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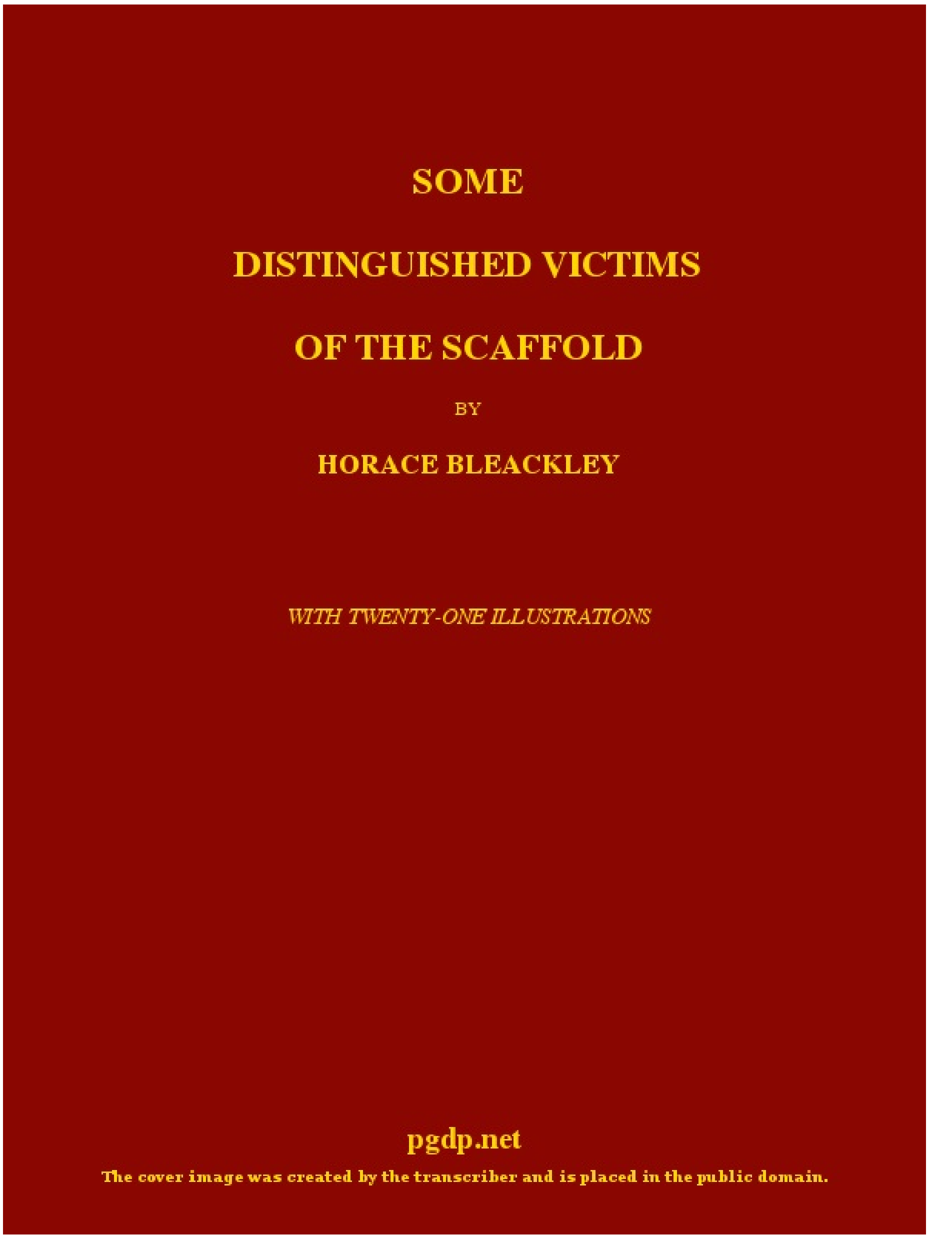

SOME

DISTINGUISHED VICTIMS

OF THE SCAFFOLD

BY

HORACE BLEACKLEY

WITH TWENTY-ONE ILLUSTRATIONS

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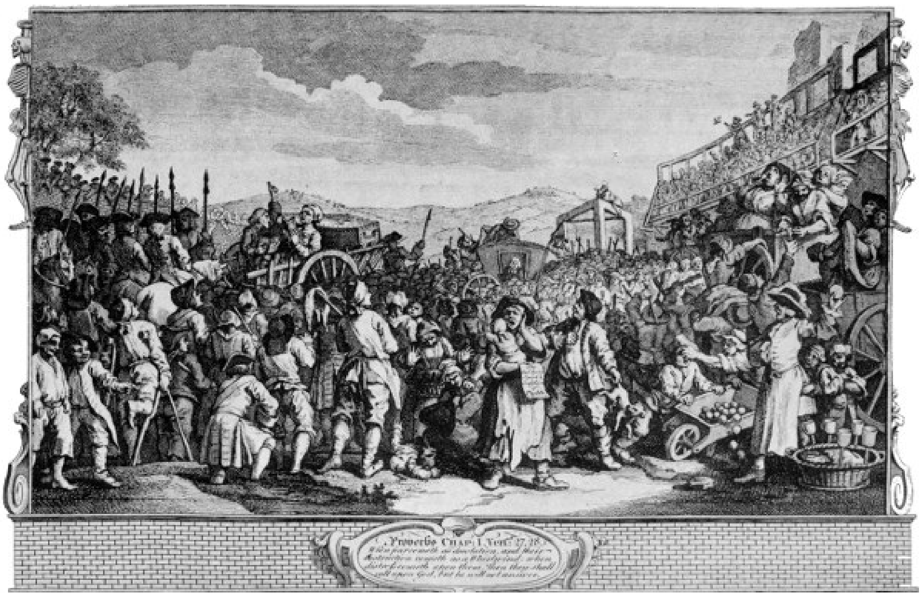
SOME DISTINGUISHED VICTIMS OF THE SCAFFOLD

The IDLE ‘PRENTICE Executed at Tyburn.


Proverbs Chap. I. Ver. 27, 28.

SOME DISTINGUISHED VICTIMS OF THE SCAFFOLD

BY

HORACE BLEACKLEY

WITH TWENTY-ONE ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER, & CO., Ltd.
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1905

To
JOSEPH GREGO
WHOSE MEMORY IS STORED WITH
PICTURES OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY
THESE MODERN IMPRESSIONS FROM
OLD PLATES ARE
OFFERED

PREFACE

No apology is needed, save that which the consciousness of inadequate work may call forth, from him who writes a history of great criminals. Since the lives of so many whose crime is their only title to fame have been included in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, it is inevitable that some of these old stories shall be re-told. Already the books of Charles Whibley and J. B. Atlay, as well as the newspaper sketches of W. W. Hutchings, have advanced this portion of our bibliography to a large extent. By a judicious selection some rare human documents and many an entrancing tale may be found in the crimson pages of the Tyburn Chronicle. The dainty squeamishness that put Ainsworth into the pillory, not because he had written a clumsy novel, but because he had dared to weave a romance around the grisly walls of Newgate, would be out of place in an age that will listen to ballads of a drunken soldier, and reads our women's stories of the boudoirs of Mayfair.

Without a knowledge of the *Newgate Calendar* it is impossible to be acquainted with the history of England in the eighteenth century. On the other hand, to him who knows these volumes, and who has verified his information in the pages of the Sessions papers and among the battles of the pamphleteers, the Georgian era is an open book. No old novel gives a more exact picture of viii a middle-class household than the trial of Mary Blandy, nor shows the inner life of those on the fringe of society more completely than the story of Robert Perreau. While following the fate of Henry Fauntleroy we enter the newspaper world of our great-grandfathers. And as we look upon these forgotten dramas, the most illustrious bear us company. For a time Wordsworth and Coleridge chat of nothing but the Beauty of Buttermere and rascally John Hadfield. Dr Johnson thinks wistfully of the charms of sweet Mrs Rudd. Boswell rides to Tyburn in the same coach as the Rev. Mr Hackman, or persuades Sir Joshua to witness an execution. Henry Fielding lashes the cowards who strive to condemn a prisoner unheard. To all who desire to understand the eighteenth century the *Newgate Calendar* is as essential as the *Letters* of Walpole.

In making a selection from the dozen or more *causes célèbres* that stand out in special prominence from the rebellion of '45 to the death of George IV. the choice is not difficult. It is apparent that the stories of Eugene Aram, Dr Dodd, and John Thurtell must be omitted, for all have been told adequately in recent years. Little that is new or interesting can be found in the tale of mad Lord Ferrers, except that he was not hanged with a silken rope. Although the weird tragedy of the Rev. James Hackman sank more deeply into the popular mind than almost any other, the history of the brothers Perreau has been preferred, since Mrs Rudd appears a more attractive personage than the unfortunate Martha Ray. For similar reasons Wynne Ryland takes the place of Captain Donellan, and Eliza Fenning, naturally, has been excluded in favour of the Keswick Impostor. As to the rest, it is obvious—owing to the omission of the highwayman and ix those guilty of high treason such as Colonel Despard—that no more illustrious names can be found in the *Newgate Calendar* than Mary Blandy, Joseph Wall, and Henry Fauntleroy.

Each crime, moreover, bears the distinct impress of its epoch. None other but the dark night that separates a gorgeous sunset from the brilliant dawn could witness the sombre tragedy at Henley. While the nation begins its eager life as a young apprentice to trade, Tom Idle is found among the recreants, and many a sparkling macaroni like Daniel Perreau prefers to stake his all in Exchange Alley to pursuing laborious days. Wynne Ryland is dazzled by the birth of a most radiant springtide when the world becomes clothed in beauty, and man seems to have stolen the heavenly flame. Then comes the clash of arms and the strife of worlds, when the red giants are unchained, and the life of ten thousand men is naught in the policy of a statesman. With the story of the Maid of Buttermere we perceive again one of the spirits of the age—vain, ruthless Strephon in dandy attire pursuing his Phyllis, shallow-pated and simple. And last, the era of Henry Fauntleroy, when the nation has grown rich, and man must choose between the scarlet of the Corinthian, and the dull, sober garb of toil—a strange mingling of black and crimson.

In order to avoid an interruption of the narrative which a footnote must always cause, the editorial comments have been placed in the bibliography at the end of each monograph, to which those who differ from the author are requested to refer. Although the addition of the lists of authorities has robbed the book of due proportion, the fact that the useful adage "when found make a note of" has been observed will, it is hoped, cause the loss to be balanced by the gain.

The author wishes to acknowledge his obligations to Mr John Arthur for his kindness in verifying x references in the British Museum; to Mr Isaac Edwards of Bolton for similar help; to the editors of the *Henley Advertiser*, the *Carlisle Journal*, and the *Tiverton Gazette* for access to the files of their newspapers; to the rectors of Henley, Feltham, Mottram, St Sepulchre's, Holborn, and St Martin's, Ludgate, for permission to consult the church register; to Mr Richard Greenup of Caldbeck for information concerning the Beauty of Buttermere; and to Mrs Bleackley for the list of Wynne Ryland's engravings. xi

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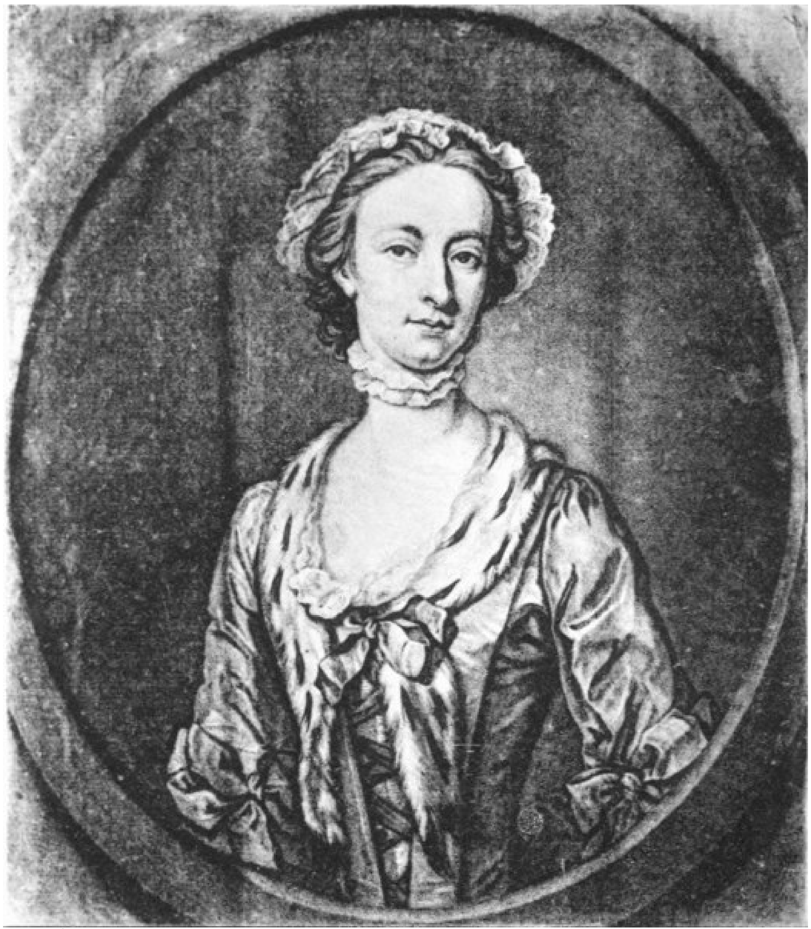


F. Wilson Pinx^{t}. *T. Riley Fecit.*

Miss Blandy

Now confined in Oxford Gaol on Suspicion of Poisoning her Father.

Some Distinguished Victims of the Scaffold

THE LOVE PHILTRE

THE CASE OF MARY BLANDY, 1751-2

"Who hath not heard of Blandy's fatal fame,
Deplored her fate, and sorrowed o'er her shame?"
—*Henley*, a poem, 1827.

During the reign of George II.—when the gallant Young Pretender was leading Jenny Cameron toward Derby, and flabby, gin-besotted England, dismayed by a rabble of half-famished Highlanders, was ready to take its thrashing lying-down—a prosperous attorney, named Francis Blandy, was living at Henley-upon-Thames. For nine years he had held the post of town clerk, and was reckoned a person of skill in his profession. A dour, needle-witted man of law, whose social position was more considerable than his means or his lineage, old Mr Blandy, like others wiser than himself, had a foible. His pride was just great enough to make him a tuft-hunter. In those times, a solicitor in a country town had many chances of meeting his betters on equal terms, and when the attorney of Henley pretended that he had saved the large sum of ten thousand pounds, county society esteemed him at his supposed value. There lived with him—in an old-world home surrounded by gardens and close to the bridge on the London road—his wife 2
and daughter, an only child, who at this period was twenty-five years of age.

Mrs Blandy, as consequential an old dame as ever flaunted *sacque* or nodded her little bugle over a dish of tea, seems to have spent a weary existence in wringing from her tight-fisted lord the funds to support the small frivolities which her social ambition deemed essential to their prestige. A feminine mind seldom appreciates the reputation without the utility of wealth, and the lawyer's wife had strong opinions with regard to the propriety of living up to their ten-thousand-pound celebrity. While he was content with the barren honour that came to him by reason of the reputed *dot* which his daughter one day must enjoy—pluming himself, no doubt, that his Molly had as good a chance of winning a coronet as the penniless daughter of an Irish squireen—his lady, with more worldly wisdom, knew the value of an occasional jaunt to town, and was fully alive to the chances of rout or assembly hard-by at Reading. Thus in the pretty little home near the beautiful reach of river, domestic storms—sad object-lesson to an only child—raged frequently over the parental truck and barter at the booths of Vanity Fair.

Though not a beauty—for the smallpox, that stole the bloom from the cheeks of many a sparkling belle in hoop and brocade, had set its seal upon her face—the portrait of Mary Blandy shows that she was comely. Still, it is a picture in which there is a full contrast between the light and shadows. Those fine glistening black eyes of hers—like the beam of sunshine that illumines a sombre chamber—made one forget the absence of winsome charm in her features; yet their radiance appeared to come through dark unfathomable depths rather than as the reflection of an unclouded soul. With warmth all blood may glow, with softness every heart can beat, but 3
some, like hers, must be compelled by reciprocal power. Such, in her empty home, was not possible. Even the love and devotion of her parents gave merely a portion of their own essence. From a greedy father she acquired the sacred lust, and learnt from infancy to dream, with morbid longing, of her future dower; while her mother encouraged a hunger for vain and giddy pleasure, teaching unwittingly that these must be bought at the expense of peace, or by the sacrifice of truth. To a girl of wit and intelligence in whose heart nature had not sown the seeds of kindness, these lessons came as a crop of tares upon a fruitful soil. But, as in the case of all women, there was one hope of salvation. Indeed, since the passion of her soul cried out with imperious command that she should fulfil the destiny of her sex, the love of husband and children would have found her a strong but pliable material that could be fashioned into more gentle form. Without such influence she was one of those to whom womanhood was insufferable—a mortal shape where lay encaged one of the fiercest demons of discontent.

Molly Blandy did not lack admirers. Being pleasant and vivacious—while her powers of attraction were enhanced by the rumour of her fortune—not a few of the beaux in the fashionable world of Bath, and county society at Reading, gave homage and made her their toast. In the eyes of her parents it was imperative that a suitor should be able to offer to their daughter a station of life befitting an heiress. On this account two worthy swains, who were agreeable to the maiden but could not provide the expected dower, received a quick dismissal. Although there was nothing exorbitant in the ambition of the attorney and his dame, it is clear that the girl learnt an evil lesson from these mercenary transactions. Still, her crosses in love do 4
not seem to have sunk very deeply into her heart, but henceforth her conduct lost a little of its maidenly reserve. The freedom of the coquette took the place of the earnestness and sincerity that had been the mark of her ardent nature, and her conduct towards the officers of the regiment stationed at Henley was deemed too forward. However, the father, whose reception into military circles no doubt made the desired impression upon his mayor and aldermen, was well satisfied that his daughter should be on familiar terms with her soldier friends. Even when she became betrothed to a captain of no great fortune, he offered small objection on account of the position of the young man. Yet, although the prospect of a son-in-law who held the king's commission had satisfied his vanity, the old lawyer, who foolishly had allowed the world to believe him richer than he was, could not, or (as he pretended) would not, provide a sufficient dowry. Thus the engagement promised to be a long one. Fate, however, decided otherwise. Very

soon her suitor was ordered abroad on active service, and the hope of marriage faded away for the third time.

In the summer of 1746, while no doubt she was sighing for her soldier across the seas, the man destined to work the tragic mischief of her life appeared on the scene. William Henry Cranstoun, a younger son of the fifth Lord Cranstoun, a Scottish baron, was a lieutenant of marines, who, since his regiment had suffered severely during the late Jacobite rebellion, had come to Henley on a recruiting expedition. At first his attentions to Miss Blandy bore no fruit, but he returned the following summer, and while staying with his grand-uncle, General Lord Mark Kerr, who was an acquaintance of the lawyer and his family, he found that Mary was off with the old love 5
and willing to welcome him as the new. All were amazed that the fastidious girl should forsake her gallant captain for this little sprig from North Britain—an undersized spindleshanks, built after Beau Diddapper pattern—in whose weak eyes and pock-fretten features love must vainly seek her mirror. Still greater was the astonishment when ten-thousand-pound Blandy, swollen with importance, began to babble of “my Lord of Crailing,” and the little bugle cap of his dame quivered with pride as she told her gossips of “my Lady Cranstoun, my daughter’s new mamma.” For it was common knowledge that the small Scot was the fifth son of a needy house, with little more than his pay to support his many vicious and extravagant habits. Such details seem to have been overlooked by the vain parents in their delight at the honour and glory of an alliance with a family of title. In the late autumn of 1747 they invited their prospective son-in-law to their home, where, as no one was fonder of free quarters, he remained for six months. But the cruel fate that presided over the destinies of the unfortunate Mary intervened once more. Honest Lord Mark Kerr (whose prowess as a duellist is chronicled in many a page), perceiving the intentions of his unscrupulous relative, made haste to give his lawyer friend the startling news that Cranstoun was a married man.

This information was correct. Yet, although wedded since the year before the rebellion, the vicious little Scot was seeking to put away the charming lady who was his wife and the mother of his child. Plain enough were the motives. A visit to England had taught him that the title which courtesy permitted him to bear was a commercial asset that, south of the Tweed, would enable him to sell himself in a better market. As one of his biographers tells us, “he saw young sparklers every day running off with rich prizes,” for the chapels of Wilkinson and Keith were 6
always ready to assist the abductor of an heiress. Indeed, before his arrival at Henley, he had almost succeeded in capturing the daughter of a Leicestershire squire, when the father, who suddenly learnt his past history, sent him about his business. Still, he persisted in his attempts to get the Scotch marriage annulled, and his chances seemed favourable. Most of the relatives of his wife, who had espoused the losing side in the late rebellion, were fled in exile to France or Flanders. Moreover, she belonged to the Catholic Church, which at that time in stern Presbyterian Scotland had fallen upon evil days. Believing that she was alone and friendless, and relying, no doubt, upon the sectarian prejudices of the law courts, he set forth the base lie that he had promised to marry her only on condition she became Protestant. His explanation to the Blandys, in answer to Lord Mark’s imputation, was the same as his defence before the Scottish Commissaries. The lady was his mistress, not his wife!

Miss Blandy took the same view of the case that Sophy Western did under similar circumstances. Human nature was little different in those days, but men wore their hearts on their sleeve instead of exhibiting them only in the Courts, and women preferred to be deemed complacent rather than stupid. Doubtless old lawyer Blandy grunted many Saxon sarcasms at the expense of Scotch jurisprudence, and trembled lest son-in-law Diddapper had been entangled beyond redemption. Still, father, mother, and daughter believed the word of their guest, waiting anxiously for the result of the litigation that was to make him a free man. During the year 1748 the Commissaries at Edinburgh decided that Captain Cranstoun and the ill-used Miss Murray were man and wife. Then the latter, being aware of the flirtation at Henley, wrote to warn Miss Blandy, and provided her with a copy of the Court’s decree. Great was the 7
consternation at the house on the London road. Visions of tea-gossip over the best set of china in the long parlour at Crailing with my Lady Cranstoun vanished from the old mother’s eyes, while the town clerk forgot his dreams of the baby whose two grand-fathers were himself and a live lord. Nevertheless, the young Scotsman protested that the marriage was invalid, declared that he would appeal to the highest tribunal, and swore eternal fidelity to his Mary. Alas, she trusted him! Within the sombre depths of her soul there dwelt a fierce resolve to make this man her own. In her sight he was no graceless creature from the barrack-room, but with a great impersonal love she sought in him merely the fulfilment of her destiny.

> “In her first passion, woman loves her lover:
> In all the others, all she loves is love.”

At this time Cranstoun’s fortunes were in a parlous state. More than half of his slender patrimony had been sequestered for the maintenance of his wife and child, and shortly after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, his regiment being disbanded, he was left on half-pay. Still, he did not waver in his purpose to win the heiress of Henley.

On the 30th of September 1749, the poor frivolous old head, which had sported its cap so bravely amidst the worries of pretentious poverty, lay still upon the pillow, and Mary Blandy looked upon the face of her dead mother. It was the turning-point in her career. While his wife was alive, the old lawyer had never lost all faith in his would-be son-in-law during the two years that he had been affianced to his daughter, in spite of the rude shocks which had staggered his credulity. Cranstoun had been allowed to sponge on him for another six months in the previous summer, and had pursued his womenfolk when they paid a visit to Mary’s uncle, Serjeant 8 Stevens, of Doctors’ Commons. However, soon after the death of his wife the patience of Mr Blandy, who must have perceived that the case of the pretender was hopeless, seems to have become worn out. All idea of the baron’s grandchild faded from his mind; the blear-eyed lover was forbidden the house, and for nearly twelve months did not meet his trusting sweetheart.

Although a woman of her intelligence must have perceived that, but for some untoward event, her relationship with her betrothed could never be one of honour, her fidelity remained unshaken. Having passed her thirtieth birthday, the dreadful stigma of spinsterhood was fast falling upon her. If the methods of analogy are of any avail, it is clear that she had become a creature of lust—not the lust of sensuality, but that far more insatiable greed, the craving for conquest, possession, the attainment of the unattainable, calling forth not one but all the emotions of body and soul. A sacrifice of honour—a paltry thing in the face of such mighty passion—would have been no victory, for such in itself was powerless to accomplish the essential metamorphosis of her life. In mutual existence with a lover and slave the destiny of this rare woman alone could be achieved. Thus came the harvest of the tempest. It was not the criminal negligence of the father in encouraging for nearly three years the pretensions of a suitor, who—so a trustworthy gentleman had told him—was a married man, that had planted the seeds of storm. Nor did the filial love of the daughter begin to fade and wither because she had been taught that the affections, like anything which has a price, should be subject to barter and exchange. Deeper far lay the roots of the malignant disease—growing as a portion of her being—a part and principle of life itself. Environment and education merely had inclined into its stunted 9 form the twig, which could never bear fruit unless grafted upon a new stalk! And while the sombre girl brooded over her strange impersonal passion, there rang in her ears the voice of demon-conscience, unceasingly—a taunting, frightful whisper, “When the old man is in his grave you shall be happy.”

The esteem of posterity for the eighteenth century, to which belong so many noble lives and great minds, has been influenced by the well-deserved censure bestowed upon a particular epoch. The year 1750 marks a period of transition when all the worst characteristics of the Georgian era were predominant. For nearly a quarter of a century the scornful glance that the boorish little king threw at any book had been reflected in the national taste for literature. Art had hobbled along bravely on the crutches of caricature, tolerated on account of its deformity, and not for its worth. The drama, which had drifted to the lowest ebb in the days of Rich and Heidegger, was just rising from its mudbank, under the leadership of Garrick, with the turn of the tide. Religion, outside the pale of Methodism, was as dead as the influence of the Church of England and its plurality divines. The prostitution of the marriage laws in the Fleet and Savoy had grown to be a menace to the social fabric. London reeked of gin; and although the business of Jack Ketch has been seldom more flourishing, property, until magistrate Fielding came forward, was never less secure from the thief and highwayman. Our second George, who flaunted his mistresses before the public gaze, was a worthy leader of a coarse and vicious society. Female dress took its form from the vulgarity of the times, and was never uglier and more indecent simultaneously. Not only was the ‘modern fine lady,’ who wept when a handsome thief was hung, a common type, but the Boobys and Bellastons were fashionable women of the 10 day, quite as much alive as Elizabeth Chudleigh or Caroline Fitzroy. Such was the age of Miss Blandy, and she proved a worthy daughter of it.

In the late summer of 1750 the fickle attorney, who had become weary of opposition, consented to withdraw the sentence of banishment he had pronounced against his daughter’s lover. Possibly he fancied that there was a chance, after all, of the Scotch lieutenant’s success in the curious law-courts of the North, and perhaps a present of salmon, received from Lady Cranstoun, appeared to him as a favourable augury. Consequently the needy fortune-hunter, who was only too ready to return to his free quarters, paid another lengthy visit to Henley. As the weeks passed, it was evident that the temper of the host and father, whose senile humours were swayed by gravel and heartburn, could not support the new ménage. Fearful lest the devotion of his Molly had caused her to lose all regard for her fair fame, wroth that the clumsy little soldier should have disturbed the peace of his household, the old man received every mention of “the tiresome affair in Scotland” with sneers and gibes. Vanished was the flunkey-optimism that had led him to welcome once more the pertinacious slip of Scottish baronage. Naught would have appeased him but prompt evidence that the suitor was free to lead his daughter to the altar. Nothing could be plainer than that the querulous widower had lost all confidence in his unwelcome guest.

The faithful lovers were filled with dismay. A few strokes of the pen might rob them for ever of their ten thousand pounds. Their wishes were the same, their minds worked as one. A deep, cruel soul-blot, transmitted perhaps by some cut-throat borderer through the blood of generations, would have led William Cranstoun to commit, without scruple, the vilest of crimes. 11 Those base attempts to put away his wife, and to cast the stigma of bastardy upon his child, added to his endeavour to entrap one heiress after another into a bigamous marriage, make him guilty of offences less only than murder. In his present position he had cause for desperation. Yet, although utterly broken in fortune, there was a rich treasure at his hand if he dared to seize it. Were her father dead, Molly Blandy, whether as wife or mistress, would be his—body, soul, and wealth. Within the veins of the woman a like heart-stain spread its poison. All the lawless passion of her nature cried out against her parent’s rule, which, to her mind, was seeking to banish what had become more precious than her life. Knowing that her own fierce will had its mate in his, she believed that his obduracy could not be conquered, and she lived in dread lest she should be disinherited. And all this time, day after day, the demon-tempter whispered, “When the old man is in his grave you shall be happy.”

Which of the guilty pair was the first to suggest the heartless crime it is impossible to ascertain, but there is evidence, apart from Miss Blandy’s statement, that Cranstoun was the leading spirit. Possibly, nay probably, the deed was never mentioned in brutal plainness in so many words. The history of crime affords many indications that the blackest criminals are obliged to soothe a neurotic conscience with the anodyne of make-belief. It is quite credible that the two spoke of the projected murder from the first (as indeed Miss Blandy explained it later) as an attempt to conciliate the old lawyer by administering a supernatural love philtre, having magical qualities like Oberon’s flower in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, which would make him consent to their marriage. Presently a reign of mystic terror seemed to invade the little house in the London road. With fear ever present in her eyes, the figure of the sombre woman glided from 12 room to room, whispering to the frightened servants ghostly tales of things supernatural—of unearthly music that she had heard during the misty autumn nights, of noises that had awakened her from sleep, of the ghastly apparitions that had appeared to her lover. And to all these stories she had but one dismal interpretation—saying it had come to her from a wizard-woman in Scotland—they were signs and tokens that her father would die within a year! Those who heard her listened and trembled, and the words sank deep into their memory. So the winter crept on; but while all slunk through the house with bated breath, shrinking at each mysterious sound, the old man, doomed by the sorceress, remained unsuspicious of what was going on around him.

Not long before Christmas, to the great relief of his churlish host, the little Scotsman’s clumsy legs passed through the front door for the last time, and he set out for his brother’s seat at Crailing in the shire of Roxburgh. Yet, though his lengthy visit had come to an end, his spirit remained to rule the brain of the woman who loved him. Early in the year 1751 she received a box, containing a present from Cranstoun, a set of table linen, and some ‘Scotch pebbles.’ Lawyer Blandy viewed the stones with suspicious eyes, for he hated all things beyond the Cheviot Hills, but did not make any comment. The relationship between father and daughter had become cold and distant. Quarrels were constant in the unhappy home. Often in the midst of her passion she was heard to mutter deep curses against the old man. Indeed, so banished was her love that she talked without emotion to the servants of the likelihood of his death, in fulfilment of the witch’s prophecy.

Some weeks later, when another consignment of the mysterious ‘Scotch pebbles’ had arrived for Miss Blandy, it was noticed that her conduct became still more dark and strange. Slinking 13 through the house with slow and stealthy tread, she appeared to shun all eyes, as though bent upon some hidden purpose. A glance within the box from the North would have revealed the secret. When the crafty accomplice found that she was unable to procure the means of taking her father’s life, he had been forced to supply her with the weapons. During the spring, the health of the old lawyer, who suffered more or less from chronic ailments, began to grow more feeble. His garments hung loosely upon his shrunken limbs, while the teeth dropped from his palsied jaws. The old witch’s curse seemed to have fallen upon the home, and, to those who looked with apprehension for every sign and portent, it was fulfilled in many direful ways. Early in June, Ann Emmet, an old charwoman employed about the house, was seized with a violent illness after drinking from a half-emptied cup left at Mr Blandy’s breakfast. A little later, Susan Gunnel, one of the maid-servants, was affected in a similar way through taking some tea prepared for her master. One August morning, in the secrecy of her own chamber, trembling at every footfall beyond the locked door, Mary Blandy gazed with eager, awestruck eyes upon a message sent by her lover.

“I am sorry there are such occasions to clean your pebbles,” wrote the murderous little Scotsman. “You must make use of the powder to them, by putting it into anything of substance, wherein it will not swim a-top of the water, of which I wrote to you in one of my last. I am afraid it will be too weak to take off their rust, or at least it will take too long a time.”

From the language of metaphor it is easy to translate the ghastly meaning. She must have told Cranstoun that the white arsenic, which he had sent to her under the pseudonym of ‘powder to clean the pebbles,’ remained floating on the surface of the tea. Possibly her father had noticed 14 this phenomenon, and, not caring to drink the liquid, had escaped the painful sickness which had attacked the less cautious servants. But now she had found a remedy—‘anything of substance!’—a safe and sure vehicle that could not fail. Louder still in the ears of the lost woman rang the mocking words, “When the old man is dead you shall be happy.”

During the forenoon of Monday, the 5th of August, Susan Gunnel, the maid, met her young mistress coming from the pantry.

“Oh, Susan,” she exclaimed, “I have been stirring my papa’s water gruel”; and then, perceiving other servants through the half-open door of the laundry, she added gaily, “If I was ever to take to eating anything in particular it would be oatmeal.”

No response came from the discreet Susan, but she marvelled, calling to mind that Miss Blandy had said to her some time previously, noticing that she appeared unwell:

“Have you been eating any water gruel? for I am told that water gruel hurts me, and it may hurt you.”

Later in the day, her wonder was increased when she saw her mistress stirring the gruel in a half-pint mug, putting her fingers into the spoon, and then rubbing them together. In the evening the same mug was taken as usual to the old man’s bedroom. On Tuesday night Miss Blandy sent down in haste to order gruel for her father, who had been indisposed all day, and such was her solicitude that she met the footman on the stairs, and taking the basin from his hands, carried it herself into the parlour. Early the next morning, while Ann Emmet, the old charwoman, was busy at her wash-tub, Susan Gunnel came from upstairs.

“Dame,” she observed, “you used to be fond of water gruel. Here is a very fine mess my master 15
left last night, and I believe it will do you good.”

Sitting down upon a bench, this most unfortunate old lady proceeded to consume the contents of the basin, and for a second time was seized with a strange and violent illness. Soon afterwards Miss Blandy came into the kitchen.

“Susan, as your master has taken physic, he may want some more water gruel,” said she. “As there is some in the house you need not make fresh, for you are ironing.”

“Madam, it will be stale,” replied the servant. “It will not hinder me much to make fresh.”

A little later, while tasting the stuff, Susan noticed a white sediment at the bottom of the pan. Greatly excited, she ran to show Betty Binfield, the cook, who bore no good-will towards her young mistress.

“What oatmeal is this?” asked Betty, significantly. “It looks like flour.”

“I have never seen oatmeal as white before,” said the maid.

Carefully and thoroughly the suspicious servants examined the contents of the saucepan, taking it out of doors to view it in the light. And while they looked at the white gritty sediment they told each other in low whispers that this must be poison. Locking up the pan, they showed it next day to the local apothecary, who, as usual in those times, was the sick man’s medical attendant.

Nothing occurred to alarm the guilty woman until Saturday. On that morning, in the homely fashion of middle-class manners, the lawyer, who wanted to shave, came into the kitchen, where hot water and a good fire were ready for him. Accustomed to his habits, the servants went about their work as usual. Some trouble seemed to be preying upon his mind. 16

“I was like to have been poisoned once,” piped the feeble old man, turning his bloodshot eyes upon his daughter, who was in the room.

“It was on this same day, the tenth of August,” he continued, in his weak, trembling voice, for his frame had become shattered during the last week. “It was at the coffee-house or at the Lyon, and two other gentlemen were like to have been poisoned by what they drank.”

“Sir, I remember it very well,” replied the imperturbable woman, and then fell to arguing with her querulous father at which tavern the adventure had taken place.

“One of the gentlemen died immediately,” he resumed, looking at her with a long, reproachful glance. “The other is dead now, and I have survived them both. But”—his piteous gaze grew more intense—“it is my fortune to be poisoned at last.”

A similar ordeal took place in a little while. At breakfast Mr Blandy seemed in great pain, making many complaints. As he sipped his tea, he declared that it had a gritty, bad taste, and would not drink it.

“Have you not put too much of the black stuff into it?” he demanded suddenly of his daughter, referring to the canister of Bohea.

This time she was unable to meet his searching eyes.

“It is as usual,” she stammered in confusion.

A moment later she rose, trembling and distressed, and hurriedly left the room.

There was reason for the old man’s suspicion. Before he had risen from his bed, the faithful Susan Gunnel told him of the discovery in the pan of water gruel, and both agreed that the mysterious powder had been sent by Cranstoun. Yet, beyond what he had said at breakfast, and in the kitchen, he questioned his daughter no more! Still, although no direct charge had been 17
made, alarmed by her father’s hints she hastened to destroy all evidence that could be used against her. During the afternoon, stealing into the kitchen under pretence of drying a letter before the fire, she crushed a paper among the coals. As soon as she was gone the watchful

spies—servants Gunnel and Binfield—snatched it away before it had been destroyed by the flames. This paper contained a white substance, and on it was written ‘powder to clean the pebbles.’ Towards evening famous Dr Addington arrived from Reading, summoned by Miss Blandy, who was driven on account of her fears to show a great concern. After seeing his patient the shrewd old leech had no doubt as to the symptoms. With habitual directness he told the daughter that her father had been poisoned.

“It is impossible,” she replied.

On Sunday morning the doctor found the sick man a little better, but ordered him to keep his bed. Startling proofs of the accuracy of his diagnosis were forthcoming. One of the maids put into his hands the packet of arsenic found in the fire; while Norton the apothecary produced the powder from the pan of gruel. Addington at once took the guilty woman to task.

“If your father dies,” he told her sternly, “you will inevitably be ruined.”

Nevertheless she appears to have brazened the matter out, but desired the doctor to come again the next day. When she was alone, her first task was to scribble a note to Cranstoun, which she gave to her father’s clerk to “put into the post.” Having heard dark rumours whispered by the servants that Mr Blandy had been poisoned by his daughter, the man had no hesitation in opening the letter, which he handed over to the apothecary. It ran as follows:— 18

> “Dear Willy,—My father is so bad that I have only time to tell you that if you do not hear from me soon again, don’t be frightened. I am better myself. Lest any accident should happen to your letters be careful what you write.
>
> “My sincere compliments.—I am ever, yours.”

That evening Norton ordered Miss Blandy from her father’s room, telling Susan Gunnel to remain on the watch, and admit no one. At last the heartless daughter must have seen that some other defence was needed than blind denial. Still, the poor old sufferer persisted that Cranstoun was the sole author of the mischief. On Monday morning, although sick almost to death, he sent the maid with a message to his daughter.

“Tell her,” said he, “that I will forgive her if she will bring that villain to justice.”

In answer to his words, Miss Blandy came to her father’s bedroom in tears, and a suppliant. Susan Gunnel, who was present, thus reports the interview.

“Sir, how do you do?” said she.

“I am very ill,” he replied.

Falling upon her knees, she said to him:

“Banish me or send me to any remote part of the world. As to Mr Cranstoun, I will never see him, speak to him, as long as I live, so as you will forgive me.”

“I forgive thee, my dear,” he answered. “And I hope God will forgive thee, but thee should have considered better than to have attempted anything against thy father. Thee shouldst have considered I was thy own father.”

“Sir,” she protested, “as to your illness I am entirely innocent.”

“Madam,” interrupted old Susan Gunnel, “I believe you must not say you are entirely innocent,
for the powder that was taken out of the water gruel, and the paper of powder that was taken 19
out of the fire, are now in such hands that they must be publicly produced. I believe I had one dose prepared for my master in a dish of tea about six weeks ago.”

“I have put no powder into tea,” replied Miss Blandy. “I have put powder into water gruel, and if you are injured,” she assured her father, “I am entirely innocent, for it was given me with another intent.”

The dying man did not wait for further explanation, but, turning in his bed, he cried:

“Oh, such a villain! To come to my house, eat of the best, drink of the best that my house could afford—to take away my life, and ruin my daughter! Oh, my dear,” he continued, “thee must hate that man, thee must hate the ground he treads on. Thee canst not help it.”

“Oh, sir, your tenderness towards me is like a sword to my heart,” she answered. “Every word you say is like swords piercing my heart—much worse than if you were to be ever so angry. I must down on my knees and beg you will not curse me.”

“I curse thee, my dear!” he replied. “How couldst thou think I could curse thee? I bless thee, and hope that God will bless thee and amend thy life. Go, my dear, go out of my room.... Say no more, lest thou shouldst say anything to thy own prejudice.... Go to thy uncle Stevens; take him for thy friend. Poor man,—I am sorry for him.”

The memory of the old servant, who repeated the above conversation in her evidence at Miss Blandy’s trial, would seem remarkable did we not bear in mind that she went through various rehearsals before the coroner and magistrates, and possibly with the lawyers for the prosecution. Some embellishments also must be credited to the taste and fancy of Mr Rivington’s reporters. Still, the gist must be true, and certainly has much pathos. Yet the father’s forgiveness of his daughter, when he must have known that her conduct was wilful, 20
although piteous and noble, may not have been the result of pure altruism. Naturally, the wish that Cranstoun alone was guilty was parent to the thought. Whether the approach of eternity brought a softening influence upon him, and he saw his follies and errors in the light of repentance, or whether the ruling passion strong in death made the vain old man struggle to avert the black disgrace that threatened his good name, and the keen legal intellect, which could counsel his daughter so well, foresaw the coming escheatment of his small estate to the lord of the manor, are problems for the student of psychology.

During the course of the day brother leech Lewis of Oxford—a master-builder of pharmacopœia—was summoned by the sturdy begetter of statesmen, and there was much bobbing of learned wigs and nice conduct of medical canes. Addington asked the dying man whom he suspected to be the giver of the poison.

“A poor love-sick girl,” murmured the old lawyer, smiling through his tears. “I forgive her—I always thought there was mischief in those cursed Scotch pebbles.”

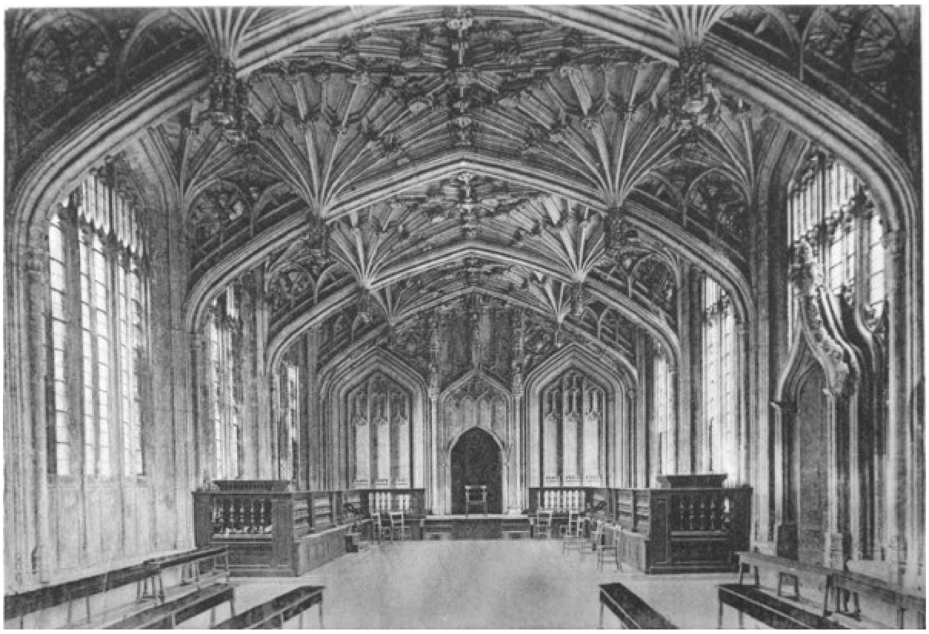
In the evening a drastic step was taken. Acting on the principle of ‘thorough,’ which made his son’s occupancy of the Home Office so memorable at a later period, the stern doctor accused Miss Blandy of the crime, and secured her keys and papers. Conquered by fear, the stealthy woman for a while lost all self-possession. In an agony of shame and terror she sought to shield herself by the pretence of superstitious folly. Wringing her hands in a seeming agony of remorse, she declared that her lover had ruined her.

“I received the powder from Mr Cranstoun,” she cried, “with a present of Scotch pebbles. He had wrote on the paper that held it, ‘The powder to clean the pebbles with.’ He assured me that 21
it was harmless, and that if I would give my father some of it now and then, a little and a little at a time, in any liquid, it would make him kind to him and to me.”

In a few scathing questions the worldly-wise Addington cast ridicule upon this weird story of a love philtre. Taking the law into his own resolute hands, with the consent of colleague Lewis he locked the wretched woman in her room and placed a guard over her. Little could be done to relieve the sufferings of poor ten-thousand-pound Blandy—who proved to be a mere four-thousand-pound attorney when it came to the test—and on Wednesday afternoon, the 14th of August, he closed his proud old eyes for ever. In her desperation the guilty daughter could think of naught but escape. On the evening of her fathers death, impelled by an irresistible frenzy to flee from the scene of her butchery, she begged the footman in vain to assist her to get away. During Thursday morning—for it was not possible to keep her in custody without legal warrant—a little group of children saw a dishevelled figure coming swiftly along the High Street towards the river. At once there arose the cry of ‘Murderess!’ and, surrounded by an angry mob, she was driven to take refuge in a neighbouring inn. It was vain to battle against fate. That same afternoon the coroner’s inquest was held, and the verdict pronounced her a parricide. On the following Saturday, in charge of two constables, she was driven in her father’s carriage to Oxford Castle. An enraged populace, thinking that she was trying again to escape, surrounded the vehicle, and sought to prevent her from leaving the town.

Owing to the social position of the accused, and the enormity of her offence, the eyes of the whole nation were turned to the tragedy at Henley. Gossips of the day, such as Horace Walpole and Tate Wilkinson, tell us that the story of Miss Blandy was upon every lip. In spite of the noble 22
irony of ‘Drawcansir’ Fielding, journalists and pamphleteers had no scruple in referring to the prisoner as a wicked murderess or a cruel parricide. Yet the case of Henry Coleman, who, during the August of this year, had been proved innocent of a crime for which he had suffered death, should have warned the public against hasty assumption. For six months the dark woman was waiting for her trial. Although it was the custom for a jailor to make an exhibition of his captive to anyone who would pay the entrance fee, nobody was allowed to see Miss Blandy without her consent. Two comfortable rooms were set apart for her in the keeper’s house; she was free to take walks in the garden, and to have her own maid. At last, when stories of a premeditated escape were noised abroad, Secretary Newcastle, in a usual state of fuss, fearing that she might repeat the achievement of Queen Maud, gave orders that she must be put in irons. At first Thomas Newell, who had succeeded her father as town clerk of Henley four years previously, was employed in her defence, but he offended her by speaking of Cranstoun as “a mean-looking, little, ugly fellow,” and so she dismissed him in favour of Mr Rives, a lawyer from Woodstock. Her old invincible courage had returned, and only once—when she learnt the paltry value of her father’s fortune—did she lose self-possession. For a dismal echo must have come back in the mocking words, “When the old man is in his grave you shall be happy.”

At last the magistrates—Lords Cadogan and ‘New-Style’ Macclesfield, who had undertaken duties which in later days Mr Newton or Mr Montagu Williams would have shared with Scotland Yard—finish their much-praised detective work, and on Tuesday, the 3rd of March 1752, Mary Blandy is brought to the bar. The Court meets in the divinity school, since the town-hall is in the hands of the British workman, and because the University, so ‘Sir Alexander Drawcansir’ tells 23 his readers, will not allow the use of the Sheldonian Theatre. Why the most beautiful room in Oxford should be deemed a fitter place of desecration than the archbishop’s monstrosity is not made clear. An accident delays the trial—this second ‘Great Oyer of Poisoning!’ There is a small stone or other obstruction in the lock—can some sentimental, wry-brained undergraduate think to aid the gallows-heroine of his fancy?—and while it is being removed, Judges Legge and Smythe return to their lodgings.



THE DIVINITY SCHOOL, OXFORD.

At eight o’clock, Mary Blandy, calm and stately, stands beneath the graceful fretted ceiling, facing the tribunal. From wall to wall an eager crowd has filled the long chamber, surging through the doorway, flowing in at the open windows, jostling even against the prisoner. A chair is placed for her in case of fatigue, and her maid is by her side. A plain and neat dress befits her serene manner—a black bombazine short *sacque* (the garb of mourning), white linen kerchief, and a thick crape shade and hood. From the memory of those present her countenance can never fade. A broad high forehead, above which her thick jet hair is smoothed under a cap; a pair of fine black sparkling eyes; the colouring almost of a gipsy; cheeks with scarce a curve; mouth full, but showing no softness; nose large, straight, determined—it is the face of one of those rare women who command, not the love, but the obedience of mankind. Still it is intelligent, not unseductive, compelling; and yet, in spite of the deep, flashing eyes, without radiance of soul—the face of a sombre-hearted woman.

Black, indeed, is the indictment that Bathurst, a venerable young barrister who represents the Crown, unfolds against her, but only once during his burst of carefully-matured eloquence is there any change in her serenity. When the future Lord Chancellor declares that the base 24 Cranstoun “had fallen in love, not with her, but with her fortune,” the woman’s instinct cannot tolerate the reflection upon her charms, and she darts a look of bitterest scorn upon the speaker. And only once does she show a trace of human softness. When her godmother, old Mrs Mountenay, is leaving the witness-box, she repeats the curtsey which the prisoner had previously disregarded, and then, in an impulse of pity, presses forward, and, seizing Miss Blandy’s hand, exclaims, “God bless you!” At last, and for the first time, the tears gather in the accused woman’s eyes.

Many abuses, handed down from a previous century, still render barbarous the procedure of criminal trials. The case is hurried over in one day; counsel for the prisoner can only examine witnesses, but not address the jury; the prosecution is accustomed to put forward evidence of which the defence has been kept in ignorance. Yet no injustice is done to Mary Blandy. Thirteen hours is enough to tear the veil from her sombre heart; the tongue of Nestor would fail to show her innocent; of all that her accusers can say of her she is well aware. Never for one moment is the issue in doubt. What can her scoffing, sceptic age, with its cold-blooded sentiment and tame romance, think of a credulity that employed a love-potion in the guise of affection but with the result of death! How is it possible to judge a daughter who persisted in her black art, although its dire effects were visible, not once, but many times! Her defence, when at last it comes, is spoken bravely, but better had been left unsaid.

“My lords,” she begins, “it is morally impossible for me to lay down the hardships I have received. I have been aspersed in my character. In the first place, it has been said that I have spoke ill of my father; that I have cursed him and wished him at hell; which is extremely false. Sometimes little family affairs have happened, and he did not speak to me so kind as I could 25 wish. I own I am passionate, my lords, and in those passions some hasty expressions might have dropt. But great care has been taken to recollect every word I have spoken at different times, and to apply them to such particular purposes as my enemies knew would do me the greatest injury. These are hardships, my lords, extreme hardships!—such as you yourselves must allow to be so. It was said, too, my lords, that I endeavoured to make my escape. Your lordships will judge from the difficulties I laboured under. I had lost my father—I was accused of being his murderer—I was not permitted to go near him—I was forsaken by my friends—affronted by the mob—insulted by my servants. Although I begged to have the liberty to listen at the door where he died, I was not allowed it. My keys were taken from me, my shoe-buckles and garters too—to prevent me from making away with myself, as though I was the most abandoned creature. What could I do, my lords? I verily believe I was out of my senses. When I heard my father was dead and the door open, I ran out of the house, and over the bridge, and had nothing on but a half sack and petticoat, without a hoop, my petticoats hanging about me. The mob gathered about me. Was this a condition, my lords, to make my escape in? A good woman beyond the bridge, seeing me in this distress, desired me to walk in till the mob was dispersed. The town sergeant was there. I begged he would take me under his protection to have me home. The woman said it was not proper, the mob was very great, and that I had better stay a little. When I came home they said I used the constable ill. I was locked up for fifteen hours, with only an old servant of the family to attend me. I was not allowed a maid for the common decencies of my sex. I was sent to gaol, and was in hopes, there, at least, this usage would have ended, but was told it was 26 reported I was frequently drunk—that I attempted to make my escape—that I never attended the chapel. A more abstemious woman, my lords, I believe, does not live.

