















In the path of  
William D. Howland

# RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS

## OF AN OLD PUBLISHER

WILLIAM TINSLEY

“I ran it through, even from my boyish days.”

*WITH PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR*

IN TWO VOLUMES — VOLUME I

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## DEDICATION

MY Publishers desire me to write a dedication to these volumes. I willingly do so ; for even in my old age I have more than a round dozen of staunch old friends, who never pass me by without a hearty shake of hands and good wishes. To all of you, my dear old friends, I humbly dedicate these memory sketches, with all the earnest love possible.

BILL TINSLEY.

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## PREFATORY NOTE

THE reader will see at once that the following very random recollections are much as they are named on the title page. I make no pretence at writing history, or of being a literary man, but I hope some of my anecdotes and statements are interesting. And I certainly hope the matter will give the reader as much pleasure to read as it has given me to write. I take blame for all errors in the work. At the same time, I must thank my daughter, Lily Tinsley, who has done her best to correct some of my numerous faults in diction.

WILLIAM TINSLEY.





# NOTICE

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## CONTENTS OF VOLUME I

### CHAPTER I

	PAGE
On Highgate Hill in 1852—Just a Memory of Dick Whittington—The Suggested Origin of the Cat in the Story—The Stars and Lamps from Highgate Hill—My Early Friendships with J. L. Toole, Lionel Brough and Henry Irving—When a Farmer's Boy I ate my Dinner under the Hedge—Blind James Harvey the Newsman—The Great Snowstorm in 1836—Catnach's Last Dying Speeches and Confessions—Mr. Charles Hindley—Travelling in the Old Days—Luton and Dunstable Bonnet Sewers—Coal Waggoners and Costermongers—Heavy Toll Charges—Howe and Cushing's Circus—Tolls at Highgate Archway—Soldiers and Recruiting—Country Fairs—The Old Election Days—Jacob Bell and Alderman Carden at St. Albans	1-25

### CHAPTER II

A Budding Bloomfield—Old Songs—Two Poor Plough Boys—Bread a Shilling per Loaf—Our Old Home in the Wood—Spring Flowers—Battue Shooting—Redmond of the Swiss Cottage—Tom Spring,

	PAGE
the Fighting Man—Our Terror of Night Poachers— Poachers and their Cunning—A Noted Poacher, afterwards Gamekeeper—His Lordship of the Harvest —Two Curious Old Wood Turners   ...   ...   ...	26-41

## CHAPTER III

Thomas and Robert Cooper, and Jacob Holyoake, at the John Street Institution—Thomas Cooper's Lectures on Napoleon and Wellington—Fergus O'Connor—Mr. Creswick and Mr. Mulready, the Artists in the Grove, Notting Hill—Book Hunting and Publishing—Early Play Going—My Brother Edward—Authors I Published For—Our Giant Novelists—Interesting Pictures in Fiction—Miss Braddon and her Books—The Opposition to Three- Volume Fiction—Lady Audley's Secret—The Ruinous Library Company, Limited—John Maxwell—Maga- zine Pictures Then and Now   ...   ...   ...	42-63
---	-------

## CHAPTER IV

Mr. Mudie and the Library Company—Hookham's Old Library—Some of the old Lending Librarians— A young Librarian's Jokes—Mr. John Morley, his First Book, and his Excellent Aid with Proofs—Mr. John Heneage Jesse—The Hannah Lightfoot Mys- tery—"Guy Livingstone" and "Ouida"   ...   ...	64-85
---	-------



## CHAPTER V

PAGE

Joseph Hatton the Novelist—Four Noted Naturalists, Frank Buckland, Francis Francis, Edward Lee, J. B. Tegetmeier—Buckland's Books—Felix and Mrs. Whitehurst—The Mystery of Authorship—"The Author of Blue Blazes"—Mrs. J. Riddell's "A Race for Wealth"—An Interesting Speculation Nipped in the Bud—The two James Willings, Father and Son—James Payn, his Work and Good Business Qualifications	... ..	86-109
---	--------	--------

