merry manner to make a bargain w^th the Minister for the marriage, and immediately came the parties themselves, disguising their dress by contrivances, particularly buttning up the coat, because the rich wastecoat should not be seen, &c."

The Church of England Marriage Service was generally used, but, in one instance, as shown by a pocket-book, it was somewhat modified, as when the ring is given the Trinity is not mentioned, but the words are altered to "from this time forth for evermore. Amen;" and when the couple promise to hold together "according to God's holy ordinance," it was rendered "according to law." There seems to have been but one example of the officiating Clergyman administering the Sacrament at a Marriage, and that was done by the Rev. W. Dan, who describes himself as "priest of the Church of England." >"October 2^nd 1743 John Figg, of S^t John's the Evang^s Gent. a Widower, and Rebecca Woodward, of Ditto, Spinster, at y^e same time gave her y^e Sacrament."

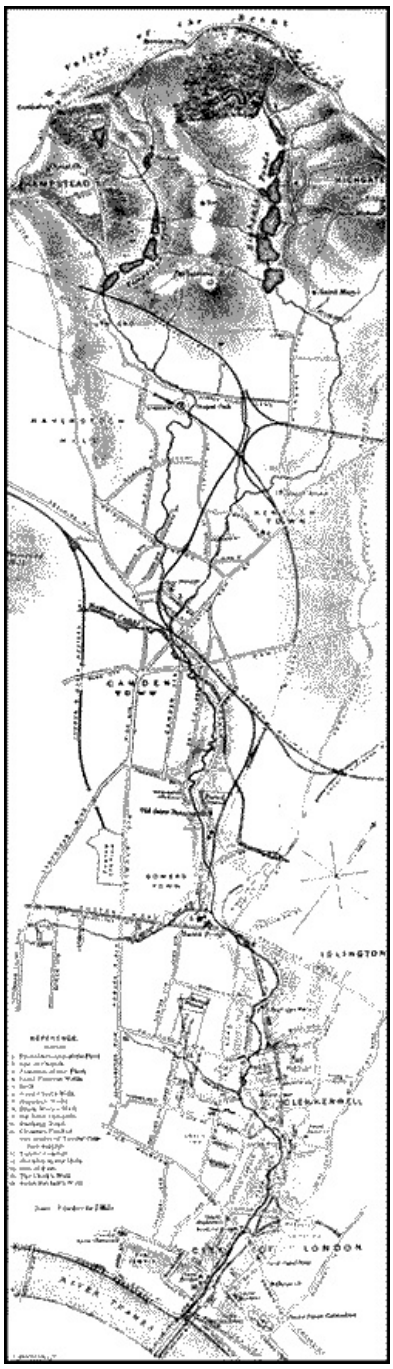
The Scandal of Fleet Marriages remained unchecked until 1753, when the Lord Chancellor brought forward and passed "An Act for the better preventing of clandestine marriages"—26 Geo. III. cap. 33—which, in its different sections, provides that the Banns of Matrimony are to be published according to the rubric, &c., the marriage to be solemnized in one of the churches where the banns had been published. Marriage by licence could only take place in the church or chapel of such parish, &c., where one of the parties should have resided for four weeks previously.

This was the death-blow to the Fleet Marriages, as any contravention of the law was made punishable by transportation "to some of his Majesty's plantations in America for the space of fourteen years, according to the laws in force for the transportation of felons."

The Act came into force on March 26, 1754, but people took advantage of the Fleet Marriages until the last moment, and that in great numbers, for in one Register alone there is a list of 217 weddings celebrated on the 25th of March!

The last Fleet Wedding is recorded in the *Times* of July 10, 1840: "Mr. John Mossington, aged 76, and a Prisoner in the Fleet, more than 15 years, was, on Wednesday, married to Miss Anne Weatherhead, aged 62, at St. Bride's Church. The Lady had travelled 36 Miles to meet her bridegroom, who is, without exception, one of the most extraordinary men in this County. He takes his morning walks round the Fleet prison yard, which he repeats three or four times a day, with as much rapidity as a young man could do of the age of 20. The Road from Farringdon Street to the Church, was lined with Spectators who knew of the event, and the Church was equally filled to hear the Ceremony performed. The Courtship first commenced 41 years ago, and Mr. Mossington has now fulfilled his promise."

THE END.



MAP OF THE FLEET.

INDEX.

UNWIN BROTHERS,
THE GRESHAM PRESS,
CHILWORTH AND LONDON.

Transcriber's Note:

Every effort has been made to replicate this text as faithfully as possible. Minor typographical errors have been corrected.

Some words are sometimes hyphenated, and sometimes not hyphenated.

All reasonable variants of spelling, grammar and punctuation have been retained.

There are a lot of sometimes old foreign words, and some French/English hybrid text from earlier centuries.

England did not have spelling or punctuation rules until the various Public Instruction Acts (c. 1860-70) in Queen Victoria's reign. In this book, that may have also extended to French and Latin spellings!!

Punctuation is not always regular; some opened quotes are not always closed.

Mismatched quotes often occur with quotations where the quotation is enclosed within double quotes and each line or paragraph within that quote begins with double quotes but has no end double quote.

Page 15: 'discretionbus' changed to 'discretionibus'.

Page 45: Unspaced punctuation, e.g. "Near Battle Bridge,'tis plain, sirs:", is as printed, and denotes elisions (the running together of words to fit the metre).

Page 104: Mismatched quotes "Yours, etc., "EUGENIO."

Page 345: "Gave Mr. Ashwell 2 : 6." [2 shillings and sixpence].

The illustration on page 362 has been replaced by a much higher quality, although slightly cropped, copy.

The illustration on page 187 and 391 have been replaced by a much higher quality copies.

There are many occasions when the term 'l.' or 'li.' is used. 'l.' or 'li.' = libra = pound/pounds. or £, so, £140 = 140 l. or 140 li.

Page 336: "cortége" is an old spelling (in use until the end of the 19th century.

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