“Upon the report of my making my escape, the gentleman who was High Sheriff last year (not the present) came and told me, by order of the higher powers, he must put an iron on me. I submitted, as I always do to the higher powers. Some time after, he came again, and said he must put a heavier upon me, which I have worn, my lords, till I came hither. I asked the Sheriff why I was so ironed? He said he did it by command of some noble peer, on his hearing that I intended to make my escape. I told them I never had such a thought, and I would bear it with the other cruel usage I had received on my character. The Rev. Mr. Swinton, the worthy clergyman who attended me in prison, can testify that I was very regular at the chapel when I was well. Sometimes I really was not able to come out, and then he attended me in my room. They likewise published papers and depositions which ought not to have been published, in order to represent me as the most abandoned of my sex, and to prejudice the world against me. I submit myself to your lordships, and to the worthy jury. I can assure your lordships, as I am to answer it before that Grand Tribunal where I must appear, I am as innocent as the child unborn of the death of my father. I would not endeavour to save my life at the expense of truth. I really thought the powder an innocent, inoffensive thing, and I gave it to procure his love. It was mentioned, I should say, I was ruined. My lords, when a young woman loses her character, is not that her ruin? Why, then, should this expression be construed in so wide a sense? Is it not ruining my character to have such a thing laid to my charge? And whatever may be the event of this trial, I am ruined most effectually.” 27

A strange apology—amazing in its effrontery!

Gentle Heneage Legge speaks long and tenderly, while the listeners shudder with horror as they hear the dismal history unfolded in all entirety for the first time. No innocent heart could have penned that last brief warning to her lover—none but an accomplice would have received his cryptic message. Every word in the testimony of the stern doctor seems to hail her parricide—every action of her stealthy career has been noted by the watchful eyes of her servants. And, as if in damning confirmation of her guilt, there is the black record of her flight from the scene of crime. Eight o’clock has sounded when the judge has finished. For a few moments the jury converse in hurried whispers. It is ominous that they make no attempt to leave the court, but merely draw closer together. Then, after the space of five minutes they turn, and the harsh tones of the clerk of arraigns sound through the chamber.

“Mary Blandy, hold up thy hand.... Gentlemen of the jury, look upon the prisoner. How say you: Is Mary Blandy guilty of the felony and murder whereof she stands indicted, or not guilty?”

“Guilty!” comes the low, reluctant answer.

Never has more piteous drama been played within the cold fair walls of the divinity school than that revealed by the guttering candles on this chill March night. Amidst the long black shadows, through which gleam countless rows of pallid faces, in the deep silence, broken at intervals by hushed sobs, the invincible woman stands with unruffled mien to receive her sentence. As the verdict is declared, a smile seems to play upon her lips. While the judge, with tearful eyes and broken voice, pronounces her doom, she listens without a sign of fear. There is a brief, breathless pause, while all wait with fierce-beating hearts for her reply. No trace of terror 28 impedes her utterance. Thanking the judge for his candour and impartiality, she turns to her counsel, among whom only Richard Aston rose to eminence, and, with a touch of pretty forethought, wishes them better success in their other causes. Then, and her voice grows more solemn, she begs for a little time to settle her affairs and to make her peace with God. To which his lordship replies with great emotion:

“To be sure, you shall have proper time allowed you.”

When she is conducted from the court she steps into her coach with the air of a belle whose chair is to take her to a fashionable rout. The fatal news has reached the prison before her arrival. As she enters the keeper’s house, which for so long has been her home, she finds the family overcome with grief and the children all in tears.

"Don't mind it," she cries, cheerfully. "What does it matter? I am very hungry. Pray let me have something for supper as soon as possible."

That sombre heart of hers is a brave one also.

All this time William Cranstoun, worthy brother in all respects of Simon Tappertit, had been in hiding—in Scotland perhaps, or, as some say, in Northumberland—watching with fearful quakings for the result of the trial. Shortly after the conviction of his accomplice he managed to take ship to the Continent, and luckily for his country he never polluted its soil again. There are several contemporary accounts of his adventures in France and in the Netherlands, to which the curious may refer. All agree that he confessed his share in the murder when he was safe from justice. With unaccustomed propriety, our Lady Fate soon hastened to snap the thread of his existence, and on the 3rd of December of this same year, at the little town of Furnes in Flanders, aged thirty-eight, he drew his last breath. A short time before, being seized with remorse for his 29 sins, he had given the Catholic Church the honour of enrolling him a proselyte. Indeed the conversion of so great a ruffian was regarded as such a feather in their cap that the good monks and friars advertised the event by means of a sumptuous funeral.

Worthy Judge Legge fulfils his promise to the unhappy Miss Blandy, and she is given six weeks in which to prepare herself for death. Meek and more softened is the sombre woman, who, like a devoted penitent, submits herself day after day to the vulgar gaze of a hundred eyes, while she bows in all humility before the altar of her God. Yet her busy brain is aware that those to whom she looks for intercession are keeping a careful watch upon her demeanour. For she has begged her godmother Mrs Mountenay to ask one of the bishops to speak for her; she is said to entertain the hope that the recently-bereaved Princess will endeavour to obtain a reprieve. In the fierce war of pamphleteers, inevitable in those days, she takes her share, playing with incomparable tact to the folly of the credulous. Although the majority, perhaps, believe her guilty, she knows that a considerable party is in her favour. On the 20th of March is published "A Letter from a Clergyman to Miss Blandy, with her Answer," in which she tells the story of her share in the tragedy. During the remainder of her imprisonment she extends this narrative into a long account of the whole case—assisted, it is believed, by her spiritual adviser, the Rev. John Swinton, who, afflicted possibly by one of his famous fits of woolgathering, seems convinced of her innocence. No human effort, however, is of any avail. Both the second and third George, knowing their duty as public entertainers, seldom cheated the gallows of a victim of distinction. 30

Originally the execution had been fixed for Saturday, the 4th of April, but is postponed until the following Monday, because the University authorities do not think it seemly that the sentence shall be carried out during Holy Week. A great crowd collects in the early morning outside the prison walls before the announcement of the short reprieve, and it speaks marvels for the discipline of the gaol that Miss Blandy is allowed to go up into rooms facing the Castle Green so that she can view the throng. Gazing upon the assembly without a tremor, she says merely that she will not balk their expectations much longer. On Sunday she takes sacrament for the last time, and signs a declaration in which she denies once more all knowledge that the powder was poisonous. In the evening, hearing that the Sheriff has arrived in the town, she sends a request that she may not be disturbed until eight o'clock the next morning.

It was half-past the hour she had named when the dismal procession reached the door of her chamber. The Under-Sheriff was accompanied by the Rev. John Swinton, and by her friend Mr Rives, the lawyer. Although her courage did not falter, she appeared meek and repentant, and spoke with anxiety of her future state, in doubt whether she would obtain pardon for her sins. This penitent mood encouraged the clergyman to beg her declare the whole truth, to which she replied that she must persist in asserting her innocence to the end. No entreaty would induce her to retract the solemn avowal.

At nine o'clock she was conducted from her room, dressed in the same black gown that she had worn at the trial, with her hands and arms tied by strong black silk ribbons. A crowd of five thousand persons, hushed and expectant, was waiting on the Castle Green to witness her sufferings. Thirty yards from the door of the gaol, whence she was led into the open air, stood 31 the gallows—a beam placed across the arms of two trees. Against it lay a step-ladder covered with black cloth. The horror of her crime must have been forgotten by all who gazed upon the calm and brave woman. For truly she died like a queen. Serene and fearless she walked to the fatal spot, and joined most fervently with the clergyman in prayer. After this was ended they told her that if she wished she might speak to the spectators.

"Good people," she cried, in a clear, audible voice, "give me leave to declare to you that I am perfectly innocent as to any intention to destroy or even hurt my dear father; that I did not know, or even suspect, that there was any poisonous quality in the fatal powder I gave him; though I can never be too much punished for being the innocent cause of his death. As to my mother's and Mrs Pocock's deaths, that have been unjustly laid to my charge, I am not even the innocent cause of them, nor did I in the least contribute to them. So help me, God, in these my last moments. And may I not meet with eternal salvation, nor be acquitted by Almighty God, in whose awful presence I am instantly to appear hereafter, if the whole of what is here asserted is not true. I from the bottom of my soul forgive all those concerned in my prosecution; and particularly the jury, notwithstanding their fatal verdict."

Then, having ascended five steps of the ladder, she turned to the officials. "Gentlemen," she requested, with a show of modesty, “do not hang me high.” The humanity of those whose task it was to put her to death, forced them to ask her to go a little higher. Climbing two steps more, she then looked round, and trembling, said, “I am afraid I shall fall.” Still, her invincible courage enabled her to address the crowd once again. “Good people,” she said, “take warning by me to 32 be on your guard against the sallies of any irregular passion, and pray for me that I may be accepted at the Throne of Grace.” While the rope was being placed around her neck it touched her face, and she gave a deep sigh. Then with her own fingers she moved it to one side. A white handkerchief had been bound across her forehead, and she drew it over her features. As it did not come low enough, a woman, who had attended her and who had fixed the noose around her throat, stepped up and pulled it down. For a while she stood in prayer, and then gave the signal by thrusting out a little book which she held in her hand. The ladder was moved from under her feet, and in obedience to the laws of her country she was suspended in the air, swaying and convulsed, until the grip of the rope choked the breath from her body.

Horrible! Yet only in degree are our own methods different from those employed a hundred and fifty years ago.

During the whole of the sad tragedy, the crowd, unlike the howling mob at Tyburn, maintained an awestruck silence. There were few dry eyes, though the sufferer did not shed a tear, and hundreds of those who witnessed her death went away convinced of her innocence. An elegant young man named Edward Gibbon, with brain wrapped in the mists of theology, who for three days had been gentleman commoner at Magdalen, does not appear to have been attracted to the scene. Surely George Selwyn must be maligned, else he would have posted to Oxford to witness this spectacle. It would have been his only opportunity of seeing a gentlewoman in the hands of the executioner.

After hanging for half an hour with the feet, in consequence of her request, almost touching the ground, the body was carried upon the shoulders of one of the sheriff’s men to a neighbouring house. At five o’clock in the afternoon the coffin containing her remains was taken in a hearse to 33 Henley, where, in the dead of night, amidst a vast concourse, it was interred in the chancel of the parish church between the graves of her father and mother.

So died ‘the unfortunate Miss Blandy’ in the thirty-second year of her age—with a grace and valour which no scene on the scaffold has ever excelled. If, as the authors of *The Beggars Opera* and *The History of Jonathan Wild* have sought to show, in playful irony, the greatness of the criminal is comparable with the greatness of the statesman, then she must rank with Mary of Scotland and Catherine of Russia among the queens of crime. Hers was the soul of steel, theirs also the opportunity.

In every period the enormity of a sin can be estimated only by its relation to the spirit of the age; and in spite of cant and sophistry, the contemporaries of Miss Blandy made no legal distinction between the crimes of parricide and petty larceny. Nay, the same rope that strangled the brutal cut-throat in a few moments might prolong the agony of a poor thief for a quarter of an hour. Had the doctors succeeded in saving the life of the old attorney, the strange law which in later times put to death Elizabeth Fenning would have been powerless to demand the life of Mary Blandy for a similar offence. The protests of Johnson and Fielding against the iniquity of the criminal code fell on idle ears.

Thus we may not judge Mary Blandy from the standpoint of our own moral grandeur, for she is a being of another world—one of the vain, wilful, selfish children to whom an early Guelph was king—merely one of the blackest sheep in a flock for the most part ill-favoured. As we gaze upon her portrait there comes a feeling that we do not know this sombre woman after all, for though the artist has produced a faithful resemblance, we perceive there is something lacking. We look 34 into part, not into her whole soul. None but one of the immortals—Rembrandt, or his peer—could have shown this queen among criminals as she was: an iron-hearted, remorseless, demon-woman, her fair, cruel visage raised mockingly amidst a chiaroscuro of crime and murkiness unspeakable.

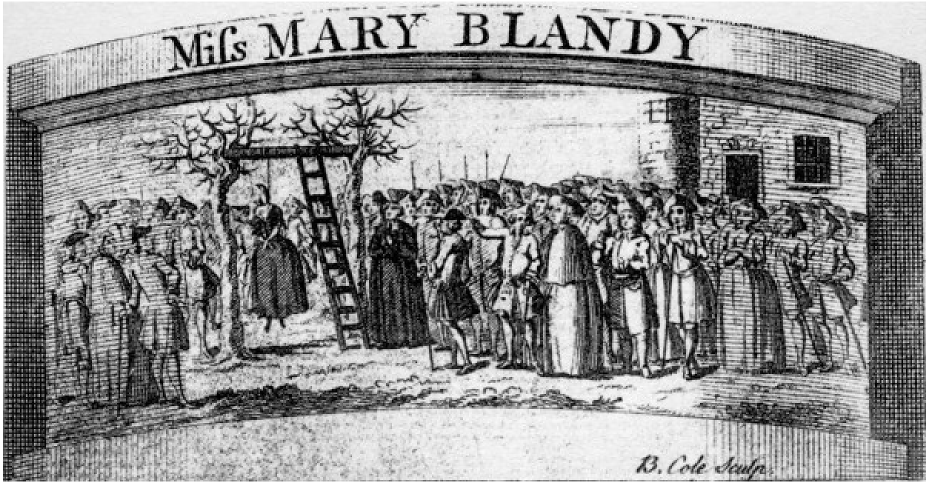
“a narrow, foxy face,
Heart-hiding smile, and gay persistent eye.”

In our own country the women of gentle birth who have been convicted of murder since the beginning of the eighteenth century may be counted on the fingers of one hand. Mary Blandy, Constance Kent, Florence Maybrick—for that unsavoury person, Elizabeth Jefferies, has no claim to be numbered in the roll, and the verdict against beautiful Madeleine Smith was ‘Not proven’—these names exhaust the list. And of them, the first alone paid the penalty at the gallows. The annals of crime contain the records of many parricides, some that have been premeditated with devilish art, but scarce one that a daughter has wrought by the most loathsome of coward’s weapons. In comparison with the murderess of Henley, even Frances Howard and Anne Turner were guilty of a venial crime. Mary Blandy stands alone and incomparable—pilloried to all ages among the basest of her sex.

Yet the world soon forgot her. “Since the two misses were hanged,” chats Horace Walpole on the 23rd of June, coupling irreverently the names of Blandy and Jefferies with the beautiful

Gunnings—“since the two misses were hanged, and the two misses were married, there is nothing at all talked of.” Society, however, soon found a new thrill in the adventures of the young woman Elizabeth Canning. 35

Miss MARY BLANDY



B. Cole Sculp

Aged 33 and Executed at Oxford April 6, 1752, for poisoning her Father.

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NOTES

NOTE I.—In recent years the guilt of Cranstoun has been questioned. Yet a supposition that does not explain two damning circumstances must be baseless:

> (*a*) In the first place, one of his letters to Miss Blandy, dated July 18, 1751, was read by Bathurst in his opening speech. Although the reports of the trial do not tell us that the note was produced in court, or that the handwriting was verified, it cannot be presumed that the Crown lawyers were guilty of wilful fabrication. However strange it may appear that this letter alone escaped destruction, it is improbable that Miss Blandy invented it. Had she done so its contents would have been more consistent with her defence. As it stands it is most unfavourable to her. Therefore, in the absence of further evidence, we must conclude that the letter is genuine, and if genuine Cranstoun was an accomplice.
>
> (*b*) In the second place, the paper containing the poison which was rescued from the fire, is said by the prosecution to have borne the inscription in Cranstoun's handwriting, 'Powder to clean the pebbles' If this had been counterfeit, Miss Blandy would have had no object in destroying it, but would have kept it for her purpose.

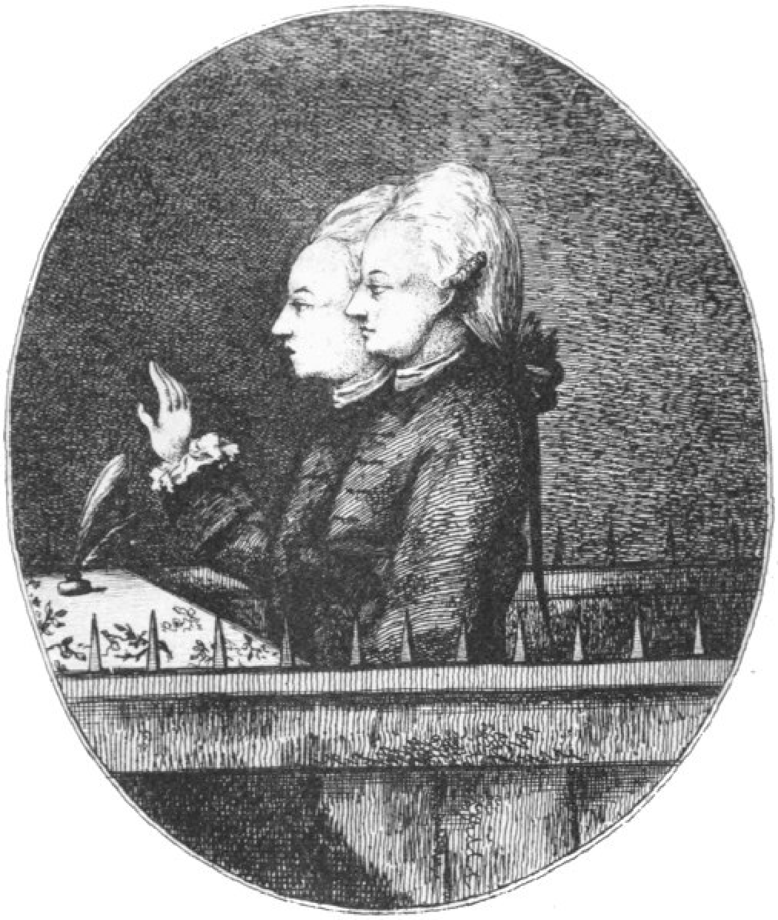
At any cost Lord Cranstoun must have been anxious to remove the black stain from his scutcheon. That this was impossible the fact that it was not done seems to prove. Indeed, if Captain Cranstoun had been ignorant of the crime, he could have proved his innocence as soon as Miss Blandy was arrested by producing her letters, which, granting this hypothesis, would have contained no reference that would have incriminated him. That she had written a great deal to him was shown in evidence at the trial by the clerk Lyttleton.

For these reasons it is impossible to accept the conclusion of the writer of Cranstoun's life in the *Dic. Nat. Biog.* (who has adopted the assertion in Anderson's *Scottish Nation*, vol. i. p. 698), that "apart from Miss Blandy's statement there is nothing to convict him of the murder."

NOTE II.—Anderson's statement that "there does not appear to be any grounds for supposing that Captain Cranstoun was in any way accessory to the murder," shows that he had not a complete knowledge of the facts at his disposal, or that he did not weigh them with precision. Miss Blandy's intercepted letter to her lover affords a strong presumption of his connivance, and her destruction of his correspondence suggests that it contained incriminating details. That these two actions were subtle devices to cast suspicion upon Cranstoun cannot be maintained with any show of plausibility, for in this case Miss Blandy, if dexterous enough to weave such a crafty plot, must have foreseen its exposure, and with such exposure her own inevitable ruin, when to prove that he was not an accomplice her lover had produced the letters she had written to him. Thus to support such an assumption it must be shown that Cranstoun had previously destroyed every particle of her handwriting, and that she was aware of the fact. Of such an improbable circumstance there is, of course, no evidence.

NOTE III.—"Old Benchers of the Middle Temple," *Essays of Elia*. The relative of Miss Blandy, with whom Mr Samuel Salt was dining when he made the unfortunate remark which Lamb repeats, may have been Mr Serjeant Henry Stephens of Doctors' Commons, who was her maternal uncle.

NOTE IV.—The date of Miss Blandy's birth is not given in the *Dic. Nat. Biog.* From the register of Henley Parish Church it appears that she was baptized on July 15, 1720.



Mess. Robert and Daniel
PERREAU.

London. Publish'd Jan^{y} 22^{d} 1776. According to Act of Parliament.

THE UNFORTUNATE BROTHERS

THE CASE OF ROBERT AND DANIEL PERREAU AND MRS MARGARET CAROLINE RUDD,

1775-6

“What’s this dull town to me?
Robin’s not near;
He whom I wish to see,
Wish for to hear.
Where’s all the joy and mirth,
Made life a heaven on earth?
Oh! they’re all fled with thee,
Robin Adair.”

When tenor Braham sent his plaintive air ringing through the town, few were alive who could recall the two previous occasions on which also the name of Adair was upon every lip. One day in February 1758 all London had been stirred by the elopement of Lady Caroline Keppel, daughter of second Earl Albemarle, with a rollicking Irish physician who may have been the Robert of the ballad; while during the summer of 1775 the whole world was wondering whether a man or a most beautiful woman must go to Tyburn for using the signature of Mr William Adair, the rich army agent, cousin to Dr Robin of wedding and song. In the first romance the hero received the just title of ‘the fortunate Irishman’: in the latter the chief personages were ‘the unfortunate brothers’ Messrs Robert and Daniel Perreau. Their disaster happened thus:— 40

On a Tuesday morning, the 7th of March 1775, a slender, middle-aged gentleman walked into the counting-house of Messrs Drummond, the great bankers of Charing Cross. Garbed in a trim snuff-coloured suit, and betraying none of the macaroni eccentricities with the exception of a gold-laced hat, his dress suited the rôle that he played in life—a sleek and prosperous apothecary. This Mr Robert Perreau of Golden Square was welcomed cordially by Henry Drummond, one of the partners in the firm, for an apothecary was almost as eminent as a doctor, and the men had met and known each other at such houses as my Lord Egmont’s or that of my Lady Lyttelton. Producing as security a bond for £7500, bearing a signature that should have been honoured by any house in London, the visitor requested a loan of £5000. However, strange to say, banker Henry, who had been joined by his brother Robert, seemed dissatisfied.

“This bond is made payable to you,” he remarked. “Was you present when it was executed?”

“No, I was not present,” was Mr Perreau’s reply.

“It is not the signature of William Adair, the late army agent of Pall Mall,” was the startling comment of Robert Drummond. “I have seen his drafts many a time!”

The prim countenance of the apothecary remained unperturbed.

“There is no doubt but it is his hand,” he answered, with perfect composure, “for it is witnessed by Mr Arthur Jones, his solicitor, and by Thomas Stark, his servant.”

“It is very odd,” replied the incredulous Robert Drummond. “I have seen his hand formerly, and this does not appear to be the least like it.”

Brother Henry Drummond echoed the same sentiment, whereupon Mr Robert Perreau waxed mysterious and emphatic. 41

“Mr Adair is my particular friend,” he declared. “There are family connections between us.... Mr Adair has money of mine in his hands, and allows me interest.”

“Come to-morrow, Mr Perreau,” said Henry Drummond, “and we will give you an answer.”

Having received this promise the apothecary departed, but after the lapse of two hours he returned, and was seen by banker Henry once more. Without the least reserve he confessed that he had been much concerned by what the Messrs Drummond had told him.

“I could not be easy in my mind till I had called on Mr Adair,” he explained. “Luckily I catched him in his boots before he went to take his ride.”

Naturally, the good banker listened with interest, noting the words, for it seemed odd that Mr William Adair, the rich squire of Flixton Hall in Suffolk, whose son was carrying on the army agency, should raise money in such a style.

“I produced the bond to Mr Adair,” Robert Perreau continued. “It was his signature, he said, but he might possibly have altered his hand from the time you had seen him write.... You might let me have the £5000, Mr Adair said, and he would pay the bond in May, though it is not payable till June.”

The astute banker, who had talked the matter over with his brother in the interim, did not express his doubts so strongly.

“Leave the bond with me,” he suggested to his visitor, “in order that we may get an assignment of it.”

Which proposal Mr Robert Perreau assented to readily, believing, no doubt, that it was a preface to the payment of his money. In the course of the day the document was shown to a friend of Mr Adair, and finally exhibited to the agent himself. Attentive to the hour of his appointment, Mr 42 Perreau left his gallipots in Golden Square, and reached the Charing Cross bank at eleven o’clock on the following morning. Both partners were ready for him, and suggested that to clear up all doubts it would be wise to call upon Mr William Adair without delay. To this the apothecary assented very readily—indeed, in any case a refusal would have aroused the worst suspicions. As it was a wet morning, he had come in his elegant town coach, and he drove off immediately with one of the bankers to the house of the late agent in Pall Mall. Upon their entrance the squire of Flixton took Mr Henry Drummond by the hand, but, to the surprise of the worthy banker, made a bow merely to the man who had boasted him as his ‘particular friend’ Then, the bond being produced, Mr Adair at once repudiated the signature. For the first time Robert Perreau betrayed astonishment.

“Surely, sir,” cried he, “you are jocular!”

A haughty glance was the sole response of the wealthy agent.

“It is no time to be jocular when a man’s life is at stake,” retorted the indignant Henry Drummond. “What can all this mean? The person you pretend to be intimate with does not know you.”

“Why, ’tis evident this is not Mr Adair’s hand,” added his brother, who had just arrived, with similar warmth, pointing to the forged name.

“I know nothing at all of it,” protested the confused apothecary.

“You are either the greatest fool or the greatest knave I ever saw,” the angry banker continued. “I do not know what to make of you.... You must account for this.... How came you by the bond?”

Then there was a hint that a constable had been summoned, and it would be best to name his accomplices. 43

“How came you by the bond?” repeated Mr Drummond.

At last the bewildered Mr Perreau seemed to realise the gravity of his position.

“That will appear,” he replied, in answer to the last remark, “if you will send for my sister.”

“Who may she be?”

“Why, my brother Mr Daniel Perreau’s wife.”

Calling his servant, the apothecary bade him take the coach for his sister-in-law, who, he said, might be at her home in Harley Street, but most likely with his wife at his own house in Golden Square. It was evident that the carriage did not go farther than the latter direction, for in a short time it brought back the lady, who was ushered into the room. Then indeed the hearts of those three hard-pated men of finance must have been softened, for their eyes could have rested upon no more dazzling vision of feminine loveliness within the British Isles. Of medium height, her figure was shaped in the robust lines of graceful womanhood, but the face, which beamed with an expression of childish innocence, seemed the daintiest of miniatures, with tiny, shell-like features, and the clearest and fairest skin. In the fashion of the time her hair was combed upward, revealing a high forehead, and the ample curls which fell on either side towards her neck nestled beneath the smallest of ears. Without a tinge of colour, her complexion was relieved only by her red lips, but the healthy pallor served to heighten her radiant beauty. A thin tight ribbon encircled her slender neck. Below the elbow the close sleeves of her polonese terminated in little tufts of lace, while long gloves concealed her round, plump arms. Dress, under the influence of art, was beginning to cast off its squalor.

Grasping the situation in a moment, this lovely Mrs Daniel Perreau asked if she might speak with her brother-in-law alone, but the request was refused. Then the beauty, making full use of 44 her shining blue eyes, besought Mr Adair to grant her a private interview. But the old man—not such a gay dog as kinsman Robin—was proof against these blandishments.

“You are quite a stranger to me,” he answered, “and you can have no conversation that does not pass before these gentlemen.”

For a short time the beautiful woman appeared incapable of reason. At last she seemed to make a sudden decision.

“My brother Mr Perreau is innocent,” she cried, in an agony of distress. “I gave him the bond.... I forged it!... For God’s sake, have mercy on an innocent man. Consider his wife and children.... Nobody was meant to be injured. All will be repaid.”

“It is a man’s signature,” objected one of the bankers. “How could you forge it?”

Seizing a pen and sheet of paper, she imitated the name on the bond with such amazing fidelity that all were convinced. Then, according to promise, Robert Drummond destroyed the writing, for he, at least, was determined that no advantage should be taken of her confidence.

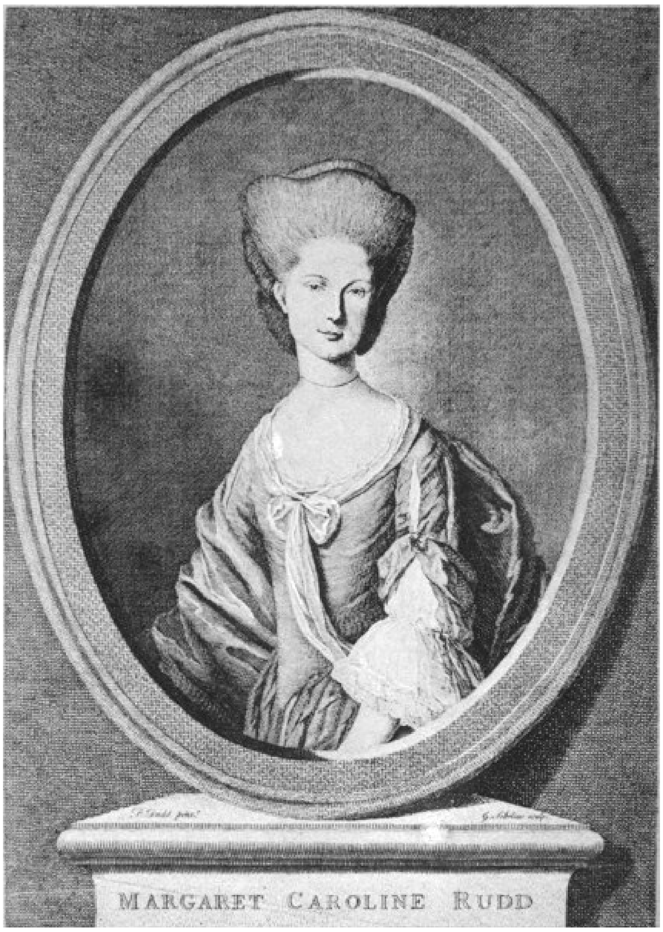
Little information was gained from Daniel Perreau—twin brother of the apothecary—who had been summoned from his spacious home in Harley Street, save shrugs of shoulders and words of surprise. Between him and Robert there was a striking likeness. Both were handsome and well-proportioned men, but a full flavour of macaroni distinguished the newcomer—a ‘fine puss gentleman’ of the adventurous type. To him dress was as sacred as to his great predecessor, Mr John Rann of the Sixteen Strings, who only a few months previously had met with a fatal accident near the Tyburn turnpike. Indeed, the macaroni was as great an autocrat as the dandy 45 of later days, and princes, parsons, and highwaymen alike became members of his cult. So the gentleman from Harley Street, flourishing his big stick, and shaking the curled chignon at the back of his neck, tried with success to look a great fool.

Quite appropriately, it was the woman who determined the result. Less dour than the squire of Flixton, the two bankers had no objection to accompany her into an adjacent room, where they listened with sympathy to her prayers. Being younger men than Mr Adair, they were full of respect for her brave deed of self-accusation, moved by the piteous spectacle of beauty in tears. In the end, confident that she spoke the truth, they began to regard Robert Perreau as her innocent dupe. So the constable was sent away, for macaroni Daniel seemed too great an idiot to arrest, and it was preposterous to dream of locking up his lovely wife. Thus the three grave financiers promised that the adventure should be forgotten, and the Messrs Perreau drove away from the house in Pall Mall in Robert’s coach, assured that they had escaped from a position which might have cost them their lives. Almost as clever as she was beautiful was this charming Mrs Daniel Perreau.

Surely, all but a fool would have tried to blot the incident from his mind, content that the gentlemen concerned believed his honour to be unsullied, too humane to betray a pretty sister into the bloody hands of justice—all but a fool, or a *criminal* seeking to escape by sacrificing an accomplice! Yet Mr Robert Perreau, although anything but a fool, would not rest. Without delay he sought advice from a barrister friend, one Henry Dagge, with the amazing result that on the following Saturday forenoon, the 11th of March, he appeared before Messrs Wright and Addington at the office in Bow Street to lay information against ‘the female forger’ Luckily, the magistrates took the measure of the treacherous apothecary, and committed him as well as the 46 lady to the Bridewell at Tothill Fields. On the next day, fop Daniel—a base fellow, who had acted as decoy while his brother was effecting the betrayal—was sent to keep them company. It was a rueful hour for the two Perreaus when they tried to pit their wits against a woman.

On Wednesday morning, the 15th of March, in expectation that the three distinguished prisoners would appear before Sir John Fielding, the Bow Street court was besieged by so large a crowd that it was deemed prudent to adjourn to more commodious quarters in the Guildhall, Westminster. Surprising revelations were forthcoming. It was found that the forgery discovered seven days ago was only one of many. Two other persons—Dr Brooke and Admiral Sir Thomas Frankland—less cautious than the Drummonds, came forward to declare that they had obliged their friend Mr Perreau by discounting similar bonds, all of which bore the signature of William Adair! Plain indeed was the motive of Robert’s betrayal. It was not enough that the bankers should forgive him—it was needful that the woman must answer as scapegoat for much more.

Never had a fairer prisoner stood before the blind magistrate than the intended victim. Above a striped silk gown she wore a pink cloak trimmed with ermine, and a small black bonnet—as usual, daintiest of the dainty, in spite of her tears and shame. Hitherto, she had given splendid proofs of courage and loyalty, but treachery had changed her heart to stone, and she lent herself to a cunning revenge. A youthful barrister named Bailey, who was hovering around Bow Street soon after her arrest, had been lucky enough to be accepted as her counsel. Clever almost as his client—in spite of contemporary libels from Grub Street, that repute him more intimate with 47 Ovid’s *Art of Love* than Glanvill or Bracton—he came forward with the naïve suggestion that she should be admitted as evidence for the Crown! And a witness she was made there and then, two days later being let loose on bail, which created a very pretty legal causerie in a little while. On the other hand, the unhappy brothers were committed to the New Prison, Clerkenwell, on the capital charge of forgery. All this was very welcome entertainment for the fashionable mob that crushed into the Westminster Guildhall.



Margaret Caroline Rudd

The repartee of one of Sir John's myrmidons, often quoted by wags of the time as an excellent joke, is not without its moral. One of the doorkeepers refused entrance to a certain person on the ground that he had been told to admit only gentlemen.

"That is Mr ——, the great apothecary," quoth a bystander.

"Oh!" returns the doorkeeper, "if that's the case, he must on no account go in, for my orders extend only to gentlemen, and the whole room is filled with apothecaries already."

It would have been well for Robert Perreau had he held no more exalted opinion of his station in life than the Bow Street officer.

To the delight of all the *bon ton*, the scent of scandal rose hot into the air. The charming lady who had passed as the wife of Daniel Perreau proved to be his mistress. Although she had lived with him for five years, bearing him no less than three children, her real name was Margaret Caroline Rudd, whose lawful husband was still alive. Being the daughter of an apothecary in the North of Ireland, by his marriage with the love-child of a major of dragoons, who was a member of the Scottish house of Galloway, her boast that the blood of Bruce ran in her veins was strictly 48
true, in spite of the scoffs and jeers with which it was hailed by her enemies. Early in the year 1762, when only seventeen, she had married a dissolute lieutenant of foot, named Valentine Rudd, the son of a grocer at St Albans. Soon his society proved distasteful, and the fair Margaret Caroline eloped with a more congenial partner. During the next few years she lived the life of a Kitty Fisher or a Fanny Murray—a gilt-edged Cyprian—selling her favours, like Danae, for no less than a shower of gold. Of all her patrons, the most faithful and generous by far was a rich Jew moneylender named Salvadore, whose name remains still as a landmark in the purlieus of the metropolis. Good Lord Granby is said to have visited her out of mere affection. Among others, it was whispered that Henry Frederick, a gentleman of easy virtue, like all Dukes of Cumberland, became one of her intimate friends. Possibly she may have listened to couplets from the *Essay on Women*, for patriot Wilkes, the member of Parliament for the county of Middlesex, is believed to have cultivated her society, going to the extent of finding her a home at Lambeth. Peers flocked to Hollen Street or Meard's Court to pay her homage. A favourite device of hers was to impersonate a boarding-school miss or a lady of quality. Few women of pleasure have possessed the fertile imagination of Mrs Margaret Caroline Rudd.

In May 1770 she met the foolish Daniel Perreau—not stupid from the woman's point of view, since he was a dashing dog with a taste for all the pleasant things in life—and in an unlucky moment she accepted him as her protector. However, in other respects, although he had travelled far over the world, his intellect was no mate for hers. In business he had been a failure both at home and abroad. Three times, it is recorded, he was obliged to make composition with 49
his creditors. Only a fortnight before his alliance with the bewitching Irishwoman his certificate of bankruptcy had been signed. Still, he was a man suited to the fair Margaret's taste,

handsome, gay, and genteel, with a complacency that paid no regard to her methods of raising money—a partner, in short, who gave her back the status in society that she had forfeited.

Naturally, Daniel was more than satisfied with his beautiful companion, allowing her to pass as his lawful wife, forming an establishment for her in Pall Mall Court—the cost of which, since Salvadore and others were as lavish as ever, she appears to have provided. Golden dreams had captured his silly brain, and he believed that Exchange Alley would bring a more propitious fortune than vulgar trade. Funds could be obtained from his dear Mrs Rudd. Secret news from the French Embassy was furnished by his confederate, one Colonel Kinder—an Irish soldier. It would be easy to cut a brilliant figure at Jonathan’s, and restore his shattered credit. Thus, relying upon certain information, he insured the chances of war with Spain; but the Falkland Island convention happened to bring peace, and Daniel Perreau suffered his first big loss in the Alley.

Still, this did not deter him, for the finances of Mrs Rudd seemed inexhaustible, and sometimes he made a lucky stroke himself. In addition to her pretended fortune, which Daniel knew was not bequeathed by any relative, she declared to her friends that a windfall had come to her in the shape of an annuity of £800 a year from Mr James Adair, the wealthy linen-factor of Soho Square. This kinsman of the Pall Mall agent chanced to be acquainted with the maternal uncle of Margaret Caroline Youngson—a tenant farmer of Balimoran, County Down, John Stewart by name, another unlawful offspring, possibly, of the amorous major of the house of Galloway—and, 50 after the custom of a man of the world, as he is described, he became even more interested than the royal duke in the fortunes of the pretty niece. It is doubtful whether his generosity reached the sum named, but with so many sources of income strict accuracy in detail may have been difficult to Mrs Rudd. Indeed, the despicable Daniel Perreau did not require them. It was a great thing to boast at Jonathan’s that his wife was a connection of one of the great Adairs. With such a surety funds might be borrowed easily.

Apparently, being much attached to her protector, Margaret Rudd was quite content to live with him in their humble quarters in Pall Mall Court, and to present him at appropriate intervals with pledges of their mutual ardour. Probably she shared his golden visions, hoping for future affluence. At all events, she gained no monetary advantage from the connection. Moreover, it was not until the beginning of the fatal year that she was mistress even of a house of her own, for the elegant residence on the west side of Harley Street was purchased on the 31st of December 1774.

Brother Robert watched with amazement the progress of the fortunes of his twin, for it was wonderful that bankrupt Daniel should be able to live in decent lodgings with a stylish lady, to pursue fashion in all its vagaries, and to throw about money in the Alley. A different man this Robert—solemn, laborious, and intelligent, making a hard-earned income of a thousand pounds a year. Nevertheless, his soul soared above his gallipots. It was his ambition to make a figure in the world, so that his wife could woo society with drums, routs, hurricanes. When he looked around he saw that fortunes were being won on every side. A wave of prosperity was bearing the empire on its crest. The Great Commoner had wrenched America and India from the 51 hereditary enemy. To these vast markets British seamen were carrying the exports of their country. At home, the clever inventors of the North, Watt and Arkwright, Hargreaves and Brindley, had increased the powers of production a thousandfold. England was setting up shop on a scale undreamt of hitherto in the world’s philosophy. Why spend one’s life in dispensing pukes and boluses, thought apothecary Robert, when the Alley is open to all who dare take advantage of this golden age?

Since this was his character, brother Daniel and his pretty *chère amie* soon tempted the misguided man to share their fortunes, glad to seek the cover of his reputable name to fashion new and more desperate schemes. For earls and bishops were clients of the apothecary, and ‘honest Perreau’ was one of his appellations. Yet to preserve the co-operation of such respectability a pleasant little piece of fiction had to be maintained. Brother Robert, not a fool by any means, was willing to assist their plans, but only in the character of an ingenuous agent; a method—as, no doubt, he pointed out—that must disarm all suspicion. Thus, when he canvassed his friends to advance money on bonds in pursuance of the new policy, he would be able to pose as the emissary of his sister-in-law Mrs Daniel Perreau and her doting relatives Messrs James and William Adair. Indeed, there was a letter in his pocket, authorising some such scheme, which, not being penned by the Pall Mall agent, probably was the work of the clever woman who could give imitations of other people’s handwriting. Such a letter would be useful in case his possession of an Adair bond was questioned, but most useful of all—and this most certainly Mr Robert Perreau would not point out to his confederates—in making him appear a guileless dupe 52 in the hands of an artful woman. Very cleverly had he arranged the saving of his own skin, this sly, precise apothecary.

For no game could be more hazardous than the one which the guilty trio continued to pursue. Forgery was needful to cover forgery. As one bond became payable another had to be discounted to provide the money. A couple of bonds to the value of nearly £8000 were cashed by banker Mills in the City. On two others the large sums of £4000 and £5000 had been advanced by Sir Thomas Frankland. In this way more than a dozen were negotiated during the twelve months that preceded the discovery. All were signed with the name of the army agent—the pretended benefactor of Daniel’s wife—and their total value reached the huge sum of £70,000. Thus the Perreaus had been able to continue their speculations in Exchange Alley. Their sole chance of coming out of the mischief scot free was a lucky stroke at Jonathan’s, or the death of one of their victims.

Public interest in the case was aroused no less by the personality of the prisoners than by the mystery surrounding the actual criminal. For the brothers on one side, and Mrs Rudd on the other, told two wonderful and contradictory stories. This most artful of women, whined the Messrs Perreau, using consummate guile, had revealed to them gradually a dazzling and enticing prospect. First Mr James and then Mr William Adair was represented as the lavish benefactor of their beautiful relative. Yet such was the modesty of these capitalists, that although they declared their intention of procuring a baronetcy for Daniel, and an estate in the country for Robert, besides setting up the twins as West-End bankers, they would communicate with Mrs Rudd alone! Moreover, such was the impecuniosity of these wealthy men that they were able to carry out their benevolent intentions only by the aid of notes of hand! However, the 53 brothers protested that these assurances had been given to them by the lady, and that all the forged bonds had been received from the fair Margaret Caroline by innocent Daniel or ingenuous Robert, in the belief that the Messrs Adair, who had signed them, intended a gratuitous present. A most happy stroke of luck, coinciding fortunately with the period of their bold speculations at Jonathan’s! Yet what was Mrs Rudd’s motive in running these risks to provide funds from which she received little benefit, was not made clear.

Even more wondrous was the other story. Although her conduct at the house in Pall Mall—whether we deem her guilty or innocent—showed something of nobility, she had no mercy for her confederates after they had played her false. While confessing once more that she had forged the bond which the Drummonds had rejected, she declared that her keeper Daniel had forced her to do so by standing over her with an open knife, threatening to cut her throat unless she obeyed. An incredible story, but no more improbable than the other! With the exception of this compulsory forgery, Mrs Rudd avowed that she was innocent. Amidst all this publicity it is likely that poor Mr James Adair, who had been very much the lady’s friend in former days, would have an unpleasant time with Mrs James Adair, and with his son, young Mr Serjeant James, M.P., the rising barrister!

Such an entertainment was a novel and delightful experience for the British public. Since the wonderful time (fourteen summers ago) when mad Earl Ferrers had made his exit at Tyburn in a gorgeous wedding dress, and amidst funereal pomp, the triple tree seldom had been graced by the appearance of gentlefolk. Broker Rice, whose shady tricks at the Alley made him the victim of Jack Ketch three years after his lordship, was almost the only respectable criminal who had 54 been hanged for more than a decade. Indeed, except Mother Brownrigg and Jack of the Sixteen Strings, no criminal of note had dangled from a London scaffold since the days of Theodore Gardelle. Yet a glorious era was dawning for the metropolitan mob, when, in quick succession, Dodd, Hackman, and Ryland were to journey down the Oxford Road—the golden age of the gallows, when George III. was king!

On Friday, the Ist of June, Robert Perreau was put to the bar at the Old Bailey. Owing to ill-health he had been allowed to remain in the Clerkenwell prison, and was not taken to Newgate until the morning of his trial—a privilege shared also by his brother. The President of the Court was Sir Richard Aston, who, as a junior of the Oxford circuit, had helped to defend the unfortunate Miss Blandy. By his side sat the Right Honourable John Wilkes, Lord Mayor of London, a quite tame City patriot now almost ready for the royal embraces, very different from the Wilkes winged by pistol-practising Martin, M.P., and hounded by renegade Jemmy Twitcher. This same City patriot—if we may credit one of Dame Rumour’s quite credible stories—whispered into the ear of the judge the most important words spoken during the trial:—“My lord, you can convict these men without the woman’s evidence.... It is a shocking thing that she should escape unpunished, as she must if you call her as a witness!” Which advice—if the lady had been as kind to ‘squinting Jacky’ as the world believed—shows that he was rising on stepping stones of Medmenham Abbey to higher things. At all events, instead of summoning Mrs Rudd into the box, the judge startled the world by ordering her to be detained in Newgate.

In spite of the efforts of his counsel and his friends, the Court did not put the least faith in the wily apothecary, refusing to believe that he had been ignorant of his brother’s relationship to his 55 mistress, or, if this were true, that an innocent man would obtain cash for a succession of huge bonds, drawn on the well-known house of Adair, at the bidding of a woman without making inquiries. Even granting that he was so credulous as to remain silent when he saw that suspicion was aroused, it was clear that no man of honour would strive to stifle mistrust by telling lies. Then there were other compromising circumstances. It was apparent that the Perreaus needed money to repay certain bonds that were falling due. Robert had antedated the latest forgery to make it agree with one of his falsehoods to the Messrs Drummond, for in the previous January he had endeavoured to obtain money from them by a fictitious story. Not only did the employment of a scrivener have no weight in his favour, but pointed to premeditation. In the face of these facts his guilt seemed clear. Notwithstanding an eloquent defence written for him by Hugh M’Auley Boyd, in which he protested that he had received the bonds from Mrs Rudd in good faith, the jury required no more than five minutes to return a hostile verdict.

At nine o’clock on the following morning there were similar dealings with brother Daniel. Seeing that his case was hopeless, he did not deliver the elaborate address that had been prepared, choosing to print it, like Pope’s playwright. Naturally, his expectations were fulfilled, and he was found guilty of forging one of the bonds in the name of William Adair, on which his friend Dr

Brooke had lent him £1500. On the 6th of June, at the close of the Old Bailey sessions, he was sentenced to death along with Robert by Recorder Glynn, while on the same day Mrs Rudd was told that as bail could not be granted, she must remain in prison. In spite of their dishonesty, and still baser treachery, it is impossible to think of the cruel sentence of the unfortunate 56 Perreaus without a thrill of horror. Yet no qualms disturbed the tranquil conscience of King George, who believed he was doing the Lord's work in hanging men and women for a paltry theft.

The charming Mrs Rudd was not disposed of so easily as her unlucky confederates. From April onwards she had attracted more attention than the skirmishes with our rebellious colonists at Bunker's Hill and Lexington. While she was at large and the brothers were under lock and key, public sympathy had remained on their side. Moreover, her tactics were not too reputable, and until it was evident that she was struggling in her prison with the valour of desperation against overwhelming odds, popular compassion did not condone her shifty methods. Still, whatever her guilt, she waged her long battle with surpassing dexterity.

One of the foremost of her foes, and not the least dangerous, was George Kinder, the Irish colonel—Daniel's emissary in the unlucky touting at the back stairs of the French Embassy—a gentleman who had sought vainly to win the good graces of Miss Polly Wilkes. There was no false delicacy about this warrior, as the letters in the *Morning Post* under pseudonyms 'Jack Spry' and 'No Puffer' bear ample testimony, and soon he had made the whole world familiar with the amatory history of Margaret Youngson. Yet Colonel Kinder was too reckless in the delivery of his attacks, and, like many another dashing soldier, he found himself often outflanked. For Mrs Rudd wielded her pen brilliantly, and her replies to critics of the press were not unworthy—both in style and context—of a novelist of later days. At all events, the vulgar diatribes of Colonel Kinder helped to bring popular sympathy to the side of his fair antagonist, and this is precisely what the clever lady must have foreseen. 57

Another enemy, as inveterate as the Irishman himself, appeared in the person of a rough-and-ready sea-dog, ex-Admiral Sir Thomas Frankland—whom the Perreaus had swindled out of thousands of pounds—a lineal descendant of Protector Cromwell. More truculent even than his great ancestor—for surely Oliver never confiscated ruff or farthingale belonging to Henrietta Maria—he pounced upon Mrs Rudd's clothes, and indeed upon all property that might help to repay his loans. Remaining loyal to his old friend the Golden Square apothecary—for the choleric gentleman was convinced that he was an innocent instrument in the hands of the woman—he seized anything that Daniel and his mistress happened to possess. In consequence of this brigandage there was a pitched battle between the employees of the admiral and the sheriff's officers for the possession of the house in Harley Street, in which the former got the worst of the tussle. Running amuck at all who took the other side—Barrister Bailey, Uncle Stewart, the Keeper of the Lyon Records—each in turn received a broadside from the fiery old salt. Shiver-me-timbers Frankland—this Paul Pry of a lady's wardrobe—wrought more good out of evil to the cause of Margaret Rudd than any other man, and his fair enemy was nothing loth to let him run to the top of his bent.

Nowhere was the diplomacy of Daniel Perreau's mistress more remarkable than in the negotiations with her old servant, Mrs Christian Hart. Early in July there was an interview between the pair in Newgate: the handmaid compassionate and pliable; the prisoner full of subtle schemes against her enemies. Barrister Bailey was present, and a lengthy document was drawn up—a paper of instructions in the form of a narrative for the guidance of the faithful 'Christy'—wherein was set forth the details of a wicked conspiracy, which the servant was to 58 pretend that she had overheard, between old sea-dog Frankland and Mrs Robert Perreau to swear away Mrs Rudd's life. Promising to learn her story and stick to the text, Mrs Hart went away with her manuscript; but, frightened by her husband or bribed by the admiral, in a little while she deserted to the other side. In no wise dismayed, Margaret Rudd retorted that 'Christy' had volunteered the story, and that the instructive document was a faithful copy of the woman's narrative as dictated by herself, another copy of which she produced, attested by the faithful Bailey. Moreover, she alleged that the whole business was a thing devised by the Perreaus for the purpose of compromising their enemy, a most dexterous plot to make it appear that Mrs Rudd was endeavouring to create false evidence! Thus, even when the first scheme failed, she gained the effect desired by its very failure. Poor, persecuted woman, thought the big-hearted British public, and what a shocking old admiral!