## CHAPTER VI

Harrison Ainsworth and his novel, "Jack Sheppard"—John Cordy Jeaffreson—The Hon. Mrs. Norton and her Ancestors, the Sheridans—Wilkie Collins—Our Difference of Opinion on a Trade Question—"The Woman in White," and "The Moonstone"—Bill Hill as the Butler—The Right Hon. W. H. Smith—His Father's wonderful Energy in Business—My dispute with Mr. W. H. Smith and Mr. W. Lethbridge, and how it ended—The heads of the departments at W. H. Smith and Son's—Mr. Wm. Faux, the Librarian—No resemblance between Sir Joseph Porter and the Right Hon. W. H. Smith—Thomas Hardy's first Fictions—Mrs. Henry Wood—"East Lynne" and <i>The Times</i> notice of the Book—Mr. Charles Wood's wonderful Belief in his mother's Books	... ..	110-133
--	--------	---------

## CHAPTER VII

PAGE

Mr. George Meredith—A Day with him at Box Hill—The Partnership between Edmund Yates and Mrs. Hoey in Novel Writing—How I was Deceived—Publishers' Modes of Dealing with Authors of known Merit and Trade Worth—Novels of which Mrs. Hoey was part Author—Captain, afterwards Sir Richard Burton, as I knew him in about 1860—Burton's very indifferent Religious Faith—A rare Traveller and Bohemian—A Book by Mrs. Burton Destroyed—Captain Burton's Books and their Value—Burton's Dedication in "Wanderings in West Africa"—The Burtons at Damascus—Lady Burton's strange Statements about Money Payments to Sir Richard Burton—Mr. George Sala—His early Writings—Mrs. Sala's love of her husband—Acting Printer's Devil to Sala and another Author—Sala's bad treatment of me—Mr. Joseph Levy and Sir Edward Lawson's kindness to Mrs. Sala—The noted Sala and Friswell Action for Libel	...	...	...	...	134-160
---	-----	-----	-----	-----	---------

## CHAPTER VIII

Robert Crawford, of Edinburgh—Christopher Pond—Henry Sinclair's Death—Pond's Kindness to his Crippled Child—Pond's Good Nature to his Barmaids—My last visit to Pond—The Degeneration of Pantomime—The Old and the New Pantomimes, and the Pantomimists—"Joey's Occupation Gone"—No

	PAGE
Harlequinades of any Length or Importance now—	
One of the best old Pantomime Trick Scenes—Mr. George Conquest's Wonderful Impersonation of a Monkey — Arthur Williams, Harry Monkhouse, Herbert Campbell and Harry Nichols at the Grecian Theatre—Pantomime at Music Halls—Charles Lauri—Paul Martinetti—Mother Shipton—Doctor Cumming—Mother Shipton's Devil, and Miss Corelli's Rimânez—Some of Mother Shipton's Prophecies—Mr. George Humphreys—T. P. Barnum at the Playing Card Makers' Banquet—Clever Capture of Thieves	161-188

## CHAPTER IX

H. S. Leigh — Jimmy Hitchman — The Leigh Family—Gandish's and Sass's—Sir Frederick Leighton's Early Artistic Works—Artists in the sixties who became Famous—A Quarrel between Mr. Alfred Bunn and <i>Punch</i> —Some very Scurrilous matter and Pictures—The Meet Glee Club and Madame Vestris—J. R. Planché and his Recollections—Kind Letters from Planché—Planché's first Drama in 1818—Planché's Father and the King's Watch Ribbon—“Can't it be washed, Planché?”	... .. 189-216
--	----------------

## CHAPTER X

H. J. Byron and our Venture with “Mirth”—Byron's kindness in Business Matters — Planché's	
---	--

	PAGE
Introductory Verses to "Mirth"—Some Witty Sayings of Byron — Hans Breitmann—Bits from Byron's Burlesques—Alfred Austin and other Poets and Poets Laureate—Mr. Swinburne and Monckton Milnes—Mrs. Burton—Sir Edwin Arnold—Robert Buchanan—Lord Tennyson as a Business Man—An Old Woman's Curse—Discreet Authors—Sir Thomas O'Hagan—Mr. Whiteside ... ..	217-246

## CHAPTER XI

James Grant the Journalist, and James Grant the Novelist—Grant's Newspaper Press and <i>The Saturday Review</i> —Volumes of Poetry and Rhyme by Women—William Gilbert—Bill Romer—Andrew Halliday, his Sad Death—Charles Dickens—Albert Smith and the Egyptian Hall— <i>The China Times</i> —Charles Ross, of "Ally Sloper" Fame ... ..	247-268
--	---------