A little later, the fair captive in Newgate triumphed over another enemy, one Hannah Dalboux, a second domestic. This Hannah had been nurse to the youngest of Daniel Perreau's children since the mother had been put in prison. One morning in August the newspapers announced that the woman had refused to surrender the child, and that the woman's husband had tried to thrash the inevitable Mr Bailey when he paid a visit with his client's request. "The baby shall be given up when I am paid for its board and lodging," was the sum and substance of Hannah's ultimatum. All the same the child had to be delivered to its rightful owner, and husband Dalboux was locked up for the assault. A great opportunity, indeed, which Mrs Rudd did not neglect. All the journals were full of hints concerning the horrid old admiral, who had employed people to steal the lady's baby as well as her petticoats—about the last two things in the world a swell 59 mobsman would choose, unless they were accompanied by the proprietress. Yet the salient fact, remembered by the British public in a little while, was that this inveterate sea-dog was the prosecutor at Mrs Rudd's trial.

The well-known anecdote told of her by Horace Walpole, must, if true, have reference to an incident that occurred during her imprisonment in Newgate.

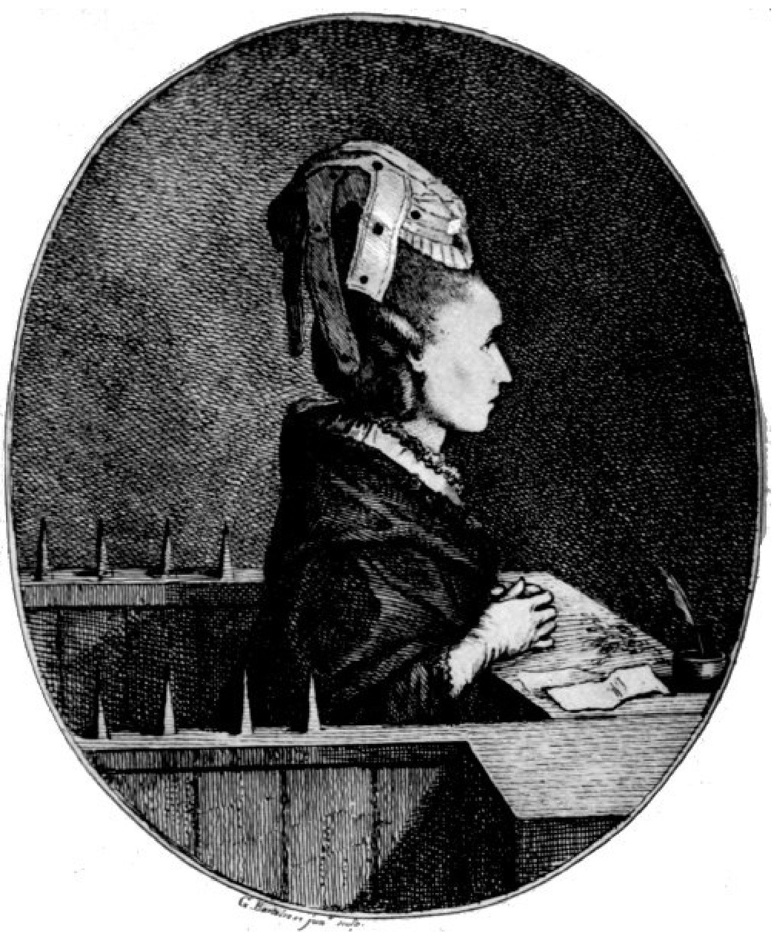
“Preparatory to her trial, she sent for some brocaded silks to a mercer. She pitched on a rich one, and ordered him to cut off the proper quantity, but the mercer, reflecting that if she was hanged, as was probable, he should never be paid, pretended he had no scissors. She saw his apprehensions, pulled out her pocket-book, and giving him a bank-note for £20, said, ‘There is a pair of scissors.’ Such quickness is worth a hundred screams. We have no Joans of Arc nor Catherines de Medici, but this age has heroines after its own fashion.”

Whenever a Gordian knot presented itself the undaunted Mrs Rudd was always ready with a pair of scissors!

Like all other popular entertainers, the fair Margaret Caroline had rivals in the public favour. On the nineteenth of August, “one of the prettiest young women in England,” Jane Butterfield by name, was tried for her life at Croydon on a charge of poisoning a foully-diseased old man for whom she kept house. Paramour also to this rotten William Scawen was Miss Jane, debauched by him when a child. Although the poor girl was acquitted amidst tears and huzzas, she lost the fortune that should have come to her, for her protector, who had listened to the accusations of his Dr Sanxy—the instigator of all the proceedings against the innocent Jane—lived long enough, unhappily, to cross her out of his will. For a while all England forgot Margaret Rudd in its generous sympathy for the beautiful heroine of Croydon. Soon also the ubiquitous Elizabeth 60
Chudleigh monopolised public attention, to the exclusion of everyone else, under her new rôle as Her Grace of Kingston; while the sex of the mysterious Chevalier D’Eon continued to be the subject of many wagers.

For six months Mrs Rudd remained a prisoner in Newgate—from the day of Robert Perreau’s condemnation on the 1st of June until the morning of her own trial on the 8th of December—using every endeavour so that she should not be brought to the judgment-seat. A few weeks after the close of the summer sessions—on the fourth day of July—she was summoned to Westminster Hall to listen to the ruling of Chief-Justice Mansfield, an unrivalled exponent of amazing decisions, with regard to her status as king’s evidence. Superfine, indeed, was the quality of Mansfield’s red tape:—“The woman did not confess that she was an accomplice, but an assistant by compulsion, therefore she may be presumed to be innocent, consequently there is no reason why she should not be tried! Only a *guilty* person can be admitted as a witness for the Crown!” Yet the great Chief-Justice had a more cogent reason still—one that is irrefutable: “Since the lady did not disclose *all* she knew, she has forfeited indulgence!” Quite proper, no doubt, in a legal sense, but foreign to the eternal ethics of British equity, that has permitted ‘burker’ Hare to escape the halter, believing that it is monstrous to ask a jury to try a prisoner from whom a confession has been extorted under promise of pardon. There was no false delicacy about the learned Mansfield’s interpretation of the law.

However, his lordship was the autocrat of all bigwigs, and none but the most stout-hearted ventured to challenge his decisions. When the case was argued by her counsel before three judges, sitting as a Court of Gaol Delivery in the middle of September, one Henry Gould, who feared a Chief-Justice as little as a Gordon riot, appears to have realised that the law must keep 61
its faith. So he gave a flat contradiction to the ruling of the King’s Bench. “How can we know that the woman was cognisant of any other forgery than the one to which she has confessed unless we bring her to trial?” demanded this judge Gould. “And if we bring her to trial we break our word!” Nevertheless his two colleagues, remembering possibly the Mansfield temper and the Mansfield tongue, maintained the arguments of the Chief-Justice, and thus it was decreed that Mrs Rudd must go before a jury. Early in November twelve judges assented to this decision.



Mrs. Margaret Caroline Rudd at the Bar of the Old Bailey

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Confident that her long struggle had not been futile, since this breach of faith must shock the public mind, the beautiful prisoner prepared to face her terrible ordeal. In a letter from Strawberry Hill we catch a glimpse of her on the eve of her trial. “... She sent her lawyer a brief of which he could not make head nor tail. He went to her for one more clear. ‘And do you imagine’ said she, ‘that I will trust you or any attorney in England with the truth of my story? Take your brief: meet me in the Old Bailey, and I will ask you the necessary questions.’ ...” And when the time came she kept her promise to help him through.

On Friday, the 8th of December, she was placed in the dock at the Old Bailey. During her long imprisonment the popular sympathy had come over to her side, and a friendly crowd filled the galleries before daybreak. With much tenderness Judge Aston explained to her the reason that she was put to the bar, his chief argument being the elusive one that she had not spoken the *whole* truth before the magistrates. No woman could have been more dignified or composed. An air of melancholy rested on her beautiful face, which appeared more pale in contrast to her garb of mourning. A silk polonese cloak, lined with white persian, was thrown round her shoulders. Beneath, her gown was black satin, *appliquée* with wreaths of broad silken ribbons, her skirt draped upon the small hoop worn with an evening toilet. Above the tall head-dress demanded by fashion, a white gauze cap, dotted with small knots of black, rested lightly upon her powdered curls. It was almost the same costume that she had worn before the three judges.

Only for a short time were the spectators in doubt as to the result of the trial. None of the evidence was convincing; each witness seemed more feeble than his predecessor. Serjeant Davy, rough and ready, tore their statements to tatters. To the jury Mrs Robert Perreau seemed eager to swear aught that might save the life of her unhappy husband. Admiral Frankland, in the face of his petticoat theft, appeared to have pressed the prosecution out of greed and for the sake of revenge. John Moody, a footman discharged by the prisoner, must have been regarded, very properly, as a barefaced liar. The famous Christian Hart, another old servant with a grudge, who was answered on all points by the evidence of the indefatigable Bailey, could prove nothing concerning the forgery cited in the indictment.

All the while Mrs Rudd kept on passing notes to her counsel—more than fifty in number—suggesting questions to baffle the hostile witnesses. The trial lasted for nearly twelve hours. When the jury returned into court, after an absence of thirty minutes, Henry Angelo, the fencing-master, saw the gay auctioneer who was the foreman throw a meaning smile towards the beautiful prisoner. “Not guilty according to the evidence before us!” declared the jury, while the court thundered with applause. At last her bitter ordeal was over, and Margaret Rudd, smiling through her tears, stepped gaily into a coach that was waiting at the door of Old Bailey.

Then she was driven, post haste, to her new home with the wicked Lord Lyttelton. Certainly this charming and clever woman was far from being too good to live. 63

Naturally, the acquittal of Mrs Rudd determined the fate of the unfortunate twins, who had been kept alive all this time pending the result of her trial. Only in one way could Robert, deemed the less guilty, have been spared. Had Daniel confessed that he was the forger, exonerating his brother, probably a pardon would have been granted. Not being built, however, after the fashion of martyrs, he continued to make frantic protests of innocence, thereby sealing the doom of both. For arguments that were incredible merely in the case of the apothecary became preposterous when applied to Daniel. Yet the loyalty of Robert was admirable, as although he knew that his one hope was to be dissociated from his brother, he would not pretend that he had been his dupe. Desperate efforts were made to save the unhappy men. A petition, signed by more than seventy bankers and influential men of business, was presented to the King. Mrs Robert Perreau with her three children, all in deep mourning, flung herself at the feet of the Queen. But good King George III. was a stranger to mercy, and Justice Mansfield was not the sort of person to make the introduction.

On Wednesday, the 17th of January 1776—a bitter morning, with keen frost in the air and deep snow on the ground—the two poor brothers were led out to die. When they were brought from the chapel into the day-room within the Press Yard, to await the coming of the hangmen, they found only a few faithful friends who wished to say farewell. For, to prevent an unseemly crowd, good Keeper Akerman stood himself at the gate of the fatal quadrangle, denying entrance even to his own acquaintances. Daniel Perreau, apparently unmoved, gave a bow to his friends, and then sought the warmth of the fire. Robert, less resolute than his brother, was unmanned for an instant by the sight of the cords and halters upon the table. In a few moments their steps were 64 ringing across the flags of the courtyard, as with bound arms they followed the Sheriffs towards the gate. Those who gazed upon these poor victims of a merciless law testify that their tread was firm and their faces hopeful and serene. For, save in that first base betrayal of a woman, no one can accuse Daniel and Robert Perreau of cowardice. Five others bore them company to the grave.

Shortly after nine o’clock the City Marshals, attended by the full panoply of sheriffdom, started the procession. Next came an open cart, covered with black baize, where sat three of the convicts, and then a hurdle, dragged by four horses, on which rested a pair of wretches condemned for coining. And last, there followed the sombre mourning-coach—a special privilege—with the unhappy brothers. All around lay a winding sheet of snow, crusted thick on the housetops, piled in deep billows against the walls. A piercing east wind shot down the Old Bailey, while the prison gleamed in the frosty mist like a monument of hard black ice.

Beyond Newgate Street the bell in St Sepulchre’s high steeple rang fiercely over the frozen roofs, as though pealing forth a pæan of exultation upon the procession of death. Here there came a halt in the march, while from the steps of the church, in time-honoured fashion, the sexton delivered his solemn exhortation to the condemned prisoners:—

“All good people, pray heartily unto God for these poor sinners, who are now going to their death, for whom this great bell doth toll....

“Lord have mercy upon you,
Christ have mercy upon you.”

Backwards and forwards around the mourning-coach surged the mob, clamouring with ribald fury for a glimpse of the celebrated forgers. Robert Perreau, sitting with his back to the horses 65 beside one of the sheriff’s officers, pulled down the glass meekly, and gazed out with calm, unruffled features. Then the long journey was resumed. Over the heavy road the wheels and hoofs slipped and crunched down the slopes of Snow Hill, and toiled up the steep ascent into Holbourn. Standing erect in the cart, George Lee, a handsome boy highwayman, gorgeous in a crimson coat and ruffled shirt, doffed his gold-laced hat with a parade of gallantry to a young woman in a hackney coach. Then, while a hundred eyes and a hundred loathsome jests were turned upon her, the poor girl burst into a flood of tears. In another moment her lover had passed away for ever. Huddled in the same tumbril with the swaggering youth, a couple of Jews, condemned for housebreaking, shook and chattered with dread, their yellow faces livid as death, a strange contrast to their florid, bombastic companion. Shivering with cold, the two tortured coiners were jolted over the snow, bound fast to their hurdle, their limbs turned to ice by the frost. Within the black coach, the brothers listened calmly and reverently to the prayers with which Ordinary Villette, who sat by the side of Daniel, supplicated the Almighty to pardon these victims unworthy of human mercy. And all the while, the mob—forty thousand strong—shrieked, danced and hurled snowballs, maddened like fierce animals by the scent of blood.

It was only half-past ten o’clock when the cortege reached the triple tree. Two separate gallows had been prepared, for it was not meet that Hebrew and Christian should hang from the same branch. So the tumbril was drawn under the smaller crossbar, and, their halters being fixed, the two Jews were left to their rabbi; while highwayman Lee, and the coiners Baker and Ratcliffe, were placed in a second cart. Seated in their coach a little distance away, the two brothers 66 watched these ghastly preparations with unruffled mien. When all was ready Sheriff Newnham gave them a signal, and they descended to the ground. A moment later they were standing beside their three wretched compatriots. Then the Rev. Villette came forward to play his usual part. Holding the same prayer-book, Daniel and Robert Perreau followed the services with pious attention, their reverence forming a marked contrast to the swagger of the boy highwayman. For some time they were allowed to converse with the Ordinary, and each gave him a paper containing a last solemn declaration of their innocence. It was noticed that Daniel raised his eyes to the sky, and boldly asserted that he was guiltless.

At half-past eleven all was ready for the final scene. Ordinary Villette offered a last shake of the hand; Sheriffs Haley and Newnham bowed in solemn farewell. Having been fee’d by his distinguished clients, Jack Ketch gave a moment’s grace while the brothers embraced tenderly. Faithful unto death, the brave fellows exhibited more nobility in their last few hours than during the whole of their lives. As the cart drew away and their foothold slipped beneath them, their hands were still clasped together. For a full half minute their fingers remained linked as they dangled in the air, and then fell apart as they passed into oblivion beside their five dying companions. Four days later, on Sunday, the 21st of January, they were buried together in a vault within St Martin’s Church, Ludgate Hill.

No mob could have behaved with more indecency than the howling, laughing throng that gazed upon this scene of death, increasing by their wanton rioting the agony of the poor sufferers a thousandfold. With great difficulty an army of constables—three hundred in number—kept a
clear space around the scaffold. After the spectacle was over it was found that there had been 67
numerous accidents. A woman was beaten down and pressed to death; a youth was killed by a fall from a coach. One of the stands near the gallows collapsed during the execution, and three or four persons lost their lives.

In the history of crime the case of the unfortunate brothers forms an important landmark. Although many a forger had gone to the gallows before, they were the first ‘distinguished victims’ of the merciless code. Thus their fate served as a precedent. “If Dr Dodd is pardoned, then the Perreaus have been murdered!” quoth the crazy king, when he was asked to forgive ‘the macaroni parson’ Henceforth, it was as safe to blow out a man’s brains as to counterfeit his handwriting. At last, when the first humane monarch for more than a hundred years set his face against such butchery the lawgivers were unable to preserve the bloody statutes that had slaughtered thousands during the half century which separated the deaths of Robert Perreau and Henry Fauntleroy. By the side of Mackintosh, Romilly, and Ewart, the fourth George is entitled to an honourable place.

Public opinion changed once more with wonted inconsistency after the acquittal of Mrs Rudd, and the apothecary in particular, as the bankers’ petition indicates, received the widest sympathy. Still, it seems strange that his guilt could have been doubted by reasonable persons. No other defence was open to him save the one he used, old as human sin—it was the woman!—and even this apology involved the most absurd pretences. Clearly, the fable had been prearranged between the conspirators. Treachery brought its own reward, and Robert Perreau, forgetting that there should be honour among thieves, was ruined because he did not trust his
fair accomplice to the full extent. No doubt she would have soothed sea-dog Frankland just as 68
she pacified the bankers Drummond.

In all the sordid history the one bright spot is the loyalty of charming, wicked Mrs Rudd to her grimy confederates, for the scene in old William Adair’s parlour on that stormy March morning might well have cost her life. Had the bankers proved to be curmudgeons, the Perreaus would not have raised a hand to save her from the shambles. Since she must have known the men who were her associates, she must have realised also her own risk. Yet still she kept her faith, while perceiving that safety lay in betrayal. Truly a noble act of heroism, though based upon a mud-heap. Thus when we bear in mind how the two brothers repaid her trust, and reflect upon the breach of law-honour sanctioned by James Mansfield, there comes the obvious suspicion that, whatever her iniquity, the woman was more than repaid in her own coin.

Little is remembered of her subsequent history. A few days after her trial it is recorded that she visited the play in Lord Lyttelton’s chariot. During the following spring she was honoured by the polite attentions of James Boswell. On the 15th of May of this year, great Johnson himself declared that he would have visited her at the same time as his *fidus Achates* were it not that they had a trick of putting everything in the newspapers! Possibly other references occur in ‘Bon Ton Magazines’ or similar *chroniques scandaleuses*, now treasured in tree calf or crushed morocco, and vended at so many guineas per ounce. There is a hint somewhere that her charms had begun to wane, although she was only thirty at the time of her trial, for a life and experiences such as hers trace lines upon the face and dim the lustre of the eye. Still, whatever the cause, we may conjecture that her friendship with Lord Lyttelton did not last much longer
than a couple of years, as, while he succumbed to the famous bad dreams on the 27th of 69
November, she died before June 1779 in very distressed circumstances. Possibly she was supplanted by the famous Mrs Dawson.

In the testimony of her contemporaries there is unanimity with regard to the beauty and wit of Margaret Rudd—the sole grudge, even of the women, being that she was clever enough to cheat the gallows. To pretend sympathy with those who were saddened because she received no punishment is superlative cant, for the penalty would have been out of all proportion to the offence. Thus the cheers that rang through the Old Bailey on that December evening long ago find an echo in our hearts to-day. Moreover, since it was needful to offer up a propitiatory sacrifice to Mammon, it was a shrewd common-sense that selected the brothers as the more deserving of the awful atonement.

In the scarlet pages of the chronicles of crime there is not another dazzling figure such as the mistress of poor Daniel Perreau. Yet she walks across the dim stage in the guise of no tragedy queen as Miss Blandy. If at all, she compels our tears amidst our smiles, and such tears are the most gentle and spontaneous. Light, sparkling, joyous, she chases pleasure with reckless laughter, meeting the fate of all who pursue the glittering wisp, heedless of the deepening mire through which they tread. It is wrong to watch her dainty person with delight, but we cannot avert our eyes. Alas, *transit gloria mundi*! One of the most excellent of modern critics speaks truly of this immortal lady as a forgotten heroine of the *Newgate Calendar*, and she—the idol of princes and lord mayors—has not received a niche among the national biographies! 70

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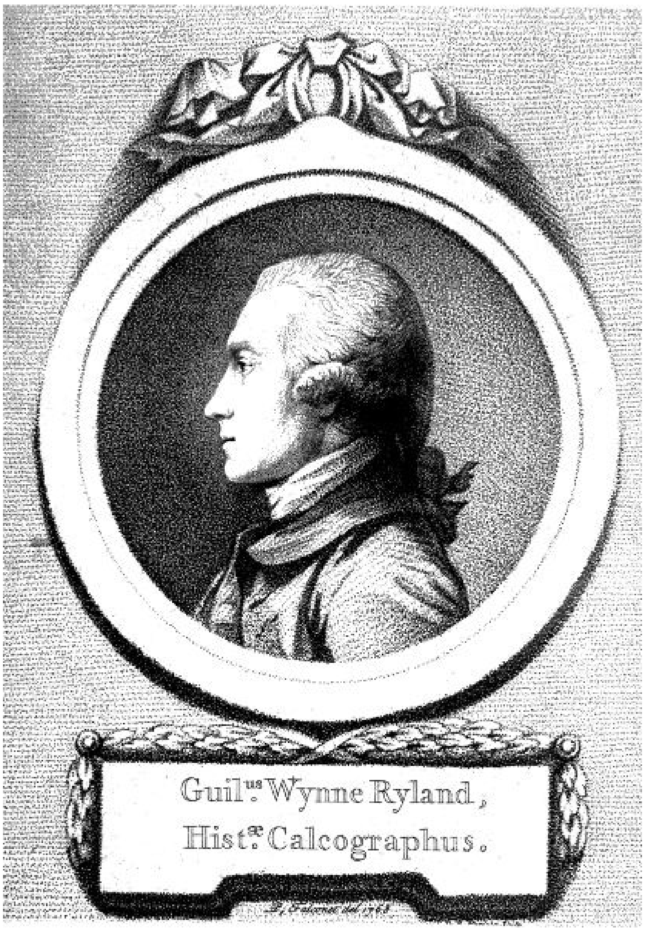
Although both words and music may have been plagiarised from old Irish ballad and old Irish melody, it is probable that the story of Surgeon Robert Adair and Lady Caroline Keppel suggested the later version of John Braham, December 17, 1811.

NOTE.—We are indebted to Sir Thomas Frankland for one of the most charming mezzotints by Wm. Ward, after Hoppner—a picture of his two daughters. 74

THE KING’S ENGRAVER

THE CASE OF WILLIAM WYNNE RYLAND, 1783

About the time that Miss Blandy was commencing her ill-fated amour with Captain Cranstoun, a dark-eyed boy with earnest, clear-cut features, often carrying a portfolio of drawings under his arm, might have been met by any one who strolled along Fleet Street or the Strand in the early morning between Charing Cross and the Old Bailey. From his home beneath the grim shadow of Newgate prison, where his father, Edward Ryland, prints and engraves in a house next door to that in which thief-taker Wild levied blackmail, the young artist trudges each day to the St Martin’s Lane Academy. And should one meet him in the autumn of 1749, he will be wearing a suit of solemn black; and his grave, eager face will seem more sombre than wont, for his patron and godfather, the good and kind Sir Watkin Williams-Wynne, has been killed by a fall from his horse, to the unspeakable grief of every son of gallant little Wales.



Guil.^{us} Wynne Ryland,
Hist.$^{\text{æ}}$ Calcographus.

Around the school of drawing where young Ryland is learning his craft, a new world is springing into life—a world of fancy, grace, and colour, destined to free old London from the sable sway of dulness. It is the world of art, over which the deep black deluge has rested for so long, soon to be peopled with the bright creations of genius. William Wynne Ryland will see some of these great ones ere he leaves St Martin’s Lane for the studio of a new master. Often, as he passes the coffee-tavern of Old Slaughter, he must catch sight of a placid, round-faced young man, with a mild pair of eyes that seem to need the aid of glasses, hurrying down Long Acre, while he envies Mr Reynolds, the portrait-painter, who has the entry to the Club that meets beneath the roof where Pope has held his court. Or, when he looks up at the house where the elegant Thornhill lived and worked, now the residence of Beau Hayman, more at home with the bottle than the brush, he may observe a tall, sentimental youth springing through the door, whose thoughts are far away amidst the woods and dales of Sudbury, where dwells a pretty miss called Peggy. And possibly, a little later, he will listen to the romantic fable that Tom Gainsborough has married a princess in disguise. Sometimes he may meet a middle-aged compatriot, named Richard Wilson, whose glowing scenes from Nature are to wrest the guerdon from France, and to found the incomparable school of British landscape.

Frequently a smile will steal over Wynne Ryland’s grave, nervous lips, as a small boy with a big head and a long, Punch-like body scampers down the lane, whirling his crooked legs, and he will hail the truant with the cry: “What, little Joey, have you been tolling for a funeral?” But the breathless lad, who has wasted too much time in his favourite game of assisting his friend the sexton at St James’s Church, scuttles back to his casts and models. Perhaps, one day, this little Joey Nollekens, who in good time produces many a beautiful bust and statue, will be allowed to take his friend into the studio of the great good-natured Roubiliac. “Hush, hush!” we can hear the volatile master cry, as he drags his young admirer before the figure which his deft chisel has caressed for a last time; “look, he vil speak in a minute!” And as the youth gazes upon the noble 76 work, his quick Welsh blood, warmed by the infection of genius, glows with like ambition to do and dare. Soon, also, he becomes a pupil of the sculptor in St Peter’s Court, from whom, whatever else he learns, he must acquire a boundless self-confidence.

Shortly after the death of his godfather, young Wynne Ryland, now about seventeen years old, is bound apprentice to engraver Ravenet, who came over from France to help Hogarth with his plates, and who has set up a school south of the river in Lambeth Marsh. As the crows flies, it is a short journey from the Old Bailey, but one must turn up Ludgate Hill, wind round Black Friars through Water Lane, holding one’s nose if the wind comes north-west down the grimy Fleet, and from the steps take wherry to the Surrey side. Across the Thames, the wide, deep ditches, bordered by their fringes of willows, have changed the moss into a fertile plain.

Old Ryland is careful to conciliate the French artist now and then by a judicious commission, which takes the form of woolly book-plates after Sam Wale—classic pictures according to Queen Anne traditions, filled with urns and hose-pipe torches, wooden scrolls of parchment, and busts on pillar-boxes, gentlemen in cotton dressing-gowns, with stony beards, and demure ladies in flowing nightshirts. We meet these curious plates in a rare copy of the Book of Common Prayer, with the sign of Edward Ryland of the Old Bailey, and similar ones in Sir John Hawkins’ interpretation of Old Isaac. Young Wynne takes his part in the work, and though Master François gives him the lead, aided by fellow-countrymen Canot and Scotin, while the senior prentices, Grignion and Walker, also ply their gravers, a glance at ‘Luke the Physician,’ or ‘St Matthew at the Receipt of Custom’ will show that the youthful Welshman already is the equal of 77 the best of them. Thus for five years he works under Ravenet.

It must have been a happy home in that dingy, sunless house in the Old Bailey, where Wynne Ryland’s early days were spent. The father, busy and prosperous, devoted to his wife, eager to encourage the talents of his boys, and observing proudly, with expert eye, the amazing genius of his third son. Yet over all there broods the sad shadow of the grim prison. Often in the night the silence is broken by the hoarse voice of the bellman chanting this refrain:—

“You prisoners that are within,
Who for wickedness and sin,

> “After many Mercies shown you, are now appointed to Dye to Morrow in the Forenoon: Give Ear and understand that to-morrow the Greatest Bell of St Sepulchre’s shall toll for you, in Form and Manner of a Passing Bell, as used to be tolled for those that are at the Point of Death....”

It is the loathly knell of the unhappy wretches within the deep black walls. And in the morning the awful boom of St Sepulchre rolls over the housetops, while a ribald, drunken mob chokes the street. Then comes the clank and clatter of sheriffs officers, and, as the procession moves from the iron portals of Newgate, there follows an open cart, driven by a gruesome creature astride a coffin, and in which, bound and quaking, lie the poor passengers to Tyburn. Such scenes are a portion of the boyhood of William Wynne Ryland, the great engraver.

But, after the long years of his apprenticeship have rolled away, a brighter and more glittering life than dingy old London, or even the whole world, can show, comes to the young genius. Since his youth Paris has been whispering to him her enticing summons—Paris, the Cyprus of art, where beauty, love, and colour walk hand in hand, and where he whose fingers can fashion their 78 charms may become mightiest of the mighty. Two friends and old school-fellows are eager to make the same pilgrimage, and the indulgent parent, whose foresight perceives whither the talents of his gifted son will lead him, gives his consent. Although he knows that if the lowering storm-clouds shall burst, a visit to France may mean exile until the close of the war, he resolves that the young man shall pursue his art in the studios of the great French masters. So, early one morning the three enthusiasts mount Christopher Shaw’s stage-coach at the sign of the ‘Golden Cross’ and resting at Canterbury over night, reach Dover in good time the next day. With a fair wind, a stout smack will touch the opposite coast in a few hours, where they must tolerate a much less speedy team and a more shaky vehicle along the road to Paris.

It is the eve before the deluge, and a sunset, having no part in the morrow, most brilliant and gorgeous of aspect. To the eye of the poet or painter there is no blemish in the fair landscape. His vision rests only upon graceful palace or shining gardens. Around the fountains, over the lawns, glide the creatures of Arcadia—beautiful gentlemen in dazzling frocks and scented ruffles, toying with bejewelled sword or flicking the lid of a golden snuff-box, moving their satin limbs in obeisance to their fair partners. Sweet ladies with snowy ringlets falling upon bare shoulders, the bloom of roses in their cheeks, and the sheen of pearls on their round breasts, fluttering like butterflies amidst the flower-beds, clad in shimmering draperies, flashing in a blaze of colour. Or, in the twinkling of an eye, the picture may dissolve, to become more entrancing. My lord now trips the mead a dainty Strephon, tuning his pipes, and shaking the ribbands at his knees, while his highborn Phyllis, still wearing her powdered hair and disdainful patches, twirls her silken ankles in the graceful freedom of short frocks. What though these 79 scenes dwell only on the canvas of the painter of Valenciennes! They are as real as were visions of angels to the dreamer Blake! In the eyes of the artist the whole of laughing France must be a fairy Arcadia such as this, for the witching Pompadour, who fulfils the thoughts of prescient Watteau, directs the dance.

Then from the thicket comes the tinkle of silvery laughter, where the paths wind beneath the branches to lonely dells, through which the sunlight streams in floods of amber between the leaves. Here, amidst the gold and olive shadows, which chase each other in flickering play round some graven image of goat-faced Pan, flits a wanton lady, flying from her persistent lover, but laughing, tripping, and calling to him still, as she draws him onward. Or, in the cool grove, crowned by a wealth of ivy-tinged greenery, a sylph-like figure sweeps through the air in her velvet swing, and her shining arms, raised to grasp the ropes, throw the contours of her form into shapely pose. From the bushes beneath sounds a burst of raillery, as her swain rises to his feet, gazing with rapture as the pretty girl flies past him and returns, adoring the tiny slippers, and the silken hose that vanish in dainty curves beneath a fluttering screen of drapery. The fancy of Fragonard has painted the spirit of his age—a world full of leaves, and flowers, and sunshine, where life moves with the rhythmic cadence of the swing, where every breath is pleasure, recking naught of pain or death.

Each palace that crowns these fairy gardens, wherein the splendour of man reaches its highest goal, is a sanctuary dedicated to the worship of feminine beauty. From every wall glows her picture, majestic in opulent lines of dazzling flesh—Cytherea draped in creamy foam, or languishing upon her couch with robes of gossamer, the divinity of the shrine. All the fair throng 80 of lords and ladies, flashing with brilliants, shining in silk attire, are her votaries, who bow in idolatry beneath the spell. More than human are these worshippers, for they have tasted the honey-dew upon her lips, and have drunk the milk of Paradise. Yet only half their life-story has been told by François Boucher. As semi-divinities he has limned them, sporting as children around their Venus-mother, grovelling as satyrs before the throne of their queen. We must turn to other pictures to view their destiny. Their fate is that of all mortals who seek to share the pleasures of the gods. Duped by the alluring smile of the deity, they spread their tiny wings to invade her home, and the outraged divinity turns upon them in her wrath and smites them with death.

Not one of those who immortalise the romance of that fairy age can read the writing on the wall. Boucher, Fragonard, and their gay school, who are as blind to the future as the dead painter of Valenciennes, depict only what they see. The squalid little leech of Boudry is still in his country home, or wandering, an enthusiastic boy, in greedy pursuit of science to the sunny south; the sea-green *avocat* of Arras has not yet looked upon the light; the lion-hearted tamer of the Gironde also is unborn. Even the surly, pock-fretten features of giant Mirabeau have never passed through the streets of Paris. A long, brilliant night is still before the giddy capital.

None of the ominous hungry growls from squalid purlieus can arrest the ears of young Wynne Ryland, who has come to Paris to shake off the memory of sad Old Bailey, who sees naught but the colour and romance. Thus he breathes into his soul, with strong, eager lungs, the perfume-scented air. With the enthusiasm of genius he plunges into work at the seductive studio of the inspector of the Gobelins. Sieur Boucher is at the summit of his fame, petted by Madame de 81 Pompadour, commissioned by King Pan. Surely the handsome, dark-faced Welshman, who can trace on copper the gallant compositions of his master as finely as any pupil of Le Bas, must have won the love of the gay, profligate painter. And, should it be his humour, what a strange world Monsieur Boucher can reveal to the pupil’s eyes! One day, perhaps, he may hold before him a jewelled fan, glowing with luscious pictures, which he has just created for la belle Marquise. Or it will be a fancy sketch of some lacquered tabouret that he has designed for her private room at Versailles. Sometimes he may grasp the young man’s arm, and, drawing him a little aside, will open a secret portfolio, whispering, with a smile upon his pleasure-worn face, and drooping his dissolute eyelids, “Pour le boudoir de Madame dans l’Hôtel de l’Arsenal.” Then, while Wynne Ryland gazes upon the beautiful Anacreontic pictures, which no scene within the cities of the plains can have excelled, his black, thoughtful eyes will flash with admiration, and his white teeth glitter between his parted lips. It is no place for innocence, nor for narrow virtue, this glowing, gilded salon of Sieur Boucher the incomparable.

Yet the young Welshman does not neglect his proper craft. As the work of later years bears eloquent testimony, none of the gifted pupils of Le Bas have profited more from the instruction of that famous school. Jacques Philippe, as might be expected, turns him on to the plates of his *Fables choisies*, designs after Oudry-interpretations of La Fontaine parables, spread over four mighty tomes, beloved of the amateur who collects the *estampes galantes*. Volume II., bearing date 1755, contains a couple of these—with signature in Gallic orthography, ‘G. Riland’—portraits of peacock-feathered jay and boastful mule, humanised in the text, though strangely wooden in the picture. 82

Still, the line-engraver, with all his splendid art, is not the master that moulds the destiny of William Wynne. Among the numerous pupils of Le Bas is an ingenious person named Gilles Demarteau, who is practising a new method of working his copper plate with tiny dots which make the finished print as smooth and soft as a drawing in chalk. Out of this arises a vehement artistic causerie, for it is a sure fact that a man of forty, one Jean Charles François, has received a pension of 600 francs for this same invention, which, some say, another before him invented after all. Ryland, no doubt, learns everything he can from both pioneers, without troubling to ascertain the original discoverer, and, as this ‘stipple’ manner takes his fancy, he soon becomes as dexterous as those who teach him. Further, he finds that this same dotted plate may be tinted by the engraver’s brush, giving an almost perfect illusion of a picture in water-colours.

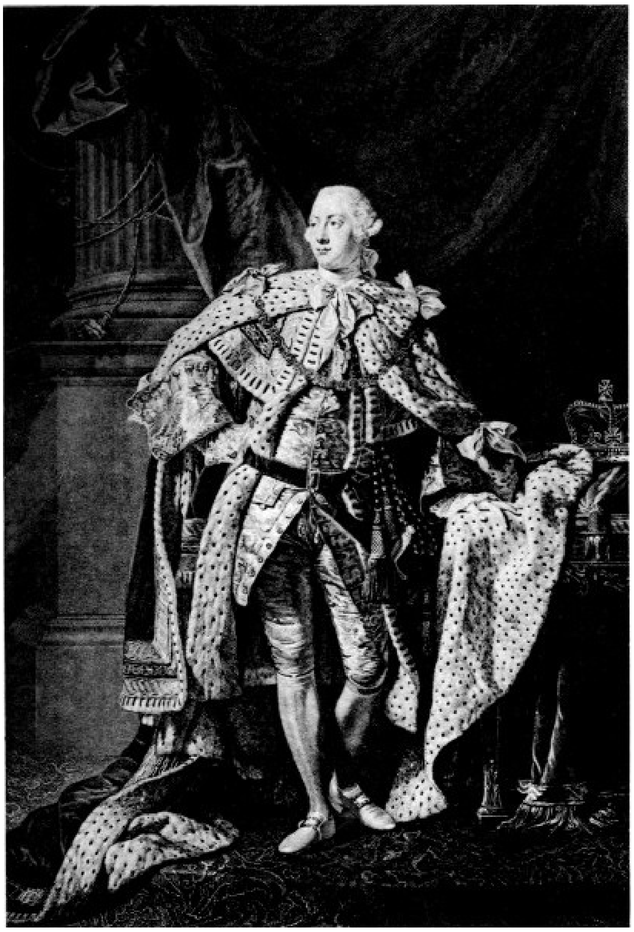
At last the young Welshman makes up his mind to complete the grand tour, without which the education of an artist is incomplete. Some say that the medal he gained at the Académie Royale entitles him to free tuition at Rome. At all events, he flies south to blunt his pencil upon the gnarled contours of Michael Angelo, and to shade the tender lines of Raphael—for the immortals of Leyden and Seville have not yet thrown these high priests from their altar. This same enterprise proves of much service to him when, in a year or two, the great lords at home wish him to transcribe, in the novel ‘Demarteau-after-Boucher’ fashion, their collections of the great masters. Hitherto he has been true to his first love, the line-engraving, in the dainty fashion of Le Bas, and the Parisian connoisseurs of ’57, who glue their glasses upon the rounded limbs of Leda toying with her swan—a print after Boucher which Ryland has pulled from his plate—acknowledge that some good has come from Angleterre at last. 83

With this same work the Welsh engraver first woos the British public, showing it at the Exhibition of the Society of Artists in Spring Gardens in the May of ’61. About this date, after an absence of five summers, when he is in his twenty-ninth year, he returns home to England. Chance has much in store for him. For a long time the canny Prime Minister, known to most of his fellow-countrymen as the Boot—an opprobrious, not a popular term,—has been looking out for a cheap line in engravings. Some time ago, courtly fellow-Scot Allan Ramsay had painted wonderful portraits of the noble favourite and royal Prince George; so, when the first was Premier and the other Defender of the Faith, it became necessary for the welfare of the nation that their lineaments should be scattered broadcast through the medium of a copper-plate.

“Robie Strange is my man,” thinks painter Allan, and makes the mistake of telling his illustrious ex-sitters before he has caught his engraver. There is a dreadful *contretemps*. Stout-hearted Robie is acquainted with Scottish truck—he will have none of them. “Off to Rome to copy great masters,” is the excuse. “Cannot waste four years over your pictures!” But in stout Robie’s heart of hearts there may lurk another motive; for Robie has whirled his claymore at Prestonpans, and Charlie is his darling. Indeed, he might have gone the way of wry-necked old Lovat had not a devoted damsel allowed him to hide beneath her hoop—to whose skirts, very properly, he remained attached ever after. Robie snorts at the canny price they offer him. A hundred pounds to engrave the cod-fish features of royal George! when Rome and the great masters are calling loudly, where he will kiss hands with his own King James III. “No, thank you!” says Robie, and, packing up chalks and drawing-board, takes himself off on his travels.

In this dilemma Mæcenas Bute, who, to do him justice, keeps his eyes open for budding genius, 84 hears of the young Welsh engraver, the beater of Frenchmen on their own soil. Being an art-collector, probably he has seen an assortment of the fleshy prints after Boucher. So, as Robie is with Charlie over the water, Bute secures Ryland to copy his likeness by the polite Allan, and, in due course, “the handsomest legs in England”—legs literally fit for a boot—appear in a very creditable line-engraving, emblazoned with a coat of arms. Thus in this month of February 1763 William Wynne has reached the top of the tree, happy and smiling, at Ye Red Lamp, Russell Street, Covent Garden, close to Button’s and Will’s. The portrait of the beautiful legs, along with his red-chalk imitations—employed industriously ever since his return from the Continent in several sketches from the old masters,—convinces ‘Modern Mæcenas’ that Robie’s room is better than his company. A word whispered in the ear of the royal mother would be enough to persuade apron-string George that the clever Welshman is the artist for his features. At all events the great honour is offered, and Taffy, very shrewdly keeping his head, takes care that, from his point of view, it is a good deal. It is a most amazing deal—£100 down for the drawings, £50 a quarter as long as the work lasts, and the proceeds of the copyright. However, thus it stands—Wynne Ryland blazons himself with the fearsome title, ‘Calcographus Regis Britanniæ’ and, setting up in the true manner of a master, begins to take pupils. One of these, worthy James Strutt, who comes to him the year after his achievement with the beautiful legs, remains a trusted friend through life, and the tutor, in turn, of his eldest son, who, alas, meets an early death.

During the next four years, being paid for time, Ryland, like a true British workman, continues to pick out slowly the salmon-lips and Gillray stare of his royal master. A large number of the 85 red-chalk engravings from pictures of the great painters in the possession of noble patrons belong to this period; and when George is finished, he goes on to copy Cotes’ picture of the Queen with the infant Princess Royal in her arms. While he is basking in smiles from the throne, he is employed in other ways, visiting Paris in the middle of his work to collect engravings for the royal connoisseur, which prints, we are told by the festive Wille, are “magnifiques épreuves ... fourniés comme pour un roi.”



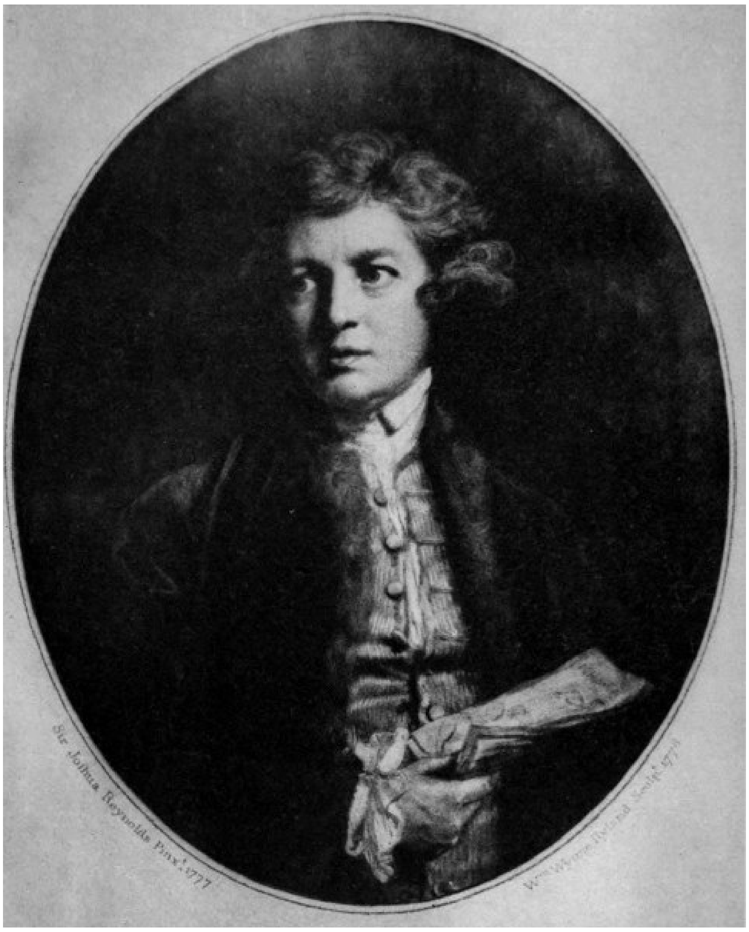
HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE III.
ENGRAVED BY RYLAND.

These are the halcyon times of the artist’s life—these are the days when we catch a glimpse of him swaggering along Bow Street, with silver-hilted sword and ample ruffles, by the side of a heavy-jowled brawler of handsome person and agile, spiteful tongue, listening with black, eager eyes and flashing teeth to the jibes and sallies of his friend. Or, beneath the arm of this same aggressive Charles Churchill, he turns into Will’s coffee-house, and sits in easy deference on the fringe of a little ring, while he hears a torrent of charming, vicious diatribe, at the expense of poor patron Bute, pouring from the wine-stained lips of the cross-eyed apostle of liberty. Or perhaps poet Charles, who wields the Twickenham rapier in the fashion of a butcher with his cleaver, may take up this Dunciad of peers, roaring out a gruesome fable—how poor John Ayliffe was strung up at Tyburn to shut his lips concerning the crimes of peculator Fox. Then, while they talk of the forged deed that brought the luckless agent to the gallows, a shudder may pass through the graceful limbs of artist William as he thinks what a small matter may take a man to the triple tree.

At other times two chairs will halt in Russell Street, and Ryland and architect John Gwynn, gorgeous in brocade frocks, satin knee-breeches, and silk stockings, will step out gaily, giving 86 the order to their bearers in two significant monosyllables—‘Carlisle House’ And among all the dazzling throng that crowds the salons of fair Therese Imer, alas for the worth of poor human nature! the one we know best—better, even, than the old maid in knickerbockers from Strawberry Hill—is a broad-limbed Italian, with frizzy hair and fierce nigger eyes; which same African-tinged gentleman moves through the company with much self-conscious play of robust leg, and a truculent stare, ogling such a one as half-draped Iphigenia Chudleigh, or making obeisance to buxom Caroline Harrington, while the whisper follows, keeping company the almost filial glance of pretty Sophy Cornelys—“The famous Casanova—it is the Chevalier de Seingalt.” Then, should Wynne Ryland draw close while the splendid blackguard babbles French to Milord Pembroke or Milord Baltimore, he will hear a dreadful tale of a certain Mademoiselle la Charpillon, who, to the eternal honour of her frail fame, has humiliated the sooty rascal to his native gutter. Wynne Ryland and companion John are very fond of these light and airy assemblies in Soho Square.

For the clever engraver his connoisseur Majesty seems to foster a great regard. Possibly, the proof prints of Wille—‘fit for a king’—have been picked up for an old song, and tickle his thrifty soul. At all events, he is pleased to grant to the artist a most amazing royal boon; for, at his intercession, he—the third George, by the grace of God—actually pardons a capital felon. A ne’er-do-weel rascal this same poor felon, so tradition relates, but all the same he is Wynne Ryland’s own brother. Near Brentford, or upon breezy Hounslow Heath, or some such fashionable highwayman resort, in a drunken frolic—after the fashion of Silas Told’s respited friend David Morgan—he calls upon two unprotected females to stand and deliver. And for this same daring frolic the rash Richard Ryland is taken, tried, and handed over to Jack Ketch. And 87

Jack soon would have made short work of Richard if the favourite engraver to the King had not moved the royal bowels to compassion. For, incredible though it may seem, his Majesty does turn his thumb to the side of mercy, and brother Richard receives pardon; after which exertion the royal bowels remain obdurate for all time.



Charles Rogers Esq^{r}.

At last the regal portrait is finished, hanging in state upon the walls of the ‘Great Room’ belonging to the excellent Incorporated Society, when it opens its exhibition on the 22nd of April 1767. The artist is now a resident in Stafford Row, close to the Green Park, or, rather, as he prefers to particularise his address, ‘near the Queen’s Palace,’ upon whose picture, with the slumbering baby Princess in her arms, he is engaged. His portrait by Pierre Falconet, drawn during the next year, shows him a man in the prime of life, with clean-cut, delicate profile and a neat bob-wig tied by black ribbon, published by a dutiful pupil who trades as Bryer & Co. in Cornhill. This kind of trade, unhappily, has much allurement for Wynne Ryland, who, with his splendid monopoly of plates—the royal George, her maternal Majesty, the Modern Mæcenas with his shapely legs—seems to scent appetising profits. So Bryer & Co. becomes Ryland & Co., and any of the royal public who desire these regal portraits must purchase them from the proprietors at No. 27 Cornhill, near the Royal Exchange. Unhappily for this same No. 27, the public—enamoured of the Wilkes squint and disdaining the regal stare—do not treat these prints in the manner of hot cakes, and upon a fateful day in December 1771, No. 27 is in the hands of the broker’s men.

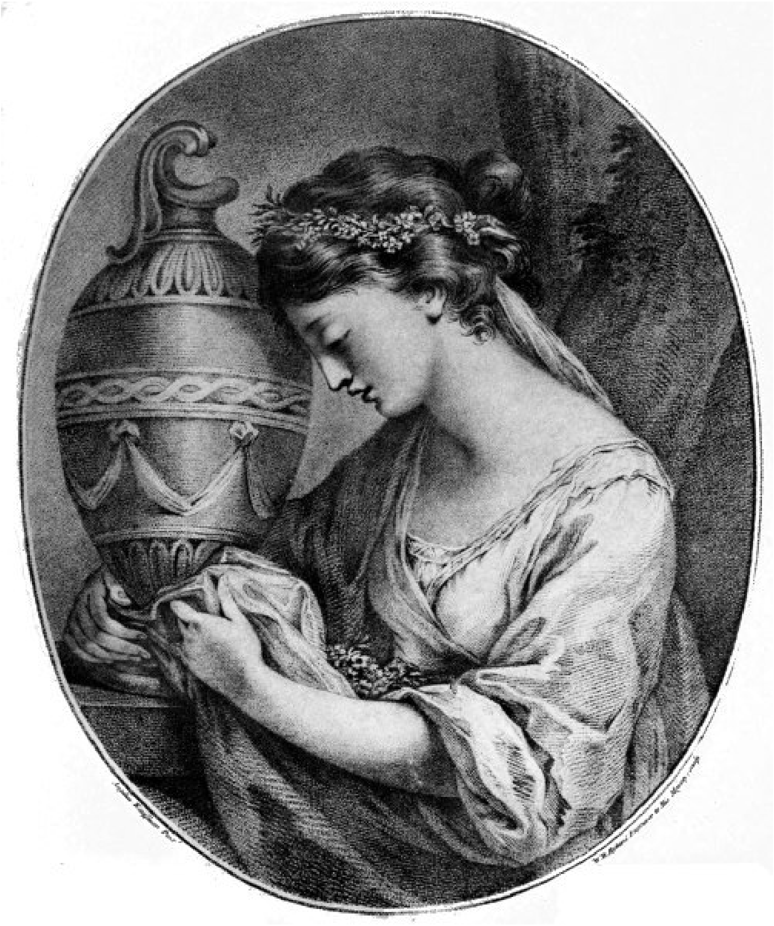
Early in the same year a strange thing happens in Ryland’s studio. A proud father brings along his fourteen-year-old son, a boy of splendid and weird genius, as the sequel shows—a sequel 88 prolific in pictures of the immortal sheik struggling against his environment of sands and storms and improvidence, which, like his interpreter Blake, sheik Job, overwhelmed by tree-trunk legs and half a gale of beard, regards as the judgment of his God. But this weird boy with the large head and amazing eyes objects to the parental scheme of making him a pupil of the great engraver. “Father, I do not like the man’s face,” murmurs boy Blake, when the pair have left Ryland’s studio. “It looks as if he will live to be hanged!” “Prescience, intuition—all the things not dreamt of in thy philosophy,” babble his legatee mystics, bowing the knee to jaundiced mind as rapturously as to portraits of human abortions, aping verbal harmony of empty sound, plastering deformities with giraffe necks and swollen limbs in a wealth of muddy hair and a saffron skin—good and sedulous disciples. Boy Blake can have heard nothing of the brother Richard hanging-escape! Such a small affair has never been breathed by fond parents who go to entrust a weird son to brother Wynne! Prescience, intuition, are more potent physical instincts than the throb of suggestion or empiric thought. Thus clamour legatee mystics, spurning the simple mental machinery put into motion by the association of ideas.

It has been reserved for a lady of our own times, whose graceful pen has been devoted to the radiant prints of fair women of olden days, to tell the romantic story of poor, crushed, bankrupt Ryland and sweet feminine charity in the person of dove-eyed ‘Miss Angel’ A scene, alluring as any of the glowing old-world engravings, is this dainty-coloured picture painted by Mrs Frankau. Within the oak-panelled studio, through which the winter twilight is stealing in flickering shadows, the two ardent souls are wrapt in the communion of art. And while coy, diaphanous Angelica listens to the fascinating tongue of the virile, dark-skinned Welshman, her quick 89 southern fancy whispers that this man is the knight-errant who shall write her fame amidst the stars. Ryland has come with a heart of lead; he goes away with a heart of gold. For one of the most famous of unions in the annals of painting has been sealed, and in a little while the prints after Kauffman will have captured the imagination of the whole world.

In a house in Queen’s Row, Knightsbridge, the great engraver commences one of those life-and-death struggles that genius alone can wage successfully against malicious fate. Gradually—for he is young and strong and brave, while the trust of a sweet woman warms his courage—he emerges from the choking atmosphere of debt. One by one his creditors are paid, and at last, free from his bankrupt chains, he is his own master. It is a fine work, this proud, independent cancelling of obligations—merely moral claims—a fair tribute to the lady who has been his tutelar divinity. For it is through his engravings of Miss Angel’s pictures, to which he applies the ‘stipple method’ which he learnt in France, that he wins his way back to fame and fortune. Soon he is a contributor to the newly-formed Royal Academy exhibition, sending very properly as his first works a couple of drawings copied from the canvas of the sylph Kauffman. Thus pass three sober years, while he perfects his new art, living with his young wife far from the delights of town and the old seductive companionship, first at Knightsbridge, and then moving a couple of miles further out into rural Hammersmith.

At last he resolves to tempt the grimy god of trade once more. Better assets are in his store than a salmon-profile king or maternal majesty, and he knows that the marketing bourgeois will not be hindered by squint of Wilkes from clamouring for his many pictures of Venus, beaming with the soft, dove-like eyes of pretty Miss Angel. So, in the third year after his bankruptcy, he hangs 90 out his sign once more as an honest print-seller at No. 159 in the Strand, near Somerset House, by the corner of Strand Lane, trading as William Wynne Ryland, engraver to his Majesty. From the first the enterprise flourishes. Angelica’s plump little Cupids, drawn in rosy chalk, appeal in their suggestive resemblance to the heart of the British matron; the dainty Angelica Venus, with her large haunting eyes, becomes a pattern of female loveliness; Angelica’s mild and chaste interpretations of classic romance push aside all previous readings. More than all, the Kauffman pinks and yellows, transformed by the deft fingers of the wonderful Welshman into soft, rainbow-tinged impressions—like a delicate painting in water-colours—capture the public fancy. Such engravings never have been seen before, and never will be seen again. It is not strange that No. 159 in the Strand becomes one of the most popular print-shops in London.

During those nine years, from 1774 until the spring of 1783, the trade venture of the engraver to his Majesty continues to enjoy great prosperity. Profits reach the sum of two thousand a year, while stock and plant swell to a total of five figures. Few well-fobbed merchants, no chair-sporting City dame, can resist the temptations of that seductive window. A pleasant sight for Miss Angel, that little knot of open-mouthed shop-gazers with burning pockets, as she passes in hackney coach, a vision of clinging drapery in her white Irish polonese. While, if at that moment the happy proprietor steps out, bound for the counting-house of Sir Charles Asgill and his friend Mr Nightingale, with whom he is having some considerable bill of exchange transactions—a glimpse of those large eyes and crest of feathers at the coach window will bring down his laced hat in a sweep of obeisance, as he bows to the knees. Then, after the bankers have discounted 91 all he wants, he will hurry off to Golden Square to show his Miss Angel the last impressions of some of her pictures, glowing in colours, or copied in the popular shade of red. Perhaps, one of these days, as he comes near the studio, a chair may stop as he passes, from which glides a beautiful lady, wearing a crown of glorious hair, brushed from her forehead, who rests her starry eyes upon him for a moment with a slight motion of her tiny rosebud lips. And his heart will beat more quickly as he recognises the woman whose radiant face has brought poor Daniel Perreau and his brother to a shameful death.



In Memory of General Stanwix’s Daughter who was Lost in her passage from Ireland.

Sold at N^{o} 159 near Somerset House, Strand May 10th, 1774.

For Wynne Ryland’s conscience is becoming a heavy burden. In spite of his princely income, artistic improvidence is beginning to weigh him down. Over his soul the like spirit that swayed Sieur Boucher the incomparable reigns absolute. Gilded rooms, where the Eo. tables pave the road to ruin, swallow his guineas in their rapacious maw. His open hand scatters gold amidst his friends. Miss Angel, his patron saint, returns to her native land. Although he remains the kind husband and devoted father, the shadow of sin creeps over his roof-tree. A pretty girl, whose fresh young beauty has stolen his heart from the mother of his children, becomes a mistress who squanders his earnings faster than they are reaped. Those bill of exchange transactions with bankers Asgill and Nightingale grow more considerable. Friends and accommodators Ransome and Moreland often receive him in their counting-house, with his pockets full of crisp notes drawn upon the Honourable the East India Company of Leadenhall Street; for this clean, easy paper-credit is always welcomed as deposit for current coin.

At last comes the fatal crash, bursting over the town in a thunderclap, striking sorrow into the hearts of thousands. On the 3rd of April 1783, when the London merchant opens his newspaper 92 —*Morning Chronicle or Daily Advertiser*—he reads there that William Wynne Ryland stands charged before the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor on suspicion of forging the acceptance of two bills of exchange for payment of £7114, with intent to defraud the United East India Company. Kind John Gwynn throws aside his plans of stately edifices, walking the streets with streaming eyes, sorrowing for his friend. Statuesque Domenico Angelo hurries to condole with poor Mary Ryland, and the sight of the agonised wife and children robs the good-hearted Italian swordsman of sleep. But the engraver had left his home at Knightsbridge on the first of the month, and although the City Marshal searches for him in the Old Bailey and in the Minories, nothing is heard of him for fourteen days.

On the morning of the 15th of April, a drunken woman reels into the ‘Brown Bear’ Bow Street, hiccupping an exciting story that entices the runners even from their pewter pots. She is the wife of a Stepney cobbler, who for many days has been harbouring a strange lodger—a man garbed in an old rusty coat, with green apron and worsted nightcap, who poses as invalid Mr Jackson who needs the country air; which same delicate invalid rests indoors all day, only venturing out after nightfall to enjoy the health-giving April east winds. But he is not Mr Jackson at all, babbles tipsy Mrs Cobbler Freeman, for, when taking one of his shoes to her husband to mend, she noticed a bit of paper pasted on the inside, and, tearing it away, she has seen written his real name—William Wynne Ryland. This is great news for the ‘Brown Bear’ runners, and Chief-officer Daly, accompanied by a fellow robin-redbreast, takes coach with Mrs Cobbler Freeman to Stepney Green.

From his garret window the guilty engraver beholds the coming of the bloodhounds. With a brief 93 prayer for pardon he flies to his razor, and when the constables burst through the door they find him stretched upon the boards with a gash across his throat. Still, he has not cheated cruel fate. A surgeon staunches his wound, and watchers surround his bed lest he should seek to meet death once more. In the agony of that long night, while physical torture conquers even the deep, black pain of unutterable despair, the wretched sufferer atones for the sins of a lifetime. Yet on the morrow they take him rudely from his couch, and while the foul cobbler goes clamouring to the India House for his blood-money, Ryland is brought before Sir Sampson Wright, who sits in the place of blind John Fielding in the office at Bow Street. There he is given over to Governor Smith, who carries him to the Bridewell at Tothill Fields, where he lies for weeks sick almost unto death.

Newspaper canards spring up in wonted manner like mushrooms from a dunghill. Mr Ryland, who cannot recover—so they say—has confessed his crime to Sheriff Robert Taylor, naming also a pair of accomplices, and hints a third. As he cannot recover—so they say—Keeper Smith has a couple of men to watch him always, lest he should kill himself. Newspaper reason uses these odd arguments and more. Among the feasts of scandal crammed down the public gullet one fact is readily digested—Ryland is guilty beyond all refutation! Forged E.I.C. bills have been found in shoals—none but the great engraver could have been their author—he attempted self-murder because he was certain of conviction. All true, possibly; nay, probably, but where is the proof?

The trial of the poor sick artist skips a session. In tender mercy those in power do not shut him up in fetid, overcrowded Newgate, but allow him to remain under the watchful care of good Keeper Smith. His kind jailor does everything in his power to lighten his dreary lot, making him 94 a trusted friend, allowing him to take walks with him in the open street, confident that he will not break his parole. It is not until the eve of the session that they drive him to the Old Bailey, around whose bloodstained walls he used to play with his brothers as a child.

On Saturday, the 26th of July, he is brought to face his accusers. Not until the last moment do Crown lawyers intimate the terms of indictment, for there are several forged bills laid to his charge, and, conviction appearing a matter of doubt, the Honourable E.I.C. wishes to be certain of its prey. So Crown lawyers select a minor charge—a small bill for £210—which they assert Ryland has copied and engraved from a true document, uttering it knowing it to be forged. Both bills have been lately in the prisoner's possession—this is made clear—but which is the counterfeit? A hard nut for Crown lawyers, since both are like as two peas. Unless they show that the first which Ryland had received is the true one, their case falls to the ground, for no man can copy what he has not seen. A breathless crowd, whose hearts are all for the man in the dock, watch the ghastly duel of keen wits, for it is death to one if he is vanquished. Witnesses come and go, but tierce and parry keep the defendant unscathed. Witnesses advance and retire, but Crown lawyers find them weak reeds. Banker Ammersley swears to his signature on the first bill, but this proves nothing, as Banker Ammersley's autograph is not the seal of Company John. One Holt, late E.I.C. secretary, whose brain is not so clear as it was, makes a dismal display in the box, while the courage of Ryland's friends mounts high. One Omer, E.I.C. clerk, tries to spot the true bill, but counsel Peckham involves him in a maze of legerdemain. All the gallant little host of well-wishers, who have drunk deeply of newspaper canards, and still more insidious City 95 gossip, are amazed that Hicks's Hall should have deemed such evidence worthy of a true bill—amazed, moreover, that their friend seems to have a chance of escape.

Suddenly the quick shadow of despair flits across the face of the prisoner. For a moment the brave, easy self-confidence leaves him naked to his enemies. Crown counsel Sylvester—who lives in fame as the judge of maiden Fenning—has played his last card, calling to the witness-box a calm, unemotional man of commerce, Mr Waterman of Maidstone, papermaker for twenty years. Then the reason of the Hicks's Hall opinion is made clear. Papermaker Waterman brushes aside all doubts—he made the sheet upon which one of the bills is printed, recognising the marks of his moulds, distinguishable only by expert eye. Since this Maidstone Waterman is positive that the paper on which one of the E.I.C. acceptances is stamped did not reach London till May 1783, it is certain that the first bill which came into the possession of Ryland was the true one accepted by the Company. Thus two counts of the indictment are decided—the last bill is the spurious one, and it was uttered by the prisoner.

Yet what is the whole significance of this carefully accumulated evidence! Merely that an amazing forgery has been wrought, and that Ryland alone, who had the motive and the skill, possessed also the opportunity. Every heart within the crowded court is filled with pity for the accused man. Bankers Moreland and Ammersley, though called by the Crown, have striven to assist the defence. Prosecutors Sylvester, Rous, and Graham have shown no vindictive spirit. Even stripping Judge Buller—he who drew up a specification of rod for the benefit of wife-beaters—strives to find a "chasm in the evidence," endeavouring to prove that the honourable 96 servants of the E.I.C. have made a mistake. Finally, when this big-brained lady-whipping Buller comes to instruct the jury, he specially commends the prisoner's defence—read by the clerk of arraigns, as poor Ryland's throat is too sore for the effort—for its matter and good sense.

Then mercy hides her face, for the youthful judge lays down calmly the most astounding of eighteenth-century judicial dogmas. "It stands prisoner," declares this Buller, "to show how he came by the bill in order to prove he did not know it to be forged." So—musty old twiners of red tape—they cannot fasten the guilt upon the man, thus with impotent *tu quoque* they demand that he shall prove his innocence. Since they cannot rip him open in the witness-box, they shift their own burden upon his shoulders. Since he cannot prove his innocence, they deem him guilty, forgetting the good British legal converse of this proposition. Bewildered by judicial hair-splitting, the jury at last withdraw. No direct evidence convicts him—circumstances, prejudice rather, the whispered stories of numerous E.I.C. bills (forgeries all) that have passed through the hands of the engraver. If one indictment does not draw, others will follow—he had the motive, means, and opportunity, and he flew to his razor when the runners came to take him. Half an hour of such reasoning kneads the brains of jury into proper hanging shape, and they decide that to Tyburn the prisoner must go.

Quiet and brave, as he has been through his long trial, the man in the dock rises to his feet when his judges return. Courage is stamped on the strong, deep lines of his face, though the face is white as his soft ruffles, or as the snowy vest that lies beneath his russet coat. Coming forward, he listens calmly while they declare him guilty, bowing to the Bench. A thrill runs through the 97 court when the foreman pronounces the dread word, but, though all hearts are throbbing with pain, one fond hope rises in every breast—that the power of a gracious king will rescue this erring genius from a shameful death. Also, the poor servant himself thinks first of his royal master; for as he is conducted back to loathsome Newgate, he tells the friends around him that, although he has been the victim of persecution, he can perceive a beam of mercy. Alas, he could not know his sovereign!

A week later the dreary session draws to a close, and Ryland is brought up again, and alone, before the rest of the convicts, to hear his sentence. Calmly and bravely he bears this ordeal like the last. Already two petitions have been presented at Windsor—one the day after he was condemned, the other on the thirtieth of the month. It is supposed that he will be kept alive for a while, since he has begged that his life may be preserved a little longer, not for his own sake, but that he may finish some plates for the benefit of his wife and children. Even the heart of royal George may have been touched by the piteous request. So the prisoner spends the gloomy days in toiling at his task, scraping the copper sheets with his stipple-graver, literally dying in harness. Nor is it inadequate work, for when his printer is allowed to bring him the proofs he is able to murmur with satisfaction, “Mr Haddrill, my task is finished!” Yet two pictures after all are left incomplete, one of which Bartolozzi, to whom he sends to beg the favour, and who owes him as a master of his craft so much, promises to take in hand, while jovial William Sharp polishes the other. For King George, when pressed once more to spare the poor artist because of his great genius, replies sternly—“No; a man with such ample means of providing for his wants could not reasonably plead necessity as an excuse for his crime.” Material logic, worthy of the 98 man!

On Friday, the 29th of August, dawns the fatal morning. Before nine o’clock the outer Press Yard is overflowing with sight-seers; but because of Governor Akerman’s humane order, none are allowed within the smaller court to disturb the last moments of the unhappy sufferers. Presently the iron-studded door of the lodge is flung open, and Sheriff Taylor, bearing his wand of office, enters the prison to demand the bodies of his victims. Then through the expectant crowd the turnkeys slowly force a path, and down this narrow lane the malefactors walk one by one with hideous clank of fetters. On his knees beside a block of stone a creature with punch and hammer deftly rids them of their chains. Five times the strident blows echo through the vaulted walls, while as many unhappy wretches pass into the hands of the hangman’s lacqueys, busy with their bonds and cords. Last of all comes a slim, graceful figure, clad in a suit of mourning with white ruffles and silver shoe-buckles, unencumbered by chains, walking as unconcernedly as though he were a spectator of the scene. A shudder runs through the throng as all eyes rest upon the gifted artist, who, as he passes on, quietly salutes those friends whom he chances to recognise. With a respectful bow the Sheriff advances and leads the prisoner to the lodge, away from the crowded quadrangle.

“Don’t tie Mr Ryland too tight,” he commands the attendants as they fasten the cords.

“Never mind, sir,” is the quiet answer; “they give me no uneasiness.”

All the time he chats calmly to those around, bearing himself in this, as through all other scenes to the end, as a brave heart and a gentleman. Then the clatter of arms is heard outside, for the City Marshal is bringing up his troop. A moment later the door is thrown back, and from the 99 steps a stentorian voice bellows aloud, “Mr Ryland’s coach.” With brisk, easy steps he passes out into the street, closely followed by the attendant Ordinary. Suddenly he springs forward, and in an instant a tiny girl has thrown her little hands around his pinioned arms, while he kisses her passionately—his own daughter, the child of sin. Tenderly they induce him to hasten the agonising farewell, but his steel-clad soul is steadfast and unshaken. Tearing himself away, he hurries on with a firm tread.

Then the procession moves forward. A strong company of Sheriff’s men and City Marshal’s constables leads the way, parting the dense surging mob for the progress of the official chariots and the black mourning-coach that follows next in line. Another carriage, in which sits one Lloyd, an ex-housebreaker turned psalm-singing penitent, comes after that of Ryland, and then the pair of loathsome carts with four more miserable victims. No cant or cowardice marks the bearing of the poor artist. Unlike the conventional hypocrite of such a time, his lips do not move in response to the exhortations of white-banded Ordinary Villette. No prayer-book rests in his fingers. Having made his peace with God, he does not deign to humour the prejudices of man. Unjustly, they are sending him to a cruel death. Why should he appear to worship in the fashion they have chosen? Thus, while the procession moves onward, his calm, inscrutable face gazes upon the scene that passes before his eyes.

An amazing spectacle, this eighteenth-century march to Tyburn, revealing as completely as the roofless city of romance the human animal taken unawares. No braver picture of dauntless courage ever has been displayed in battlefield than the serene victim, tied and bound, who is drawn along slowly to his shameful death. Though the deep toll of St Sepulchre's passing bell 100 may beat in cruel blows against his heart, as he moves past the old church at whose font his brothers and sisters were given their Christian names, there is no tremor visible to the thousands who gloat upon his form. Down the slopes of Snow Hill runs the quick, eager whisper, for the eyes of all seek but one man, "Which is Mr Ryland?" And the careless murmur swells into a louder key, "There he is in the coach—that is he—that is Ryland"—the heartless babble of a multitude of savages. Thicker and thicker teems the concourse, as the procession crawls over the bridge and up Holbourn Hill, swollen like a black, turgid river by streams that flow from haunts of filth and foulness—the sweepings of the slums. Thieves, cut-throats, hoarse drunkards, and shrill strumpets join in the delirious march with the loud, mad tread of a thousand clattering feet.

Thus they move onward. Within the sable coach the smug Ordinary is mumbling scraps of Holy Writ pertaining to the time and place, the valley of the shadow of death. In response, a hundred ribald oaths and loathsome jests are pealing all around. Within the sable coach the poor ecstatic housebreaker is piping a quavering hymn, his joints shaking in palsy, his eyes, which gleam in horrible whiteness, raised to the skies. All around, the hands of a hundred thieves are busy at work as they tramp along in this march to the grave. Beyond Chancery Lane the wide thoroughfare seems to pass into a new world. Although the street echoes still to the tread of ten thousand squalid footsteps, high up on either side, at the windows or in the narrow balconies, wealth and beauty take their part in the mighty spectacle. Sweet, pale faces look down, while soft, heaving bosoms press the casements. Beings who might soar amidst the stars are sunk in the mire—all compelled by the haunting, irresistible tramp rolling onward in the march of death.

Yet the footsteps never pause. Forward still, winding through St Giles, the highroad to Tyburn 101 opens to the view. There is no halt now for the Lazar-house bowl, nor would those fettered men in the carts wish to quaff it. Huddled together in the first, the three are babbling supplications; prone and fainting, a half-dying creature is stretched within the last. In front, the hysterical housebreaker is swaying like a drunkard on the seat of his coach, still quavering forth his piteous hymn. Only the artist, whose carriage leads the way to the shambles, gazing calmly around with grave, stony face, will have no truck with the cant of humanity. For his thoughts are far distant, fleeing from the mighty roll of footsteps till they soften to his ears like the murmur of muffled drums. All around him are visions of bygone days. Yon narrow road that is pouring forth its human torrent leads to Soho, where, with the gentle Gwynn, he used to visit the gilded palace of Therese Cornelys, or that other Carlisle House, the fencing-school of splendid Angelo. Down that long street is Golden Square, but there is no pretty Miss Angel to weep for him. And far away, beyond the distant horizon, lies the palace of his king, but before it there is reared the gaunt, frightful spectre of the triple tree.

Then the sound of voices swells louder while the march is stayed. Through the windows of his coach he can see the three bare posts close at hand, so that he can almost touch them. Slowly the creaking carts roll forward, halting beneath the wooden bars, and a sweeping circle of soldiers spreads itself around. Perched upon the park wall is a long mass of expectant faces. Here and there rise huge stands, tier upon tier, choked to the full with swaying humanity. As far as the eye can reach is a dense, surging throng, crushing forward, ever crushing, as though eager to press the victims to their doom.

Presently the black clouds that have been slowly unfurling their shadows across the August sky burst in a peal of thunder, and the tempest rushes through the air. Amidst the flashes of 102 lightning, a fierce rainstorm hurls itself to earth. For a moment the bloody work must pause, since it is impossible to stand against the blinding torrents. Half an hour passes. Then the deluge ceases as suddenly as it arose. Hastily the Sheriff gives his orders, and soon expert hands have arranged the ropes around the necks of the three rain-soaked wretches in the cart. Swiftly the second tumbril, in which the sick man is lying prostrate, backs to the coach where sits the penitent housebreaker, and he is summoned to the gallows. In a few moments the halters are placed upon their heads, while the contrite thief entreats the multitude to take warning from his fate. At last, when all is ready, they call upon Mr Ryland. Springing lightly down the steps, he mounts the cart, and stands beside his two fellow-sufferers—a brave, graceful gentleman in black, quiet and unflinching. Strange contrast indeed to the swooning creature on the floor, or to the noisy burglar, who shrieks to heaven, wringing his hands. Ordinary Villette comes forward, pressing his holy attentions upon the unhappy artist, who listens to him calmly and respectfully, while close at hand his wretched companions pray long and loud. Suddenly there is a shrill, wailing sound, rising and falling in equal cadence with the see-saw rhythm of a hymn, "The Sinner's Lamentation," which four terror-stricken creatures, with their heads thrown back, bellow loudly to the skies. And all this time, firm, motionless, inscrutable, bearing even the greatest ignominy—the contact of these foul ones—without a tremor, Wynne Ryland stands silent, waiting for the last cruel moment. Swiftly it comes. His face is covered, the hangman lashes his horse, the foothold sweeps from beneath, and he passes into oblivion. To the other five who sway in the air at his elbow (save one) death also is merciful. 103

A holiday of butchery, cries Mercy; yea, and more, a holiday in which butchery alone has a part, giving naught that chance or strength or valour might lend its victim; butchery a thousand times more squalid than that of the noble Roman. Ah, but it is the pious retribution of majestic laws, declares the spirit of those times; the just conclusion of the social contract; butchery, alas! for these poor victims can have no resemblance to the gladiators of the arena. Yes, indeed, retorts Mercy; it is the vengeance of the sacred majesty of commerce, whose garments have been soiled by the hands of these malefactors, which cannot be appeased by the code of savages, an eye for an eye, a life for a life. Yet ’tis stern for the sake of utility, pleads the spirit; harsh for the public good, so that the evil-doer may be terrified to the advantage of all innocence, and to the encouragement of a Christian life. But what of that handsome youth, is the reply, whose face is seared by vice, and whose hand is in the fob of your sleek, well-fed City merchant: is this one dismayed by these six dangling victims on the tree? No, answers the spirit; but we must not adopt a universal conclusion from a particular case, for how can we judge how many of the tempted have been saved from crime by the terrible example of the fatal rope? True in logic, false in truth, Mercy well may thunder—a valid deduction from *conditional* premiss, but the terms of jurisprudence should not be qualified by an ‘if’ Thus, surely, unless we admit the old Hebrew ‘eye for an eye’ dogma, must we view all legal punishments that deprive a fellow-creature of his life. Alas, that we are controlled by the logic of other times!

The same coach that conveyed William Wynne Ryland along the road to Tyburn brought back his dead body to his friends. Five days later—on Thursday, the 3rd of September—they took him to the tiny churchyard of Feltham, beyond Hounslow, where his father and mother had been laid to 104
rest. For a long time after his death Mrs Ryland continued to keep a print-shop at the corner of Berners Street, where her husband’s engravings commanded a large sale. Subsequently she transferred her business to New Bond Street. From contemporary newspapers we learn that the Ryland plates were much sought after in Paris when his untimely fate became known. Nine years later, on the 20th of October 1792, the unhappy wife went to join her husband in the little grass-plot of the village by the Thames.

With the exception of that mighty scholar Eugene Aram, the eighteenth century never suffered deeper loss by the hangman’s rope than in the death of brave and graceful Wynne Ryland. Just as the marvellous usher is the greatest of schoolmen, so is the Strand engraver incomparably the greatest artist that ended his days upon the scaffold. With him the dissolute and passionate Theodore Gardelle can no more be contrasted than poet Gahagan with the former. Yet, unlike the sombre Aram, poor Ryland did not bear the stain of blood upon his hands. Nor was the evidence of his guilt less open to doubt. Because he failed to prove his innocence they sent him to his death. Still, although there was no lack of tears and lamentation, his cruel fate did not excite the same interest nor cause the universal consternation that was aroused in similar cases. Neither Horace Walpole, Mrs Delany, nor George Selwyn speak his name, and gossip Tom Smith merely mentions him incidentally in a list of engravers. A reason is not far to seek. Not being a man of fashion, how was it possible that an epoch which had beheld so many stupendous melodramas should be greatly shocked by his atonement? Preacher Dodd, the pet of devout ladies; the unfortunate brothers over whom the charms of Margaret Rudd cast the halo of 105
romance; soldier-parson Hackman, with his love and madness; poisonous Captain Donellan of Lawford Hall—all these magnificent criminals had lately made the march to Tyburn, or elsewhere. Little wonder that society, *ennuyé* by the sight of the gallows, had lost its zest for convict-worship.

To say that William Wynne Ryland might have been the greatest engraver that the world has seen would be to state an equivocal proposition, since modern print-science, to which the splendid art has given birth, scarce realises comparative methods, and has no complete list of precise terms. Yet the assertion that none have ever excelled him as a creator of the coloured stipple is a mere platitude. Also, it would be difficult to name any other artist who has produced finer work in all the three great branches of engraving—line, dot, and mezzotint. Still, like every rolling stone, he suggests rather than demonstrates the possession of superlative powers. Although few surpass him as a draughtsman, colourist, and craftsman, he shares the fate of all who pursue unworthy models. While the fair Kauffman sinks into insignificance in contrast to Sir Joshua, the man who translated her pictures into their popular form is worthy to take his place beside all the masters who fashioned engravings after Reynolds. Through the whole of his life it is the same. In careless vigour he speeds along the difficult paths that lead to the golden mountain-tops, but never reaches the summit. To Wale or to Oudry he gives more than to François Boucher. Smiling Ramsay and courtly Bute snatch him from his allegiance to the mighty Italians. Always opportunist, the pleasures of the world entangle him amidst a stifling undergrowth, where his wings may not expand to bear him aloft, free and unconfined.

Nor are his copies of Angelica the best that she can offer. In humble servitude he seems to take 106
all that is given to him. The slave of popular taste, unlike Bartolozzi he never casts off his shackles. A simpering Venus, an over-fed Cupid, a Grecian warrior with a feminine frame—these are the subjects upon which he wastes his powers. Even when opportunity comes to draw a human portrait in the person of a noble woman, he has to struggle against the mockery of a burlesque dress—furled Turkish trousers, or a Grecian turban. Yet how different is the obvious ideal! Since he could transform the work of ‘Miss Angel’ with such wondrous art, conjecture may dream of entrancing pictures after Gainsborough, in miniature, but in perfect semblance, glowing with all the gorgeous tints of the great master.

An illustrious feather-pate, gazing with idolatry upon his own modern photograph, has screamed, “Camera beats the brush! Look upon that picture, and then presume to tell me that Rembrandt or Velasquez has fashioned its equal.” Obviously, for those painters never had such a model as illustrious feather-pate. Yet feather-pate but babbles the gibberish of his times. All who inveigh against soulless lithograph or poll-parrot photography, saying that monarchs of the brush are with us still whose works are worthy of the engraver’s steel, cry as prophets of the wilderness. “Camera beats the print,” shrieks Cosmos; “magna est vilitas, et prævalebit.” Thus poor Cinderella, who never went to the ball with her more gorgeous sisters, is driven even from her home in the kitchen.

Still, could some god transport Wynne Ryland from the sunny plains, he would find work for his hand as alluring as the canvas of Angelica Kauffman. In the gossamer creations of such as Alma Tadema and Blair Leighton, the soft-coloured print might begin a new life. Is it too late to hope that ere he passed over the dark river he left his mantle upon the shore?

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE RYLAND CASE

I. Contemporary Authorities

1. *Authentic Memoires of William Wynne Ryland.* Printed for J. Ryall, No. 17 Lombard Street, 1784. Brit. Mus.

> As these *Authentic Memoires* do not present a very lucid account, it is necessary to place the principal events of Wynne Ryland’s career in chronological order:—
>
> Born November 2, 1733, in St John’s Street, Clerkenwell; the third son and fifth child of Edward and Mary Ryland.
>
> Baptized December 2, at St Martin’s Church, Ludgate, where his name appears in the register as William Wynn.
>
> Studied at St Martin’s Lane Academy—probably during the latter half of the forties.
>
> If, as is generally stated, he served an apprenticeship of five years with Ravenet, he must have been bound to that engraver before 1750.
>
> The second volume of *Les Fables choisies de la Fontaine*, with illustrations after Oudry, shows that he was in Paris in 1755. Having studied for two years under Le Bas, it would seem that he went to Boucher about 1757. According to most accounts he remained abroad for five years.
>
> Probably he was in England in 1761, for several of his red-chalk engravings after the old master were finished during the next year.
>
> In April 1762 he published at Lichfield Street, Soho, an engraving of George III., after Ramsay.
>
> In February 1763 his engraving of Lord Bute, after Ramsay, was finished.
>
> From 1763-67 he was engaged upon the portrait of George III. in his Coronation Robes, after Ramsay.
>
> In the spring of 1765 he visited Paris on a commission for the King (*v.* Journal of J. G. Wille).
>
> In 1767 he was living in Stafford Row, Pimlico.
>
> From 1767-69 he was engaged upon the portrait of the Queen, after Cotes.
>
> In 1767 or 1768 he entered into partnership with his late pupil, Henry Bryer, at 27 Cornhill. This firm became bankrupt in December 1771.
>
> In 1772 he was living at Queen’s Row, Knightsbridge, and in 1773 near the Hammersmith turnpike.
>
> In 1774 he opened his print-shop, No. 159 in the Strand.
>
> On November 4, 1782, he deposited the forged bill on the East India Company with Messrs Ransome, Moreland & Ammersley, bankers.
>
> On the 1st of April 1783 he fled from his home at Knightsbridge, and the advertisement offering £300 for his arrest was published in the newspapers on April 3.

2. *A Catalogue of Mr Ryland’s Exhibition* at Mr Pollard’s in Piccadilly. Brit. Mus.

3. *Exhibition Catalogue of Incorporated Society of Artists*, 1761-69. “In their Great Room in Spring Gardens, Charing Cross.” Brit. Mus.

The following were Ryland's exhibits:—

1761. No. 215. A Print of "Jupiter and Leda," after Boucher.
1767. No. 217. A Print of his Majesty in his Coronation Robes after Ramsay.
1769. No. 301. Two Drawings.
No. 302. One Drawing.

4. *Catalogue of the Royal Academy.* 1772-1775. Brit. Mus. The exhibits of Ryland, with their dates, are as follows:—

1772. No. 227. Vortigern falling in love with Rowena—after A. Kauffman.
No. 228. The interview between Edgar and Elfrida after her marriage with Athelwald—after A. Kauffman.
No. 229. A Portrait of a child drawing.
1773. No. 259. Domestic Employment—a drawing.
1774. No. 255. A Frame with sundry Portraits.
No. 256. " " "
1775. No. 268. Juno borrowing the Cestus from Venus. A Drawing in red chalk, after A. Kauffman.

5. *Dodd's Memoires of English Engravers*, xi. pp. 104-110. Add. MSS. 33404. Brit. Mus.

6. *Joseph Strutt's Biog. Dic. of Engravers* (1785-6), ii. 285. Brit. Mus.

7. *A Collection of Prints in Imitation of Drawings.* 2 vols. 1778. Edited by Charles Rogers. Brit. Mus.

> Ryland contributed fifty-seven plates. These two volumes should be included in any collection of Ryland's works.

8. *Nichol's Literary Anecdotes* (1813). Vol. iii. 256, vol. v. 668, 681, 686.

9. *Reminiscences of Henry Angelo.* 2 vols. London, 1828-30. Vol. i. pp. 473-83. New Edition by Joseph Grego and H. Lavers Smith. Kegan Paul. 1904. Vol. i. pp. 366, 370-75.

> Ryland was a frequent visitor at the fencing and riding school, which the elder Angelo had established at Carlisle House, Carlisle Street, and which, oddly enough, was the second building of that name in Soho Square.

10. *Mémoires et Journal de J. G. Wille.* 2 vols. Jules Renouard. Paris, 1857. Vol. i. pp. 287, 288.

> Wille met Ryland in Paris on April 17, April 18, and May 9, 1765. He tells us that he had been acquainted with him when the English engraver was in France seven or eight years previously (*i.e.* in 1757-1758), which dates fit in with other known incidents of Ryland's life.

II. CONTEMPORARY NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

1. *The Gentleman's Magazine* (1771), p. 572; (1778), p. 594; (1783), part i. pp. 359, 443; part ii. pp. 626, 710, 714; (1808), part i. p. 87.
2. *The European Magazine* (1783), part ii. pp. 158, 172-173.

3. *The Morning Post*,	April-August 1783.
4. *The Morning Chronicle*,	do.
5. *The Morning Herald*,	do.
6. *The London Chronicle*,	do.
7. *The Public Advertiser*,	do.
8. *The Daily Advertiser*,	do.
9. *The General Advertiser*,	do.
10. *The Whitehall Evening Post*,	do.
11. *The London Recorder*,	do.
12. *Ayre's Sunday London Gazette*,	do.
13. *The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*,	do.
14. *Lloyds Evening Post*,	do.

> The most complete account of the trial will be found in the *Morning Post*, Monday, July 28, 1783. Those who are interested in the much-debated question whether the site of the 'Tyburn Tree' was in Connaught Square, Bryanston Street, or Upper Seymour Street, would do well to remember that on August 29, 1783 (so the papers tell us), the gallows were placed fifty yards nearer the park wall than usual. Naturally, its position was changed from time to time.

Note I.—*Dic. Nat. Biog.* The date of Ryland’s birth is given as July 1732! Nor was he the eldest, but the *third* son of his father.

Note II.—*Eighteenth Century Colour Prints.* Mrs Julia Frankau. Macmillan (1900).

Mrs Frankau’s explanation of the flight of Ryland is scarcely plausible. It is not credible that a man who is engaged in a frantic search for a lost mistress would remain in close hiding, posing as an invalid, only venturing abroad after dark. Nor is it a tenable assumption that he attempted to commit suicide in a fit of despair because he fancied that he was being arrested for debt, and thus might lose all chance of finding his *chère amie*. One of the strongest pleas in his defence was that his fortune was ‘princely’ and he protested that he fled because he could not find the man from whom he had received the fatal bill. It is a strange coincidence that the discovery of the fraud upon the East India Company should have taken place on the eve of his disappearance. Moreover, he was not arrested for the forgery that secured his conviction. The warrant charged him with counterfeiting two other bills of exchange to the value of £7114 (as reference to the advertisement columns of the daily papers of April 3 will show), and it was not until this publicity that Mr Moreland, the banker, examined the bill for £210, which Ryland had deposited with his house. Thus the accusation of one crime led to the discovery of another! And it is still more strange that the artist should have cashed an East India Company bill of the value of £210 on September 19, 1782, while on November 4 he should have handed to his banker another bill—an exact copy of the first—bearing a similar date, denomination, and acceptances. Although these two identical bills came into Ryland’s possession within the space of a few weeks, he did not seek an explanation of the remarkable coincidence. A careful survey of all the facts must convince everyone of the guilt of the unfortunate engraver, but it is a pleasure to be able to agree with Mrs Frankau—except in some minor details—in her contention that the evidence was not conclusive. Ryland was convicted because he failed to show that he had received the forged bill from another person, and to cast thus the burden of proof from the prosecution to the defence is quite foreign to the methods of a modern tribunal.

Since the Catholic has become the spoilt child of contemporary literature, it is not surprising to find Wynne Ryland hailed as the victim of Protestant persecution. Yet there appears to be no evidence to support this assumption. There is not a line in the newspapers of the day to indicate that any anti-Romanist feeling was aroused, and had such been the case, the *Public Advertiser*, at all events, whose animosity towards ‘Popery’ is sufficiently evident, would have trumpeted loudly. It is significant that the mob never behaved with greater propriety—very unusual conduct in the howling Tyburn crowd—than on August 29, 1783. How different would it have been if the word had been whispered that a Papist was going to the gallows! Strutt and Angelo, who write so sympathetically of their friend, have nothing to say on this subject, and, indeed, accept his guilt as proved. Although the former, who wrote in 1785, might have reason for reticence, yet the latter, whose book was published a year before the Emancipation Act, could have no reason to suppress such evidence. Indeed, we have only the doubtful authority of the *Authentic Memoires* for the statement that Ryland was a ‘supposed’ Catholic in his early youth. With this very ambiguous suggestion we must reconcile the strange fact that he was buried in a graveyard of the Established Church, and that the last rites were performed by an Anglican clergyman. There are one or two slips of the pen in Mrs Frankau’s interesting memoir. As the catalogue of the Royal Academy shows that Ryland contributed his first drawing in 1772—four years after the institution was established—he was not “one of the earliest exhibitors.” From the same catalogue it appears that the print-shop in the Strand was opened in 1774. The date of the publication of the *Authentic Memoires*, given as 1794, is, of course, a clerical error. Owing to the footnote attached to Ryland’s letter to Francis Donaldson of Liverpool, printed in the *Morning Post*, September 2, 1783, the document must be regarded with suspicion. No trivial disagreement with the conclusions of Mrs Frankau can diminish the interest of her delightful account of the great engraver, which must remain the most valuable of recent monographs.

Note III.—There are references to W. W. Ryland in the innumerable dictionaries of painters and engravers, French, German, and English, such as Basan, Le Blanc, Portalis and Beraldi, Andreas Andrescen, Redgrave, Bryan, etc. One of the best of modern notices will be found in the *Print Collectors’ Handbook*, by Alfred Whitman.

A LIST OF WILLIAM WYNNE RYLAND’S ENGRAVINGS.

(By Ruth Bleackley.)

1. Les Grâces au Bain,	after Boucher.	}
2. La Belle Dormeuse,	do.	}
3. Le Repose Champêtre,	do.	}
4. Vue d’un pont,	do.	}
5. Berger passant une rivière,	do.	} 1757-60
6. La petite Repose,	do.	}
7. La Bonne Mère,	do.	}
8. La Marchande d’Oiseaux,	do.	}

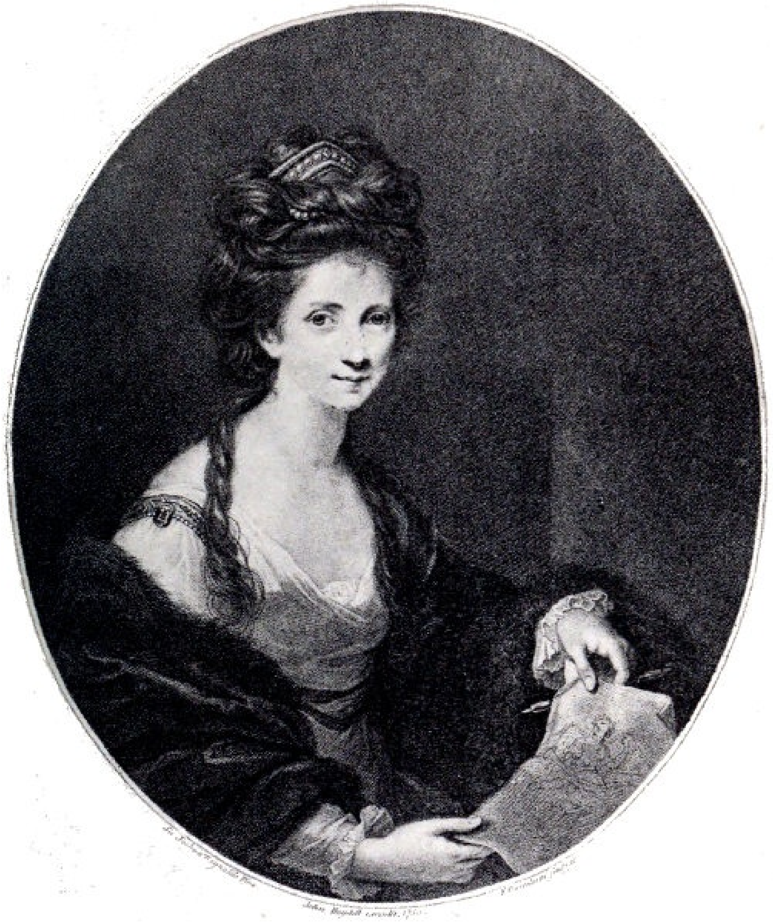
9. I. and II. Vue de Fronville, do. }
10. Jupiter and Leda, do. }
11. George III., King of Great Britain. Published April 1762.
12. John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute—after Allan Ramsay. Published February 1763.
13. George III. in State Robes—after Allan Ramsay. Published 1767.
14. George III. (bust).
15. Queen Charlotte with infant (Princess Royal)—after Cotes. Published 1769.
16. Diogenes—after Salvator Rosa. Published 1771.
17. Antiochus and Stratonice—after P. da Cortona. Published 1772.
18. General Stanwix’s Daughter—after Angelica Kauffman (called also “The Pensive Muse”). Published in colours 1774.
19. Hope—after A. Kauffman—(a portrait of herself). Published in colours, February 7, 1775.
20. A Lady in a Turkish Dress—after A. Kauffman. Oval in colours. Published May 1, 1775.
21. A Lady in a Greek Dress—(the Duchess of Richmond)—after A. Kauffman. Published November 20, 1775.
22. Narcissus. Drawn and engraved by Ryland. Published January 12, 1775.
23. Domestick Employment. Drawn and engraved by Ryland, in colours. Published September 13, 1775.
24. Faith—after A. Kauffman. Published 1776.
25. Dormio Innocuus—after A. Kauffman. Circle in colours. Published May 21, 1776.
26. Olim Truncus—after A. Kauffman. Circle in colours and red. Published, first state, April 3; second state, May 1, 1776.
27. Juno cestum a Venere Postulat—after A. Kauffman. Circle in colours and red. Published January 1, 1777.
28. Achilles lamenting the Death of his friend Patroclus—after A. Kauffman. Published December 4, 1777, in colours and red.
29. Patience—after A. Kauffman. Published May 27, 1777.
30. Perseverance—after A. Kauffman. Published June 24, 1777.
31. Cupid Bound, with Nymphs breaking his Bow—after A. Kauffman. Published March 17, 1777.
32. Telemachus returns to Penelope—after A. Kauffman, in colours. Published December 4, 1777.
33. Venus in her Triumphal Chariot—after A. Kauffman, in colours and red. Published September 7, 1778.
34. Charles Rogers—mezzotint after Sir Joshua Reynolds. Published 1778.
35. Cleopatra decorating the Tomb of Mark Antony—after A. Kauffman. Published March 25, 1778, in colours.
36. Telemachus at the Court of Sparta—after A. Kauffman, in colours. Published 1778.
37. The Judgment of Paris—after A. Kauffman, in colours and red. Published January 17, 1778.
38. Maria Moulins—after A. Kauffman. Published 1779, in colours and red.
39. Eloisa—after A. Kauffman. Oval in colours and red. Published 1779.
40. Britannia directing Painting, Sculpture and Architecture to address themselves to Royal Munificence, etc.—after Cipriani, in colours and red. Published August 18, 1779.
41. Marianne. Drawn and engraved by Ryland. In colours and red. Published January 3, 1780.
42. Eleanor sucking the poison from the wound of King Edward—after A. Kauffman. Published March 1, 1780, in colours.
43. Lady Elizabeth Grey imploring pardon for her husband—after A. Kauffman. Published 1780, in colours and red.
44. The Flight of Paris and Helen—after A. Kauffman. Published 1781.
45. Venus presenting Helen to Paris—after A. Kauffman. Published 1781.
46. Cymon and Iphigenia—after A. Kauffman. Circle in colours. Published January 15, 1782.
47. Morning Amusement—after A. Kauffman. Published March 1, 1784.
48. King John signing the Magna Charta—after Mortimer. Published 1785. This plate was finished after Ryland’s death by Bartolozzi and published by the widow.
49. Interview between Edgar and Elfrida—after A. Kauffman. Published 1786. According to Bryan’s *Dictionary* this plate was finished by W. Sharp and published by the widow.
50. Donald MacLeod, aged 102—after W. R. Bigg. Published 1790.

The following I am unable to date:—

51. John, Duke of Lauderdale.
52. Henry, 7th Baron Digby.
53. Churchill, Duke of Marlborough.
54. Charity—after Van Dyck.
55. The Muse Erato—after Joseph Zucchi.

56. Les Muses (Urania, Clio, Thalia, and Erato)—after Cipriani.
57. Sir John Falstaff raising Recruits—after F. Hayman.
58. Interior of a Dutch Cabaret with peasants dancing—after R. Brackenberg.
59. Penelope awakened by Euryclea—after A. Kauffman.
60. Religion—after A. Kauffman.
61. Ludit Amabiliter—after A. Kauffman. Circle in colours.
62. Penelope hanging up the Bow of Ulysses—after A. Kauffman.
63. Achilles discovered by Ulysses in the disguise of a Virgin—after A. Kauffman.
64. Andromache weeping over the ashes of Hector—after A. Kauffman.
65. Samma at Benoni’s Grave—after A. Kauffman.

Note.—The *Morning Herald*, May 5, and the *Morning Post*, August 28, 1783, state that Ryland left unfinished a plate of the Battle of Agincourt, after Mortimer.



Sir Joshua Reynolds Pinx. *John Boydell excudit, 1780.* *F. Bartolozzi Sculpsit.*

ANGELICA KAUFFMAN,

Ex. Academia Regali Artium Londini

Published Sept^{r}. 3; 1780 by John Boydell, London.

BOOK ILLUSTRATIONS

1. The Book of Common Prayer. Published by Edward Ryland, May 1, 1755. Nine plates by Ryland—after S. Wale.

2. The Book of Common Prayer in Welsh (1770), with the same plates as in former edition.

3. The Complete Angler, by Isaac Walton, edited by Sir John Hawkins. With fourteen plates, dated 1759, by Ryland—after S. Wale. First edition 1760.

4. “Les Fables choisies de la Fontaine.” Illustrated by J. B. Oudry (1755-59). Seven plates by Ryland in vols. ii., iii., and iv.

5. L’Ecole Des Armes. Par M. Angelo. A Londres: chez R. & J. Dodsley, Pall Mall. February 1763. Second edition 1765. With forty-seven plates. A few copies in colours. Ryland engraved fourteen of these plates. Hall, Grignion, Elliot, and Chamber did the rest—all after drawings by John Gwynn. Thus Henry Angelo’s account of this work is inaccurate.

6. A Collection of Prints in Imitation of Drawings. Edited by Charles Rogers. Published London 1778. Contains fifty-seven plates by Ryland in addition to the mezzotint portrait of Rogers.

7. The School of Fencing, by D. Angelo, edited by Henry Angelo. 1787. With forty-seven plates, the same as in the first edition. This book is not well edited, as the letterpress does not always agree with the pictures.

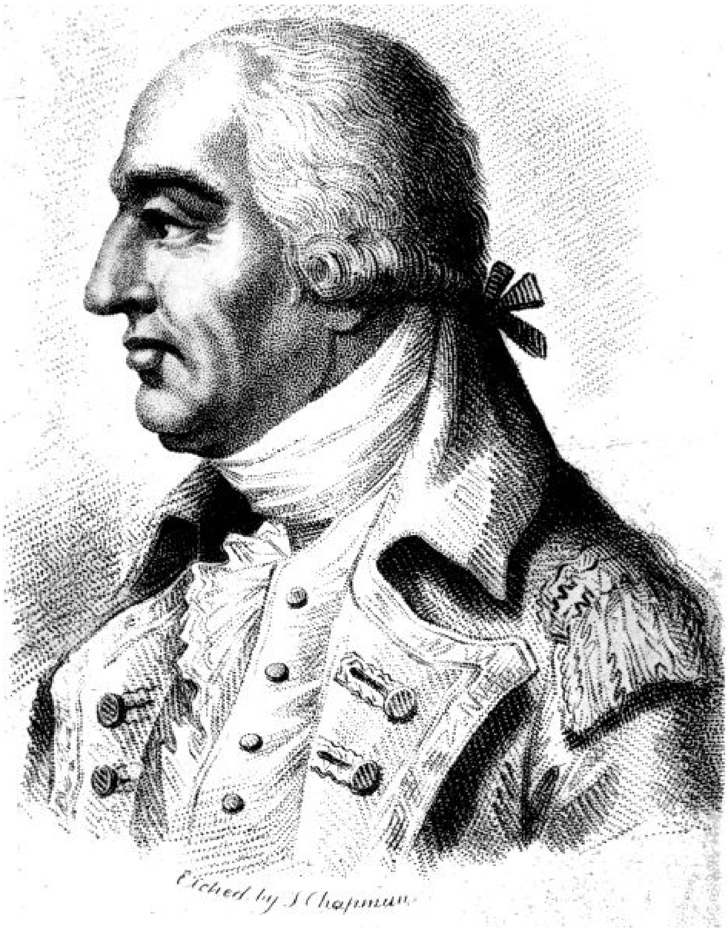
Note.—In every case the date of the engraving has been copied from an existing impression. Possibly there are earlier and later states.

A SOP TO CERBERUS

THE CASE OF GOVERNOR WALL, 1782-1802

> “He wandered here, he wandered there,
>   A fugitive like Cain,
> And mourned, like him, in dark despair
>   A brother rashly slain.”
>   —*A Tale without a Name.* James Montgomery.

On the 26th of August 1782, a captain in the army, named Joseph Wall, just come home from foreign service, sat down to compose his report to the Secretary of State. A glance would tell that he was one of those chosen by destiny to rule man and enslave woman. Although the swift, hot courage of the Celt shone in his fearless eyes and slumbered in his rough-hewn features, the beetling brow, resolute jaw, and fierce, mobile mouth were softened by the gentle mesmeric charm that marks all of his race. In stature he was a giant; while his sweeping shoulders, which towered above the heads of most, the thick, gnarled fingers and stalwart limbs, indicated a mighty strength. For the rest, he was a clean-looking man, with light brown hair and a fresh complexion. Yet the dull grey lines in his face told that the tropics had levied that tax upon his physique which the British soldier is ever eager to pay.