## CHAPTER XII

Charles James Mathews—Madame Vestris—"Here I am without a Shilling"—Mr. and Mrs. Frank Matthews—A Witty Rhyme by Mathews—George Honey, the Comedian—His Mother's Post Office Order—George Cook, "more Seats and less Cheers"—Theatrical Benefits — Charles Thompson — Jonas Levy — The Alambra Relief Fund — Inside the Victoria Sporting Club—Steele, the Betting Man, and Henry Ulph ... ..	269-294
---	---------

## CHAPTER XIII

PAGE

William Black, my little Dispute with him—Mr. W. G. Wills, the Dramatist—Mr. Clark Russell—Frederick Greenwood—Thomas Wright, the Journeyman Engineer—James Greenwood—Justin McCarthy and Mr. John Morley at <i>The Star</i> Newspaper Office—The Supposed Mystery of Publishing	... 295-312
--	-------------

## CHAPTER XIV

Shirley Brooks—The Recluse of the Iron Tower—Richard Jefferies—Publishers and Editors—Books on the Fourth Estate—"The Shilling Magazine"—Mr. Samuel Lucas—"London Society"—Edmund Yates—"Tinsleys' Magazine"—William Croft—Willing's "Press Guide"—Edmund Downey—Mr. H. W. Lucy and <i>The World</i> —Mr. Harry Furniss	... 313-332
---	-------------

## CHAPTER XV

A Sad Ending to a Merry Meeting—Sir Henry Irving—Death of Mr. Bateman—Always Welcome at the Lyceum Theatre—A Ghost Story told by Henry Irving — The "Hamlet" and "Merchant of Venice" Banquets — Mr. Compton's Speech — Hamlet only the After Piece—Mr. W. S. Johnson—The "London Journal": Some of the Serial Writers for it — Johnson's Swish-Tail Blacks — The Market Gardener's Little Joke	... 333-347
---	-------------

## CHAPTER XVI

PAGE

J. L. Toole at the Coventry Street Picture Shop— A Little Dispute Settled at the Gaiety Theatre— Many Jolly Days with Mr. Toole—An Amusing Dinner at Greenwich—A Merry Week in Birmingham —A Trip to Stratford-on-Avon—Kind Letters from Mr. Toole—The Cause of the German War—A Foolish Picture	...	...	...	...	348-368
--	-----	-----	-----	-----	---------

# RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS

## CHAPTER I

### ON HIGHGATE HILL IN 1852

READERS of the following random recollections and now and then, I hope, not obtrusive reflections, will not, I am afraid, find them as interesting as the somewhat mythical but capital little story of Dick Whittington and his cat. I venture to refer to young Whittington, because by a curious coincidence I found myself on Highgate Hill early one morning in 1852, walking into London. Whittington, when he lay sleeping on the London side of the old northern height, had run away from his employer and, as pictured in some of the accounts of his life, from a stout, greasy-looking cook-maid, who was apt to drub him with a large wooden spoon or ladle. In his sleep, Master Whittington thought he heard church bells ring, "Turn again, Whittington, Lord Mayor of London." If our dear old household fairy story does refer to the Sir Richard Whittington who lived in part of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the old bells might have told him to turn again and be three



times Lord Mayor of London, for the Sir Richard Whittington of that time was Lord Mayor in 1397, again in 1406, and again in 1419. So it would seem that there was a smaller number of candidates for the Mayoralty chair in the old days than in our own. To be three times Mayor of London was no great event, for it seems that one of the first, if not the first, Mayor of London, was Henry Fitzalwyn, who in about Henry the Second's time held the office of Mayor for twenty-four consecutive years. But perhaps some of our stage Whittingtons have a much better record than Fitzalwyn's, for they have been made Lord Mayor every night for weeks and months; in fact, many of our best Dick Whittingtons have been made Lord Mayor of London thousands of times, but alas! have not had the semblance of a taste of the good things down Guildhall way on great occasions. In fact, many stage Lord Mayors have been content with a banquet of bread and cheese, and malt liquor out of the pewter. I had some years ago seen so many stage Whittingtons, and read so much fanciful matter about them, that I grew a little curious about the origin of the story and especially the cat portion of it; but I found no facts to warrant anyone believing that Sir Richard Whittington ever held a menial position or was ever at the mercy of a cook-maid. The most reasonable theory about the cat is given by Doctor Brewer, who says that centuries ago, French merchants and traders of any importance were termed "achats," or "acats," and

that Chaucer spells the word "acater," and from him and doubtless other sources came the word "caterer." And it is believed that the populariser of the story of Dick Whittington, not being versed in nautical lore, accordingly imagined him to have been a trader in cats, instead of owner of one or more of the old Norwegian ships of the "cat" or "catch" kind.