Etched by J. Chapman

Governor Wall.

Published by J. Cundee Ivy Lane Jan^{y}, 1804

There was nothing of moment in the officer’s report to Secretary Townshend. It was merely a rough account of the termination of his stewardship while Governor for eighteen months at the island of Goree. Mere chance had thrown this tiny sun-baked rock once more into the possession of Great Britain. Three years previously the French fleet under de Vaudreuil, *en route* to the West Indies, sweeping down upon Senegal, had seized the English posts at Fort Lewis and Fort James. The victory of Sir Edward Hughes had reversed the position. By the capture of the island of Goree, which nestles south of Cape Verde scarcely three miles from the mainland, the approach to the enemies’ settlements on the opposite shore was placed in the hands of England. Being a station of some importance for trading purposes, owing to its proximity to two great rivers of West Africa, a British garrison remained there during the course of the war. Though deemed less unhealthy than the coast, its climate was deadly. Not a mile in length, and scarcely more than a quarter in breadth, the men had little scope for exercise. All ranks detested the place. The regiment was composed of the riff-raff of the army; the officers were those who could get no other appointment.

Joseph Wall was worthy of better things. Nature had made him one of those soldiers of fortune whom his native land has sent forth unceasingly year by year into the armies of every country in the world. About the time of George III.’s accession he had flung aside the religion of his fathers to obtain a commission, and two years later, at the age of twenty-five, the young Irishman saw his first fight in the West Indies. His fiery valour during the storming of Fort Moro gained him promotion, and he returned home from Havannah in 1762 with the rank of captain. Fate, however, robbed him of his birthright, for twelve years of weary peace laid their rust upon his restless soul. Soon an appointment under Company John took him to Bombay, but opportunity 114 never came to draw his sword in a war of nations. At the close of his residence in India he returned to his father’s home, Abbeyleix, in Queen’s County, a sad example of him whom fortune welcomes with a smile and then turns away her face for ever. The keen spirit that could find no outlet under arms was ill fitted for the civilian’s life. Joseph Wall, the soldier of fortune, possessed none of the grace of humour which might have softened his red, untamable temper. Broils innumerable led to many a bloody duel, and on one occasion—so tradition relates—he crossed swords with ‘Fighting Fitzgerald’ Rumour credits him also with the death of a faithful friend, and, ’tis said, *dux femina facti*. Indeed, several affairs of gallantry stain his record, and once he was called upon to answer an insult to a lady in a court of justice.

At last he sought active service once more. The British colony that borders the river Gambia in North-West Africa offered him employment, and Fort James, a station on the estuary, became his home. Unfortunately, Colonel Macnamara, the Lieutenant-Governor, was a man of similar disposition to his young officer, and during August 1776 the inevitable encounter took place. Wall, on the plea of ill-health, happening to disregard one of the orders of his superior, was cast into prison without trial, and was immured for nine months. An action at law, which appears to have been heard during the year 1779, was the result, and the jury, who, guided by Lord Mansfield, held the opinion that Colonel Macnamara had acted with unnecessary severity, ordered him to pay the sum of a thousand pounds to the victim of his tyranny.

Previously, having returned to England, the Irishman had become fortune-hunter, and cut a dash at Bath or Harrogate, searching in vain for his rich heiress. Such a precarious existence could not endure, and during the year 1780, Joseph Wall, whose finances were at a low ebb, 115 again was compelled to seek employment. The command of the recently captured island of Goree was going a-begging—two Governors having succumbed to the climate in a space of eighteen months—and he accepted the post. Its perquisites were considerable; for as the control of the vast trade along the coast of Senegambia was in his hands, there were endless chances of lucrative commissions and levying extortion upon the native chiefs. Huge inflammable Wall was just the man to tame and cow the rebellious gaol-birds who formed his garrison, and he ruled them with a hand of steel. Neither men nor officers loved his methods. As ships touched but seldom at this far-distant port, the soldiers were called upon often to submit to short commons. A glance from the fiery Governor quelled the murmurs, for a merciless flogging was the fate of the unlucky one upon whom his eye rested for a second time. Even the iron frame of Joseph Wall was soon conquered by the deadly climate. In less than two years he was compelled to send in his resignation. On the 11th of July 1782 he quitted the arid rock, and, his ship being lucky enough to avoid the cruisers of France and Spain, he landed safely at Portsmouth before the end of August. Thus it came about that this soured and disappointed man sent his report to Mr Townshend.

Joseph Wall was only in his forty-sixth year. Although his health had broken down temporarily, he was capable still of a long period of active service. But the unkind fate that had offered his only chance at the close of the Seven Years’ War, and had kept him styed in Senegambia during the struggle with the American colonies, was smoothing the way for the younger Pitt and his ten years’ peace. Thus fortune sports with nations, giving to one Frederick, to another Daun, working miracles with Chatham, or assisting Choiseul to open the flood-gates of a deluge. 116 Lucky, indeed, for humanity that every man has not his opportunity. Valour was not lacking in the British officers who fought at Lexington, at Bunker’s Hill or Saratoga, but theirs was no mate to the courage of those who did battle against them beneath the shadow of the rope. During the early years of the American War a hundred Joseph Wall might have erected a forest of gibbets and have made the colony a second Poland, but the United States never would have survived its birth. It is far better as it is. Truly, there were giants in those days—cruel, untamable giants, but capable of superhuman achievements; and though from time to time we cast off their chains, bidding them stalk through a world of slaughter, yet, to the credit of our race, the spirit even of that robust age kept them mostly in their dungeons of obscurity.

For only ten months did the Irish soldier of fortune enjoy his retirement undisturbed. Dark rumours had been whispered of his bloody régime in West Africa, and one Captain Roberts made grave accusations, of which, however, a court-martial at the Horse Guards took little heed—merely censuring the giant tenderly in minor matters, as the beating of a sentry, with a humorous rider that the man got what he deserved. They are tedious complaints, such as rise to the lips of the slack and spiteful when a strenuous commander insists upon a rattle of bones. It was not until the troopship *Willington* brought home the remainder of the garrison of Goree—now ceded to the French—that a more substantial charge was laid against the ex-Governor. In a few days the newspapers announced that the surgeon and a couple of officers, who had been examined before the Privy Council, had presented a terrible indictment of cruelty against their late commander. Towards the end of February 1784, two men set out for Bath to take Joseph 117 Wall into custody. Although distressed by the warrant, he submitted quietly, merely asking that a lady friend should be allowed to accompany him to London. The ‘Castle Inn,’ Marlborough, was the first halting-place on the journey along the most famous of coach-roads, and on the 1st of March, the next evening, they rested at the old ‘Brown Bear’ in Reading. Here Captain Wall protested that his custodians should not occupy the same bedroom as himself; and to humour him, as ordinary mortals are in the habit of humouring a restive giant, they agreed to remain in an adjoining chamber. A drop to the ground from a first-floor window was not the obstacle to deter the untamable soldier, and the next morning the police-officers found that their captive had vanished. A reward of £200 was offered for his apprehension on the 8th of March, the day on which he is believed to have set foot on French soil. It is understood that he wrote to a friend, stating he should surrender for trial as soon as the popular clamour against him had died away, and it is certain that he sent a letter containing a similar promise to Secretary Townshend, now Lord Sydney, on the 15th of October of the same year. This intention, however, was not fulfilled, and gradually the case of Governor Wall, whose cruelty had excited so much indignation, faded from public memory.

The cause of his arrest was an incident that occurred on the eve of his departure from Goree in 1782. For some time the felon soldiers under his command had been muttering low growls of discontent. Short allowance had been their lot for a long period, and the fear arose that the usual compensation would not be paid unless they received it before the Governor left the island. On the 10th of July preparations were hastened for Wall’s departure. All was bustle at the storekeeper’s office, where a servant was packing the commander’s luggage. No doubt it 118 was whispered among the men that the home-bound vessel would carry a wealth of merchandise, which by right should be left for the garrison. Early in the morning the Governor observed a body of soldiers, twenty or more, marching across the hot sand towards his residence, where they had no right to intrude. Though enraged at this evidence of insubordination, he merely gave an order that they should retire. Two hours later, a still larger number was seen approaching Government House. Wall went out into the blazing tropical sunlight to meet them. So determined were they to vent their grievances that they did not pause to consider that this act was flagrant mutiny. Since their commanding officer had forbidden a similar gathering, the right course was to send a deputation to the Governor, explaining their demands through the proper channels.

That Wall considered the situation was serious, is proved by the fact that he temporised with the men, dismissing them without any threat of serious punishment. In later days he protested—which version was endorsed by several eye-witnesses—that the conduct of the soldiers who spoke to him was insolent and menacing, and that he induced them to disperse by a promise to consider their claims. At all events, he came to no decision until he had taken counsel with his officers, whom he met, as usual, at the two o’clock dinner. The methods adopted show that elaborate precautions were deemed necessary in order to avoid a grave disturbance. Roll-call was sounded about an hour before the proper time, and as the pink flush of evening was stealing over the burning rock the soldiers assembled on parade. Unaware that reprisals were contemplated, the corps was drawn up in a half-circle within the ramparts, in the centre of which stood the Governor and his four available officers. As the men were falling in, or perhaps a little while before, another case of insubordination arose. Word was brought that there was a 119 mutiny in the main guard. Away hurried the intrepid commander to the scene of the disturbance. Snatching a bayonet from the hands of a drunken sentry, the angry giant belaboured the man lustily, and thrust back an excited soldier named George Paterson, one of the ringleaders of the morning, who was about to break from the guard-room.

Having thus smothered this miniature rebellion, the Governor, whose inflammable temper had burst its bonds, hastened back to the parade ground. In those robust times a commanding officer had rude methods of dealing with disobedient soldiers, and Wall had no tender scruples against straining to the utmost all the power that martial law had given him. Yet in spite of his bloody tyranny, it is impossible not to admire the courage of the stout-hearted Irishman. The whole regiment, two-thirds of which was composed of civil or military convicts who had exchanged prison life for servitude on the deadly island, loathed his authority. A few miles off on the coast lay the French settlements, where English rebels would be sure of an eager welcome. There were but seven officers to support the Governor, and one of these, who sympathised with the claims of the soldiers, was under arrest. Except half a dozen artillery-men and some blacks, the remainder of the garrison belonged to the ill-conditioned African corps—a hundred and fifty strong. One bold leader might have raised a swift mutiny. There was a ship in the harbour, and in a few hours the rebels would have been safe within Gallic territory in Senegal.

But the courage of Joseph Wall, which had borne him across the rocky slopes of Moro amidst the hail of Spanish bullets, did not quail before the scowling faces of his own men. Calling two of them from the ranks of the circle—Benjamin Armstrong, sergeant, and George Robinson, private 120 —he charged them with disorderly conduct during the morning, and commanded his officers to try them by drumhead court-martial. As the penalty had been decided previously, the proceedings were brief. After a few moments’ discussion the little tribunal announced the sentence—eight hundred lashes apiece for the two mutineers. A gun-carriage having been dragged forward, the men in turn were ordered to strip. The mode of punishment struck terror into every heart. No cat-o’-nine-tails could be found; nor was it thought safe to trust a white man with the flogging. When the victim was bound to the cannon, one of the blacks was called up, a rope put into his hand, and he was ordered in military formula to “do his duty.” After twenty-five lashes a new operator took his turn in the usual way. During the whole time the garrison surgeon looked on, but made no comment. A thousand strokes of the ‘cat’ was a common punishment in those Draconic days, and it seemed immaterial whether the flagellation was inflicted with a bunch of knotted leathern thongs or with a rope’s-end. When at last the long agony was over, the two poor soldiers were taken to nurse their bruised and swollen backs in the hospital.

On the following morning, the 11th of July, the bloody work was continued. Drastic Wall thought fit to leave an imperishable record of his mode of government. Beneath the flaming blue sky the soldiers were marshalled upon the parade ground once more, and four of their number were selected for punishment in the same informal manner. George Paterson, the guard-room rebel, was sentenced to eight hundred lashes; Corporal Thomas Upton, a ringleader of the deputation, and Private William Evans, were condemned to receive three hundred and fifty and eight hundred strokes respectively; while Henry Fawcett, the drunken sentry, was let off with forty-seven. Having thus vindicated his authority, the terrible Governor proceeded to his ship, which, 121
to the great joy of the awestruck garrison, weighed anchor the same day.

Soon after his departure the drama became a tragedy. A poisonous climate and scanty rations had undermined the physique of the soldiers; besides which, the sickly season was at hand. The ignorance of the medical attendants was supplemented by an immoderate use of brandy. Since the first occupation of the island, men had dropped like flies, while to the sick and wounded a visit to the hospital was almost equivalent to a sentence of death. Corporal Thomas Upton died two days after his punishment; Sergeant Armstrong succumbed on the 15th of the month; George Paterson only survived until the 19th of July. Meanwhile, Joseph Wall, on the high seas, knew none of these things.

Cruel, wanton, reckless as was the deed of the Governor of Goree, such things were of everyday occurrence in the army of his time. Sir Charles Napier has left record of the merciless floggings of which he was an eye-witness a decade later. Forty years after the Peace of Versailles a court-martial had no hesitation in passing a sentence of a thousand lashes. Although the rope’s-end employed in the punishment of Armstrong and his fellows was probably a more formidable instrument than the regimental ‘cat’ it was no more dangerous than the bunch of knotted cords used in the navy. A social system that permitted women and children to be hanged for petty larceny had a Spartan code for its soldiers on active service.

Moreover, any lack of firmness on the part of Joseph Wall might have brought him face to face with a serious mutiny. Riot was the sole means of expression of the inarticulate mob, both civil and military. A few months after the disturbance at Goree, General Conway, Governor of Jersey, was called upon to quell a fierce rebellion among his troops. About the same time wild 122
insubordination was rife in the regiments quartered at Wakefield and Rotherham. The danger of a similar outbreak in a far-off island, garrisoned for the most part by gaol-birds, and close to the French possessions, was multiplied a hundredfold. Severe as were the methods of Wall, had such a man been in command at the Nore the nation would have been spared the terror and ignominy of ‘Admiral’ Parker. Unfortunately for himself, the discipline of the Irish giant was exerted to punish a personal affront. Had his soldiers refused to cheer the birthday of some German princeling, he might have flogged to death a whole company with impunity. Yet, relatively, the ways and means of inflammable Wall were tame. On the 4th of August 1782, Captain Kenneth Mackenzie, who ruled over a similar regiment of convicts at Fort Morea on the coast of Africa, blew to atoms a mutinous fellow-Scot, a private under his command, from the mouth of a cannon. For this deed, being brought to trial two years later, he was condemned to death, but subsequently granted a free pardon. At the time of his escape from the ‘Brown Bear’ at Reading, there were rumours (so Wall alleges) that the Governor of Goree had put to death soldiers in Mackenzie fashion. In which case he bore the stigma of another’s sin.

For twenty years after his flight from England Joseph Wall remained a fugitive from justice, being an exile for the greater proportion of the time. Paris was his principal abode, where he was able to meet many compatriots, who held commissions in the French army. Yet, although poor and in disgrace, he was never tempted to swerve from his allegiance to his king. To have joined the colours of France would have raised him from comparative poverty to affluence, but he kept loyal, treasuring the hope that some day he would be able to return to his country a free man. There is evidence of his presence in Paris at the time of the flight to Varennes in 1792; but 123
previously he paid a visit to Scotland, and had married the fifth daughter of Baron Fortrose, Frances Mackenzie, who gave birth to a son in 1791. At one time he resided in Italy, where he wandered as far as Naples. All these years his crime lay heavy upon his conscience, and it is said that several times he meditated surrender. There is a legend that once he went as far as Calais with this intention, but, his resolution failing at the last moment, he remained on shore. By a strange chance, the boat in which he should have reached the packet was swamped in the harbour before his eyes—a noteworthy fact, like the drowning-escape of immortal Catherine Hayes, for all who credit the old adage.

About the year 1797—so the *European Magazine* tells us, although the date seems premature by three years—he came over to London incognito, where he lived with his wife in Upper Thornhaugh Street, Bedford Square, under the name of Thompson. One day, while some workmen were painting the house, he happened to express a few words of sympathy for a sickly apprentice lad, who he had been told was in a decline. “Yes, poor little fellow,” observed the foreman; “his father was flogged to death by that inhuman scoundrel, Governor Wall.” Sometimes in real life poetic justice will assert its power.

For a long while the outlaw was undecided whether to run the risk of surrender. Under the shield of oblivion he might have continued to live in the metropolis without danger, for his crime was almost forgotten. Yet there were urgent reasons why he should vindicate his character, as his wife was entitled to property which she could not receive unless her husband appeared in person in a court of law. Before such a step could be taken it was necessary for him to stand his trial. In his dilemma he consulted Mr Alley, the famous counsel, who, in the face of his flight 124 from justice, could give him only cold comfort. However, Joseph Wall was not the man to shirk risk in pursuit of a definite object. On the 5th of October 1801 he sent a letter to Lord Pelham, Secretary of State, announcing his presence in England; while on the 2nd of November he appeared before the Privy Council, and was committed to Newgate.

The Special Commission appointed to judge the case of Governor Wall met on the 20th of January 1802. At nine o’clock in the morning the Court assembled in all the majesty of a State trial. Its president was Sir Archibald Macdonald, Chief Baron of the Exchequer, a political Scot who, like many of his betters, owed his position to a wife. Sir Giles Rooke of Common Pleas, and Sir Soulden Lawrence of King’s Bench, two merciful and kind-hearted judges, sat on either side to give assistance. Never was there a more formidable array of counsel for the Crown. Grim and spiteful Attorney-General Edward Law; the urbane and much-underrated Spencer Perceval, Solicitor-General; Thomas Plumer, George Wood, and Charles Abbott, all three destined to hold distinguished positions on the Bench; and lastly, William Fielding, who, like his more famous father, became a London magistrate. Nor were the three barristers for the defence less illustrious: Newman Knowlys was appointed Recorder of London; John Gurney, one of the greatest of criminal advocates, rose to be a judge; and Alley, defender number three, was as astute a lawyer as any of the rest.

No shudder of sympathy sweeps through the crowded court as the figure of the crimson giant passes into the dock. Outside swell the low growls of a gutter-wallowing mob; within, every heart cries aloud for vengeance upon the grim tyrant. Joseph Wall faces his accusers, as he faced all enemies, with fearless eyes and undaunted soul. From the firm, martial tread and high, unbent brow, none would judge that this is an old man, who has lived for sixty-five years. At the 125 close of the indictment the voice of the prisoner rings through the court, to the surprise of all.

“My lord,” he exclaims, “I cannot hear in this place. I hope your lordship will permit me to sit near my counsel.”

“It is perfectly impossible,” stammers the scandalised scion of the Lords of the Isles. “There is a regular place appointed by law. I can make no invidious distinction.”

Jaundice-souled Law opens the attack in most persuasive cut-throat manner, compelled to be fair in spite of his opportunity by reason of instinctive tolerance for all savouring of bloodthirsty tyranny. Pinning the jury down to the first indictment, he bids them think only of the fustigation of Armstrong. “Can the prisoner prove a mutiny?” is Law’s reiterated demand. “You cannot flay soldiers alive, unless they deserve it!”

Law-logic is a marvellous thing. “Wall left island day after flogging,” it persists; “*ergo*, no mutiny.” The jury suck in this eloquence open-mouthed—visions of neatly-plaited halters hover before their retinas. “Governors never turn their backs directly mutiny is quelled,” argues Law, and the myriad black-and-white sprites, who, invisible and in silence, weave their gossamer threads of passion into the webs of poor human nature, hear and tremble. Yet their handicraft still sparkles with the hues of Iris, for not even British law-giver can paint the spirits of the soul in the dull self-colour of his own dreary brain. “Generals never desert their beaten army,” we can hear Law thunder at Judges’ dinner ten years later; “Napoleon is still with his troops on the Beresina!” Wonderful logic, wonderful Law! Pity, for the sake of cocksuredom, that hearts do not beat as he bade them.

“Prisoner did not report this rope’s-end business to Secretary Townshend,” cries the logician. 126 “Why not? Because mutiny plea was an after-thought to cloak his crime.” One wonders of what fashion were the accounts of his stewardship, if any, that this stalwart pillar of Church and State made in daily confession to his God. Did he omit naught? Or did he report all cruel lashes for which he had given sentence, and did he speak of his savage opposition to a change of the bloody code? Kind forgetfulness given by Providence to those who need it most! “Prisoner did not report flogging, because he did not know the man was dead.” Jury mouths open wider upon this marvellous Law, for reason whispers in their ears, “Then prisoner did not intend that the man should die.” But reason is dinned out of their tradesmen pates. “After-thought—after-thought!” clangs ding-dong Law, and echo comes to the true and bewildered twelve: “Away with him to the gallows!”

First witness appears—Evan Lewis—Cambrian bred; a race of man for the most part having no mean, superlative, or unspeakable. Lewis was, or says he was, orderly sergeant on the day of the Goree flagellation; now he is Bow Street runner, brave in scarlet waistcoat. “No mutiny!” declares this Lewis. “Men were as good as gold. They couldn’t have been bad if they’d tried.” Perceval gently leads the witness along, and much is communicated. “Flogged to death without trial”—such is the meaning of Taffy’s testimony. In due course, other soldiers of the precious garrison follow—one, two, three, four, five—and the parrot cry, “No mutiny,” smites the ears of the tradesmen in the jury-box. The Scotch lip of the Lord-of-Isles grows more attenuated, and he sees the man in the dock crowned with halo of crimson. His busy pencil scribbles notes for the

edification—at the proper time—of the luckless twelve men, good and true. “Witnesses each say different things,” writes Caledonian pencil. “But what else can you expect? The thing happened 127
twenty years ago!” And this Caledonian tongue repeats—at the great and proper time.

A gentleman and officer—for things are not what they seem—is produced by Law in due course, one Thomas Poplett, a lieutenant under untamable Wall. This estimable Poplett confesses the Governor had him safely under lock and key—for disobedience—on the day of flagellation, which shows that the red Irishman was not a bad judge of some men’s deserts. From his prison Poplett witnessed the thrashing of Armstrong, and he produces rope with which it was done, or rather someone told him, who had it from one of its nigger wielders, that this was the very same. The Caledonian pencil scribbles industriously. Hearsay evidence? not a bit of it. Nor proof of malice neither, for the nice Poplett may be a collector of curios. But the nice Poplett had done some odd things in his time; had been sacked from Lord George Germaine’s office for telling tales out of school—a dabbling-in-Funds speculation—such things as disgrace men still. The name of Poplett, too, had been posted in the Stock Exchange, with a footnote, ‘Lame-duck’ or some equivalent compliment. A most estimable witness, indeed, this nice Poplett. Splendid material for Caledonian pencil.

There was yet another of similar breed—Peter Ferrick, surgeon of Goree. The rope’s-end business was well in hand when he arrived. Peter takes much credit for this unpunctuality, and the Lord of Isles jots it down a black mark against the prisoner—the why is not clear. “The Armstrong back-slashing did not seem more severe than usual to Doctor Ferrick, but the man is dead.” Doctor Ferrick was amazed at the time, but he knows now that the rope’s-end killed him—a marvellous pair of eyes in the skull of this Ferrick! “Brandy-drinking in the tropics after such fustigation would not be wholesome, and would be done contrary to leech-Ferrick’s orders.” 128
Corollary, note by Scotch pencil—if there was brandy-drinking, the treatment was unskilful, and prisoner must answer for the leech-folly. Query—“Why didn’t Ferrick stop the flogging?” Great wrangling among counsel on account of this same query. “Improper question—the twelve honest tradesmen must not be prejudiced against the man in the dock.” Still, innuendo remains: *i.e.* leech-Ferrick did not interfere, because he was afraid of Wall! The Scotch lip lengthens, and its owner pats the timid leech on the back approvingly. What a grim, bloodthirsty tyrant, this Governor Wall! think the honest twelve. Leech-Ferrick steps down, proud and satisfied that Caledonian pencil has wrote him down an ass. To hang Wall is all he cares. Better a live donkey than a dead giant. Going home, he comes to the bad end of many fools—he writes a letter, which is printed by *The Times*.

Then the tyrant is called upon for his defence. It is simple and straightforward, for he knows nothing of Law-logic. “The soldiers were turbulent; Armstrong was disobedient; every cat-o’-nine-tails was destroyed, so he did the thrashing with a rope; he had no intention of killing the man, who might not have died but for brandy-soaking in hospital; he ran away from Reading twenty years ago, because the mob was howling for his blood, believing that he, like Kenneth Mackenzie, had blown men from cannons.” *N.B.*—The red soldier must have remembered how successfully the ’57 mob had howled for the death of kid-gloved Byng.

Witnesses for the crimson tyrant follow—a poor lot. Number one, mincing Mrs Lacy, wife of late second in command at Goree. This lady gets angry with magnificent Law, to the great scandalisation of the Lord of Isles, and tries to put everyone right, for they are all wrong. Contradictions annoy the Court. When there has been plain sailing—though close to the wind, no matter—it is annoying to think out new and perplexing tracks. “Welshman Lewis was not 129
orderly-sergeant,” persists Mrs Lacy. “The deputation to the Governor was eighty strong. Her husband’s brain was turned by the sun in 1784, so he would have been no use as witness to the arrested Governor.” All this borders on the superfluous, shocking the Chief Baron, upon whom the honest twelve glue their round and honest eyes. “The soldiers threatened the Governor—upon my oath, they did,” vociferates Mrs Lacy, while the Lord-of-Isles, no doubt, thinks sadly of another such shrill voice that assails his ears at home. Then magnificent Law—a naughty Attorney-General now—plies witness with searching questions about solitary visits to imprisoned giant, here in Old Bailey; and though the military widow makes wrathful repudiation, this thin-ice skating exhibition sinks deep into the pious souls of the virtuous twelve. A wicked profligate also, think they, is this cruel red Irishman!

Mary Faulkner, gunner’s wife, comes next, and says similar things, and more; she even heard the men discuss the killing of Governor Wall. Her husband, gunner Faulkner, corroborates. Agrees with the two last that Armstrong was mutinous and threatening. Admits, however, he had little trial. Great excitement among Crown counsel, and learned Plumer presses the point. “Very little trial” is the conclusion sought, and Caledonian pencil records it. No matter that consistent Law has laid it down that if there was a mutiny he will not press for proof of elaborate court-martial. A prisoners witness has scored a point for the other side, and they record it—“Scarcely any trial at all.”

What matters the rest, while the prim Scotsman, in full-bottomed wig, brandishes his pencil! Peter Williams, soldier, endorses all said by women Lacy and Faulkner, but clever Plumer shows him up, on the word of an officer, as “a lying, shuffling fellow.” Private Charles Timbs swears 130
that ‘cats’ were all destroyed by the men, but no one heeds him. Deputy-Advocate Oldham instructs the tribunal that drum-head court-martials are never reported to Government Department. Thus, why should Wall report his small explosion to Secretary Townshend, why ——? But what does this signify in face of what Law had laid down—“Never mind trial! Can

prisoner prove the mutiny?” No need to press Deputy Oldham, for there is no chance of scoring another point at the expense of prisoner’s witness.

Then arrives the great and proper time. The pencil has done its work, and Caledonian tongue now speaks, and Caledonian lip, having arrived at full tension, trembles. Important comments are delivered—a general ripping-up of the Wall witnesses. Chief Baron reads the report to Secretary Townshend, and adds footnote: “No mention of mutiny”—suspicious. Again: “Two officers returned from Goree at same time as the Governor. This,” he echoes Law-logic, “does not indicate existence of mutiny.” Further: “Prisoner made his escape when all witnesses who could prove his innocence were alive”—still more suspicious. Twelve good and honest brows grow still darker and more vengeful. The rope-ending is contrasted with the birching of children; marvellous parallel—as though the maternal heart bore resemblance to the provisions of Mutiny Acts! Back-slapping of leech-Ferrick is long and loud. “Be careful not to hurt a toss-pot,” declares the Lord-of-Isles, “for if he drinks himself to death, you are his murderer!” Wonderful Caledonian pencil that is able to out-logic wonderful Law.

It is ten o’clock at night. For thirteen hours the unfortunate twelve have been box-fast. Within twelve honest waistcoats lies a dull and aching vacuum. The Laws, Plumers, and Lords-of-Isles have similar sensations, in spite of the adjournment-gorge in an upper chamber. Yet, when they 131 retire, the good tradesmen debate this military cause sedulously for the space of sixty minutes. They have sons and brothers in the army, and doubtless much suppressed eloquence to explode. At last, an hour before midnight, they return into Court, faces stern and dark. The deaf giant receives the verdict with a start of surprise, but without tremor of limb. To him the proceedings have been a long, dreary mumble, and he longs for repose. In good set terms, for the benefit of reporters and the junior bar, the Recorder passes sentence, and, as the curtain falls, the gaol-bird mob outside growls forth its plaudits.

Till Friday morning, only thirty-two hours, has been allowed the prisoner to prepare for death. Before trial, Keeper Kirby had given him a spacious and comfortable room, but a cell in the Press Yard wing must now be his portion. With a cry of impotent rage the weary giant flings himself upon his bed, and declares he will not rise till the fatal hour. During the black winter night the felons in other cells hear his voice, for the poor crushed giant is singing hymns to his Maker. Next day there is much wear and tear of good cloth in the seats of the mighty. Government officials sit long over case, and a respite till the Monday following is the result of their labours. The love of the noble and devoted wife, given long ago to him whom she knew as one of the world’s pariahs, shines brighter and more beautiful amidst the dreadful darkness, and she toils without ceasing for a reprieve. All the influence of Clan Mackenzie—such as it be—is summoned to the aid of the condemned soldier, for the second daughter of the house had married Henry Howard, and their kinsman, his scapegrace of Norfolk, is induced to take up the cudgels on behalf of the chained giant. Unfortunately, the senior peer is not a favourite at headquarters. Still, Secretary Pelham gives heed so far as to send down another respite to 132 Newgate on Sunday eve. Wall’s hanging-day is now settled for Thursday, the 28th of January, and the Monday morning mob of gallows-birds howls fiercely when discovery is made that it has been baulked of its prey for a few dozen of hours; which same howls, penetrating in ministerial mind’s-ear to the purlieus of Whitehall, set ministerial hearts palpitating with apprehension. For the Pilot who weathered the Storm no longer has a home in Downing Street, and the hearts of ministerial successors lack tissue.

Not all the wealth of woman’s tears can move authority to greater mercy on behalf of the red giant. The smug and closet-petted doctor, who cares naught for military matters, is bent on his French peace in spite of all that patron Pitt may say, and it seems a small matter to hang a mob-detested officer. “Soldiers a drug in the market—we are going to be friends with the good Buonaparte,” think Farmer George and his Council when they confabulate on Wednesday afternoon. The Caledonian pencil-notes are consulted, and cobwebs gather fast around the bewildered royal brain. Kingly thoughts dwell lovingly upon the royal prerogative of the gallows—a truly English pastime, worthy of a British prince whose blood has run itself clear of all Hanoverian coagulations. Chancellor Eldon, being interrogated, finds his load of learned lumber ill-digested for the moment, and doubts, and doubts, and doubts. Then some brave and discreet statesman—oblivion shrouds his illustrious name—mentions the mutineers of the ‘Fighting Téméraire’ a dozen or so of whom a few days before had ornamented the yard-arms at Spithead, and King and Council ponder deeply. Newgate howls have been ominous, Newgate cries have been eloquent, and the time-honoured platitude, “One law for rich, another law for poor,” has often ended in window—sometimes royal window—smashing. Mercy seems a great risk, far 133 greater because of the ‘Téméraire’ yard-arm business than the unpopular pardon of Kenneth Mackenzie. On the other side there is the alluring picture of the great triumph of British equity—the balance of justice—‘Téméraire’ rebels hanging on one side of the scale, and mob-hated Joseph Wall on the other. “Foreign nations please observe and copy!” A notable triumph for an English-born German prince. Like the peace that was to be, it seemed an experiment worth the while. Farmer George and Doctor Henry prove to have most forcible willpower in the Council, and when his Gracious Majesty posts off to Windsor at five o’clock, to drink tea with his Princesses, the Governor of Goree has been left for execution.

In the condemned cell that same evening the devoted wife and husband hope still for the reprieve that never comes. Keeper Kirby has promised the grief-stricken woman that she shall remain in the gaol till the last possible moment, and while the clock slowly beats its march to the hour of eleven the heart-rending tragedy unfolds its agonies.

“God bless you, my dear,” cries the giant in their last embrace. “Take care of the children. Let them think as well of me as you can.”

Then, while the Governor of the prison escorts the poor lady along the cold, dark corridors, she sobs forth her one piteous question for the hundredth time:

“Is there no hope?”

“Madam, I trust your wishes may be fulfilled,” replies Kirby. “But it is now a late hour, and I have received no orders.”

Sister Howard, who also has borne this terrible vigil, supports the fainting woman from the portals of the charnel-house, and their carriage rumbles away over the stones of Old Bailey. Even these loving friends have failed him, and the red giant must bear his last dismal journey 134
alone. Two turnkeys watch over him, lest he may do himself injury, for he wears no fetters.

“It is a long night,” he exclaims about two o’clock, as he tosses wearily upon his couch.

Still, his voice is strong and resonant with its military ring, though his mighty form has sunk beneath a weight of torture into a mere gaunt framework of bones. Bread-and-water has been his diet since the sentence, and Sheriff Cox, although assiduous in his visits to the unhappy man, will not relax his stern rules. In a little while, as if he looked for sleep, he asks whether the scaffold will make a noise when it is dragged out into the street. With compassionate lie, they answer that it will not, but his thoughts dwell morbidly upon his destiny.

“I most earnestly request,” he tells his attendants, “that I may not be pulled by the heels when I am suffering.”

They attempt to appease him by the promise that it shall be done as he wishes, but he has seen hangings in plenty, and he knows what may happen.

“I hope that the fatal cord may be placed properly,” he persists, “and that I may be allowed to depart as fairly and easily as my sentence will allow.”

At last he falls asleep, and when the huge wooden machine lumbers between the prison doors with a sound that reverberates through the whole building, he is unconscious of what has happened. Also, it is not recorded that he heard the dread chaunt of the bellman outside in the Old Bailey:

“You that in the condemned hole do lie,
Prepare you, for to-morrow you shall die;
Watch all, and pray, the hour is drawing near,
That you before the Almighty must appear.”

About half-past five he awakes with a start as a mail-coach rumbles along Newgate Street. 135

“Is that the scaffold?” he demands, and they tell him no.

Once more he makes anxious inquiries about the methods of the hangman, and they satisfy him as well as they can. Shortly before seven he is led to the day-room of the Press Yard, where he is joined by Ordinary Forde, who, robed in full canonicals, with a great nosegay beneath his chin, seems prepared for a wedding day. A fire is smouldering on the hearth, and a nauseating smell of green twigs fills the chill stone chamber. Gaunt and terrible is the aspect of the red, untamable giant, who is meek and penitent, but with soul still unbowed. A yellow parchment-like texture is drawn tightly over his sunken features, and through their hollow sockets the piercing eyes shine as though in ghastly reflection to the glance of death—not the triumphant glitter thrown back by Death Magnificent, but the stony, frightful stare imparted by the Medusa of Shame. A suit of threads and patches hangs loosely upon his emaciated limbs—an old brown coat, swansdown vest, and blue pantaloons—a sorry garb for one who has worn a colonel’s uniform in his Majesty’s army. For a moment his piercing gaze falls upon Ordinary Forde.

“Is the morning fine?” is the strange, eager question. “Time hangs heavily,” the hollow far-away voice continues. “I am anxious for the close of this scene.”

As if in response to the wish, Jack Ketch’s lackey, a dwarf with face of a demon, draws near with his cords and binds the giant’s wrists.

“You have tied me very tight,” is the weary complaint.

“Loosen the knot,” commands absolute Forde, and the sulky wretch obeys with low mutterings.

“Thank you, sir,” murmurs the giant. “It is of little moment.” The green twigs upon the hearth crackle in a shower of sparks up the wide chimney, and a shovelful of coals is thrown upon the 136
burning mass. Death’s piercing glitter flashes from the eyes of the dying man while his brain

paints pictures in the flames. Then his lips move slowly:

“Ay, in an hour that will be a blazing fire.”

Ay, and you are thinking that in an hour, you poor, red, untamable giant will have finished your long torture, and be lying cold and still—while that fire blazes merrily. In an hour one loving, great-hearted woman will have entered upon the agony-penance that she must endure to the grave. In an hour your little ones will be children of a father upon whom his country has seared the brand of infamy—and these green twigs will have become a blazing fire! Sad—yea, saddest of words that could fall from human lips!

Then the demon of suspense torments the poor giant once again, and he turns to the Ordinary appealingly:

“Do tell me, sir—I am informed that I shall go down with great force; is that so?”

Ordinary’s thoughts cease for a moment to dwell lovingly upon his breakfast-gorge with the Sheriff—the epilogue to every hanging—and professional pride swells his portly soul. With reverent unction he explains the machinery of the gallows, speaking of ‘nooses and knots’ with all the mastery of expert, for Jim Botting and his second fiddle ‘Old Cheese’ are no better handicraftsmen than Ordinary hangman Forde. Presently he in his turn grows curious.

“Colonel Wall,” he inquires, “what kind of men were those under you at Goree?”

The haunting glance of death-shame fades from the piercing eyes, and through the portholes of his soul there flashes the living spirit of defiance.

“Sir,” he cries, “they sent me the very riff-raff!”

Suddenly the reverend Ordinary bethinks himself of his holy office, and plunges headlong into 137 prayer; a contrast that must compel the tear of recording angel—smoke-reeking, unctuous, ale-fed Forde and contrite, half-starved, but invincible giant. Sheriff Cox and his myrmidons enter as the clock is striking eight. A look of eagerness passes over the cadaverous lineaments, a gaunt figure steps forward, and a firm, hollow voice murmurs:

“I attend you, sir.”

Although his head is bowed, his tread is that of the soldier on parade as they pass out into the keen winter air. A crowd of felons, destined soon for the gallows, is huddled in groups, here and there, within their courtyard den, and as the procession passes through the quadrangle they hurl forth curses of hell against the man who is marching to his death. The giant head falls lower, and the martial tread beats faster. “The clock has struck,” he cries, as he quickens his step. There is a halt in another chamber beyond the Press Yard. An ingenious law-torment is demanded—the Sheriff’s receipt for a living corpse. A legal wrangle follows; the red giant’s body is not described in good set terms, and there is much quill-scratching, while the giant gazes calmly. Then the march is resumed down the loathsome passages, and the soul of Greatheart warms as eternity draws nearer.

In another moment, the most wondrous prospect of his life opens before his eyes. High upon the stage, with back turned to the towering wall, as befits a soldier, his vision ranges over a tossing sea of savage faces, a human torrent that fills the wide estuary, surging full and fierce to the limits of its boundaries. Then a mighty tumult rises from the depths of the living whirlpool, the exultant roar of a myriad demons thirsting for blood. At last the giant limbs tremble, as the shouts swell fiercer and louder still—three distinct terrific huzzas—unmistakable to trained ears; 138 they come from the angry throats of a thousand British soldiers, the fierce war-cry learnt from the cruel Cossack long ago. The red tyrant is delivered to the mob at last. Some say it is the shout of punters delighted to have won their bets, and loudly press the strange apology; but reason, giving preference to comparative methods, calls to mind the savage exultation that hailed the atonement of skipper Lowry and Mother Brownrigg, of Burke and Palmer, and muses thoughtfully upon this balance of justice.

The gnarled, bony fingers of the red giant grasp the hand of Sheriff Cox, while the foul-odoured beast fumbles with the halter around his neck, withdrawing the noose and slipping it once more over his head. The victim turns to the plump Ordinary with a last request:

“I do not wish to be pulled by the heels.”

The priest deftly draws the cap over the gleaming, shrivelled face, and mumbles from his book. No clanging bell disturbs the peace of the sufferer, for he is a murderer, and this blessed torture is not for those of his class. The bareheaded crowd gazes with rapture upon the wooden scaffold, shorn of its appalling garb of black—another mercy vouchsafed to him who dies guilty of a brother’s blood. Suddenly there is a second mighty shout of triumph. The rope hangs plump between the two posts, and the tall, gaunt form is swaying in empty air. In another moment there are cries of horror, but of horror mingled with applause. The noose has formed an even collar around the giant’s neck, while the knot has slipped to the back of his head, which is still upright and unbent. Horrible convulsions seize the huge, struggling frame. It is a terrific scene—most glorious spectacle of suffering that a delighted crowd has ever gazed upon—Jack Ketch has bungled! Minutes pass, and still the hanging man battles fiercely for breath. Minutes pass, and not a hand is stretched forth to give him relief. Sheriff's eyes meet eyes of Ordinary in 139 mutual horror. Sheriff's watch is dragged from its fob, and when the little steel hands have stretched to a right angle, at last a hasty signal is made to the expectant hangman. Two butchers beneath the scaffold seize upon the sufferer's legs, and soon his agony of more than a fourth of an hour is brought to a close. A fierce shock, indeed, to reason and the balance of justice argument—a fiercer shock still to those that cling lovingly to the tenets of Hebrew mythology.

With a sigh of relief Sheriff and Ordinary hurry away to coffee and grilled kidneys in Mr Kirby's breakfast-room, leaving the crowd to watch the victim hanging—which crowd does with gusto, scrambling fiercely a little later for a bit of the rope, which Rosy Emma, worthy helpmate of Jack Ketch, retails at twelvepence an inch, and, furthermore, gloating with delight upon the cart that presently takes the wasted form of the dead giant to the saws and cleavers of Surgeons' Hall dissecting-room, Saffron Hill. Tight hands at a bargain, these bloodletting, clyster-loving old leeches! They demand fifty, some say a hundred, guineas from the giant's friends, and they pocket the ransom before they surrender their corpse. Devoted old leeches: *sic vos non vobis*—we are the learned legatees of your dabblings in anatomy. A few days later—it is a Thursday morning, numbered the 4th of February in the calendar—a few merciful friends bear the giant's coffin to a resting-place in St Pancras Churchyard. Epitaph does not appear, for cant refuses to superscribe the true one—"England did not expect him to do his duty!"

As we look back upon the glowing perspective of our history, there are few scenes that stand out in fiercer grandeur than the flogging of Goree. Foul-smelling, Lilliputian picture, it shines, nevertheless, with the same unconquerable spirit of genius that clapped a telescope to the blind 140 eye at Copenhagen. One untamable hero, armed merely with a crimson rope, faces a hundred cut-throats, and, within view of the ramparts of the enemy, cows them into licking his shoes, declaring that an insult to himself is an insult to his King. Truly a David and Goliath picture.

"Wrong," cry Farmer George and Doctor Henry, glancing timidly, as with mystical prescience, down the vista of ages to Board School days, and quaking at swish of cat and clank of triangles, guilty of as deep anachronism as he who hurled a shell at the tomb of the Mahdi, to the great disturbance of bread-and-milk nerves. For birch twigs and cat—essential forerunners of Standards Six—had much Peninsular and Waterloo work in front of them, and it was just as easy to chain red giants as to hang them.

"Wrong," cry Farmer Merciful and Doctor Justice, busy with knife and steel, getting ready a keen edge for the grey, gallant head of poor crazy Despard, and eager to paste the town with balance of justice placards—"'Téméraire' insubordinates, and red giant of Goree—both hanged. Let foreign nations please copy." And, doubtless, a burst of inordinate Gallic laughter hailed this *jeu d'esprit*, for Gallic neighbours had other things for the encouragement of red giants—a field-marshal's baton and the like.

There is no place for the musings of modern milksop. The deeds of the parents of his grandfather are for him merely a tale that is told, and as he closes the family record his bread-and-milk soul must only give thanks that his lot is cast in more pleasant places. Modern eye can but discern the red giants of a bygone world through a glass darkly. Cruel, crimson, unscrupulous—they were all that: children of murkiness even as we are children of light, and thus let comparison end. One hundred years—as great a barrier as a million miles of ether—has 141 divided our ages, *et nos mutamur*. A thousand pencils—Saxon and Caledonian—have banished with Dunciad scorn the birchen wand that used to betwig merrily the tender fifteen-year-old flesh of ribald lad and saucy maiden. Triangle and cat, rope's-end and grating, ceased years ago to terrify the hearts of rolling Jack and swaggering Tommy. Good Mr Fairchild no longer takes little Harry and little Emily to view the carrion of the gibbet, *exempli gratiâ*, for the modern Mr Fairchild does not remember that such instruments ever had their proper places in the land. Red giants, too—only to be let loose when occasion required—had their proper places in the good old times of birch-rod and gibbet, of Farmer George and Doctor Henry, who found much use for them in the taming of the Corsican ogre. Modern milksop, however, will scarcely concede that such times were good, or, at least, most wrong when inconsistent! Be that as it may, the cat and rope's-end of the crimson giant were a portion of Britain's bulwarks, in spite of inconsistent headshakings of Farmer George and Doctor Henry, of Brother Bragge and Brother Hiley—all of which, fortunately, is as repulsive to the soul of modern milksop as the dice and women of Charles Fox, or the two-bottle thirst of the Pilot who weathered the Storm. Lucky, perhaps, for bread-and-milk gentleman that he had fathers before him.

No other case bears the same resemblance to that of Joseph Wall as the incident of Kenneth Mackenzie and his cannon-ball execution. Some, indeed, have a certain affinity, and exhibit the national conscience overwhelmed by periodical fits of morality—a hysterical turning-over of new leaves. A few days before the red giant of Goree passed through the debtor's door, Sir Edward Hamilton of the 'Trent' frigate was dismissed from the navy for an act of cruel tyranny, only to be reinstated in a few months. Thomas Picton, England's "bravest of the brave," was shaken by 142 the same wave of humanity. Yet, after all, the guilt of the Admiral or the innocence of the hero of Waterloo were of little moment to a nation that continued to mutilate its enemies in the fashion of a dervish of the desert, under the sacred name of high treason. For, years later, the bloody heads of Brandreth and Thistlewood stained an English scaffold. Luckily for their oppressors, the victims of Hamilton and Picton—officers who did not stand in the desperate position of the

Governor of Goree—survived their punishments, not having a leech-Ferrick to reckon with, else Farmer George and Doctor Henry, in the face of those dangling ‘Téméraire’ seamen, would have been in an awkward dilemma.

The case of George Robert Fitzgerald, often held forth as a parallel by contemporary pressmen, has little similarity to that of Wall. Both belonged to the 69th Foot, they were antagonists in a Galway duel in ’69, and both ended their days on the scaffold; but here comparison ends. The retribution that overtook ‘Fighting Fitzgerald’ at Castlebar was the fitting penalty of a vendetta murder, brutal and premeditated, and wrought without a semblance of authority.

Fifty years before the death of Joseph Wall, the London mob was able to indulge its fury in like
fashion against another black-beast of its own choosing, one James Lowry, skipper of the
merchant ship ‘Molly’ compared to whom the Governor of Goree appears to have been a mild
and merciful commander. At different times, three sailors expired beneath the terrible floggings
of Captain Lowry, who was wont to salute his dying victim with the cry, “He is only shamming
Abraham.” And as the cruel seaman was carried in the cart to Execution Dock, the furious mob
howled forth this ghastly catchword, just as they saluted Wall with the echo of the phrase which 143
they supposed he had uttered while Benjamim Armstrong was being flogged to death, “Cut him
to the heart—cut him to the liver.”

Nor was the cruel tyrant only to be found in the merchantman, or was Edward Hamilton a solitary exception. Captain Oakham of the British navy is more than a creature of fiction, as is shown by the trials of Edward Harvey in August 1742, and of William Henry Turton in August 1780, which cast a lurid light upon the conditions of life in our ships of war. Midshipman Turton was a butcherly young gentleman, who turned his sword against a disobedient sailor in a sort of Captain-Sutherland-and-negro-cabin-boy fashion, but, owing to a Maidstone grand-jury petition and the absence of ‘Téméraire’ mutineers, there was no hempen collar for him.

The story of Joseph Wall has no exact parallel in our history, for the Mackenzie incident differs in two essential particulars—the dour Kenneth meant murder from the first, and did not pay the penalty of his crime. Lowry, Turton, and Sutherland were guilty, like ‘Fighting Fitzgerald,’ of common homicide, and the *malice prepense*, as law-givers understand the phrase, was clear and unmistakable. Even the lax morality of Doctor Henry’s days was compelled to take cognisance of giant Wall’s offence, just as it punished very properly—or tried to do—the sins of Picton and Hamilton; and a verdict of manslaughter, though delivered by a tradesman jury, would not have been an illogical conclusion. However, it remains a judicial murder—one of the most disgraceful that stains the pages of our history during the reign of George III. 144

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE WALL CASE

I. Contemporary Tracts

1. *An Authentic Narrative of Joseph Wall Esqr.* By a Military Gentleman. J. Roach, Britannia Printing Office. Russell Court, Drury Lane (1802). Brit. Mus.

> Except in the tract published by A. Young—a transparent plagiarism—there is no corroboration of the statement that Wall flogged to death a man named Paterson on the voyage out to Goree. As no reference is made in any contemporary newspapers, it seems probable that the ‘Military Gentleman’ has confused his materials. George Paterson, a soldier, received eight hundred lashes the day after the punishment of Armstrong, and died soon afterwards, which may have caused the mistake. If Wall had done another such deed in 1780, it is probable that it would have obtained greater publicity.

2. *The Life, Trial and Execution of Joseph Wall Esqre.* By a Gentleman. A. Young, Vera Street, Clare Market (1802). Brit. Mus.

3. *The Trial at Large of Joseph Wall Esqre.* Also an Account of his escape in 1784. John Fairburn, 146 Minories.

4. *The Trial of Lieut. Col. Joseph Wall.* Taken in shorthand by Messrs Blanchard and Ramsey. London (1802). Brit. Mus.

5. *Life, Trial and Execution of Joseph Wall Esqre.* (with a full length portrait). E. Lawrence, C. Chapple, and H. D. Symonds.

This tract is advertised in the *Morning Chronicle*, February 9, 1802.

6. *The Trial of Governor Wall.* With particulars of his escape at Reading in 1784 and his subsequent surrender in 1802. Fred Farrah, 282 Strand, (The Only Edition Extant). Brit. Mus. Copied from earlier accounts.

II. Contemporary Newspapers and Magazines

1.	*The Public Advertiser*, March 1784.		
2.	*The Gazetteer and New Advertiser*, August 14, 1783, and March 1784.		
3.	*The General Evening Post*,	March 1784.	
4.	*The Bath Chronicle*,	do.	
5.	*The Bristol Journal*,	do.	
6.	*The London Gazette*, March 9, 1784.		
7.	*The Times*, March 1784, January 1802.		
8.	*Morning Post*, July 21 and August 12 and 13, 1783, March 1784, January 1802.		
9.	*Morning Chronicle*,	March 1784,	January 1802.
10.	*Morning Herald*,	do.	do.
11.	*St James' Chronicle*,	do.	do.
12.	*Lloyd's Evening Post*,		do.
13.	*The True Briton and Porcupine*,		do.
14.	*The Star*,		do.

In the *Morning Post* of August 13, 1783, there appears the report of the court-martial held at the Horse Guards on July 7 and following days, which practically acquitted Wall of the charges brought against him by Captain Roberts. The *Gazette* of March 9, 1784, contains the King's Proclamation, dated March 8, describing the personal appearance of the escaped prisoner, and offering a reward of £200 for his apprehension. To those who consult contemporary journals for a first time there will come a surprise, for they will learn that Governor Wall on July 10 and 11, 1782, flogged to death not *one* man but *three*. No account later than the Espriella Papers, and not one of the many *Newgate Calendars*, gives this information. Surgeon Ferrick's letter appeared in *The Times*, February 5, 1802.

15. *The Gentleman's Magazine* (1784), part i. p. 227; (1802), part i. p. 81.

The January number, 1802, endorses the statement that Augustine Wall, the brother of the Governor of Goree, was "the first person, who presumed to publish Parliamentary Reports with the real names of the speakers prefixed." This evidence is important, as Sylvanus Urban might have grudged such an admission. His own claims, however, are set forth very modestly. "Dr Johnston (in our magazine) dressed them (*i.e.* the speakers in Parliament) in Roman characters. Others gave them as orators in the senate of Lilliput. Mr Wall laid the foundation of a practice which, we trust for the sake of Parliament, and the nation, will never be abandoned."

16. *The European Magazine* (1802), pp. 74, 154-157.

17. *The Annual Register.* Appendix to Chronicle, pp. 560-568.

NOTES

Note I.—*Dict. Nat. Biog.*

Although reference is made to the dubious case of the flogging of the man Paterson during Wall's outward voyage to Goree, there is no mention of the fact that four other soldiers were flogged by the Governor's order on the same day and the day following the punishment of Benj. Armstrong, and that two of these also died of their wounds. There seems to be no authority for the statement that Wall "appears to have been in liquor" when he passed sentence on the men, and as such a presumption, which was never put forward by the prosecution, sweeps away all defence, and proves that the act was murder, it should not be accepted without the most trustworthy evidence. Mrs Wall's father, Kenneth Mackenzie, Lord Fortrose, never became Lord Seaforth; her brother did. Since Wall did not remain at Goree for more than two years, and left the island on July 11, 1782, it is evident that he did not become Governor in 1779. His letter to Lord Pelham, offering to stand his trial, was written on October 5, 1801, not on October 28. *State Trials*, vol. xxviii. p. 99.

Note II.—*State Trials of the Nineteenth Century.* By G. Latham Brown (Sampson Low, 1882). Vol. i. pp. 28-42.

On page 31 the author states that he has searched the records of the Privy Council in vain for a report of the charges brought against Wall by Captain Roberts in 1783. As stated previously, he would have found what he required in the columns of the *Morning Post* of August 13, or the *Gazetteer*, August 14, 1783. It is strange that he is unaware that Wall flogged to death two other soldiers besides Benj. Armstrong.

Note III.—*Edinburgh Review*, January 1883, *vide* criticism of G. L. Brown's book, p. 81.

To the writer of this review belongs the credit of being the first to hint a doubt as to the justice of Wall's conviction.

Note IV.—*A Tale without a Name*—a tribute to Joseph Wall's noble wife—will be found in the works of James Montgomery, Longman (1841), vol. iii. p. 278. *Vide* also *Life of Montgomery*, by Holland and Everett. Longman (1855), vol. iii. p. 253.

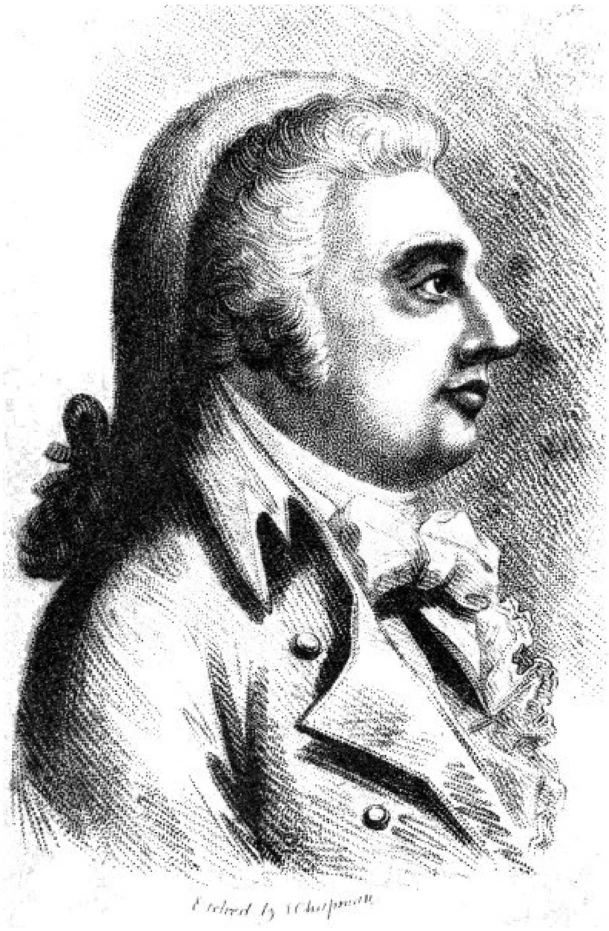
Note V.—Other contemporary authorities are *Letters from England by Don Alvarez Espriella*, Robert Southey, vol. i. pp. 97, 108, and the familiar *Book for a Rainy Day*, by J. T. Smith, pp. 165-173.

THE KESWICK IMPOSTOR

THE CASE OF JOHN HADFIELD, 1802-3

> “... a story drawn
> From our own ground,—the Maid of Buttermere,—
> And how, unfaithful to a virtuous wife
> Deserted and deceived, the Spoiler came,
> And woo’d the artless daughter of the hills,
> And wedded her, in cruel mockery
> Of love and marriage bonds....
> Beside the mountain chapel, sleeps in earth
> Her new-born infant....
> ... Happy are they both,
> Mother and child!...”
> —*The Prelude*, Book vii. Wordsworth.

During the late autumn of 1792, a retired military man of amiable disposition and poetic temperament, who had made a recent tour through Cumberland and Westmoreland, published his impressions in a small volume which bore the title *A Fortnight’s Ramble to the Lakes*. The book displays the literary stamp of its period just as clearly as a coin indicates the reign in which it is moulded. Fashion had banished the rigour of the pedant in favour of idyllic simplicity. The well-groomed poet, who for so long had recited his marble-work epistle to Belinda of satin brocade, now spoke to deaf ears; while the unkempt bard, who sang a ballad of some muslin-clad rustic maid, caught the newly-awakened sympathies of the artistic world.



Etched by J. Chapman

John Hatfield.

Published J. Cundee Ivy Lane

The author of *A Fortnight’s Ramble*, having the instinct of a good literary salesman, was not backward in sentiment, and among his thumb-nail sketches of rural life he was careful not to omit the portrait of a village damsel. There is certainly much charm in the impression of his humble heroine, whom he discovered in a tiny hamlet on the shores of Lake Buttermere, where, according to the laws of romance, she was the maid of the inn. No doubt the child of fourteen was as beautiful as he describes her—with her long brown curls, big blue eyes, rosy lips, and clear complexion, and with a grace of figure matured beyond her years. The pity is that the picture was ever drawn.

Before the close of the year the charms of ‘Sally of Buttermere’ had been quoted in a London magazine, and henceforth the tourist was as eager to catch a glimpse of the famous young beauty as to visit Scale Force or Lodore. Very soon the inn where she lived—“a poor little pot-house, with the sign of the Char”—became a place of popular resort. Verses in her praise began to cover the white-washed walls; and while she was in the full bloom of youth, wandering artists, who have handed down to us her likeness, took the opportunity of persuading her to sit for them. That Mary Robinson was a modest and attractive girl is shown by the testimony of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and there is evidence that she remained unspoilt in spite of her celebrity.

Six years after the publication of *A Fortnight’s Ramble*, its author, Joseph Budworth, paid a second visit to the home of his ‘Sally of Buttermere’ Mary, who was nineteen, and still charming, seemed destined (after the fashion of village maidens) to become a buxom beauty, and it is said, indeed, that she had been most lovely at the age of sixteen. Budworth, however, saw that she was quite pretty enough to attract hosts of admirers, and conscience told him that he had not 148 done well in making her famous. There was Christmas merrymaking at the little inn, and she reigned as queen of the rustic ball. Next morning he confessed to her that he had written the book which had brought her into public notice.

“Strangers will come and have come,” said he, “purposely to see you, and some of them with very bad intentions. We hope you will never suffer from them, but never cease to be on your guard.”

Mary listened quietly to this tardy advice, and thanked him politely.

“You really are not so handsome as you promised to be,” Budworth continued. “I have long wished by conversation like this to do away what mischief the flattering character I gave of you may expose you to. Be merry and wise.”

Then, taking advantage of his seniority of twenty-three years, the good-natured traveller “gave her a hearty salute,” and bade her farewell. Unfortunately, he repeated his previous indiscretion by publishing another long account of the Buttermere Beauty in the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, and, like Wordsworth, who in similar manner paraded the charms of ‘little Barbara Lewthwaite’ he lived to regret what he had written.

Two years later, a handsome middle-aged gentleman of fine presence and gallant manners paid a visit to the Lake District, bearing the name of Alexander Augustus Hope (brother to the third Earl Hopetoun), who, after a successful military career, had represented the burgh of Dumfries, and now sat in Parliament as member for Linlithgowshire. An active, strong-limbed fellow, with courtly demeanour and an insinuating Irish brogue, the contrast between his thick black brows and his fair hair, between the patch of grey over his right temple and the fresh colour of his face, added to an appearance of singular attractiveness. These were the days of the dandies, 149 when young Mr George Brummell was teaching the Prince of Wales how a gentleman should be attired; and Colonel Hope was distinguished by the neatness and simplicity of a well-dressed man of fashion.

The new-comer reached Keswick about the third week in July, travelling in his own carriage without ostentation, having hired horses and no servant. Soon after his arrival he went over to Buttermere, and remained there for two or three days. Towards the end of the month he visited Grassmere, where he became acquainted with a genial merchant from Liverpool, whose name was John Crump. Being a most entertaining companion—for he was a great traveller, had fought in the American War, and, as might be expected of one so gallant and handsome, had been engaged in numerous duels—Colonel Hope had the knack of fascinating all whom he met. With Mr Crump, who for some reason was not in favour with the young poet at Greta Hall, he struck up a great friendship during his three weeks’ stay at Grassmere, and a little later the merchant showed his appreciation by christening one of his children ‘Augustus Hope’ as a compliment to his new acquaintance.

About the end of the third week in August the member of Parliament, whose passion, we are told, was a rod and fly, left Grassmere, and, for the sake of the char-fishing, took up his quarters at the little inn at Buttermere. So pleased was he with the district, that he contemplated the purchase of an estate, and Mr Skelton, a neighbouring landowner, went with him to inspect a property near Loweswater. During his sojourn at the Char Inn he paid frequent visits to Keswick to meet his friend John Crump. Although wishing, for the sake of quiet and seclusion, to travel incognito, Colonel Hope seems to have been a gregarious person, and could not help extending 150 the number of his acquaintances. At the ‘Queen’s Head’ Keswick, where his Liverpool friend was in the habit of stopping, he came across a kindred spirit in Colonel Nathaniel Montgomery Moore, who had represented the town of Strabane in the recently extinct Irish Parliament.

Since the two had much in common, a close intimacy ensued; but there was another reason for Colonel Hope’s friendly advances. A pretty young lady of fortune, to whom Mr Moore was guardian, was one of his party, and the new acquaintance began to pay her the most evident attention. Colonel Hope, in fact, always had been remarkable for his insinuating behaviour in the society of women, and since his arrival in the Lake District he had been concerned in an affair of gallantry with at least two local maidens far beneath him in station. However, this was a pardonable weakness, for the Prince himself, and his brothers of York and Clarence, did not disdain to stoop to conquer. But on the present occasion the gay Colonel apparently had fallen in love, and when, before very long, he asked the lady to be his wife, he was accepted.

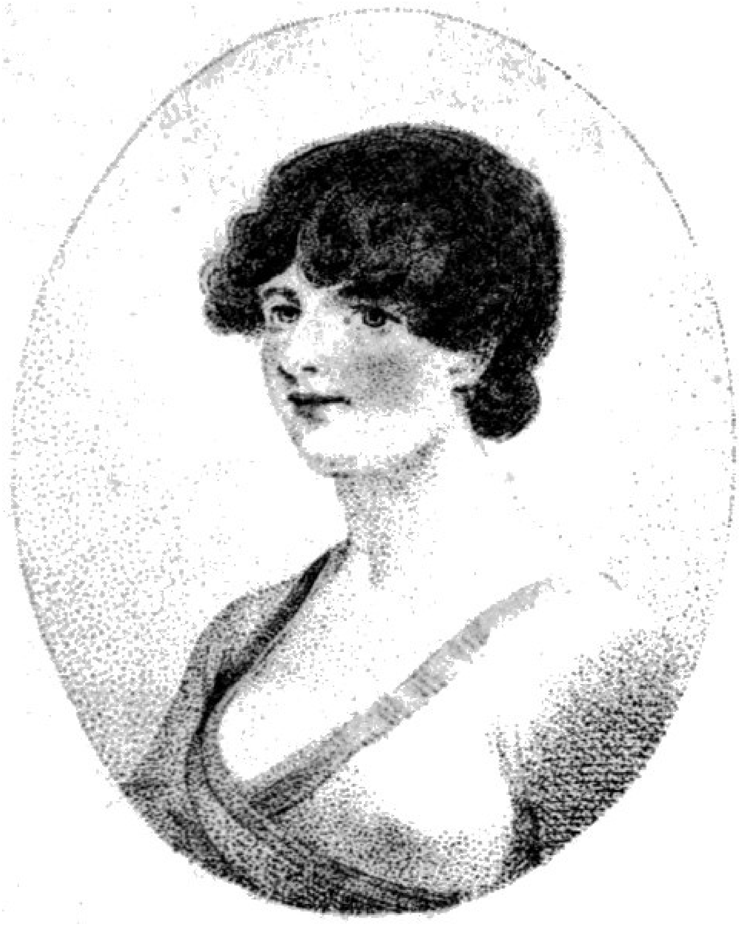
It is not strange that a man of his power of fascination and handsome appearance should have met with success even on so short an acquaintance. The match seemed a most suitable one in every respect, and Mr Moore would have been well satisfied that his ward should be engaged to a man of Alexander Hope’s rank and position. Yet the lover did not hasten to take the guardian into his confidence. Remaining at the little inn on the shores of Buttermere, only occasionally he made the fourteen miles’ drive to visit his *fiancée* at Keswick. Colonel Moore, who could not remain blind to the flirtation, became anxious lest his ward should place herself in a false position. It was evident that the two behaved to each other as lovers, and the Irishman was 151 impatient for the announcement of the betrothal. Still, the love affair ran a smooth course until the close of the third week in September; but as the time went on, and the engagement remained a secret, the suspicions of the lady’s guardian began to be aroused. Since it was apparent that his friend had committed himself, his duty was plain. There were only three explanations of his reticence. Colonel Hope was not the man he pretended to be, or he had quarrelled with his relatives, or else his passion was beginning to cool.

The first proposition already had been whispered among a few. Although his *bonhomie* and air of distinction had made him a great favourite with his inferiors, yet the fact that the reputed Colonel Hope was travelling without servants, and had selected a woman of fortune as his conquest, prejudiced critical minds. Coleridge, who was engaged in basting the succulent humour of the gentle Elia before a roasting fire, seems to have cast the eye of a sceptic upon the popular tourist from the day of his arrival. However, no open rupture took place between the Irishman and Alexander Hope, but towards the close of September they met less frequently.

On Friday, the 1st of October, Colonel Hope sent over a letter to his friend at Keswick, explaining that business called him to Scotland, and enclosing a draft for thirty pounds, drawn on Mr Crump of Liverpool, which he asked him to cash. Pleased, no doubt, at this mark of confidence, which may have appeared a favourable augury of his ward’s happiness, Colonel Moore at once obeyed the request, and forwarded ten pounds in addition, so that his friend might not be short of funds on his journey. On the next day, the sensation of a lifetime burst upon the people of Keswick. At noon, the landlord of the ‘Queen’s Head’ returning from the country, brought with him the great intelligence that the Hon. Colonel Hope had married the 152 Beauty of Buttermere!

It was obvious to everyone—aye, even to the sceptic of Greta Hall—that the mystery was at an end. Alexander Hope was no impostor. Avarice had not led him to attempt the capture of a lady of fortune. Torn between love and honour, he had doubted whether to give his hand when his heart was disposed elsewhere, or to break his word. Thus, obeying the impulse of love, he had married a girl of the people. Native pride in the Beauty of Buttermere was strong in every breast, and the next mail conveyed to London the news of her great triumph.

But Colonel Moore, who had the right to be wroth and suspicious, would not be appeased by the explanations which satisfied the multitude. Since he could not believe that a gentleman would behave in such a fashion, he made haste to test the credentials of his late friend. The bill of exchange was forwarded to Mr Crump, who, delighted to be of service to Colonel Hope, from whom he had received an affectionate note requesting the favour, at once accepted it! Still the Irishman refused to be convinced, and he sent a letter to the bridegroom, informing him that he should write to his brother, Lord Hopetoun. Moreover, he told all friends of his intentions.



J. Smith, sculp.

THE BEAUTY OF BUTTERMERE.

Published in the Act directs. June 25-1803.

During his five or six weeks' residence at the Char Inn, the amorous tourist must have had full opportunity of forming a contrast between the Irish girl and Mary Robinson. The Beauty of Buttermere was now in her twenty-fifth year. A healthy outdoor life had matured her robust physique, and her figure, though graceful still, had lost the lines of perfect symmetry. The keen mountain air had robbed her complexion of its former delicacy, and with the advance of womanhood her features had not retained their refined, girlish prettiness. Still, her face was 153 comely and pleasant to look upon. The charm of her kind and modest nature was felt by all who met her, and she seems to have possessed culture and distinction far in advance of her lowly station. Indeed, one of her most celebrated admirers hints plainly that a mystery surrounded her parentage, and that her breadth of mind and her polished manners were the result of gentle birth. However, there appears no warrant for such a surmise.

So, at last, Colonel Hope had begun to waver in his ardour for the Irish girl. Naturally, she was not content to remain under a secret engagement, and her inclinations favoured a brilliant wedding, which her husband's noble relatives should honour with their presence. Such delay had not pleased the lover, who wished the announcement of the betrothal to be followed by a speedy marriage. In this respect his other inamorata had been less exacting. Poor Mary expected no pomp or ceremony, and had never imagined that a peer and his people would come to her wedding. All the odium that can attach to the man who pays his addresses to two women at the same time is certainly his, for it is stated on good authority that he made his first proposal to the Cumberland girl before he commenced the courtship of Colonel Moore's rich ward.

Then, when the heiress refused to fall in with his wishes, he made the final choice. On the 25th of September he went over to Whitehaven—about twelve miles as the crow flies from Buttermere—with the Rev. John Nicholson, chaplain of Loweswater, a friend of two weeks' standing, to obtain a special licence for his marriage with Mary Robinson. Naturally, no opposition was raised by the parents; and although it has been said that the reluctant girl was overruled by their persuasions, it is certain—as far as any judgment of human nature can be certain—that she was a willing bride. Nor—since his record shows that each woman whom he 154 cared to fascinate was unable to resist him—is it difficult to believe that Mary was in love with her handsome suitor.

On the morning of Saturday, the 2nd of October, the wedding took place in the picturesque old church at Loweswater, in the beautiful vale of Lorton, about seven miles from Buttermere. The ceremony was performed by Mr Nicholson, who had become as firm a friend of the bridegroom as Crump himself. Immediately after the service the newly married pair posted off north to visit Colonel Hope's Scotch estate. Their first day's journey was a remarkable one. Passing through Cockermouth and Carlisle, they reached Longtown, near Gretna Green, at eight o'clock in the evening, a distance of over forty miles. The next day being Sunday, the bridegroom, who on occasions could affect much religious zeal, is careful to record, in a letter to the chaplain of Loweswater, that they made two appearances in church. On Tuesday or Wednesday they continued their tour across the Border, but on the following Friday, owing to Mary’s anxiety to receive news from her parents (so her husband alleged), they retraced their steps to Longtown. Here, two days later, important communications reached Colonel Hope, which made him resolve to return to Buttermere without delay.

Friend Nicholson wrote that scandalous reports concerning his honour had been spread in the neighbourhood since his departure, and that his wife’s parents had been much disturbed by the rumours that had reached their ears—informing him also of Colonel Moore’s opinion of his behaviour. This latter news was superfluous, for there was a letter from the Irishman himself. Its contents may be gathered from the reply that the traveller despatched to Nicholson on the 10th of October. With amazing effrontery he tells his friend that his attentions to the Irish heiress had never been serious, and expresses his astonishment that Colonel Moore should censure his 155 conduct. Yet he shows his concern for the attacks on his integrity, declaring that he will come back at once to meet his calumniators face to face. Moreover, he was as good as his word. Probably he left Longtown for Carlisle, according to promise, the next morning, and arrived at Buttermere on Tuesday, the 12th of October. Thus Mary’s brief honeymoon came to an end.

As luck would have it, a somewhat remarkable person, who happened to be acquainted with Colonel Hope, was now staying at Keswick. This was George Hardinge, senior justice of Brecon, the late Horace Walpole’s friend and neighbour, the ‘waggish Welsh judge’ of whom Lord Byron has sung. Having heard of the romantic marriage, and being anxious to meet Colonel Hope, he sent a letter to Buttermere requesting a visit. Early on Wednesday morning the newly married man drove over to Keswick in a carriage and four, accompanied by his factotum, the Rev. John Nicholson, to answer the summons in person. The meeting, which took place at the ‘Queen’s Head’ Hotel, was an embarrassing one. Pertinacious Nathaniel Moore, who no doubt had kindled in Justice Hardinge’s mind the suspicions which had caused him to solicit the interview, was present at the encounter. The Welsh judge found that Colonel Hope of Buttermere renown was an entire stranger to him!

However, the other was in no way abashed, but pointed out pleasantly that the mistake had arisen through the coincidence of names. Mr Hardinge persisted that it was remarkable that he should be Alexander Augustus Hope, M.P. for Linlithgowshire, when the name of the representative of that county was Alexander Hope. The reply was a flat denial that these names and titles had been assumed, and we are told that the credulous clergyman bore witness to the truth of this statement. Nevertheless, other testimony against the accused man had more weight 156 with the astute George Hardinge. Not only was there Colonel Moore’s declaration that the stranger had always passed as Lord Hopetoun’s brother, but the Keswick postmaster was able to prove that he had franked letters as a member of Parliament. The result was an appeal for a warrant of arrest to a neighbouring magistrate, and the suspected Mr Hope was placed in charge of a constable.

Still, he did not appear disconcerted, but treated the whole matter as a joke. Others, too, were of the same opinion, for during the course of the day he presented a bill of exchange for twenty pounds, drawn once more on John Crump, to the landlord of the ‘Queen’s Head’ which that individual cashed without hesitation. The stranger at once sent £10 to Colonel Moore to cancel the gratuitous loan received before his departure to Scotland. Faithful Nicholson, too, retained full confidence in his genial friend, who ordered dinner to be prepared for both at the hotel, and continued to bear him company.

Presently, the prisoner, chafing at the thought of being kept in durance, asked permission to sail on the lake. As this appeared a reasonable request, the wise constable gave his consent. The clergyman accompanied his companion to the water’s edge, while he made fervent protests of innocence.

“If he were conscious of any crime,” he told his trusting friend, “a hair would hold him.”

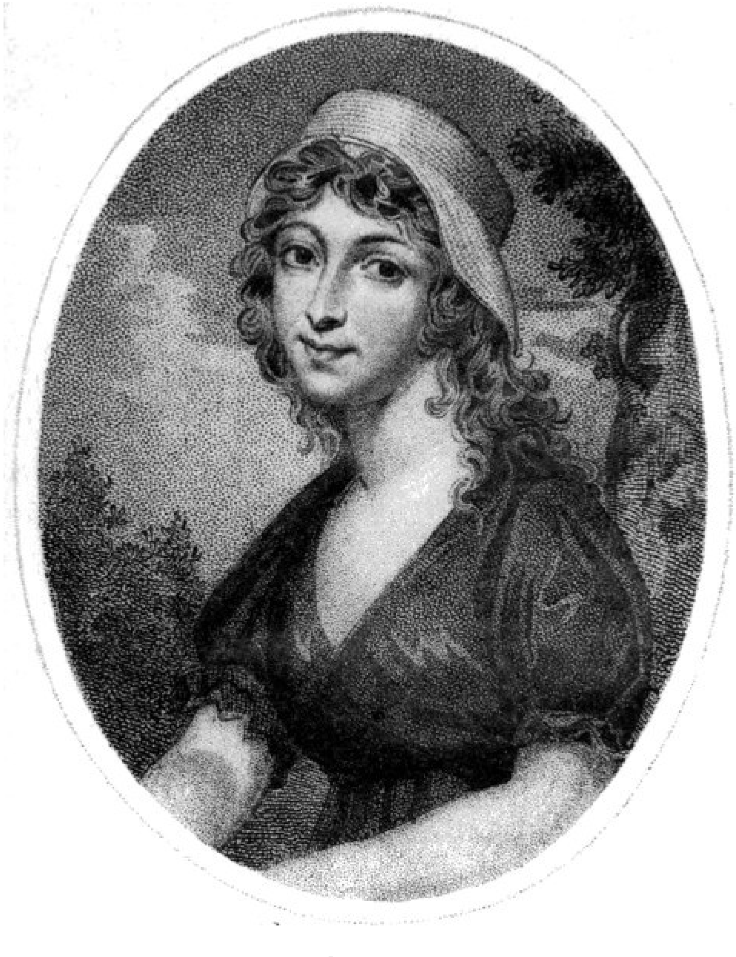
Since, however, he declared that he was guiltless, as a natural corollary he had no intention of being held by the whole force of the Keswick constabulary, and Nicholson must have been aware of his design. For not only did he give his friend a guinea to pay for the dinner at the ‘Queen’s Head’ which was a plain hint that he did not mean to return, but he told him that, as his carriage had been seized by his accusers, his only chance of rejoining his wife at Buttermere 157 was by rowing down the lake.

Luck favoured him. A fisherman named Burkett, who had been his companion on many previous expeditions, had a boat ready for him, and soon he was far across Derwentwater. A crowd of sympathisers, full of wrath against his enemies, for they were sure he was a great man (as an impostor would have had no motive in marrying poor Mary), stood on the shore with Nicholson and the intelligent constable to watch his departure. Soon the short October day drew to a close, and darkness fell upon the waters, but ‘Colonel Hope’ did not return. Keswick never saw his face again.

The conduct of the Rev. John Nicholson has been the subject of keen censure. Although the province of a parson is not that of the detective, it is unfortunate that he did not suggest to the parents of Mary of Buttermere that it would be wise to verify the statements of their daughter’s suitor. On the other hand, it must be admitted that everyone was infatuated by the splendid impostor, and it is evident that the clergyman was not aware of the flirtation with the Irish heiress. It is more difficult to defend Nicholson’s conduct at the interview between Judge Hardinge and the swindler; for although we have no precise details of the conversation, it is plain that the chaplain of Loweswater was guilty of a strange reticence. Naturally, he knew that his mysterious friend had passed under the name of Colonel Hope, and had franked letters as a member of Parliament. Still, not only did he refrain from exposing, but even continued to trust him, though he must have perceived him to be a liar. However, charity may suggest the conclusion that the clergyman was full of compassion for Mary Robinson; and since he believed that her husband would join her at the little Char Inn, he was determined, whether felon or not, that he should have the chance of escape.

The first announcement of the marriage of the celebrated Buttermere Beauty with the brother of the Earl of Hopetoun was printed in the *Morning Post* on the 11th of October. Yet, three days later—the morning after the remarkable escape at Derwentwater—a letter, written on the highest authority, appeared in the same journal, denying the previous report and stating that the real Colonel Alexander Hope was travelling on the Continent. Thus, by chance, London and Keswick became aware almost simultaneously that Mary Robinson had been the victim of a cruel fraud.

Although his flight had made it evident that the pretended member of Parliament was an impostor, it was not until the last day of October that his identity was discovered. Meanwhile, the most strange rumours had been aroused. The fact that all his plate and linen were found packed in his travelling carriage, which was retained by the landlord in pledge for his twenty pounds, gave rise to the suspicion that he had meant to desert his poor young bride. On the other hand, his admirers persisted that he was an Irish gentleman, hiding from the authorities because of his share in the recent rebellion. A costly dressing-case, which he had left behind, was examined under warrant from a magistrate, but nothing turned up to reveal his true name. In the end this discovery was made by Mary herself. While looking over the dressing-box more carefully, she disclosed a secret hiding-place containing a number of letters addressed to him who had forsaken her. Alas for the Beauty of Buttermere! No anticipation could have exceeded the cruel reality. The handsome bridegroom was a married man, and these letters had been written by the heart-broken wife whom he had deserted. ‘Colonel Hope’ her supposed rich and noble husband, was a notorious swindler—guilty of a capital felony—whose real name was John Hadfield!



Mary of Buttermere.

Since the days of ‘Old Patch’ no impostor had reached the eminence of Hadfield. Born of well-to-do parents at Cradden-brook, Mottram-in-Longdendale, Cheshire—where a neighbouring village may have lent his family its surname—forty-three years before the adventure at Keswick, his habits and disposition had always been superior to his station in life. As a youth he was apprenticed to the woollen trade, but proved too fond of adventure to succeed in business. Though much of his career is wrapped in mystery, we know that he was in America between the years 1775-1781, during the War of Independence, and that he married a natural daughter of a younger brother of that famous warrior the Marquis of Granby.

Having squandered the small fortune he had received with her, the elegant Hadfield left his wife and their children to take care of themselves, and by means of credit managed for a short time to enjoy a career of dissipation in London. By his favourite device of extortion—passing drafts or bills of exchange upon persons of wealth, who would be unlikely to prefer a charge against him—he was enabled to continue his impositions without any more serious consequence than an occasional visit to gaol.

The King’s Bench Prison, where in 1782 he was confined for a debt of £160, appears as the next grim landmark in his life. By a lucky chance he was able to lay his case before the Duke of Rutland, who, having discovered that the prisoner had married a daughter of his late uncle, but being ignorant that the wife had died of a broken heart in consequence of her husband’s desertion, generously paid the sum necessary to obtain his release. For many years the impostor’s dexterity in obtaining money under false pretences from credulous strangers, who believed him to be a connection of the Manners family, made it possible for him to associate with those far above his rank. 160

During 1784, after a brief career of fraud in Dublin, where he posed as a relative of the Viceroy, and by means of this falsehood contracted a host of fraudulent debts, he was lodged in the Marshalsea Prison. With unblushing impudence he appealed to the Lord Lieutenant—his previous benefactor, the Duke of Rutland—who agreed to pay his debts on the understanding that he should leave Ireland immediately.

In the year 1792 Scarborough became the scene of his depredations. Staying at one of the principal hotels, he announced his intention of representing the town in Parliament in the interest of the Manners family. A portrait of poor Captain Lord Robert caused him to burst into tears, which evidence of feeling won the sympathy of all who witnessed it. As usual, his sparkling conversation and distinguished appearance disarmed suspicion, and for several weeks he lived in princely style at the expense of his landlord. When pressed for money he did not hesitate to offer bills of exchange, which the local tradesmen accepted without demur. Yet the day of reckoning, which this remarkable man never seemed to anticipate, could not be postponed. On the 25th of April he was arrested for the hotel debt, and, not being able to find bail, was cast into prison. Some weeks later, a detainer was lodged against him by a London creditor, and for eight years he remained an inmate of the Scarborough Gaol.

During his long confinement he maintained his favourite pose as a luckless aristocrat, writing poetry, and publishing much abuse against the authorities. At last fortune smiled upon the interesting captive. Neither Faublas nor Casanova ruled with more success over the female heart, and it was to a woman that he owed his release. A Devonshire lady, named Nation, who, it is said, occupied rooms facing the prison, took compassion upon him, and paid his debts. On the 13th of September 1800 the impostor became a free man, and the next morning, 161 notwithstanding that hitherto they had been strangers, he married his benefactress. The pair made their home at Hele Bridge, near Dulverton, on the borders of Somerset and Devon, where the bride’s father was steward to a neighbouring landowner, and before very long Hadfield plunged once more into a career of fraud.

A marvellous *aplomb*, his previous commercial experience, and a deposit of £3000 which he contributed towards the firm, induced Messrs Dennis and Company, merchants of repute in the neighbouring town of Tiverton, to admit him as a partner. In consequence of this new enterprise, he removed during the summer of 1801 with his wife and child to a cottage at the village of Washfield to be near his business. As before, the utter lack of prescience and sagacity characteristic of the man prevented him from reaping the fruits of his perverted genius, as a less clever but more prudent would have done. The whole transaction was a smartly conceived but clumsily arranged swindle. Since the money for the partnership had been obtained by inducing a Mr Nucella, merchant of London, to transfer Government stock, which soon would have to be replaced, to the credit of Messrs Dennis, Hadfield was compelled to realise his winnings without delay. For the sake of a few hundred pounds of ready cash, he seems to have been eager to sacrifice all that a man usually holds dear, and to have become a lawless adventurer once again.

In April 1802 he was obliged to decamp from Devonshire, leaving his wife and children as before, while his partners in Tiverton, who soon discovered that they had been defrauded by a swindler, proceeded to strike his name off the books of the firm. During the following June he was declared a bankrupt. Meanwhile he had proceeded to cut a dash in London, and it is said 162 that he came forward as candidate for Queenborough, with the object of obtaining immunity from arrest as a member of Parliament. Being still provided with funds, he made no attempt to surrender to the commission issued against him; but compelled, through fear of exposure, to relinquish his political ambitions, he went on a leisurely tour through Scotland and Ireland, and in the month of July appeared at Keswick as ‘Colonel Hope’ to work the crowning mischief of his life.

There has been much conjecture with regard to the motives of Hadfield in his conduct to poor Mary Robinson. The explanation that he was actuated by pure animalism cannot be reconciled with our knowledge of his temperament or his methods, setting aside the initial objection that the sensualist, already cloyed by innumerable conquests, does not usually play a heavy stake to gratify a passing fancy. Nor is it credible that a man who had the heart to forsake two wives and five children could have been influenced by love. At first sight it seems probable that, just as the most reckless speculator often cuts a desperate loss, he wished to quit a hazardous career of fraud, and to live a life of quiet and seclusion in the humble home of the Beauty of Buttermere. Such foresight, however, was wholly inconsistent with the nature of the man; and even had he been capable of this reasoning, a moment’s reflection must have taught him that his recent ostentation had made retirement impossible. No; like that of every gambler, John Hadfield’s destiny was ruled by chance. Each stake he played was determined by the exigency of the moment; win or lose, he could not draw back nor rest, but must follow blindly the fortunes of the day to cover the losses of the past. Although not able to possess his Irish heiress, the tiny dowry of Mary Robinson, the poor little inn at Buttermere, seemed to lie at his mercy, and so he seized upon it and threw it—as he would have thrown his winnings of any shape or kind—into the pool. 163 John Hadfield was a fatalist, and his motto, *Quam minimum credula postero*.

After the interview with Judge Hardinge, the adventurer became the sport of chance once more. When he took boat from Keswick on the evening of his clever escape, he steered his course to the southern extremity of Derwentwater. The cluster of little islands soon must have hid him from view, and no one thought of pursuit. Whatever may have been his impulse, there was no time to bid adieu to his bride. The path to safety lay far ahead over the high mountains. Having left the lake under the guidance of his faithful friend Burkett the fisherman, his course for a few miles was a comparatively easy one; but twilight must have fallen before he had traversed the gorge of Borrowdale, and his flight up the desolate Langstrath valley, which cleaves its way between Glaramara and Langdale Pike, was made in the darkness. By night the journey was a terrible one—over rocks and boulders, along a broken path winding its course beside the mountain torrent, up the face of the precipitous crags, and across the Stake, a tremendous pass high up in the hills, dividing northern lakeland from the south. From Langdale he struck west towards the coast, and after a journey of some fourteen miles reached the seaport of Ravenglass, on the estuary of the Esk. In this place he borrowed a seaman’s dress, and took refuge in a little sloop moored near the shore, and here he was recognised on the 25th of October. With a hue and cry against him, it was not safe to remain near the scene of his latest crime. Going by coach to Ulverstone, he continued his flight thence to Chester, where early in November he was seen at the theatre by an old acquaintance. Then he appears to have walked on to Northwich, and there for some time all trace of him was lost. An advertisement, describing his appearance and offering a reward of fifty pounds for his arrest, was published on the 8th of 164 November and scattered broadcast over the country.

The next tidings of him came from Builth in Wales, where, on the 11th of November, he is said to have swindled a friend, who had no knowledge that he was the Keswick impostor, by the usual device of a bill of exchange. On the day following this performance, the London post brought the newspapers containing the description of his person, and he hurried away from the little town on the banks of the Wye in his flight towards the south. For a time he still baffled capture, but the pursuers steadily closed upon his track. On the 22nd of November the authorities at Swansea were informed that a man resembling the published account of the impostor had been seen in the mountains beyond Neath, and the next day Hadfield was run to earth at the ‘Lamb and Flag’ an old coaching inn about seventeen miles from the seaport town. At once he was lodged in Brecon Gaol, and in about a fortnight’s time the newspapers inform us that he was brought up to town by one Pearkes, robin-redbreast.

The romance of the case attracted a great crowd to Bow Street when the notorious swindler was brought up for examination by Sir Richard Ford on the 6th of December, and the investigation appears to have been difficult and tedious, for he appeared before the magistrate each Monday morning during the next three weeks. On one of these occasions his attire is described as “respectable, though he was quite *en déshabillé*,” his dress being a black coat and waistcoat, fustian breeches, and boots, while his hair was worn tied behind without powder, and he was permitted to appear unfettered by irons. Among other requests he asked for a private room at Tothill Fields Prison, as he objected to herd with common pickpockets, and he desired also to be sent as soon as possible to Newgate. Although his wishes were not granted, the solicitor for his 165 bankruptcy made him an allowance of a guinea a week.

Most pathetic was the loyalty of the wife and benefactress whom he had used so cruelly. The poor woman, who was the mother of two children, travelled from Devonshire—a journey occupying a couple of days and a night—to spend Christmas Day in prison with her unfaithful husband. Numerous celebrities visited the court during the examination of the impostor. Amongst those who were noticed more than once was the Duke of Cumberland, drawn possibly by a fellow-feeling for the culprit, and Monk Lewis, on the look-out for fresh melodrama. At last all the charges against him were proved to the hilt—his offence against the law of bankruptcy, his repeated frauds on the Post Office, the two bills of exchange forged at Keswick. Still, although the iniquities of his past were fully revealed, and although a shoal of unpaid debts, fraudulently contracted, stood against his name, one circumstance alone was responsible for the great popular interest, and aroused also universal abhorrence. John Hadfield had been damned to everlasting fame as the seducer of Mary of Buttermere.

The extent of his baseness was disclosed in the course of the proceedings at Bow Street. It was found that the poor girl was destined to become the mother of his child, and that he was in debt to her father for a sum of £180. Indeed, the motive of his mock marriage became apparent, for he had endeavoured to persuade the trusting parents to allow him to sell the little inn on their behalf, and possibly, but for the interference of Justice Hardinge, he might have succeeded. Mary refused to prosecute him for bigamy, but she was induced to send a letter to Sir Richard Ford, which was read in court at Hadfield's fourth examination.

"Sir," she wrote, in the first agony of her cruel disenchantment, "the man whom I had the misfortune to marry, and who has ruined me and my aged and unhappy parents, always told me that he was the Honourable Colonel Hope, the next brother to the Earl of Hopetoun." 166

Contemporary newspapers show that the Beauty of Buttermere became the heroine of the hour—she was the theme of ballads in the streets; her sad story was upon every lip; never was there so much sympathy for one of her humble birth.

Early in the new year, Hadfield, who received as much notice from the journals as Madame Récamier's wonderful new bed, was committed to Newgate. With cool effrontery he dictated a letter to the press, asking the public to reserve judgment until his case was heard, and, as a wanton Tory newspaper declared, like Mr Fox and Mr Windham, he complained bitterly of misrepresentation. A long interval elapsed before he was sent north to stand his trial, and he did not reach Carlisle Gaol until the 25th of May, whither he was conveyed by an officer from Bow Street, who bore the appropriate name of Rivett.

At the next assizes, on the 15th of August, he was arraigned before Sir Alexander Thomson, nicknamed the 'Staymaker' owing to his habit of checking voluble witnesses—a figure to be held in dread by law-breakers of the northern counties, as the Luddite riots in a few years were to show. Hadfield was not lucky in his judge, for the man who, at a later date, could be harsh enough to consign to the hangman the poor little cripple boy Abraham Charlson, was not likely to extend mercy to a forger.

The prisoner stood charged upon three indictments:—

(*a*) With having drawn a bill of exchange upon John Gregory Crump for the sum of £20, under the false and fictitious name of the Hon. Alexander Augustus Hope.

(*b*) With having forged a bill of exchange for £30, drawn upon John Gregory Crump, and payable to Colonel Nathaniel Montgomery Moore. 167

(*c*) With having defrauded the Post Office by franking letters as a member of Parliament.

Only the first two were capital offences.

James Scarlett, afterwards Baron Abinger, was counsel for the Crown, and Hadfield was defended by George Holroyd, who, as a judge, displayed masterly strength fourteen years later in directing the acquittal of Abraham Thornton. It is recorded by some aggrieved journalist that the crowd was so great it was difficult to take notes. Such odium had been aroused against the betrayer by the sad story of Mary of Buttermere, that ladies and gentlemen are said to have travelled twenty miles to be present at his condemnation. At eleven o'clock in the morning the prisoner was placed in the dock. The principal witnesses for the Crown were George Wood, landlord of the 'Queen's Head' Keswick; the Rev. John Nicholson; and good-natured Mr Crump, who proved conclusively that he had assumed a false name and had forged a bill of exchange. A clerk in the house of Heathfield, Lardner and Co. (late Dennis), of Tiverton, called Quick, and a Colonel Parke, a friend of the real Colonel Alexander Hope, supplied other necessary evidence. One witness only—a lawyer named Newton, who had been employed by Hadfield in the summer of 1800 to recover an estate worth £100 a year, which he had inherited from his late wife—was summoned by the defence.

The prisoner bore himself in a calm and dignified manner, taking copious notes, and offering suggestions to his counsel. But his speech to the jury—for still, and for many years afterwards, a barrister was not allowed to address the court on behalf of his client, except on some technical point of law—shows that he anticipated his doom. "I feel some degree of satisfaction," he declared, "in having my sufferings terminated, as I know they must be, by your verdict. For the space of nine months I have been dragged from prison to prison, and torn from place to place, subject to all the misrepresentation of calumny. Whatever will be my fate, I am content. It is the award of justice, impartially and virtuously administered. But I will solemnly declare that in all transactions I never intended to defraud or injure those persons whose names have appeared in the prosecution. This I will maintain to the last of my life." 168

Very properly the judge would not accept the plea set up by the defence, that the financial position of the prisoner was a guarantee that no fraud had been meditated. At seven o'clock in the evening, after a consultation of ten minutes, the jury returned a verdict of guilty. Hadfield received the announcement with composure, and when he was brought up for sentence the next day—as was the barbarous custom of those times—he displayed equal coolness. Kneeling down, and looking steadily at the judge—who began to roll out a stream of sonorous platitudes—he did not speak a word.

From the first he seems to have been resigned to his fate, and gave no trouble to his gaolers, but spent his time quietly in writing letters and reading the Bible. Indeed, his whole behaviour was that of one utterly weary of existence, and he does not appear to have desired or expected a reprieve. All his life he had posed as a religious man, and he lent an eager ear to the ministrations of two local clergymen who attended him. Since there is no evidence that he was penitent, we may adopt the more rational supposition that he was playing for popular sympathy. It was seldom that he spoke of himself, and the only reference he made to his own case was that he had never sought to defraud either John Crump or Colonel Moore. A contemporary report 169 states that “he was in considerable distress before he received a supply of money from his father. Afterwards he lived in great style, frequently making presents to his fellow-felons. In the gaol he was considered as a kind of emperor, being allowed to do what he pleased, and no one took offence at the air of superiority which he assumed.” Some days before his death he sent for an undertaker to measure him for a coffin, and gave his instructions to the man without any signs of agitation.

On the day of his sentence, Wordsworth and Coleridge, who were passing through Carlisle, sought an interview with him. While he received the former, as he received all who wished to see him, he denied himself to Coleridge, which makes it clear that he had read and resented the articles written by the latter to the *Morning Post*. Neither his father (said to have been an honest man in a small way of business) nor his sisters visited him. Also his faithful wife, since probably the state of her health or her poverty would not allow her to make the long journey from Devonshire to Carlisle, was unable to bid him farewell.

There has been much idle gossip concerning the conduct of Mary of Buttermere after her betrayer was condemned to die. Some have said that she was overwhelmed with grief, that she supplied him with money to make his prison life more comfortable, and that she was dissuaded with difficulty from coming to see him. Without accepting the alternative suggested, among others, by De Quincey, that she was quite indifferent to his fate, there are reasons for rejecting the other suppositions. It is impossible that the most amiable of women would continue to love a man who had shown so little affection towards her, and whose hard heart did not shrink from crowning her betrayal by the ruin of her parents. The story of the gift of money, also, seems 170 unlikely, as her father had been impoverished by the swindler, and the fund for his relief, raised by a subscription in London—which did not receive too generous support—had not yet been sent to Buttermere. And, finally—alas! for romance—since the moral code even of the dawn of the nineteenth century did not allow Mary Robinson to usurp the duties, more than the name, of wife to the prisoner, it is incredible that a modest woman would wish to renew the memories of her unhallowed union by an interview with the man whose association with her had brought only dishonour.

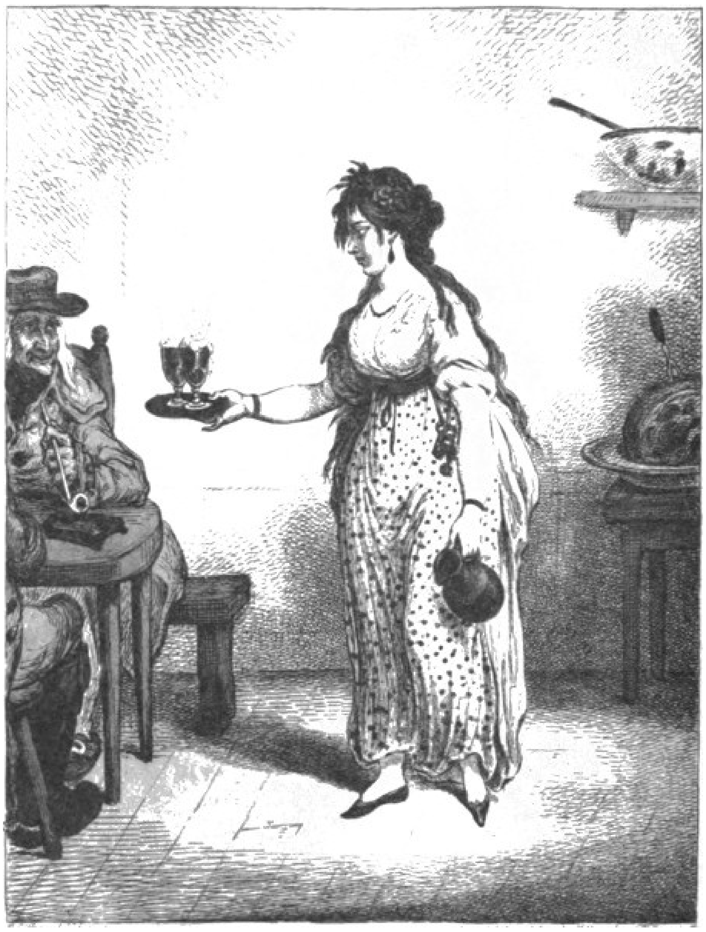
The execution of John Hadfield took place on Saturday, the 3rd of September. Rising at six, he spent half an hour in the prison chapel. At ten o’clock his fetters were removed, and he was occupied most of the morning in prayer with the two clergymen, who, we are told, drank coffee with him. The authorities do not seem to have had any fear that he would attempt his life, for they allowed him the use of a razor. About the hour of three he made a hearty meal, at which his gaoler kept him company. In those times there was a tradition in Carlisle that a reprieve had once arrived in the afternoon for a criminal who was hanged in the morning. Thus, nearly three weeks had been allowed to elapse between Hadfield’s trial and execution—in order that there might be plenty of time for a communication from London—and even on the last day the fatal hour was postponed until the mail from the south was delivered.

Although it had been the opinion of the town that he would not suffer the extreme penalty, the Saturday post, which arrived early in the afternoon, brought no pardon. At half-past three he was taken to the turnkey’s lodge, where he was pinioned, his bonds being tied loosely at his request. Here he showed a great desire to see the executioner—who, oddly enough, hailed from Dumfries, the town which the real Colonel Hope had represented in Parliament—and gave him 171 half a crown, the only money he possessed. It was four o’clock when the procession started from the prison, in the midst of an immense concourse of spectators. Hadfield occupied a post-chaise, ordered from a local inn, and a body of yeomanry surrounded the carriage. Without avail he petitioned for the windows to be closed. The gallows—two posts fixed in the ground, about six feet apart, with a bar laid across them—had been erected during the previous night on an island, known locally as the Sands, formed by the river Eden on the south side of the town beyond the Scotch gate, and between the two bridges. A small dung-cart, boarded over, stood beneath the cross-bar, Tyburn fashion, in lieu of the new drop. As soon as it met his eyes, the condemned man asked if this was where he was to die, and upon being answered in the affirmative, he exclaimed, “Oh, happy sight! I see it with pleasure!”

John Hadfield met his fate with the heroism which great criminals invariably exhibit. Aged since his arrest, for he had been in prison nearly ten months, he looked at least fifty. In every respect he had become very different from the sprightly ‘Colonel Hope’ of the previous summer. When he alighted from the carriage at the shambles he seemed faint and exhausted, but this weakness was due to physical infirmity and not to fear. A feeble and piteous smile occasionally played over his white face. Yet none of the arrogance of pseudo-martyrdom marked his bearing, but his quiet resignation and reverent aspect won the pity of the vast crowd, bitterly hostile to him a short while before. It was remarked that he had still an air of distinction, and was neatly dressed; his jacket and silk waistcoat were black, and he wore fustian breeches and white thread stockings. Just before he was turned off he was heard to murmur, “My spirit is strong, though my body is weak." We are told that he seemed to die in a moment without any struggle, and did not even raise his hands. An hour and a half later he was lying in a grave in St Mary's Churchyard, for his request that he should be buried at Burgh-on-Sands was disregarded out of consideration for the pious memory of Edward I.

Were it not for his dastardly treatment of the women who gave him their love, the fate of John Hadfield would seem hard. He was not hanged for swindling John Crump out of £50—which indeed the value of his carriage and its contents, left behind at Keswick, would have more than cancelled—but for attempting to swindle him under the fictitious name of Colonel Hope. Thus by assuming the character of another man he became entangled in one of the fine-spun meshes of the law, and was held guilty of an intention to defraud. Our great-grandfathers, who, with the assistance of Sir Alexander Thomson, could hang an old woman for stealing a few potatoes in a bread riot, thought it expedient also to kill a man who obtained £50 by telling a lie.