However, how and in what way Dick got his cat into the story perhaps matters little at this date. Time nor custom will not blot it out of childhood's dreams and merry-makings.

Whittington's experience on the old northern height was much more pleasant and encouraging than mine. It was a bleak cold morning when I was there, and as I trudged along I heard no cheery or welcome sounds of any kind. I had walked over twelve miles that morning, and the sun had not yet risen. The myriads of stars and gaslights in the distance seemed to meet, and from the old height it was hardly possible to distinguish where the lamps left off and the stars began. However, that illusion did not last long, for as soon as I was off the hill and in the Holloway Road it needed no speculation on my part to distinguish the bright stars above from the murky lamps below.

I had not even dreamed that London streets were paved with gold, and I was not surprised to find them paved with very hard stones. I remember I soon tired of the long roads and streets I had to travel, not from the weight of clothes I had to carry,

for my bundle was not much larger than the ordinary stage Whittington's small property one. I remember that I had more than the one fortune-hunting shilling, but certainly not more than about two of these always useful coins of the realm. I was wending my way to Notting Hill, where I hoped to obtain some employment, and as I dragged my weary limbs through street after street London seemed indeed a wilderness to me. I stared at most of the passers-by, but none of them took the slightest notice of me. In country villages, and even towns of some importance, many of the inhabitants know each other by name or sight, and cheery "good mornings" and "good nights" are often heard and commonly exchanged. But busy London knows little of such civilities.

I was fortunate in obtaining employment the day after I arrived at Notting Hill. How I succeeded at that time and in after years the kindly reader will, I hope, discover in these very random recollections.

I did not keep a diary of any kind. I shall, therefore, have to rely upon my memory, a fairly good one, for only the happiest and most pleasing incidents in my life. But I am afraid those of my readers who justly consider that every man or woman who lives a fairly long life should strive to leave this world better than they found it, will not praise me for my poor efforts in that direction.

Still, I cannot help being a little proud of having known and been friends with many distinguished men and women in the noble professions of literature,

science, art, and the drama, and during my many years as a publisher, of having published the first books of many noted authors.

I have several times been a favoured guest of different Lord Mayors at the Mansion House, and at other gatherings memorable in the history of literature, science, art, and the drama. I well remember when our grand old actor, Samuel Phelps, first shook hands with me. I was very proud of the event, and of knowing that excellent man and actor. I knew my excellent friend, Mr., now Sir, Henry Irving, when he was quite a young man, and even then a most earnest student in the great profession of which he is now the acknowledged head, and perhaps as much admired as any Englishman and actor that has ever lived.

I remember one evening at my house, a good many years ago, we were a merry romping family party, and for some time Henry Irving was foremost in the fun, but towards the small hours of the morning we missed him from our circle. We subsequently found him in a quiet room, digging deep into his favourite Shakesperian mine, in which he has since found wealth and fame.

I will venture to refer to banquets and entertainments given by the great actor and other friends, which put our little family parties and such boyish games as "more sacks to the mill" into the shade. Lionel Brough will perhaps remember the evening when he and Henry Liston would not let Irving have his quiet read in any corner. My old and

esteemed friend, Mr. J. L. Toole, will perhaps remember some of the merry meetings I shall venture to mention in these rambling notes. But alas! merry meetings and companions soon pass away in this busy, anxious world. Old Death has robbed me of scores of excellent friends and companions; and I am afraid some few who knew me when I seemed to hold a sort of position in life, must have forgotten my existence by now.

But I feel sure my old friend, John Lawrence Toole, will not be offended when later on in these pages I mention some of the merry days and times we have had together. I had almost written nights instead of times, but times seems to sound better.

But those were the days when a good deal more than the ordinary load of this world's sorrows had not come upon the great and genial comedian, his home had not then been bereft of an excellent wife and loving children; and I am afraid Mr. Brough is not so ready now to stand on his head, or even on very high wooden stilts, as he was when he was young, and could then play Tony Lumpkin as well, if not better, than any other young actor of his time.

But, unlike a good storyteller, I anticipate events and matters I want to scribble more fully about further on in these pages. Memory seems to serve me fairly well, for I remember many of the scenes and doings of my boyhood days, when as a poor farmer's boy I ate my dinner under a hedge, got my drink from the nearest stream or pond, and did not dream of being proud in after years of having done so.