There is much truth in the proposition, which has been stated with such inaccuracy by De Quincey, that, but for his heartless conduct to Mary of Buttermere, John Hadfield might have escaped the gallows. It is probable that Mr Crump would have been loth to advertise himself as a credulous dupe, unless he had thought that it was his duty to give evidence against a heartless seducer. Parson Nicholson, also, would have had no reason to depart from the attitude he had taken up before he was aware that he had officiated at a bigamous marriage.



Mary of Buttermere.

Sketched from Life July 1800

Notwithstanding that his career was marked by so many villainies, John Hadfield is in many respects an admirable rascal. Setting aside his behaviour towards women—if that is possible even for a moment—he played a part which required infinite tact and magnificent courage. Although occasionally he robbed a man who was not rich, yet until the crime of Buttermere such an occurrence was in the nature of an accident, and was rather the fault of the wronged one for putting himself in the path. Like Claude Duval, the Keswick impostor was in the main merciful towards the impecunious; not indeed for conscience sake, but because he believed that his rightful place was among the wealthy. A hunter of big game, dukes, members of Parliament, and prosperous merchants were his proper prey! And the man who could maintain a decent social position for twenty years, in spite of the heavy handicaps of poverty and lowly birth, and could compel those whom one of his class should have met only as a lackey to receive him on equal terms, was more than a common trickster. An insatiable love of pleasure robbed him of all foresight and prudence, or such a consummate liar might have climbed high. Even as he was—had an earl been his father—he might have gone down to posterity as one of the greatest diplomats the world has ever seen.

The career of Samuel Denmore Hayward, hanged at the Old Bailey for forgery on the 27th of November 1821, a picture of whom, dancing with 'a lady of quality' ornaments one version of the *Newgate Calendar*, is similar to that of the Keswick impostor. Both men seem to have had culture and address; each was distinguished for his social ambition, and both were famous for gallantry. With the exception of James Maclean, illustrious as the friend of Lady Caroline Petersham and little Miss Ashe, none of our rogues—not even William Parsons, the baronet’s son—have been such fine gentlemen.

Mary Robinson’s child was born early in June 1803, but did not survive its birth. Who can tell whether she wept over it; or if the words that came from the lips of her parents, when they heard of the death of her betrayer, did not seem a fitting epitaph—“God be thanked!” To avoid the gaze of curious travellers the unhappy girl was obliged for a period to leave her native place, 174
and the shadow that had fallen upon her young life was not lifted for many years. Yet, brighter days were in store for the Maid of Buttermere. In the course of time she was wooed and won by a Cumberland ‘statesman’ named Richard Harrison, to whom she was married at Brigham Church in the May of 1808. Two of her sons, born at Buttermere, where she resided for a period after her marriage, died in infancy; but when her husband took her to his farm at ‘Todcrofts’ Caldbeck, beyond Skiddaw—where the Harrison family had been ‘statesmen’ for generations—she became the mother of five more children, three daughters and two sons, all of whom grew up and married. In later years it was remarked that her girls were as pretty as Mary had been herself when she was the Maid of the Inn. There is reason to believe that the rest of her career was happy and prosperous, and she lived tranquilly in her home at ‘Todcrofts’ where she died in her fifty-ninth year. The tombstone records that she passed away on the 7th of February 1837, while her husband survived her for sixteen years. Both rest in the churchyard that holds the ashes of immortal John Peel, who followed Richard Harrison to ‘the happy hunting-fields’ within a few months.

(I am indebted to the kindness of Mr Richard Greenup, of Beckstones, Caldbeck, one of Mary Robinson’s few surviving grandchildren, for much interesting information.) 175

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> Although always spoken of as John Hatfield, the proper name of the 'Keswick Impostor' if the register of his baptism is an authority, was Hadfield.

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4. *The Morning Herald,*	do.	do.
5. *The Morning Chronicle,*	do.	do.
6. *The True Briton,*	do.	do.
7. *Lloyd's Evening Post,*	do.	do.
8. *The Carlisle Journal,*	do.	do.
9. *The Leeds Mercury,*	do.	do.

10. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, part ii. 1792, pp. 1114-16; part i. 1800, p. 18-24; part ii. 1802, pp. 1013, 1062, 1063, 1157; part ii. 1803, pp. 779, 876, 983.

11. *The European Magazine*, part ii. 1792, p. 436; part ii. 1802, pp. 316, 477; part ii. 1803, pp. 157, 242.

Coleridge and the "Morning Post."

> Three accounts from the pen of Coleridge, which appeared in the *Morning Post* of October 11, October 22, and November 5 respectively, under the titles "Romantic Marriage" and "The Fraudulent Marriage," find a place in Coleridge's "Essays on His Own Times," edited by his daughter. The late Mr H. D. Traill, in his monograph in the "English Men of Letters" series, has pointed out (note, p. 80) that "it is impossible to believe that this collection, forming as it does but two small volumes, and a portion of a third, is anything like complete." It is not an unwarrantable assumption that two subsequent articles in the *Morning Post*, which appeared on November 20 and December 31, were written from Greta Hall, and that Coleridge therefore was responsible for the sobriquet "The Keswick Impostor."

> Sir Alexander Hope, brother of the third Earl Hopetoun, whom Hadfield impersonated, was not (as stated in the *Dic. Nat. Biog.*) the second but the *eighth* son of the second earl (*vide Gentleman's Magazine*, 1837, part ii. p. 423).

Notes.

Note I.—*A Fortnight's Ramble to the Lakes in Westmorland*, Lancashire and Cumberland.

> This book is reviewed at full length in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, December 1792, pt. ii. pp. 1114-16, and in the *European Magazine*, December 1892, pt. ii. p. 436. The author, Joseph Budworth, who afterwards adopted his wife's surname, Palmer, was a contributor to the former journal. Mary Robinson is described under the pseudonym 'Sally of Buttermere' The second edition of the *Fortnight's Ramble* is reviewed in *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lxvi. pt. i. p. 132, February 1796.

Note II.—*A Revisit to Buttermere*. Letter from a rambler to 'Mr. Urban' dated Buttermere, January 2 (*vide Gentleman's Magazine*, January 1800, pp. 18-24).

> This account was inserted in the third edition of *A Fortnight's Ramble*, published in 1810. Joseph Budworth tells us that his second visit to Buttermere took place in January 1798.

Note III.—*The Prelude*, or Growth of a Poet's Mind, by Wm. Wordsworth. Commenced 1799, finished 1805, published 1850. The Centenary edition of the works of Wm. Wordsworth. Six vols.

Edited by E. Moxon, 1870.

Book VII., “Residence in London,” contains the famous reference to Mary of Buttermere and her story. Describing various dramas he has seen at Sadler’s Wells Theatre, the poet mentions one written around the story of Mary of Buttermere. *Notes and Queries*, Tenth Series, i. pp. 7, 70, 96.

Note IV.—*The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey.* Edited by David Masson. A. & C. Black (1889-90); *vide Literary Reminiscences*, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, vol. ii. pp. 138-225.

The description of ‘The Hadfield Affair’ occupies pp. 174-184, and its numerous errors were the subject of a smart attack by a correspondent in *Notes and Queries* (First Series, vol. viii. p. 26), July 9, 1853.

Note V.—*The Tourist’s New Guide.* By William Green. In two volumes. Kendal (1819), vol. ii. pp. 180-5, 221. *Seventy-eight Studies from Nature.* By William Green. Longman (1809) p. 7.

The various descriptions of Mary Robinson are so conflicting that it is difficult, until one reads the impressions recorded from year to year by Wm. Green, to form an estimate of her personal appearance. It has been shown that Joseph Budworth, who first saw her in 1792, when she was fourteen, raves of her charms, and his second visit to Buttermere six years later did not disillusionise him. De Quincey, however, denies that she was beautiful, and does not praise even her figure. Yet he seems to be unconscious that he is describing, not the world-renowned ‘Maiden of Buttermere’ but a matron of thirty-five, who was now the wife of a prosperous farmer, and who had drank deeply of life’s sorrows. Mr Frederick Reed of Hassness, Buttermere, writing in August 1874 (*Notes and Queries*, Fifth Series, ii. 175), thirty-seven years after her death, states that “she was not the beauty she is represented to have been. She carried herself well, but got to be coarse-featured.” Still, as it is improbable that Mr Reed saw her till she was past her prime, his criticism is of little value. Sara Nelson, too, who was born during the year of Mary’s great trouble, did not meet her till her good looks had vanished. The *Morning Post* of October 11, 1802, contains the following description from the pen of Coleridge:—“To beauty in the strict sense of the word she has small pretensions, being rather gap-toothed and somewhat pock-fretten. But her face is very expressive, and the expression extremely interesting, and her figure and movements are graceful to a miracle. She ought indeed to be called the Grace of Buttermere rather than the Beauty.”

William Green tells us that he first saw Mary Robinson in 1791, the year before she was noticed by Captain Budworth. “At that time,” says he, “she was thirteen; and to an open, honest, and pleasant-looking face, then in the bloom of health, was added the promise of a good figure. Her garb, though neat, was rustic; but through it, even while so young, appeared indications of that mild dignity which was afterwards so peculiarly attractive.” He saw her next in 1794. “The infantine prettiness of thirteen was now matured into beauty; her countenance beamed with an indescribable sweetness, and the commanding graces of her fine person were equalled only by her innate good sense and excellent disposition.” After remarking that Captain Budworth’s panegyric seemed to have had no ill effect upon her mind, he proceeds: “Like some other mountain rustics, observed by the writer during his residence amongst these thinly populated wilds, Mary’s beauty was ripened at an early period; for this was, probably, the period of its perfection.” Green did not see her again till 1801. “She was then twenty-three, and though greatly admired for her general appearance and deportment, was on the whole infinitely less interesting than seven years before that time.” In 1805, the date of his next visit to Buttermere, he noted a further change. “Her features were pervaded by a melancholy meekness, but her beauty was fled, and with it, that peculiar elegance of person, for which she was formerly celebrated.” The next time the artist saw her was in 1810. “She was no longer the Beauty of Buttermere, but Mrs. Harrison, the bulky wife of a farmer, blessed with much good humour, and a ready utterance.” This was about the time when De Quincey saw her. Gillray’s sketch, November 15, 1802, corroborates Green’s description.

The *Dictionary of National Biography* gives the date of publication of *The Tourist’s Guide* as 1822. This is an error. It was published in 1819. The same monograph does not mention Green’s *Survey of Manchester*.

Note VI.—*East Cheshire.* By J. P. Earwaker, 1880, vol. ii. p. 136.

Gives the following extract from the register of baptisms at the parish church of Mottram-in-Longdendale:—

“1759. May 24, John, son of William Hadfield, and Betty, his Wife.” The church register confirms this reference.

John Hadfield’s father, who lived at Crodenbrook or Craddenbrook, Longden, must have been a man of means, for in 1760 he gave £20 to the poor.

Note VII.—*Dic. Nat. Biog.* This excellent sketch is only marred by the misspelling of Hadfield’s name, and the error in the date of his birth.

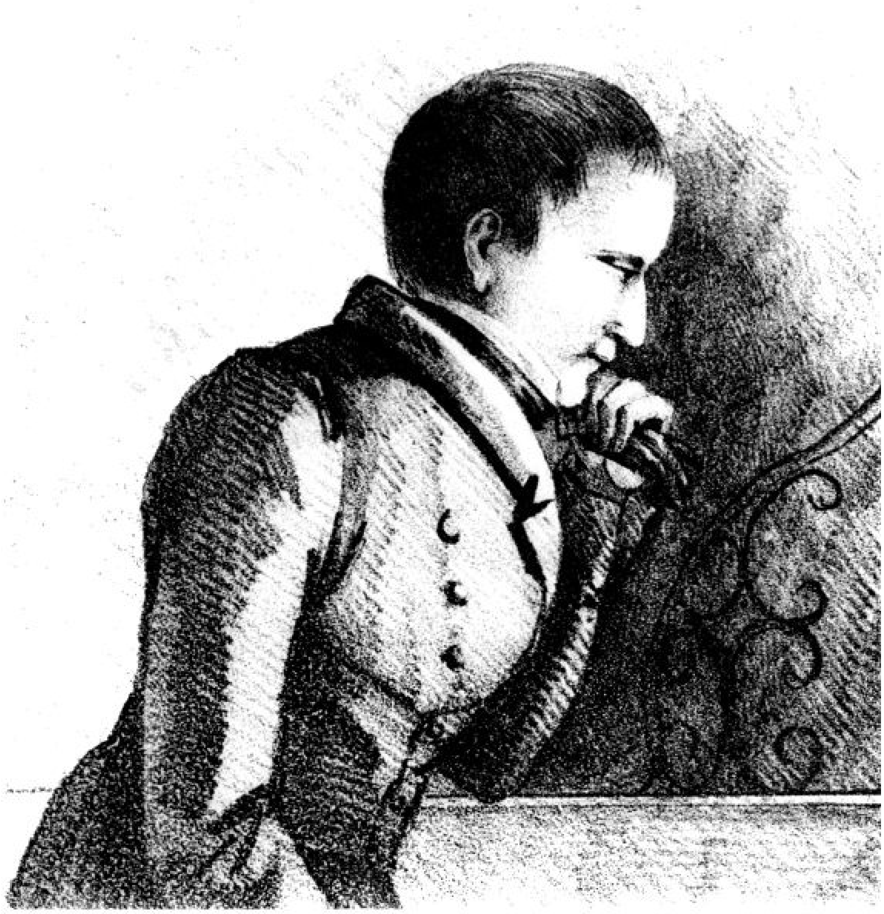
A FAMOUS FORGERY

THE CASE OF HENRY FAUNTLEROY, 1824

Part I.—The Criminal and his Crime.

> “Then, list, ingenuous youth....
> And once forego your joy,
> For your 176 instruction I display
> The life of Fauntleroy.”
> *The Dirge of Fauntleroy*, James Usher, 1824.

In the year 1792—not one of the least disastrous in our annals of commerce—a small party of capitalists established a private bank under the name of Marsh, Sibbald & Company of Berners Street. The chief promoters—William Marsh, a naval agent, and James Sibbald of Sittwood Park, Berkshire, a retired official of Company John—were gentlemen of substance and position; while their managing partner, William Fauntleroy (previously employed at the famous house of Barclay), was a man of ability and business experience. Four years later, a younger son of Sir Edward Stracey, a Norfolk baronet, who married eventually the niece of Sir James Sibbald, was admitted into the firm.



HENRY FAUNTLEROY.

Although never a bank of great resources, it appears to have made a fair return to its proprietors, and because of its connection with two baronets—one of whom became Sheriff of his county—it was regarded as a house of repute. In the spring of 1807 the firm received a severe blow through the death, when only in his fifty-eighth year, of the active partner, William Fauntleroy, in whom his colleagues placed implicit trust. Luckily, however, it was possible to fill his place, for his second son Henry, who had been employed as a clerk for seven years, although only twenty-two, was fit and eager for the post. None of the members of the firm were able to devote much attention to their bank, and thus, by a strange chance, the sole control was left in the hands of young Fauntleroy.

A remarkable man in every respect, this youthful manager, who carried with ease the burden of a great business on his shoulders. During the second decade of last century no figure was better known to those familiar with the west end of Oxford Street. Neat and elegant as Brummell, grave and industrious as Henry Addington, he seemed a model for all young men of commerce. Each morning at the same hour, the front door of No. 7 Berners Street, where he lived with his mother and sister, was thrown open, and the banker would step briskly into the adjoining premises—the counting-house of Messrs Marsh, Stracey, Fauntleroy & Graham. For he was a partner, also, as well as absolute manager, this solemn young gentleman whose air of ponderous respectability won the confidence of all.

At first sight, his cleanly-chiselled features seemed to express merely gentleness and simplicity, but a second glance would reveal a picture of resolution and strength. In fact, the massive brow, the broad cheekbones, and the firm, bold contour of the chin suggested a strange likeness—one that he sought to emphasise by the close-cropped hair made to droop over his forehead. It was his foible, this belief that he bore a resemblance to the great Buonaparte—whose bust adorned his mantelpiece—and the final catastrophe that overwhelmed him should discourage any latter-day 180 egoist who prides himself upon a similar likeness.

Springing from an industrious Nonconformist stock (for his father had been the architect of his own fortunes, while his elder brother William, who fell a victim to consumption at an early age, was a youth full of the promise of genius), the temperament of Henry Fauntleroy appears to have been as complex a piece of mechanism as Nature ever enclosed within a human tenement. The love of toil, and an indomitable perseverance, seemed to be the guiding principles of his life. Not only did his fine courage never waver amidst the terrors of the financial tempest, through which he stood at the helm of his frail bark, but he gave no sign to his colleagues of the misgivings that must have lurked within his mind. For commerce had fallen upon evil days. On every side he beheld the crash and wreckage of his fellows, but, inspired by the confidence which only the knowledge of power can bestow, he resolved to continue his struggle against the storm. With a brain capable of grappling with huge balance-sheets, an almost superhuman dexterity in figures being his natural gift, the work of three men was the daily task of this Napoleon of commerce. Although the members of his firm were compelled to dive deeply into their pockets during these hazardous years, to meet losses occasioned by the failure of clients engaged in building speculations, the Berners Street Bank was handled so skilfully that it managed to weather the storm.

In spite of his vast abilities, there was nothing of bombast in Fauntleroy’s nature, nor did external evidence show that he was engaged in deadly warfare against the unpropitious fates. A gentle, unassuming man, with a quiet charm of address, he won universal regard from all with whom he came into contact. The gift of friendship, the infectious knack of social intercourse, was part of his character. Naturally, the circle in which he moved was composed of persons of 181 refinement and, in some cases, of eminence in the commercial world. While his hand was ever open to the cry of distress, his board always had a place for those who had gained his esteem. All the leisure he could snatch seemed devoted to simple pleasures—a choice little dinner to a few kindred spirits, a holiday at his suburban villa, or a week-end visit to his house in Brighton. Though his earnest, florid face might be seen often beneath the hood of his smart cabriolet, this carriage was used principally in journeys between Berners Street and the City. In short, few business men in London were held in greater respect than this hard-working young banker, who was so like the Emperor Napoleon.

Yet there was another side to the picture. Although ostensibly he lived this simple and strenuous existence, a few bosom companions knew him in another guise. Unknown to the world, those week-end parties at his villa in the suburbs were tainted and ungodly. The sweet girl who sat at the head of his table as mistress of his home had lost her maiden innocence while her fresh young beauty was in its bud, lured by the sensuous Fauntleroy almost from school. All her pretty friends belonged to the same frail sisterhood, Cyprians beyond question, though modest perhaps in demeanour and speech. And with these ‘Kates and Sues’ of the town came Fauntleroy’s intimates, ‘Toms and Jerries’ unmistakably, though possibly only in travesty, becoming sober men once more in business hours.

Or one might have seen him driving past the fetid Pavilion at Brighton in his smart carriage, with its fawn-coloured lining, and have recognised in the shameless features of the flashy lady at his side the notorious ‘Corinthian Kate’ herself—in real life Mrs ‘Bang’ most ‘slap-up of ladybirds’ Then, again, at his luxurious seaside home in Western Place, with its conservatories 182 and sumptuous billiard-room-draped as a facsimile of Napoleon’s travelling tent—his Kate’s dear friend Harriet Wilson, or other illustrious fair ones, would come to amuse his bachelor companions. Thus, in his leisure moments, the industrious Fauntleroy enjoyed secretly the life of an epicure and sensualist. Deep-buried in his soul the love of vice was ever present. “There only needed one thing to complete your equipage,” he writes, in plain *double entente* that indicates his ruling passion, to his friend Sheriff Parkins, “instead of the man at your side, a beautiful angel!”

Marriage had meant no sowing of wild oats to Henry Fauntleroy. A mystery surrounds his union to the daughter of a naval captain named John Young. It is known only that, although a son was born, the match from the first was an unhappy one, and an early separation took place. During the year of Waterloo a liaison with a married lady, who had a complacent or shortsighted husband, increased the habits of extravagance which in the end brought the banker to ruin. Later, the pretty young girl Maria Fox, who had been educated at a convent in France, consented to become the mistress of his suburban home. Thus the double life continued; while to those who knew him only in Berners Street, Mr Fauntleroy appeared the most righteous and respectable of men.

What was the nominal income of the young bank manager it is impossible to ascertain; but whatever the sum, it is certain that before very long his expenditure began to exceed his means.

Probably he took the first step on his downward march during the year of the hejira to Elba. The strength and weakness of his character combined to make the position of Tantalus unendurable. Nothing seemed more certain than that the Berners Street house, which had never recovered 183
from its unfortunate speculations, would return large profits if its capital was sufficient to meet all claims. Thus Fauntleroy decided not to take his colleagues into his confidence. Such a step would have caused the business to be wound up, and he would have lost his handsome salary. As one of his most severe critics has pointed out, “he had not enough moral courage to face the world in honest, brave poverty.” On the contrary, his courage took another form. Confident that he must conquer evil fortune, the self-reliant man resolved to commence a life-and-death battle with fate, alone and unaided. And his choice was the frightful expedient of forgery!

The methods of Fauntleroy were of unparalleled audacity. Then, as now, clients were in the habit of placing the certificates of their securities in the hands of their bankers for safe custody. So, by boldly forging the signature of the proprietor upon a power of attorney, he was able to sell any particular investment that he desired. Naturally, his depredations were confined to Government securities—Consols, Long Annuities, Exchequer Bills—and thus in effecting the fraudulent transfers his negotiations were with the Bank of England. For a period of almost ten years this incomparable swindler maintained the credit of his house in this manner, selling stocks belonging to his clients to the value of hundreds of thousands of pounds. As the proprietors received their dividends as regularly as ever—for Fauntleroy took care that their pass-books were credited with the half-yearly payments—they never knew that their investments had been abstracted. On the death of an owner the stolen stock was replaced, and thus the trustees were unaware of the theft. So the frauds went on, each forgery being shrouded by another, until the total deficit of the Berners Street Bank exceeded half a million! 184

Narrow escapes were inevitable. On one occasion he was handing over a power of attorney for the transfer of stock to one of the clerks in the Consols Office at the Bank of England, when the person whose name he had forged entered the room. Yet Fauntleroy’s *aplomb* did not fail him. As soon as he perceived the new-comer, he requested the clerk to return the document, with the excuse that he wished to correct an omission. Then, having secured the paper, he went to greet the friend whom he was about to rob, and they strolled out of the bank together. Another day, one of his lady clients instructed a London broker to sell some stock for her. Finding no such investment registered in her name, the man called at Berners Street to make inquiries. To his surprise the plausible banker informed him that the lady had already desired him to effect the sale. “And here,” continued the smiling Fauntleroy, producing a number of Exchequer bills, “are the proceeds.” Although his customer protested that she had never authorised the transaction, the matter was allowed to drop. While a friend was chatting in his private office he is said to have been imitating his signature, which he took out to the counting-house before his companion had departed. One of the last occasions when he visited the Bank of England was on the 5th of January, the day on which Thurtell and Hunt were tried for the Gillshill murder. While the clerk was crediting the dividend warrants due to his firm, the banker conversed about the crime. It was noted as a strange coincidence that the same clerk was one of the witnesses against him.

One day in September 1824, Mr J. D. Hulme, an official of the Custom House, wishing to examine a list of investments belonging to an estate of which he had become a trustee, paid a visit to the Bank of England. To his amazement he found that a sum of £10,000 in Consols was 185
missing, and inquiry proved that the stock had been sold by the Berners Street manager under a power of attorney. On the advice of Mr Freshfield, solicitor of the bank, an application was made to Mr Conant of Marlborough Street, who was induced to grant a warrant for the arrest of the suspected man. At last the wily Fauntleroy had been caught napping; for although he was aware that there was a risk of exposure, and had made preparations to reinvest the stolen Consols, he had not yet been able to complete the transaction.

During the whole of Thursday night, Samuel Plank, chief-officer of Marlborough Street, finding that the banker was away from home, paraded Berners Street watching for his return. On the next morning, the 10th of September, at his usual hour, the grave, neatly dressed forger walked into his place of business. A mean trick marked the arrest. Mr Goodchild, the other co-trustee of the plundered estate, entered the counting-house a few moments before Plank, and proceeded into the private office, while the constable, pretending to cash a cheque, remained at the counter. When through the half-closed door of the inner room he saw that the victim and decoy were closeted together, the police-officer pushed past the astonished clerks, explaining that he wanted to speak to their employer. As Fauntleroy raised his eyes from his desk, and saw a warrant in the intruder’s hand, he realised that the visit of his friend was merely a device to place him in the hand of the law.

“Good God!” exclaimed the doomed man. “Cannot this business be settled?”

And tradition relates that he offered Plank a bribe of ten thousand pounds to allow him to escape. But the officer proved incorruptible, and soon the banker was standing in the presence of his astonished friend, Magistrate John Conant, who, though sore distressed, was compelled to 186
commit him to Coldbath Fields prison.

“I alone am guilty,” cried the wretched Fauntleroy, in a burst of penitence. “My colleagues did not know!”

Like the great model whom he had striven to emulate, the vain man had found his Moscow. No longer was he the dandy banker of Berners Street, whose friendship had been sought by so many rich men from the City. The days of the lavish Corinthian, the associate of ‘bang-up pinks and bloods’ had passed away for ever, and he had become a criminal, standing beneath the shadow of the gallows!

While Mr Freshfield, with the aid of the constable, proceeded to execute his right of search, the members of the firm were summoned to town. At first the catastrophe was not appreciated to the full extent. On the following morning the bank opened its doors, and customers paid and drew their cheques as usual. However, before the close of the day the proprietors sent an announcement to the press that “in consequence of the extraordinary conduct of their partner,” they had determined for the present to suspend payment.

During the whole of Monday, the 13th of September, an excited throng took possession of Berners Street—neighbouring tradesmen trembling for their deposits; men from the City dismayed by the wildest rumours. A force of police was deemed necessary to prevent a riot. “Arrest of Mr Fauntleroy, the well-known banker!” The amazing tidings was upon every lip. A similar sensation had not been experienced in the memory of man. Since the days of Dr Dodd, half a century before, none so high in the social scale had been accused of such a crime. All the week, panic reigned in business houses. It was whispered that the defalcations would reach half a million pounds: that the greatest commercial scandal of the age would be disclosed. One day, 187
it was said that Fauntleroy had arranged a plan of escape; on another, that he had cut his throat with a razor.

In the presence of a crowd of his creditors, the forger—crushed, despairing, overwhelmed with the deepest shame—was brought up for his first examination at Marlborough Street on the following Saturday. Although not more than forty, his hair, prematurely grey, made him look much older. During ten long years of torture the slow fires of suspense must have burnt deep into his soul, and the reality of this fatal hour would seem less cruel than the dreaded expectation. One observer states that “his expression is of pure John Bull good-nature”; another declares that he had “a mild Roman contour of visage”; while his dress was the inevitable blue tail-coat and trousers, with half-boots and a light-coloured waistcoat—the morning attire of all gentlemen of the period from Lord Alvanley and Ball Hughes down to Corinthian Tom.

On the Friday week following his first examination, the forger stood once more in the dock at Marlborough Street. Two maiden ladies, Miss Frances and Miss Elizabeth Young, whose small fortune had been stolen, gave testimony against the prisoner. Pained to see the man whom they had honoured and trusted in this terrible position, the tender-hearted women were tearful and distressed. Since the maiden name of Mrs Henry Fauntleroy was the same as theirs, rumour leapt to the conclusion that these witnesses were the sisters of the prisoner’s wife. When the unfortunate banker was seen to flush deeply as Miss Young appeared in the witness-box, the error was confirmed.

It was not until the 19th of October that the accused went through his third and last
examination. Although well-groomed and immaculate as ever, he was a mere shadow of the 188
placid, inscrutable man of business who had borne his guilty secret so boldly and so long. There was “rather a ghastly than a living hue upon his countenance,” remarks the stylist who reports for *The Times*. All the necessary charges being proved, he was committed to Newgate, his removal being postponed until Thursday, the 21st of October, on the application of his solicitor.

Meanwhile the London press had revelled in the case. Scarcely a day passed without a reference to the forger or to the forgery, and there was the greatest strife among the various newspapers to secure the most lurid reports. Many times we have the amusing spectacle of two journals belabouring each other like the envious editors in *Pickwick*. Even the recent crime of John Thurtell—for in this wonderful fourth year of his Gracious Majesty King George IV. the lucky public was satiated with melodrama, while Jemmy Catnach’s pockets were overflowing with gold—did not offer such chances of sensational reports. It was announced to an amazed public that Fauntleroy had squandered the proceeds of his forgeries in riot and dissipation. One-half of his private life was disclosed to public ears; and though some of the newspapers were merciful, just as others were hostile to the prisoner, one and all, with very few exceptions, probed deep into his murky past.

Happily, there is no evidence to justify the supposition that the partners in the Berners Street bank—and in particular Mr J. H. Stracey, who thirty years later succeeded to the baronetcy held in turn by his father and his two brothers—were responsible for the dastardly attacks upon the defenceless man. Even had he given no public denial to the charge, such an assumption is impossible in the case of an honourable man like the late Sir Josias Stracey. Moreover, the identity of the person who inspired the disgraceful accounts in *The Times* and other journals is 189
easy to discern.

This spiteful enemy bursts upon the stage of the sad tragedy of Fauntleroy like the comic villain of melodrama—too contemptible to hate, but with a humour too crapulous for whole-hearted laughter. Joseph Wilfred Parkins—elected Sheriff of London on the 24th of June 1819—appears to have been one of the most blatant humbugs that ever belonged to the objectionable family of Bumble. Tradition relates that he was the son of a blacksmith who lived on the borders of Inglewood Forest in Cumberland; but Parkins, too proud to know from whence he came, preferred to pass as a bastard of the Duke of Norfolk. In his early youth, we are told that “he

was apprenticed to a breeches-maker in Carlisle, but his dexterity as a workman not being commensurate with his powers of digestion, a separation took place.” Afterwards he sailed to Calcutta, where, assisted by letters of introduction from his patron the Duke, he established a lucrative business. In other ways, according to account, he was a success in India, where he became famous for hunting tigers with English greyhounds, and once shot a coolie for disobeying his orders, two miles and a half distant, right through the head, across the Ganges, and through an impenetrable jungle! On another occasion he claimed to have ridden stark naked in mid-day, on a barebacked horse without bridle, fifty miles in six hours, for a wager, and to have trotted back for pleasure without even a drink of water. When he returned to his native land with the treasures of the East, it was inevitable that such a man should win notoriety. Having failed to gain the affections of Queen Caroline, who preferred Alderman Wood for a beau, he devoted himself to Olive Serres, ‘Princess of Cumberland’ and became her champion and literary collaborator. One of the achievements on which he most prided himself was the 190
refusal to marry a daughter of Lord Sidmouth, who was most eager to become his father-in-law. Sometimes we behold him fawning upon Lord Mayor Waithman and Orator Hunt. At others, no one excels him in hurling abuse at these same celebrities. During a portion of his career a charmer named Hannah White caused him much trouble. Probably he enjoys the unique honour of being the only Sheriff of London upon whom the Court of Common Council has passed a vote of censure for his conduct while in office.

For some years this great Parkins was a familiar friend of Henry Fauntleroy. “I have been looking out for you in town these three or four days,” the banker writes to him in May 1816, “as we have a dance this evening, and lots of pretty girls, and I know you are an admirer of them.” However, just after the arrest, the ex-Sheriff suspected his former associate unjustly of a breach of faith, and thus became his most deadly enemy, placing his intimate knowledge of his friend’s habits at the service of the hostile press. In order to exhibit the bankers depravity, he published a communication from the fair but frail Corinthian Kate, known in real life as ‘Mother Bang’ but the context chiefly serves to indicate that Parkins treasured a grudge because his friend had never introduced him to the lady. Even after the criminal had received sentence his animosity did not cease. “The penalty for forgery should be the gallows,” he declared at a meeting of the Berners Street creditors, “until the law discovered a worse punishment.” When the only son of the condemned man, a youth of fifteen, wrote to the papers, pleading that mercy should be shown to his father, the vindictive ex-Sheriff declared in the columns of the *Morning Chronicle* (as it proved, falsely) that the boy was not the author of the appeal. Nor did he scruple to print private letters from Mrs Fauntleroy to her husband in order to show that she was an ill-used 191
wife.

Great indulgence was shown to the banker—for a forger always was treated with lenience—during his term of imprisonment at the Old Bailey. The same consideration—which aroused the ire of Parkins to boiling point—had been paid to him while he was under the care of Mr Vickery, ex-Bow Street runner, at that time the Governor of Coldbath Fields bridewell. On this account there arose a very pretty quarrel, at which, of course, the newspapers assisted, between John Edward Conant of Marlborough Street and an elderly magistrate of Hammersmith named John Hanson. The latter was accused of intruding into Fauntleroy’s room at the House of Correction, when the following conversation is said to have taken place:

“You are the banker from Berners Street, aren’t you?” demanded the visitor.

“Yes, I am that unfortunate person, sir,” answered the prisoner.

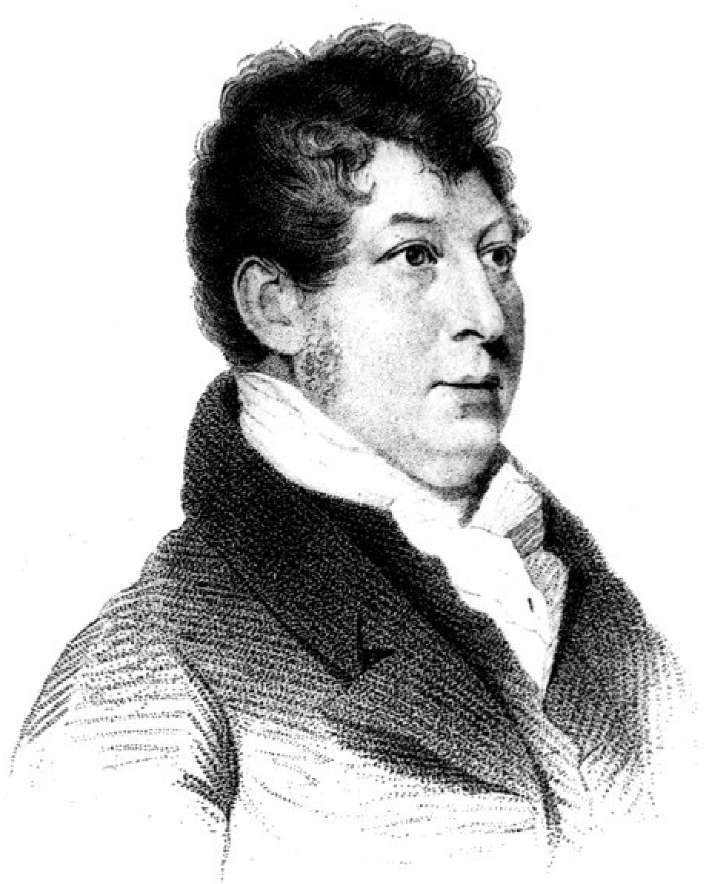
“Oh, then you’d better look to your soul,” was the reply. “Look to your Bible. Read your Bible.”

Although poor old Hanson, who was struck off the list of visiting justices in consequence of his officiousness, made many earnest protests that he had been misrepresented, and although Fauntleroy acquitted him of all intent to offend, it would appear that his observations were superfluous, whatever their precise form.

At Newgate the kind-hearted Mr Wontner—keeper of the gaol from 1822 till his premature death at the age of fifty in 1833—allowed the unfortunate banker every privilege that lay in his power. Thus his prison was no gloomy dungeon, but a large and well-furnished room, occupied by a turnkey named Harris, who removed into an adjacent apartment, and who, together with his wife, watched over and attended to the wants of his charge. Convinced that his case was 192
hopeless, it is said that Fauntleroy resolved to plead guilty; but, urged by his friends, and by his solicitors, Messrs Forbes & Harmer, he was induced at last to abandon the intention.

James Harmer, who conducted his defence, was the great criminal lawyer of his day—a prototype of Mr Jaggers—the prince of Old Bailey attorneys. Among his clients were such diametrically opposite characters as Joseph Hunt of Gillshill fame, and lusty Sam Bamford of Middleton. The incidents of Mr Fauntleroy’s case offered many opportunities for his versatile talents; and although he failed to teach good manners to *The Times* newspaper, he did much service to his age, by means of a side issue, in getting Joseph Parkins indicted for perjury. Yet the greatest abilities could do little to extenuate the Berners Street forgeries. Still, whether or not he had a weakness for scented soap, Harmer never fought in kid gloves, as the unfortunate Messrs Marsh, Stracey, & Graham—whom he was compelled to damage in the interests of the man he defended—found to their cost. Those inclined to accuse Charles Dickens of exaggeration should bear in mind that murderer Hunt, who chose Jaggers Harmer as his solicitor, escaped the hangman’s rope, while Thurtell, who employed another lawyer, was handed over to Thomas Cheshire.

The trial of Fauntleroy on Saturday, the 30th of October, did not attract the mob of respectables that officialdom had anticipated. A guinea entrance-fee proved prohibitive. Press and law students alone furnished their crowds, and the private galleries were patronised but poorly. Joseph Parkins, eager to witness the humiliation of the man whom he had chosen to regard as an enemy, was an early arrival, taking his place at the barristers’ table in front of the dock, where, in full view of the prisoner, he could gloat over his misery. Luckily, Sheriff Brown, whose humanity—like that of his colleague John Key—was in advance of the age, witnessed the 193 manœuvre, and, appreciating the motive of the truculent nabob, sent an officer of the court to tell him that his seat was engaged. Parkins, whose fierce eyes, glaring from beneath bushy, overhanging brows, seemed to inflame his combative features and fiery locks, turned in outraged dignity upon the official.



James Harmer, Esq^{r}.
Solicitor.

Engraved by T. Wright from a Drawing by A. Wivell.

London, Published August 1st, 1820, by A. WIVELL, 105, Great Titchfield Street.

“Do you know to whom you speak, sir?” he articulated.

“Know you?” was the reply. “To be sure I do. Come, be off!”

So the ‘XXX Sheriff’ was forced to make his exit by climbing ignominiously over seats and benches, to the infinite mirth and advantage of the gentlemen of the press.

At ten o’clock Justice Park and Baron Garrow come into court, followed by the Attorney-General, the great Sir John Copley, soon to be Lord Lyndhurst, who, instructed by Mr Freshfield, solicitor to the bank, has charge of the prosecution. John Gurney, afterwards a judge, who, like Scarlett and Adolphus, is one of the great criminal barristers of his day, defends the prisoner. The buzz of many voices is hushed into silence as Fauntleroy is placed at the bar. Jaggers Harmer accompanies him. For a moment he is dazzled by the glare from the inverted mirror above the dock. Making a feeble attempt to bow to his judges, he almost falls back into the arms of the attendants. With closed eyes and bent head, shrinking from the universal gaze, he stands with trembling fingers resting on the bar—a picture of unutterable shame. Thin and worn are his features, and his face is pale as death, while his hair, thrown into contrast by his full suit of black, has become white as though sprinkled with powder.

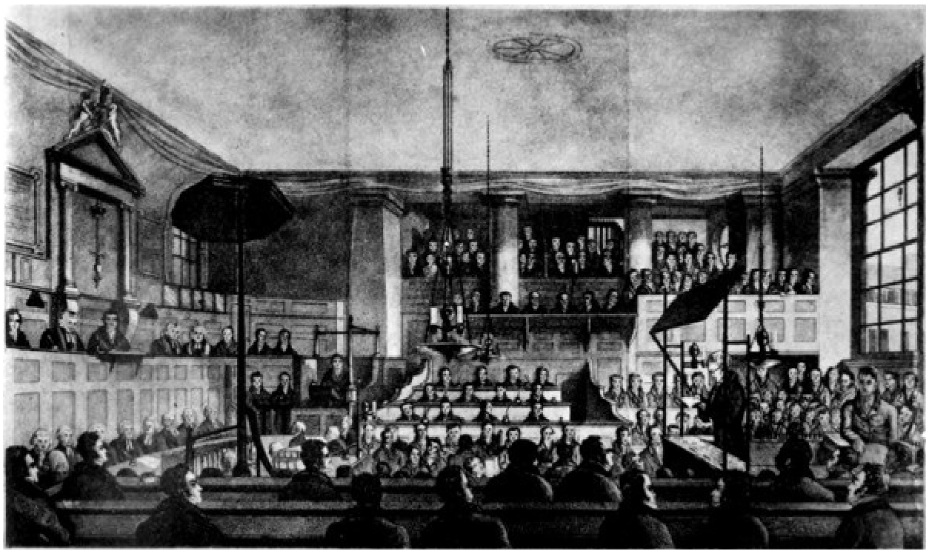
The Attorney-General proceeds with the first indictment, that which charges the prisoner with transferring under a forged deed £5450 Three per cent. Consols, belonging to Miss Frances 194

Young. During the speech there comes a disclosure amazing to everyone in court save the man in the dock and those who defend him. In a private box found at Berners Street after his arrest, a document has been discovered containing a list of stolen securities. Upon this paper, written and signed by the hand of Fauntleroy, and dated the 7th of May 1816, are these words, which, as Sir John Copley reads them, bewilder all his hearers:—

“In order to keep up the credit of our house I have forged powers of attorney, and have thereupon sold out all these sums, without the knowledge of my partners. I have given credit in the accounts for the interest when it became due. The Bank (of England) began first to refuse our acceptances, and thereby to destroy the credit of our house; they shall smart for it.”

Attorney-General and rest of the world are much puzzled, concluding that but for unaccountable negligence the prisoner would have destroyed this seemingly incriminating document; as though a forger would not prefer that his frauds should be thought to have been actuated rather by devotion to his business and revenge against the unpopular Old Lady of Threadneedle Street than merely for the sake of self-aggrandisement. “The Bank of England shall smart for it!” Were the story credible—were Fauntleroy, in fact, a small defaulter—we may well believe that another fierce outcry would have arisen against the wicked old harridan of the City.

There is little difficulty in proving the indictment, while the poor wretch in the dock sits huddled in his chair, trying vainly to conceal his face with his handkerchief. A couple of his own clerks swear that the signature to the deed is a forgery. Tear-stained Miss Young, whom most regard as the sister-in-law of the accused man, proves that her slender store of investments has been 195
pilfered. Officials of the Bank show that the unhappy prisoner was the thief. There crops up a curious instance of the *naïveté* of British jurisprudence. For Threadneedle Street has been obliged to refund the stocks belonging to Miss Young in order to make her ‘a competent witness’ lest it might seem that she has a motive in affirming or denying the forgery of the power of attorney. Thus the Old Lady confesses that she has bribed a witness in order that this witness may not be suspected of trying to obtain a bribe!



FAUNTLEROY’S TRIAL AT THE OLD BAILEY.

When Fauntleroy is called upon for his defence, he manages to stagger to his feet. The law of England will not allow his counsel to speak for him. Drawing a paper from his bosom, and wiping away the tears that stream from his eyes, he adjusts his glasses. Then, in a clumsy, insincere manner, like a schoolboy’s recitation, he begins to read a long apology. It is apparent that he has not written the speech himself, and it makes no impression. Commencing with a complaint against the false and libellous accounts in the press, he sketches the history of the Berners Street Bank in order to show that it has received the benefit of the whole of his forgeries; describing how he alone has borne the burden of the business and the anxiety of perilous speculations, while his partners have given him no assistance. All his frauds were accomplished to cover commercial losses, the withdrawal of borrowed capital, and the overdrafts of two of his colleagues. To every one of the charges of prodigality he offers an emphatic denial. In conclusion, he makes a pathetic vindication of his conduct towards his wife, declaring that not only are the statements published in the newspapers false, but that she has had always the best of feeling towards him.

Although just and merciful, the address of the judge is hostile to the prisoner, and the jury, who retire at ten minutes to three, return in less than a quarter of an hour with a verdict of guilty. 196
Exhausted with his long ordeal, poor Fauntleroy is incapable of exhibiting emotion. A vacant expression is stamped on his pallid features, and when Justice Park tells him that the trial is over he sinks listlessly into his chair. Raising him in his arms, Governor Wontner supports him from the dock.

On the following Tuesday, when the convict is brought up to hear his doom in the New Court, Messrs Broderick and Alley move an arrest of judgment on certain technical points of law.

Justice Park, who is said to have been acquainted with the prisoner, does not attend, but neither Baron Garrow nor the Recorder will accept the empty but ingenuous arguments of counsel. The prisoner reads a paper, stating that when he committed the forgeries he had expected to repay the money when his house prospered. Thus he begs for mercy from the Crown. Sentence of death is the reply.

After the publication of Fauntleroy's defence, the press attacks—as no doubt Jaggers Harmer had foreseen—are turned against the unlucky partners. All the statements of the condemned man find acceptance, like the protests of every criminal, and it is believed that his colleagues must be guilty of complicity in the frauds. From *The Times* comes a demand that Messrs Marsh, Stracey, and Graham shall be examined before the Privy Council! A petition for reprieve is promoted by the creditors of the Berners Street house, on the plea that Fauntleroy's evidence is necessary to elucidate the intricate accounts. Another lies at the office of Harmer's paper, the *Weekly Dispatch*.

Condemned convicts are quartered still, and for many years afterwards, in the part of the prison known as the Press Yard—a walled quadrangle, where they are allowed to herd together indiscriminately during certain hours, adjacent to a three-storied building containing a day-room and the cells in which they are locked at night. Being a person of consequence, the miserable 197 banker does not share this ignominy, but returns to the same apartment that he had occupied before his trial. Since the use of fetters had been abolished in Newgate, he is not required to endure even the 'light manacles' which some of the papers state he is wearing.

Remaining faithful to the end, although so deeply wronged, his poor wife is a constant visitor. His brother John, a London solicitor, and his fifteen-year-old son, reported variously as being educated at Winchester and Westminster (afterwards at Skinner's, Tonbridge), come frequently to the prison. The beautiful Maria Fox, a mere schoolgirl when first she became his mistress, and who appears to be deeply attached to her protector, brings her two baby daughters to Newgate. Few men in their last hours have witnessed more terrible examples of the ruin they have wrought than the weak and self-indulgent Henry Fauntleroy.

Gentle Mr Baker, the white-haired layman of the map office in the Tower, whose work in the foul dungeon was scarcely less admirable than that of Elizabeth Fry, seems to be more successful in winning the affections of the condemned man than Ordinary Cotton; and the efforts of this good Samaritan are aided by a clergyman from Peckham, named Springett, to whom Fauntleroy had been introduced by a friend. These two are his constant companions during the remainder of his imprisonment. Most of his old associates prove loyal, in spite of his infamy and disgrace, for the fearful penalty of the forger is thought to atone for the greatest of frauds.

Meanwhile, exertions for a reprieve continue. The condemned banker is not included in the Recorder's report on the 20th of November at a meeting of the Council, over which the King is said to have presided, and the case is argued twice before the Judges on the 23rd and 24th of the month. George IV., the only one of the four who was a gentleman, a scholar, or a man of 198 artistic taste, the only one whose foolish egotism did not embroil the country in a costly and bloody war, was also the only one with a merciful heart. His first great fault, for which neither contemporaries nor posterity have forgiven him, was infidelity to a dull, silly, uncleanly wife, whom he was compelled to marry against his will, and who was nothing loth to pay him back in his own coin. His next, that, like the Duke of Wellington and his brother William, he was a lion among the ladies. George IV. is inclined to save Fauntleroy from the scaffold, just as he wished to save all except the murderer.

Every effort fails, however, and on Wednesday night, after a meeting of the Privy Council, the Recorder sends his report to Newgate. At half-past six the Rev. Cotton, whose duty it is to break the news of their fate to the prisoners, proceeds to Fauntleroy's room. The banker, who is reading, looks up as the Ordinary enters, and, observing that he is deeply affected, "Ah, Mr Cotton, I see how it is," he exclaims. "I expected nothing less than death, and, thank God, I am resigned to my fate." During the rest of the day he seems more concerned for the doom of Joseph Harwood—a lad of eighteen, condemned to die the next morning for stealing half a crown from the pocket of a drunken Irishman—than for his own dismal situation. Worn out with suspense, he does not awake until a late hour on Thursday, and thus sleep spares him the anguish of hearing the awful bell that is added to the torments of those who go to the scaffold innocent of murder.

On Friday, Miss Fox comes to bid him farewell, bringing with her, so *The Times* reports, "two lovely babes, both girls, of the ages of eighteen months and three years, and both also in deep mourning." Another occasion, indeed, for the modern reader to exclaim—"Cruel, like the 199 grinding of human hearts under millstones." One of that time thinks so—Edmund Angelini, a crazy teacher of languages, who the same day makes application to the Lord Mayor that he may be allowed to mount the scaffold instead of Fauntleroy.

On Saturday, the miserable wife pays her last visit. Previously she has made a desperate attempt to reach implacable Peel—fainting in his hall—which brings from the Home Secretary "a kind message." Afterwards she strives to speak with Lady Conyngham, who pleads inability to assist, conscious, no doubt, that although she can mould divine right, her charms are powerless against the incorruptible calico-printer. Angelini, still filled with lust for the rope, but whose logic has made no impression on the Lord Mayor, comes hammering at Newgate door, and succeeds in gaining an interview with Ordinary Cotton, whom, perhaps, he regards—judging by appearances—as Jack Ketch’s commanding officer.

With the Sabbath comes gala-day and the ‘condemned sermon’ The partners of Jaggers Harmer, by name Forbes and Mayhew, are humane enough to sit with Fauntleroy in the ostentatious sable pew reserved for doomed convicts, and the good Samaritans Baker and Springett, supporting their charge with kind hands, take their seats with the dismal company. Abductor Wakefield has left a graphic picture of an entertainment similar to this. The rude, unsightly chapel, near akin in more than appearance to the dissecting-room in Old Surgeons’ Hall, and with no more semblance of holiness than the court at Bow Street, is packed with prisoners, gay and careless sight-seers, the pomp of sheriffdom and attendant lackeys. Hymns are bellowed, in hideous blasphemy, beseeching divine mercy to show good example to the creatures it has moulded in its own image. Prayers are mumbled, and heeded as little by the gallows-gazing 200 throng as the showman’s horn by children who pant eagerly for the puppet-show. The hangman’s prologue—the sermon—is what all desire, and everything else is of no account. At last the Rev. Cotton, smug and resolute in white gown, mounts the lofty pulpit, and the Sheriffs attempt to screw their courage to face the ordeal. The Ordinary is in his finest form. On the previous Sunday he had shattered the nerves of the boy Harwood, and had sent ‘a female’—condemned to die for a paltry theft—into hysterics a fortnight ago. Scenes like these make the condemned sermon attractive. To-day the discourse is a stupid plagiarism of the Jacobite doctrine of passive resistance, but the bank’s charter, and not divine right, is Cotton’s fetish. While lauding the humanity of “the greatest commercial establishment in the world,” he displays his want of accuracy and legal knowledge by praising the directors for having replaced the stolen investments, as they had not yet done, but were bound by law to do. “I deprecate that feeling,” he declaims, “which is artfully and improperly excited in favour of those who have no extraordinary claim to mercy. When monstrous crimes have been committed we have a right to call for judgment on criminals, and to consign them to the fate the law demands. Offences are sometimes brought to light which require the most severe chastisement the law can inflict, and discoveries of such a nature have been made in reference to the unhappy individual to whom I shall more particularly address myself,” etc., etc. Upon the limp, shrinking figure in the large black pew, whose poor throbbing brain is pierced through and through by the barbed words of the holy man, all eyes are turned, save a few blinded with tears, or those wretches of both sexes who testify by sobs and howls that a like fate is their portion. Even in the leathern faces and soulless eyes of the grim turnkeys there glimmers a tiny spark of emotion. It is pleasant to 201 remember that the Rev. Cotton, harmless and worthy gentleman in other respects, received strong censure from those in authority for his eloquence at the expense of Fauntleroy, and was accused of “harrowing the feelings of the prisoner unnecessarily.” Still, it would have been wiser to have attacked the system rather than the man.