Before entering upon an account of my life ventures and adventures in London, I should like to recall some of the memories of my old home and boyhood's days in our old village sixty years ago, where life in nearly all its phases was very primitive. School boards were not then dreamed of, and national schools had not been established long enough to displace the spectacled old fogies and dames who passed as learned schoolmasters and mistresses, and whose learning did not go much beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic. In fact, some of them were not more learned than the Irish schoolmistress, who, when her pupils tried to spell some rather hard geographical words, told them to pass them over, because they were names of foreign countries where they would never go.

Goldsmith's schoolmaster in "The Deserted Village" would seem to have been rather above the general class of teachers of his time, but the fact does not show him to have been a very great scholar, even though

"The village all declared how much he knew.  
'Twas certain he could write and cypher too;  
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,  
And even the story ran that he could gauge."

I seem to have a glimmering remembrance of being seated on a form in an old dame's school when I was about four or five years old. And I certainly remember going to our national school for a little time when it was first opened. I think that was in 1836; but my father took no great interest in the education of his children, and certainly before



I was nine years of age I had to do different kinds of day work. Some of it consisted in trying to scare rooks away from newly-sown fields of corn, and when the corn was getting ripe, to frighten small birds and rooks from stealing it. But those artful devils of rooks often didn't care for me a bit, for when I drove them off one part of the field, they would coolly wing their way to another portion of it not far off, and there plough up the newly-sown seed, and wait until I was almost close to them, and then they would away again to the other side of the field, and again wait for me. And then, worse than all, they would divide their forces, and one portion go to one part of the field, and the other to another part, and in that way would play the double upon me, until they had gorged themselves with their ill-gotten food. Often, too, when the black armies had beaten me in their tactics, my worthy taskmaster, who paid me the large sum of two shillings and sixpence for my seven days' work, would appear upon the scene and bully me for not driving the artful birds away.

My excellent mother had had a fair education—at all events she could read and write fairly well—and she was often asked to read and write letters for neighbours who could not read or write them for themselves. It frequently happened that letters came from soldiers in different parts of the world to their parents, written by comrades or superior officers, and these letters were, as a rule, read to parents who could neither read nor write. In

fact, letters from soldiers on active service were often of much interest, not only to parents, but to most villagers who knew the senders, and were anxious to hear them read; but, as a rule, the clergyman, the doctor, or the old school master, was asked to read letters of any importance, and often to answer them.

I think I am right in saying that none but the poorest hovels were without the Bible, the Testament, and the Book of Common Prayer; for about that time the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge had begun to distribute the holy books almost broadcast, and well-intentioned old ladies made no little merit of distributing Bibles and Prayer Books to people who could not even read them. In fact, scores of the old villagers knew part of the Church service by heart, and certainly many of the psalms and hymns, and yet could not write or read a line of them from the books, but being good church-goers, had mastered them from memory. When the grand old hymns, "Rock of Ages," "Day of Judgment, Day of Wonders," and, of course, the morning and evening hymns were sung, almost every man, woman, and child, joined in, and if they were not always of one accord in words and tune, there was a divine sound and feeling that even Michael Costa would not have despised. I remember that "Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress" and Hervey's "Meditations Amongst the Tombs" were very favourite books with people of religious tendencies. I got my first peep into "Robinson



Crusoe" and the "Arabian Nights" at the home of an old uncle of mine. But even though these two wonderful books have been read and enjoyed by millions, I am afraid I was never thoroughly master of the contents of either of them.

My old uncle kept the village toll-gate, and I was somewhat a favourite of his, and, I think, of his children. I well remember the toll-house was a regular haunt and place for gossip. My uncle and some others were subscribers to *The Weekly Dispatch*, each of the subscribers agreeing as to the time and days they were to have the paper to read, and I also remember that *The Times* newspaper was subscribed to by some of the better-off families in and near our village. The bearer of *The Times* and *Dispatch* to their several destinations during the week was James Harvey, who was totally blind, but, fortunately, what he had lost in sight he had, to some extent, gained in memory, and before the end of the week, "Blind Jim," as he was called, had, from hearing, mastered most of the contents of these two important papers, and then made some capital out of having done so, by repeating the news from his favourite corner in one or more of the old inns, always to a number of interested listeners and village politicians. Harvey's serious affliction made him many good friends, and being a very reliable man, he was often sent on important missions and errands in the village and to distant villages within a few miles around, and often for the parish doctor, who lived some three miles off. .

I am, of course, writing of what were called the old coaching days, and as several of the coaches changed horses in our village, news from London and towns farther away in the midland counties was not very scarce, coachmen, guards, post-boys, and the passengers being, as a rule, ready to relate events of importance. Curious blunders were often made, and the wonderful reports of the passengers by one coach were often contradicted by the next. In fact, sometimes Queen Anne was dead, and sometimes she was not.

The news of the last dying speeches and confessions of murderers reached our village very early as a rule ; in fact, now and then, before the execution had taken place, for the reprieve had, like that of William in "Black-eyed Susan," arrived late, but not too late to save the prisoner from the rope.

Of course, when the news of a reprieve did overtake Master Jimmy Catnach's men in the country, they soon made their way back to Seven Dials with their useless stock of false reports, and I suppose Catnach made them some allowance, for he was a shrewd business man, and made a fair fortune out of the printing and sales of Newgate literature, ballads, and other kinds of penny broadsides.

I learnt from my old friend the late Charles Hindley, of Brighton, father of Charles Hindley, of Booksellers' Row, that James Catnach had for some years a private house at Dancers' Hill, not far from our village, so that it is quite possible he may now and then have heard his Seven Dials wares cried in front of his house when he was not in business.

I published several interesting volumes by Mr. Charles Hindley, who was also a most industrious chronicler of the lives and works of James Catnach and Bewick, the celebrated wood engraver. Perhaps there were few men in Mr. Hindley's time who had a better knowledge of old signs, old ballads, and street cries, than he had. In fact, had he been as good a writer as he was a talker, the curious books he published would have made excellent reading.

Travelling in the old coaching days, when the roads were good, and the weather fine, was doubtless very enjoyable, but the speed was not great, especially in comparison to the railroad speed of these days. Often in bad winter weather the old stage coaches, carriages, vans, and waggons were in an almost hopeless plight for days and days, and sometimes weeks. I distinctly remember the great snowstorm in 1836, when coaches and heavy loaded waggons often had from six to eight horses yoked to them to drag them through the snow, even when much of it was banked away on the sides of the roads. In some places it was quite eight feet deep, and hedges, ditches, ponds, and brooks were hidden beneath it, and the sharp frost turned the surface of it into strong ice, so that it was fairly easy to walk from one point to another over hedges, ditches, and ponds, a feat not possible when the snow was not there. Hares, rabbits, and other dwellers on and in the earth lived and fed under the snow for weeks, at least those who were

fortunate enough to get ventilation into their snow-covered homes, which many of them did by working their way up by the side of trees, bushes, along ditches, and in other ways. There were strange sights when the snow melted, for it was found that every vestige of green stuff was gone, and all the small branches and twigs in the hedges were eaten up, and in many places the thick bark of full grown timber trees was eaten away for some feet above the ground. I do not seem to remember that there was any very great distress at the time, I suppose because so many roads, paths, and public ways had to be cleared of snow, which gave employment to willing hands. But the destruction of wild animals and birds was very great, and, as a rule, whether shot or caught and killed, or frozen to death, they were all eaten by the poor and needy.

Better perhaps than even comfortable coach travelling was what was called posting from stage to stage, or town to town. In that way many of the best families in England, Wales and Scotland travelled between London and their country residences, in their own carriages, but with hired post-boys and horses. The owners of heavy old chariots, as a rule, were drawn by four horses, with two post-boys, and lighter carriages with one pair of horses, and one post-boy, and I think a stage was, as a rule, about ten or twelve miles. Some of the travellers rested and slept at the old inns, but many of them posted night and day to their journey's end, even when they were going right into the heart of

Scotland. Their guide book on the way was "Patterson's Book of Roads," which was a poor sort of Murray's handbook and Bradshaw combined, and when travellers had not the book with them, they could see it as a rule at the posting hotels on the road. The clumsy old carts and waggons loaded with articles of commerce, drawn by four and sometimes six horses, with often not more than about two or three tons weight upon them, crawled along the roads at seldom more than four or five miles an hour, stopping at certain stages for rest and bait for the men and horses. In fact, in those days, neither men nor horses seemed in a hurry. But, *hey presto!* and then came a wondrous change. Business men seemed suddenly to realise that time was worth money, and move on, and quickly, was the word. Instead of articles of commerce being dragged at a snail's pace on heavy gravelled roads, iron roads were laid, Master Puffing Billy began to rush into and out of London and many of our important towns, with two or three hundred tons of merchandise behind him, with more ease than four of the old carrier waggon horses had done with about three tons behind them, and at forty miles an hour instead of four. One can imagine how much good swift transit has done for dealers in perishable goods. I can remember when a dish of fresh sea water fish was almost an impossibility in hot weather, forty or even twenty miles inland from the sea. The old transters were all right for perishable goods in winter and cold

weather, but they would not overload themselves with such wares when the thermometer stood at seventy or eighty degrees in the shade.