Less gruesome even than the loathsome chapel is the condemned cell on the fatal night. All day the doomed banker has been calm and resigned, bidding adieu to his brother and his son, and explaining to his solicitors intricate details in the books of the bank. Late in the evening Mr Wontner comes to visit him as usual, and tries to persuade him to take something to eat, but the wretched man protests he ‘loathed food’ For hours he continues to pace the room, leaning on the arm of Mr Springett. Although he declares that he shall never sleep until after that ‘awful moment’ about three o’clock he is induced to lie upon the bed. The clergyman, who leaves the chamber for a few moments, finds him, when he returns, sitting by the fire and greatly terrified. Early in the morning he is able to accept a cup of tea and a biscuit. Before six o’clock Baker has resumed his work of mercy, and a little later conscientious Ordinary Cotton joins the sad company. Neat and precise as ever, the forger has made as careful a toilet as if he was to attend a social gathering, attired in a suit of black, with knee-breeches, silk stockings and dress shoes, and a white handkerchief around his neck. To Mr Baker he gives a few pounds to distribute among the needy people in the prison, and leaves a ring for Mrs Harris, the wife of the turnkey, to whom, and also to her husband, he gives thanks for their kindness.

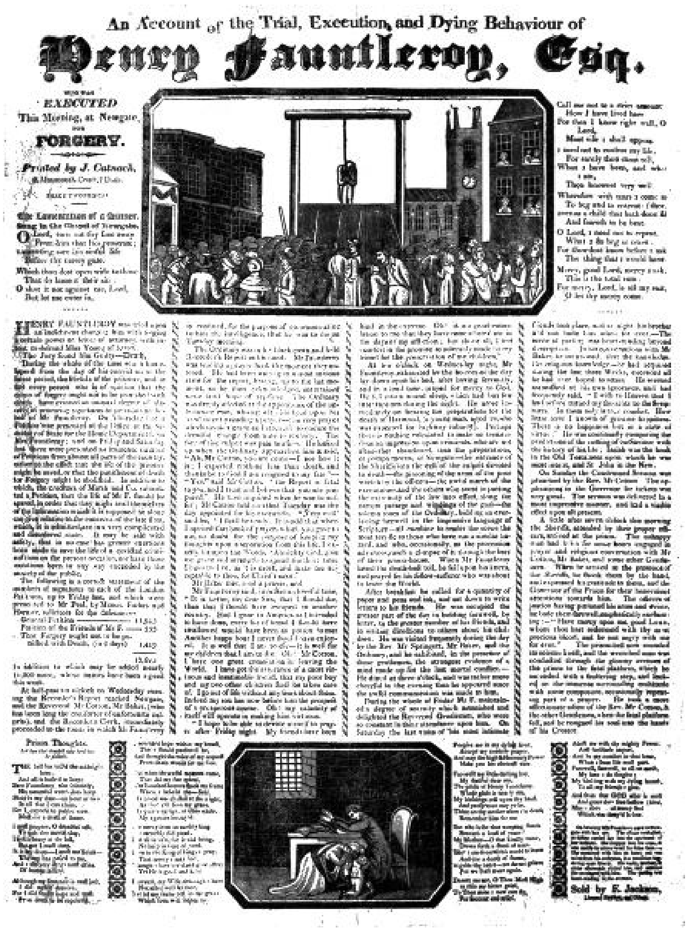
Fauntleroy is spared a visit to the Press Yard, or to the adjacent apartment, where the manacles of prisoners are knocked off previous to the march to the scaffold. About 7.30 they conduct him 202 to the ‘Upper Condemned Room’ and here his favourite hymn is sung—“God moves in a mysterious way”—and he partakes of the sacrament. From the numerous conflicting reports it may be gathered that Sheriff Brown and his ghastly train—for Alderman Key did not care to be present—attend their victim at a quarter to eight. At the end of the long stone chamber, dimly lighted by two candles, a small group is huddled before the fire—the Rev. Cotton administering platitudes, Baker and Springett on each side of the prisoner with their arms linked in his. Fauntleroy is standing firmly in easy pose, although his senses seem benumbed as if under the influence of a narcotic, and he bows slightly to the Sheriff, who addresses him in a few kindly words. The Ordinary—clever stage-manager—seizes the opportunity to draw the criminal a pace or two apart, and the officers, taking the signal, come behind, and commence to place their ropes around his arms. For a moment he seems terrified, and like a hunted animal shrinks for refuge to his two faithful friends, who gently place his hands across his breast, while the attendants pinion his elbows with their cords.

The clock of St Sepulchre—ominous name!—strikes the hour. With a solemn inclination of his head towards the convict the Sheriff moves forward, followed by the white-robed Cotton. Then comes the hapless banker, supported by Baker and Springett. With tightly closed eyes and mechanical steps, as though his nerves were dead and his senses steeped in torpor, he moves almost as an automaton. Through the long vaulted passages, where the tread of footsteps seem to beat a funeral march to the grave, down cold, steep stairs and along damp, cavernous windings, amidst a gloom made more fearful by the red glare of scanty lamps, the procession 203 crawls onward. As it reaches the gate of the long corridor leading into the high, square lobby, from whence the Debtors' Door opens upon the street, the Ordinary commences the service for the dead. At the sound of the harsh words the wretched sufferer starts, and clasps and unclasps his hands. No other sign of emotion marks his bearing; and even when the boom of the passing bell smites the startled ears of his companions, and their footsteps, as though stayed, pause for a moment involuntarily, he shows no sign of consciousness.

Across the lofty stone hall, and under the gate of the slaughter-house, the Sheriff and the Ordinary pass onward. There is a rush of chill, moist air through the open door, the bare wooden stairs reverberate with the tread of feet, and in another moment Fauntleroy, still supported by his friends, is standing upon the platform in the open street beneath the frowning wall of Old Bailey. Instantly every head in the dense crowd is uncovered. Yet this is not a token of respect for a dying man, but a time-honoured custom, so that the view of those in the rear may not be obscured. With eyes still closed, and his face turned towards Newgate Street, Fauntleroy moves under the cross-bar. Physical exhaustion is fast conquering him, and the officials hasten their task. In a moment the cap is slipped over his head, while Baker, accustomed to these scenes, speaks to him in earnest prayer. The halter is placed round his neck, and the loathly creature, whose expert hands have finished pawing their victim, glides swiftly from the scaffold. The Rev. Cotton continues to read from his book, but his eyes steal sideways furtively, and he throws a glance of meaning upon the man who has descended. An instant later, the Ordinary passes a handkerchief across his lips. It is the signal! There is a crash of falling timber, and to those in 204 the street Fauntleroy appears to drop through the platform as far as his knees, and hangs swaying from the strong black beam which holds the cord that is gripping him by the throat. The bowstring of the unspeakable Turk is a more artistic but not a more cruel death.

The performance was an immense success, for a more stupendous throng had never gathered round the black walls of Newgate. Over one hundred thousand persons were said to have witnessed the entertainment, and reserved seats in the houses commanding a view of Debtors' Door had been booked far in advance. At the 'King of Denmark' in the Old Bailey the sum of fourteen shillings was charged for a place; while at Wingrave's eating-house and at Luttman's, which were exactly opposite 'the drop' the price was as high as one pound. "Many respectable-looking females," says the *Morning Post*, "were present at the windows, all attired in deep black." A line of large waggons, hackney-coaches and cabriolets, all of which reaped a rich harvest, stretched from the corner of Giltspur Street and Newgate to Skinner's Street, Snowhill, and every housetop was overflowing with holiday-makers.

It was a bitterly cold morning, with icy rain-storms and a chill mist, so the resolute thousands thoroughly deserved the enjoyment for which they set at defiance all the ills of the flesh. Most careful precautions were taken to avoid a repetition of the Haggerty-Holloway tragedy, when the mob saved James Botting—that worthy soul whose latter days were distressed by visions of 'parties' in nightcaps with their heads on one side—an infinite deal of trouble by trampling to death some fifty of its fellows. Six huge barriers stretched across Newgate Street at the corner of the prison, and there were two intermediate ones, to break the press, between that place and the scaffold; more were erected at the Ludgate Hill termination of Old Bailey, and within the 205 barricade around the fatal platform were four hundred constables.



An Account of the Trial, Execution, and Dying Behaviour of

Henry Fauntleroy, Esq.

EXECUTED

This Morning, at Newgate,

FORGERY.

Printed by J. Catnach,

CATNACH'S BROADSIDE OF FAUNTLEROY'S EXECUTION.

Sad to relate, the object-lesson was a failure in one instance, for Henry Norman, a fine-looking lad of fifteen, was charged at the Guildhall the next morning with picking a pocket, the owner of which was gloating over the spectacle of the strangled banker. It speaks highly for the integrity of our modern police force that, in these days of exclusive hangings, a nimble-fingered Robert has never tried to filch the watch of an impressionable Under-Sheriff. Or if he has, the public has not heard of it.

In these record-breaking times it is a common occurrence for a trusted attorney to embezzle half a million pounds, but before the achievements of Henry Fauntleroy all previous forgeries sink into insignificance. Poor Dodd surrendered all he stole, and Wynne Ryland's fraud was, in its way, as artistic a performance as those of Thomas Chatterton, while a brief career of crime—as in the case of Henry Savary of Bristol, who was lucky enough to escape the gallows—ruined the brothers Perreau. James Bolland and John Rouvelett were low-born fellows; and although the public welcomed each as a first-class criminal, neither gained the same prestige as a forger of gentle birth. In a small way, Henry Cock, the lawyer, anticipated the Berners Street frauds, and two other cases bear some resemblance. Henry Weston, a man of good family and social position, who was hanged at the Old Bailey on the 6th of June 1796, disposed of stocks amounting to twenty-five thousand pounds in a similar manner to Fauntleroy; and Joseph Blackburn, one of the most respected of Leeds attorneys, who suffered a lingering death at York on the 8th of April 1815, committed innumerable frauds for a great number of years by transferring and altering the denominations of the old familiar blue stamps.

"Fauntleroy's doom was so thoroughly recognised as well merited," writes Mr Thornbury, sternly, about forty years after the event, "that although in 1832 every other kind of forger was exempted by law from the gallows, the hands of the hangman still hovered over the forger of wills and powers of attorney to transfer stock." Yet, since the penalty was never inflicted, this argument appears superfluous.

Fauntleroy certainly is the prince of forgers, as truly as Jack Sheppard is the greatest of prison-breakers and George Barrington the finest genius among pickpockets. Although driven to crime in the first instance by moral cowardice and craving for self-indulgence, he must have possessed an almost Napoleonic confidence that his abilities would conquer misfortune. Too proud to surrender the terrible struggle, he refused to adopt the easy alternative of flight to France with his ill-gotten gains. When one tries to realise the stupendous task of manipulating figures of such magnitude for so many years, the brain reels. The regular payment of huge dividends lest the victims should become aware of their loss, the constant replacement of stock when discovery seemed to threaten, the repeated buying and selling in order to rob Peter to-day to pay Paul to-morrow, the daily juggling with the books, and adjustment of balances, added to the incessant vigilance lest the errors of a few figures should mean betrayal to partners or clerks—all these wonderful transactions show an example of mathematical legerdemain such as the world has seldom seen. When it is borne in mind that the man was playing for nearly ten years with sums amounting in the aggregate to half a million sterling, his title to the incomparable forger of all time cannot be challenged. But like many another who has contributed to the public amusement, his memory soon faded from the minds of all save his creditors. Scarcely had the curtain been rung down on the tragedy of Fauntleroy, when it rose again upon the entrancing drama of accommodating Miss Foote and wayward Mr ‘Pea-green’ Hayne. 207

Occasionally, but not often, we hear mention of the banker’s name, and there was a recent reference to it in one of the delightful novels of Anthony Hope.

“It is no longer a capital offence,” declares ribald Arty Kane, referring to forgery, and addressing charming Peggy Ryle; “you won’t be hanged in silk knee-breeches like Mr Fauntleroy.”

Part II.—Some Details of the Forgeries.

The Berners Street bankruptcy.

No complete balance-sheet of the Marsh-Stracey bankruptcy appears to exist. The books of the firm seem to have baffled both the Commissioners and the assignees; and so artfully had Fauntleroy concealed his frauds, that even skilled accountants did not succeed in unravelling the whole of their mysteries. Contemporary newspapers furnish many important clues, but their statements, when not conflicting, are neither lucid nor exhaustive. Yet, although many details must remain obscure, it is possible to form a rough conception of the result.

The position of the bankrupts.

Since we know that the first dividend of 3s. 4d. in the pound (distributed to the creditors on the 7th of February 1825) absorbed a sum of £92,486, it is clear that Messrs Marsh, Stracey & Company required a grand total of £554,916 to pay twenty shillings in the pound. Practically these figures are substantiated by the preliminary accounts presented at the meeting of the Commissioners on the 18th of December 1824, which state that the claims against the firm—excluding any liability to the Bank of England—amount to £554,148. 208

This estimate, however, is the only one of any accuracy made at the time, for the assets expected to be realised fell very short of the original calculation. A second dividend of 3s. 4d. was received by the creditors on the 30th of August 1825, and between that date and the appointment of the official assignee a further sum of £46,243 was distributed. Thus the total of the first three dividends—which were equivalent to 8s. 4d. in the pound—amounts to £231,215.

The bankruptcy return of Patrick Johnson (official assignee), published in 1839, shows that assets were collected subsequently amounting to £160,930, and thus the creditor side of the Berners Street ledger appears to have reached a total of £392,150.

From this balance of £160,930—realised by the official assignee after the payment of the first three dividends—further distributions of 5d. and 1s. (being 9s. 9d. in the pound in all) were made respectively on the 23rd of December 1833 and the 9th of September 1835, and absorbed further sums of £11,560, 15s. and £27,745, 16s.

During September 1835 the claim of the Bank of England against Messrs Marsh, Stracey & Company was compromised for a payment of £95,000 in cash; and a further sum of £11,000 for the expenses of working the Commission of Bankruptcy from the 16th of September 1824 to the end of the year 1833 must also be deducted. Therefore a balance of £15,628—less any further costs—appears to have remained for payment of a final dividend. Although many of the newspapers state that this was made on the 7th of October 1837, unfortunately none of them give any particulars. Yet it may be conjectured that the unfortunate customers of the Berners Street Bank, after waiting for thirteen years, could not have received more than 10s. 6d. in the pound. 209

The following rough balance-sheet will explain the above account:—

Dr.			***Cr.***		
First div. 3s. 4d., Feb. 7, 1825,	£92,486	0	First div.,	£92,486	0
Second div. 3s. 4d., Aug. 30, 1825,	92,486	0	Second div.,	92,486	0
Third div. 1s. 8d., (paid before Dec. 28, 1832),	46,243	0	Third div.,	46,243	0
Fourth div. 5d., Dec. 23, 1833,	11,560	15	Received by the official assignee at 84 Basinghall Street from Dec. 28, 1832, to Oct 7, 1837,	160,930	0
Fifth div. 1s., Sept. 9, 1835,	27,745 16	0			
Bank of England, Sept. 1835,	95,000	0			

Expenses of Administration up to Dec. 24, 1833,	11,000	0			
Balance (including all costs from Dec. 24, 1833, to Oct. 7, 1837, and out of which the final dividend was made on Oct. 7, 1837,)	15,628	9			
	—————————			—————————	
	£392,150	0		£392,150	0
	—————————			—————————	

The private estates of the partners.

The private estates of Messrs Stracey and Graham paid twenty shillings in the pound before the end of 1833; and upon that of Mr Marsh, the senior partner, who appears to have been indebted to the firm for a loan of £73,000, excluding his overdraft on his private account, a distribution of 17s. 6d. had been made before 1834. Little was received on Fauntleroy’s estate, as it was claimed almost entirely by the creditors of the Berners Street Bank.

Losses under Fauntleroy’s management.

It is now possible to form an estimate of the extent to which Messrs Marsh, Stracey & Company were defaulters, and what were the losses under the Fauntleroy régime. The total receipts set against the claims of the creditors and the money stolen from the Bank of England, show a deficiency of £522,980. Thus:—

Dr.		***Cr.***	
Claims of the creditors (to pay 20s. in the £)	£554,916	Total receipts	£392,150
Gross loss of the Bank	360,214	Deficiency	522,980
	—————		—————
	£915,130		£915,130
	—————		—————

How the losses were incurred.

210 Although it would be difficult, with any degree of accuracy, to apportion under the separate charges this adverse balance of over half a million pounds, and although much must be left to conjecture, it is possible to explain some of the ways in which this vast sum was dissipated. At the outset, the suggestion—arising out of one of the pleas of Fauntleroy, and believed at the time—that the overdraft on loans to two of the partners was responsible for a deficit of £100,000, is refuted by the fact that both Messrs Marsh and Graham refunded eventually their obligations to the full extent. In like manner, the belief that large sums were lost owing to the necessity of reinvesting constantly the various stocks sold by Fauntleroy in order to avoid detection, overlooks the fact that, on the other hand, these transactions must have afforded similar opportunities for making a profit. It is probable that many such losses did occur; but since we may believe that the Berners Street Bank prior to the forgeries was earning an income of £7000 a year, it is likely that such an astute manager as Henry Fauntleroy would be able to cancel many of these losses through reinvestment by the profits he earned on the immense capital he had secretly appropriated.

(*a*) Loss of £160,000 in building speculations.

(*b*) £90,000 lost by paying dividends on the stolen stocks.

Although the forger’s estimate of the result of his building speculations is extravagant, the newspapers of the 20th of December 1824 make it clear that the Berners Street house must have lost in this manner £160,000. It is certain also that immense sums were absorbed by the payment of dividends to the proprietors whose stocks had been stolen. Nearly £7000 per annum must have been required for this purpose from the year 1816, and the sum would accumulate at compound interest, until, as some say, an annual fund of £16,000 was required. Setting aside all excessive calculations, we have the great authority of the historian of the Bank of England that £9000 to £10,000 a year was thus expended during the progress of the forgeries. Further than this, 211 notwithstanding that the partners in the bankrupt firm were not entitled to any fraction of profit, the testimony of almost the entire press credits each of them with receiving an income of over £3000. At the examination of William Marsh, reported in the newspapers of the 1st of March 1825, it was proved that he was indebted on his private account for an overdraft of £26,000. As there is no reason to believe that Mr Stracey or Mr Graham had enjoyed a smaller income, a further deficit of nearly £80,000 is the result. And finally, as will be shown, there is an overwhelming weight of evidence to prove that the iniquitous Henry Fauntleroy, during the nineteen years he was a partner, dissipated at least £100,000. In addition, the repayment of the capital of Sir James Sibbald (who died the 17th of September 1819), which formed a large portion of £64,000—the capital of the firm in 1814—would swell the adverse balance still further. Leaving this out of the question, the facts stated above explain the deficit of £430,000; and with the material at our disposal any further solution would involve a more elaborate use of the methods of conjecture.

(*c*) Loss of £80,000 through payments to Messrs Marsh, Stracey

When Fauntleroy made his famous declaration from the dock, he was endeavouring to refute the extravagant assertion that he had spent a sum of over four hundred thousand pounds in riotous living; and thus, led to

& Graham.

(*d*) Fauntleroy spent £100,000.

To what extent did Fauntleroy participate in the proceeds of his forgeries?

the opposite extreme, he made the mistake of attempting to convey an erroneous impression of his frugality. Thus the statement that he had never enjoyed any advantage beyond that in which all his partners had participated seems to hint economy; but as Mr Marsh had overdrawn his loan account by £70,000, the proposition is irrelevant to the argument. Then, again, he confesses that the Brighton villa cost £400, but he is not candid enough to admit the expenses of his other establishments. The 212 stern reality—that a thief cannot justify the expenditure of one pennyworth of stolen property—never entered his mind. Utterly false, however, is his answer to the charges of profligacy—outrageous though they were.

“It has been cruelly asserted,” he declares, “that I fraudulently invested money in the Funds to answer the payment of annuities amounting to £2200 settled upon females. I never did make such investment.”

No single tenet in Father Garnet’s doctrine of equivocation puts greater stress upon the truth. Whoever made the necessary investments—and the forger was shrewd enough not to let the transaction appear in his own name—there is certain evidence that he provided lavishly for his mistress Maria Fox. The lie is merely concealed in subtle language.

“Neither at home nor abroad,” continues Fauntleroy, “have I any investment, nor is there one shilling secretly deposited by me in the hands of any human being.”

Such an assertion goes far beyond the sophistry of the most misguided seventeenth-century Jesuit, for the Commissioners of Bankruptcy were soon to discover that he had squandered thousands on his friend Mrs Disney. His one denial in unequivocal terms is a deliberate falsehood.

“Equally ungenerous and untrue it is,” the forger proceeds, “to charge me with having lent to loose and disorderly persons large sums of money which never have and never will be repaid. I lent no sums but to a very trifling amount, and those were advanced to valued friends.”

No doubt this last declaration had reference to the rumour that he had squandered money upon the notorious Mary Ann Kent, ‘Mother Bang’—who figures as ‘Corinthian Kate’ in *Life in London* —and its truth or falsehood must depend upon the exact definition of the term ‘large sums’ The 213 criminal who had dealings with huge balance-sheets, naturally had a magnificent sense of proportion.

Fauntleroy’s expenditure.

Fortunately, there is evidence of some of the ‘prodigal extravagance’ that was laid at his door. The total loss of the Bank of England owing to the forgeries was £360,214, and the original claim of the directors against the Berners Street establishment was £250,000. So it seems that the balance was believed to have been spent wholly by Fauntleroy, and not placed to the credit of the partnership. The sworn testimony of Mr Wilkinson, an accountant employed by the assignees to examine the books of the bankrupts—although inclined to favour Messrs Marsh, Stracey & Company—supports this assumption in the most decisive manner. Thus, in spite of his defence, it would appear that during his management the forger appropriated for himself a sum of over £100,000. These figures, moreover, are endorsed by the fair-minded James Scarlett, who made the same statement as Wilkinson in his speech for the defendants in the case of Stone and Others *v.* Marsh, Stracey & Company, which was heard on the 2nd of March 1826. To disregard such unanimous testimony is impossible.

How did Fauntleroy spend the money?

(*a*) Domestic expenditure £2000 a year.

It is quite credible that for a period of seventeen years (from 1807 to 1824) a man of Fauntleroy’s habits should expend an average income of £5000. Had each of his three establishments—in Berners Street, in Brighton, and at Lambeth—cost him as much as his moderate estimate of one—and none of them could have been less expensive—the total reaches £1200 a year. In addition to this, it is known that he allowed an annuity of £400 to his wife. Thus, as he kept horses and carriages both at London and the seaside, his lowest annual domestic expenditure must have been at least £2000, or £34,000 over the period. Although the house at Fulham was one of his later 214 extravagances, there were others that had taken its place previously.

(*b*) Freehold property £10,000.

The villa, land and furniture at Brighton, sold after his death, realised nearly £7000—the residence alone is said to have cost him this amount; and since he was the owner of a mews and six houses in Bryanston Square, and two other houses in York Street, his freehold property, on a moderate estimate, must have been worth £10,000.

(*c*) Maria Fox £10,000.

From the reports of the trial of Maria Fox at the Lewes Assizes in April 1827, we gather that Fauntleroy settled on his youthful mistress £6000, besides an annuity of £150, “of which the assignees,” said John Adolphus, her counsel, “through the advice of a worthy gentleman, Mr Bolland, were not so cruel as to deprive her.” Thus another £10,000 is added to the banker’s debt.

(*d*) Mrs J. C. Disney, £10,000.

During the month of December 1824 the London papers are full of insinuations with regard to Fauntleroy's improper connection with a Mrs James C. Disney, and the letter from the lady's husband, which appeared in the *New Times* on the 24th of December, substantiates unwittingly much of the truth of the story. It is certain that the creditors of Marsh, Stracey & Company recovered large sums from this Mrs Disney, who had been the recipient of Fauntleroy's bounty to an extent exceeding the limits of platonic love, and according to *The Times* the amount refunded was £10,000. Although many reports state that she received twice this sum, it is sufficient for the purpose to accept the lesser figures.

Thus there is almost complete evidence that Fauntleroy's expenditure under three heads—domestic expenses, freehold property, and the two mistresses above mentioned—absorbed a sum of £64,000. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the man who could squander this money in less than seventeen years, while his firm was in so dire a plight, was capable of spending 215 double the amount. It is improbable that his various establishments cost him no more than £2000 a year; and if *The Times* of the 1st of December is to be believed, he confessed that he had enjoyed a very much larger income. The age of pinks and bloods was as extravagant as our own, and many luxuries of life were more expensive. Fauntleroy was a patron of 'Corinthian Kate'; and if Pierce Egan is an authority, we may conjecture—in spite of her denial to Joseph Parkins—that the unfortunate banker found her an expensive luxury. Like the great man whom he took a pride in fancying he resembled, it is notorious that the forger had a weakness for what his contemporaries termed 'ladybirds' and was in this respect a dissipated and worthless fellow. Moreover, he was celebrated for his costly dinners and rare wines—there is the grisly story of the friend who urged him as a last request to tell where he purchased his exquisite curaçoa—and he seems to have denied himself no luxury. Although it is not possible to give a complete explanation of Fauntleroy's expenditure during the years of his race to ruin, it is satisfactory to know some portion of the details, and they show, through all possible coats of whitewash, that he was guilty of the most prodigal extravagance.

The conduct of the partners.

Since the partners of the Berners Street Bank were censured for gross negligence in two courts of law, it is not surprising that their creditors should have treated them with intolerance. At first the public had regarded them as unfortunate dupes, and it was not until Fauntleroy had made his defence that a popular outcry arose. It seemed incredible that three men of the world should have thrown the heavy burden of managing a firm, weighed down by embarrassments, upon the shoulders of a youth of twenty-two, and equally preposterous that, in the face of losses reaching into hundreds of thousands, the young man's colleagues should have remained easy, 216 trusting, asleep. Yet, in spite of the onslaught of the London press, and the clamour of the noisy creditors, headed by Joseph Parkins and his fellows, beneath the roof of the 'Boar and Castle' and the 'Freemasons' Tavern,' it is certain that Messrs Marsh, Stracey & Graham were innocent of all guilty complicity in their partner's frauds. The statements that had aroused the storm against them proved to be baseless or exaggerated. It has been shown that the Berners Street Bank did not lose £270,000 in building speculations between 1810 and 1816, as Fauntleroy suggested, and to meet the loss that did occur a large sum was raised by the supporters of the firm, to which William Marsh contributed £40,000. Thus, considering the reticence of their manager, there was good reason why the partners should believe that they had weathered the financial panic which brought to ruin so many of their contemporaries.

Modern commerce estimates more accurately the value of youth than the age of Mr Walter the Second; and as young Fauntleroy, who was one of the smartest bank managers in London, accepted his responsibilities with zest and cheerfulness, it is not surprising that he became the autocrat of the firm. Moreover, the juggler who could deceive the clerks working at his elbow day by day would have no difficulty in satisfying the periodical curiosity of sleeping-partners. Fat profits rolled into their coffers, and, like many another good easy man, they did not pause to look a gift horse in the mouth. Fools they were, and must remain, but in the end the world ceased to suspect their honour.

Still, their credulity was remarkable. All three of them appear to have been the instruments of most of the frauds, attending at the Bank of England to make the transfer under the forged powers of attorney, and instructing brokers to dispose of the stolen stocks and bonds. In one 217 particular, however, the conduct of Marsh and Stracey appeared dubious. On the day of Fauntleroy's arrest the daughter of the former cashed a cheque for £5000, while the latter drew out over £4000 in the name of his father. The trick was discovered, and restitution made to the creditors.

The Bank of England's claim.

As might be supposed, the Bank of England received little sympathy either from the press or from the people. The directors never disputed their obligation—as managers of the public debt—to refund to the rightful proprietors the whole of the stocks that had been stolen, but they made every effort to enforce their claim against the Berners Street firm—amounting to a quarter of a million—which they contended that Fauntleroy had placed to the credit of his house. It was soon made clear by law that Messrs Marsh, Stracey & Company were responsible to the stockholders, who had been defrauded by their managing partner, and thus were equally responsible to the Bank, whose debt was similar to that of the stockholders. The chief obstacle to the enforcement of the Bank's claim lay in the fact that the proprietors of the stolen stocks were clients, and, as a

natural consequence, creditors also of Marsh, Stracey & Company. Being aware that the directors were legally compelled to replace their missing Consols and Exchequer Bills, they raised a great clamour against the claim of the Bank, for naturally they perceived that if it was enforced the cash balances in their Berners Street pass-books would be diminished. This difficulty compelled the Bank to seek the consent of the Courts to permit them to claim from the bankrupts the lump sum that had been restored to the stockholders, so that it would not be necessary to bring forward reluctant persons to prove each separate debt. Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst ruled, however, that each transaction must be established to the satisfaction of the Commissioners of Bankruptcy in the usual way, and thus the Bank was driven to depend upon 218
the stockholders. Since the claim of half a million was compromised for a payment of £95,000, we may conclude that the majority of the Berners Street creditors were not disposed to assist the rival claimant to a share of their dividends.

The transfer of stock.

Much has been written of the lax methods of transferring stock in vogue at the Bank of England. As the frauds were so slovenly that Fauntleroy’s clerks had no difficulty in detecting their employer’s handwriting in the signature attached to the forged power of attorney produced at the trial, it is plain that the crimes could not have continued for so many years unless a most careless system had prevailed. The Berners Street swindle showed that it was possible for any applicant with whom the clerks at the Consols Office were acquainted to complete the transfer of another person’s securities, provided only that he possessed a knowledge of the exact value of the particular stock he wished to appropriate. A power of attorney seems to have been as readily acted upon as obtained, and no comparison of the real owner’s signature appears to have been made. This danger was pointed out subsequently at a meeting of the Court of Proprietors, and a shareholder made the wise suggestion that when any transfer was made immediate notice should be sent to the proprietor of the stock.

Yet checks and precautions did exist at the Bank of England in the days of Henry Fauntleroy. The purchasers of securities were recommended to protect themselves from fraud by accepting themselves—that is to say, by signing—all transfers of stock made to them, thus giving the officials of the Bank the opportunity of comparing the handwriting of the proprietor whenever necessary. Still, the investing public rarely complied with this regulation, and Fauntleroy must 219
have been aware that there was no danger of detection on this account.

Although forgery of such a description is more difficult in these days, yet prudence should neglect no safeguard that does not impede the business of everyday life. A signature, however much resemblance it has to its original, may still be a forgery, and personal attendance might be simulated by a bold and plausible scoundrel. The most sure precaution is the one suggested on the 17th of September 1824 by the nameless proprietor, that whenever a transfer is lodged immediate notice shall be sent to the holder of the stock. 220

FAUNTLEROY AND THE NEWSPAPERS

1. *The Morning Chronicle.*

    Under the leadership of the famous John Black, this paper had become a somewhat fat and stodgy production, savouring of the ‘unco guid’ It is fierce in its attacks upon Fauntleroy’s partners for their indolence and carelessness, and pleads that mercy shall be shown to the offender. Special prominence is given to the pious conversations alleged to have taken place in Newgate between the prisoner and his spiritual advisers Messrs Springett and Baker. Since this paper is not hostile to Fauntleroy, it is strange that it should publish (November 11) a vile communication from his enemy J. W. Parkins, an ex-Sheriff of London, in which the writer tries to show that the prisoner who is awaiting his trial has been a brutal husband. The first announcement that the Bank in Berners Street had suspended payment appears in the columns of the *Chronicle* on Monday, September 13.

2. *The Morning Post.*

    Although the *Morning Post* makes a point of pluming itself on its humanity towards Fauntleroy, its attitude is wholly inconsistent and double-faced. Having copied from *The Times* a column of disgraceful news concerning the private vices of the dishonest banker, it turns round and upbraids its contemporary, a few weeks later, for supplying the information. Foolish letters upon all kinds of subjects from Fauntleroy’s bitter enemy, J. W. Parkins—Sheriff of London 1819-20—disfigure this paper constantly. The *Post* gloats over the scene at the Debtors’ Door, and is glad that there was no pardon.

3. *The Morning Herald.*

    This journal is opposed to the death penalty for forgery, and inserts several letters, urging that the convict should be reprieved, but it admits, after the execution, that while the law remained unaltered there were no special circumstances in the case to warrant mercy. The report of the trial on November 1, which holds up to ridicule the absurd and indecorous conduct of ex-Sheriff Parkins previous to the meeting of the Court, furnishes a striking proof of his malice against his former friend Henry

Fauntleroy. During April 1823 the notorious Parkins made a somewhat feeble attempt to assault Mr Thwaites of the *Morning Herald* in his office, which is the reason, no doubt, why the editor handles him so roughly.

4. *The Times.*

The attitude of the greatest paper in the world towards the unfortunate banker is a black record in its history. Although the man was a sensualist and a forger of the highest degree, it is not creditable to British journalism of those days that a leading newspaper should take infinite pains to rake up every scandal of his past life, and to prejudice the public mind against him before he was brought to trial. A more 221
deliberate attempt to condemn a man unheard has never been made in the press. It is amazing that an editor of the calibre of Thomas Barnes should have printed the article of September 24 and the disgraceful letter signed "T." of September 25, which compares Fauntleroy to Thurtell, the cut-throat. The reproof administered by James Harmer on September 27, although fully deserved, was not sufficient to restrain the licence of Mr Walter's reporters. *The Times* proceeds to wrangle with the *Brighton Gazette* as to whether the banker had been a libertine, and on October 9 publishes a statement about his lenient treatment at Coldbath Fields prison, for which it is compelled to apologise to Mr Vickery, the Governor. More innuendoes follow concerning Fauntleroy's moral character, and on October 19 (before his trial!) it is reported that the printers at the 'One Tun' tavern in Covent Garden were making bets as to whether he would be hanged.

Almost as repulsive are the leaders written after the culprit's execution. "If forgery had not been capital before," says this truculent journal, "the most humane legislators would have doubted whether, if carried to a similar extent, it should not be rendered capital in future." Yet Samuel Romilly had been in his grave only six years, and James Mackintosh and William Ewart were left to continue his brave work. Finally, on December 4, comes a blast of thunder that Dennis or the editor of the *Eatanswill Gazette* might have envied. "We are not anxious to extend the narrative of Mr Fauntleroy's life by a description of his personal habits, but, if provoked, we can lay before the public such a detail of low and disgusting sensuality, as would appear incredible to those who were not as degraded in body and mind as he was. This narrative would involve persons who hold themselves rather high, and who have presumed to talk big with reference to our accounts of their wretched friend and associate. Let them be quiet; if we find that in public or private (and we have channels of information they dream not of) they have the impudence to disparage our motives or deny our statements, we will hold up their names and actions to public scorn and astonishment and disgust."

5. *The Morning Advertiser.*

This journal, then as now the organ of the licensed victuallers, is hostile to Fauntleroy, but moderate in the reports it publishes about him.

6. *The New Times.*

As might be expected, this paper deals some nasty raps at that from which its editor seceded. It is very critical of the conduct of Fauntleroy's partners, with whose explanations before the Commissioners of Bankruptcy it is dissatisfied, but does not make the reckless charges against them that appear in some journals, such as the *Sunday Times* and *Morning Chronicle*.

7. *The British Press.*

Gives more complete information than any other paper of the details of Marsh, Stracey & Company's bankruptcy. The reports of the proceedings before the Court of Commissioners, and of the meetings of the Berners Street creditors, which are criticised at large, throw much light upon the endless ramifications of the Fauntleroy forgeries. This journal alone makes an attempt to ascertain whether the statement of the criminal banker was endorsed by the books of his firm. "I declare," says Fauntleroy in his defence, "that all the monies temporarily raised by me were applied, not in one single instance for my own separate purposes or expenses, but in every case they were immediately placed to the credit of the house in Berners Street, and applied to the payments of the pressing demands upon it.... The books will confirm the truth of my statement ... the whole went to the general funds of the house." 222

The value of this assertion may be tested by reference to the columns of the *British Press* of the following dates:—September 20, 29, October 6, November 13, 15, 17, 22, 23, 30, December 10, 13, 17, 20, 28 (1824), January 17, 19, 20, February 2, March 1, 19, April 11, July 25, August 31 (1825).

For further particulars of the bankruptcy consult *The Times*, *Morning Post*, and *Morning Chronicle* of December 24, 1833; and September 10 and 11, 1835. Also *John Bull*, September 20, 1835; the *Weekly Dispatch*, September 17, 1837; and *The Times*, October 7, 1837.

8. *The Examiner.*

The statements in Fauntleroy's defence are received with incredulity. "From what we hear and observe of the man," says the *Examiner*, in a leading article, "we do not believe he would have risked his life to preserve a trading concern of which he had only a fourth share. We expect the truth will be that he began to forge to get money for himself, and was obliged to go on because bankruptcy would have led to his detection." The leader proceeds to condemn the law of banking, and to attack the monopoly of the Bank.

9. *The Observer.*

The veteran Sunday journal—which at this period was the property of Wm. Clement, who owned also the *Morning Chronicle*, and afterwards *Bell's Life*—takes the bulk of its reports, like most of the weekly papers, from the columns of the daily press.

10. *The Sunday Times.*

This hardy newspaper (which age cannot wither) condemns the criminal code that makes forgery a capital offence, and charges Messrs Marsh, Stracey and Graham with previous knowledge of their partner's guilt. On October 10 appeared the famous letter from malignant ex-Sheriff Parkins, complaining that Fauntleroy or his partners had surrendered certain private documents which he had left at their bank in safe custody. In those days the *Sunday Times* was under the proprietorship of its founder, Daniel Harvey.

11. *The Englishman.*

A weekly paper, containing reports similar to those in the *Observer*.

12. *Bell's Weekly Messenger.*

The leading article of December 5 expresses the hope that Mr Fauntleroy will be the last person executed for forgery. As a matter of fact the Berners Street frauds postponed this much-desired reform, and the illogical argument of George III. was revived in another shape—"If Dr. Dodd is pardoned, then the Perreaus have been murdered." Captain John Montgomery would have been hanged on July 4, 1828, for forging bank notes, had he not cheated the gallows by the aid of prussic acid; Joseph Hunton, the Quaker, suffered death at Newgate on December 8 following, for issuing counterfeit bills of exchange; and Thomas Maynard, who had obtained money from the Custom House under a fraudulent warrant, was executed in the same place on the last day of the year 1829. After this date, although the capital penalty was not finally abolished until 1837, no other person was hanged for forgery in this country.

13. *Bell's Weekly Dispatch.*

This newspaper, founded in 1801—five years after his *Weekly Messenger*—by John Bell, the printer of the *British Poets*, had now become the property of James Harmer the Old Bailey attorney, who was Fauntleroy's solicitor. The scathing attacks upon Joseph Wilfred Parkins, which appear in this journal on October 3, October 10 and November 14, explain the reason of the 'XXX Sheriff's' animosity towards the unfortunate banker. Some time before the arrest of the forger, Parkins, who had a law-suit pending, requested Fauntleroy to return a certain cheque for £6000 that he had drawn upon his firm a few years previously. The reply was that, as it could not be found, probably it had been destroyed. On the strength of this statement, Parkins swore in the witness-box on September 13, when his action was being tried, that the cheque in dispute had never been presented, but to his amazement and consternation the missing piece of paper was produced in Court. In consequence, he not only lost his case, but was called upon to stand his trial for perjury on December 20 following. By some means or other wily James Harmer, who happened to be solicitor for the defendants against whom Parkins was bringing his action, had discovered the cheque at the Berners Street Bank soon after Fauntleroy's arrest, and perceiving its importance to his clients, had appropriated it. Naturally, this amusing piece of strategy was not relished by the choleric ex-Sheriff, who cast most of the blame upon the shoulders of the unhappy banker, and pursued him to the death without mercy. 223

The *Weekly Dispatch* made a great effort to save the doomed man, and the petition for reprieve which lay at its office received three thousand signatures. The Rev. Cotton, Ordinary of Newgate, comes in for some well-deserved censure for the tone of his 'Condemned Sermon'

14. *Pierce Egan's Life in London.*

This paper, started February 1, 1824, by the creator of *Tom and Jerry*, gives extracts, copies for the most part from other sources, and similar information to that contained in Pierce Egan’s account.

15. *John Bull.*

Naturally, Theodore Hook’s paper did not miss the opportunity of inveighing against *The Times* for its cruelty towards Fauntleroy, or of ridiculing the sanctimonious articles of the *Morning Chronicle*. Still, it is unjust to Mrs Fry’s friend and helper, the humane Mr Baker, whose work among the prisoners at Newgate merits the highest praise.

16. *The Globe and Traveller.*

Condemns the ‘mischievous law’ passed in 1708 to support the Bank of England’s monopoly, which prevented a private banking establishment from being controlled by more than six partners. The journal contends with truth that this legislation “forces a business of great responsibility, which should be of entire security, into the hands of small firms.” The law of 1825 altered all this.

17. *The Courier.*

Has a weakness for drawing attention to its own propriety, in comparison with that of its contemporaries. Its leader on the evening of the execution declares that, although it refrained from comment while there was a chance of mercy, it applauds the firmness of justice in refusing a reprieve when there was nothing in Fauntleroy’s case to merit such interference. The *Courier* was in the hands of Daniel Stuart—a great name in journalism—who was proprietor also of the *Morning Post*.

18. *The Sun.*

A somewhat feeble paper, though well printed and arranged, edited by John Taylor. It prides itself on never printing anything about Fauntleroy except the proceedings before the magistrates.

19. *The Brighton Gazette.*

Cudgels *The Times* lustily, and is indignant that a mere London paper should presume to know more about Mr Fauntleroy’s seaside residence than a journal published in Brighton. About two years later the *Gazette* has much to say about the beautiful Maria Fox (*alias* Forbes, *alias* Forrest, *alias* Rose), who had lived under the protection of the fraudulent banker. A retired lawyer named Barrow, who resided next door to the lady on the New Stein, accused her of keeping a disorderly house, and she was called upon to meet this charge at the Lewes Assizes. Although the fine advocacy of John Adolphus obtained a verdict of not guilty, the judge went out of his way to compliment the author of the prosecution. (*Vide* the *Brighton Gazette*, April 5, 1827; also September 14 and 21, 1826.)

20. *The Rambler’s Magazine, or Frolicsome Companion.* Printed and published by William Dugdale, 23 Russell Court, Drury Lane. April 1, 1827, pp. 180-182 (*vide* Trial of Maria Fox).

The learned ‘Pisanus Fraxi’—H. S. Ashbee—whose knowledge of this class of literature is unrivalled, gives no description of this particular publication. It may be a plagiarism of a magazine of about the same date, and bearing an almost similar title (which it appears to resemble), noticed in *Catena Librorum Tacendorum*, p. 327. Periodicals of this name are almost as numerous, between the years 1782-1829, as the *Newgate Calendars*. The *Rambler’s Magazine* makes two things evident: first, that Fauntleroy’s *chère amie* was a “fair and engaging woman”; and secondly, that Mr Barrow had much cause of complaint.

21. *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, November 1824 (part ii. p. 461); December 1824 (part ii. p. 580).

In the December number there is a trenchant letter from the Earl of Normanton, condemning the criminal code. “Philosophy would deem it an abuse,” says he, “to punish the crime of a Fauntleroy in the same manner as the crime of a Thurtell.” For the obituary notice of William Moore Fauntleroy, the brother of the forger, see the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, part ii. p. 1092, 1803.

NOTES ON THE FAUNTLEROY CASE

Note I.—*Pierce Egan’s Account of the Trial of H. Fauntleroy.* Knight and Lacey, 1824.

No one excelled the historian of the Prize Ring in this style of literature, and his two other similar works, the *Life of Samuel Denmore Hayward* (1822), and the *Account of the Trial of John Thurtell* (1824), will remain text-books for all time. Pierce Egan makes a note (p. 21) that Mr. Fauntleroy has never used a ‘slang expression’ during his imprisonment. The surprise indicated by this comment is natural, for, robbed of his italics, the author of *Life in London* would have been left as naked to his enemies as Cardinal Wolsey.

Note II.—*The Newgate Calendar.* Knapp and Baldwin (1824-28). Vol. iv. pp. 285-390.

Accepting the statement made by most of the daily newspapers, this account declares that Fauntleroy was hanged for defrauding his wife’s family. Although this statement was made by *The Times* on October 2, it was denied two days later in that paper, and the contradiction was published also in *Bell’s Weekly Messenger*, the *Globe*, and the *Courier*. Again, on December 4 *The Times* repeats once more that “Miss Frances Young is no relation to Mrs Fauntleroy.” Considering the bitter rivalry that existed between the various newspapers, and the jealous criticism that each journal bestowed upon the information of its contemporaries, it is certain that if the assertion made by *The Times* had been untrue—and if false it could have been disproved easily—its rivals would have exposed it with the greatest joy. Moreover, since Fauntleroy might have been charged with twenty other indictments, the public mind would have been shocked had his sister-in-law alone been selected as the instrument of vengeance.

Note III.—*The Anatomy of Sleep.* Edward Binns, M.D. Churchill (1842). p. 282.

Although such an escape was a physical impossibility to Fauntleroy, there is a rational explanation of the strange superstition—referred to in this book—that he did not die on the scaffold, but was resuscitated, and lived abroad for many years. At eight o’clock on the evening of his death the body was taken by the undertakers, Gale and Barnard, to their premises opposite Newgate prison, where the coffin was fastened down immediately by order of the relatives, who had reason to fear that the morbid—attracted by the notoriety of the criminal—would seek by means of a bribe to view the remains. The flames of rumour are set ablaze by a tiny spark, and the fact that no one outside the prison saw the dead body of the forger may have revived popular faith in a favourite belief. The haste, too, in sealing up the shell may have excited suspicion. For in later days it is certain that many persons cherished the idea that Fauntleroy, more lucky than Jack Sheppard or Dr Dodd, whose friends tried in vain to restore them to life, had survived his execution. *Vide* also *Notes and Queries*, First Series, viii. 270, ix. 445, x. 114, 233. Possibly that prince of inkslingers, G. W. M. Reynolds, may have had the Fauntleroy legend in his mind when he drew the picture of the resuscitated forger in the first part of his obscene and scurrilous romance, *The Mysteries of the Court of London*. Fauntleroy was buried in the cemetery at Bunhill Fields on Thursday, Dec. 2.

Note IV.—*Old Stories Retold.* By George Walter Thornbury (1867), p. 290.

Mr Walter Thornbury makes a brave and ingenious attempt to explain “the mystery still shrouding the great Fauntleroy swindle,” and “to conjecture for what purpose the dishonest banker preserved in a private box so carefully a suicidal statement of his own misdoings.” His conclusion is that Fauntleroy invented the lie so it should not be thought that he had been influenced by motives of greed, but that as time went on he began actually to credit the untruth, and, treasuring the paper for conscience’ sake, was for years “buoyed up by the secret excuse of an absurd and illogical revenge.” It is only a want of lucidity that prevented Mr Thornbury from unshrouding the mystery, for the explanation—the key of which he held in his hand—is a simple one. There was method in Fauntleroy’s seeming madness. The document found in his private box, which gave a list of his forgeries, and contained the footnote explaining that his motive was revenge against the Bank, was dated May 7, 1816. It is notorious that never in her history was the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street so unpopular as at this time. For nearly twenty years she had borne the odium caused by the suspension of cash payments, and by the alarming depreciation of paper money. In like manner, the panic which overthrew so many provincial houses in 1814, 1815, and 1816 was ascribed to her envied monopoly; and her consequent prosperity, owing to the demand for Bank of England notes, helped to increase the widespread jealousy. Never had forger a more splendid shield than Henry Fauntleroy. Although he had hoped and believed that the proceeds of his first frauds would enable his firm to weather the financial storm, yet if Nemesis should overtake him before he had struggled through the slough, he was justified in supposing that the Board of Directors might hesitate to prosecute a man who would be hailed as a popular champion. Indeed, had his crime been as paltry as that of Henry Savary, it is quite probable that the public would have regarded him as an intrepid enemy of the Bank’s monopoly, and that a like storm which compelled the financial legislation of 1819 and 1825 might have saved him from the scaffold. Fate compelled him to overreach himself, or the crafty story of revenge might have been believed.

Note V.—*The History of the Catnach Press.* By Charles Hindley (1886), p. 73.

But for the indefatigable researches of this author we should know little of the immortal Jemmy, who, it must be remembered, was the Alfred Harmsworth of his day.

Note VI.—*Dic. Nat. Biog.*

Like Pierce Egan and Charles Hindley, the writer of this monograph states that Fauntleroy was convicted for a fraud upon his sister-in-law, which is the more remarkable as *The Times* is cited as an authority. The name of the forger's father was not Henry, but William; the arrest was made on September 10, not September 11; the warrant of commitment charged him with embezzling, not a thousand, but ten thousand pounds; the Berners Street Bank was not founded in 1782, but ten years later; the value of Miss Young's stock was £5450; and Fauntleroy was committed for trial on October 19. There does not appear to be any authority for the assertion that the fraudulent transfers first began in 1815, and it would be more correct to say that Messrs Marsh, Stracey & Company announced the suspension of payment on September 13.

Note VII.—*History of the Bank of England.* By John Francis (1847). Vol. i. pp. 339-345.

The author of this work, relying upon the evidence of J. H. Palmer before a Committee of the House of Commons in 1832, estimates the loss of the Bank of England through the Fauntleroy forgeries at £360,000. Although these figures were correct at the time when the Governor made his statement, the Bank received £95,000 from Messrs Marsh, Stracey & Company during September 1835, in full discharge of their debt.[1] Thus, as the gross loss to the Bank, according to John Horsley Palmer, was £360,214, the actual loss appears to have been reduced to £265,214.

Note VIII.—For particulars of the Berners Street Bankruptcy consult the following:—

(*a*) *The Bank of England's Case* under Marsh & Co.'s Commission. By a Solicitor. (Lupton Relfe, 113 Cornhill. 1825.)

(*b*) *The Bank of England's Claim* ... in reply to Mr Wilkinson's Report upon the Facts. (Lupton Relfe. 1825.)

(*c*) *Ryan and Moody's Law Reports from 1823-1826.* "Stone and Another *v.* Marsh, Stracey & Graham." P. 364.

(*d*) *Reports of Cases determined at Nisi Prius from 1823-1827.* By Edward Ryan and Wm. Moody. "Hume and Another *v.* Bolland and Others." P. 371.

(*e*) *Cases in Bankruptcy from 1821-1828.* By Thomas Glynn and Robert Jameson. "Governor and Company of the Bank of England in the matter of Marsh, Stracey, Graham and Fauntleroy." Vol. ii. pp. 363-368, 446.

(*f*) *The Report of Committee of Secrecy on the Bank of England's Charter* (1832). *Vide* Evidence of John Horsley Palmer (Governor). P. 9, and Appendix, p. 55.

(*g*) *Returns as to Bankruptcies previous to the Act of Parliament, 1831.* (1839.) Vol. xliii. p. 96.

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[1] I wish to acknowledge, with many thanks, the kindness of Mr Kenneth Graham, Secretary of the Bank of England, in verifying the sum paid by the assignees of Marsh, Stracey & Company.

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