A good portion of the merchandise that passed through our village to London consisted of straw-plaited hats and bonnets; the plaiting was mostly done by the poor villagers who lived within eight or ten miles of Luton, Dunstable and St. Albans, and the hat and bonnet sewing was mostly done in those towns. The sewing was all done by hand, and of course when a hat or a bonnet of any special pattern was required in London at once from St. Albans, Dunstable, or Luton, the obtaining it by horseback or a light conveyance was a large item in the cost, for the journey was a good day's work for a man and a horse, and often the messenger would have to wait some hours for the article to be sewn and shaped. In those days London held none or very few bonnet sewers; but a goodly number of years ago I saw a young girl sitting in a sewing machine shop in Holborn, machine sewing very pretty straw plait bonnets at the rate of about twelve in the hour. That proceeding would indeed have astonished the bonnet sewers of old, in the towns I have mentioned, and the cost of the London sewn bonnet would have still more surprised them.

I think it must have been in about 1835 that I had my first ride in a stage coach. My grandfather, on my mother's side, was a veterinary surgeon and general manager of the men and horses that worked



the coaches between Whetstone and St. Albans. He and my grandmother lived at Whetstone, and my mother put me in a coach and sent me to them on a visit.

At that time the coaches that ran between London and Birmingham belonged, I think, to a gentleman of the name of Waterhouse, but they were soon afterwards purchased by Mr. Chaplin, the father or grandfather, I think, of the present statesman, who was the Chaplin of Chaplin & Horne, the noted carriers.

I should like to refer again to my old uncle, the toll-gate keeper, for he was rather a noted character in his way. I think he had been a shoemaker in his younger days, but had deserted his last to collect tolls. The following were some of the tolls charged for horses, vehicles, and almost any kind of conveyance except wheelbarrows: threepence for a saddle horse, sevenpence for any kind of cart or gig with one horse, without springs, and eightpence for conveyances of the same kind with springs. Even a costermonger's donkey barrow, with springs, was subject to the same charge as a gentleman's gig, and very pretty language was often used by the costermongers before they parted with the toll. However, some of the costers were alive to the fact that the toll could, now and then, be evaded. In these days coals were, as a rule, carted to our village and other places around, in waggons drawn by four horses, and when returning to London the coal-men would often lift a donkey and barrow bodily into

their waggons, and by that means evade the toll. I do not think doing so was quite legal, but I remember my uncle seldom, if ever, cared to argue the matter with costers and coal-heavers.

Beyond the above-mentioned toll-charges it was fifteenpence for a tandem, one shilling and ninepence for a carriage and pair of horses, three-and-sixpence for a carriage and four horses, an extra number of wheels and horses being all charged in proportion, while drovers of all kinds of cattle were taxed rather heavily.

The heavy tolls collected at our turnpike were by no means singular. Some years after I came to London, I was making my way from Cambridge to a village about ten miles from there. On the St. Neots Road anyone can see rather a long way ahead. At one point I could see quite a mile or more, and there was what seemed a tremendous caravan coming towards me. However, I had not long to wait to know what it was, for at a toll-gate a little further on I found a gentleman in an American waggon, puzzling the gate-keeper not a little to reckon the toll for the number of horses and large vehicles of different kinds. At all events, after some bartering, the sum agreed upon was a few shillings over seven pounds, and I stood at the gate and saw the seemingly endless procession pass by. Those who remember Messrs. Howe and Cushing's first visit to England with their gigantic circus will remember that the number of horses, carriages, and men was very great; in fact, I have no remembrance of any travelling circus



of the same length, or number of animals, artistes, and attendants, before or since. Perhaps Barnum could have beaten the length had he paraded his last variety show in England. But there were items in it not quite of the character to travel daily. I refer to fat women, skeletons, dwarfs, giants, and other unfortunate creatures not built to be continually on the road, and I do not seem to remember that the Brothers Sanger or Jim Myers' circuses were ever the length of Howe and Cushing's as I saw it.

We had not a toll weighbridge in our village, but there was one at Watford toll-gate. Those bridges were rare friends to poor over-loaded horses, for the moment a toll-gate keeper thought the horses were loaded beyond the licensed weights, he ordered the driver to make the horses draw the waggon or cart on to the weighbridge, and the penalty for over weight was very severe. I knew a toll-gate keeper who was in charge at Watford gate, who charged a driver nearly as much as four pounds for over-loading a team of horses, and there was no credit given in the matter—the team or the value of the fine was delayed until the money was paid or assured.

Plenty of us not living remember that hateful penny charge for walking through Highgate archway, and doubtless some drivers of horses, who, having tried to drive them with their load up the London side of the hill and failed, had to go back and pay the archway toll, which the collector had

the power to increase when he knew any driver had tried to evade his gate, and even when the load was manure, a material that was exempt from toll at some gates in the old days.

But I have rambled back to Highgate before. I have nearly done with my remembrances of our old village, where we had some little excitements. One I remember was when soldiers marched from their different stations to or from London, and especially when a regiment, or a good portion of one, halted, and was billeted in our village for the night. When they were foot soldiers, their being billeted was no easy task for those who were compelled to find them beds, but mounted soldiers and their horses were a double task for those with limited accommodation for men and horses. Some of the old publicans, rather than let the soldiers sleep on the premises, paid for lodgings for them in private houses, and so many of the poor people gave up their beds for the night sometimes for good pay.

Companies or regiments of soldiers seldom passed through our village without leaving bitter tears behind. The recruiting sergeants were always ready with the fatal shilling and the bits of ribbon for the hats of the recruits, and more than often an extra pint or glass and the thoughts of becoming generals filled the souls of the recruits with martial ardour, and they at once became soldiers of the Queen. It was strange how few of them cared or dared to go back from their bargain with their

country ; now and then one would be missing, and at other times the heavy money penalty for the release of the bond would be paid, but they were rare events. There were often sad sights when the recruits went away with the soldiers ; mothers, sisters, sweethearts, and fathers often wept bitterly, for as a rule the soldiers took away good and honest young fellows, and left the lazy and useless behind.

Our parish doctor was always in his element when the soldiers were with us, and was the recruiting sergeant's best friend. His advice to the young fellows was, "Off you go, boys, off you go, and come back generals and field-m Marshals," always adding, "If I were a boy as young as you I would be off at once, and not stay here and doctor a lot of old women and cripples." The worthy doctor was fairly safe himself as regards height, for he was certainly not more than five feet high, and by no means a good figure. I think I am right in saying that more strapping young fellows marched out of our village than ever returned, even as poor pensioners.

Our annual fair was held on the first Tuesday in Whitsun week, and various amusements were arranged. Stalls, covered with milk-white table-cloths, for the sale of toys, stewed prunes, sweetstuff and fruits, were placed outside most of the shops, and there were rough kinds of entertainments, such as climbing a well-greased pole, some thirty feet high, with a leg of mutton placed at the top for anyone who could get it down ;

chasing a well-greased pig ; boys and girls bobbing for oranges in tubs of water, both their hands tied behind them, and in the same fix trying to eat rolls of bread, saturated with treacle, suspended on a cross line, just high enough to make it difficult for a hungry boy to reach.

It was not often the day of pleasure passed off without what the countrymen called a good slogging fight, but as a rule the combatants were better friends when they had knocked each other about for half an hour, or more.

The most brutal annual fight in our neighbourhood for some years was at Colney Heath. The challenger's name was Jonathan Brinklow, a gipsy. His first words when he arrived on the Heath were, " My dog shall fight any man's dog, and I'll fight the man ! " There was generally a stupid fool to meet him, and they would often knock each other about so much that their friends could hardly recognise them, for the gipsy did not always prove the best man. In fact, it sometimes happened that the seconders of the combatants would so much disagree about the respective merits of their men that they would set to work and knock each other about in the same sort of way. Those were of course the brutal phases of country fairs.

Most of the public-house keepers made room for country dancing. At one of the inns I remember there was once an attempt made by some young people, who had been in London, to introduce quadrilles and polkas, but the college hornpipe, the merry

haymakers, the waltz, contra-dance, jigs, and "Sir Roger de Coverley" reigned supreme, and the old oak floors rattled again when the often hobnailed performers went up the sides and down the middle, and double-shuffled to a poor tune, extracted from a very indifferent fiddle by a still more indifferent player. Violin at that time was a name hardly known in our village for that instrument. The charge was one penny for each person in the dances; the gentlemen, as a rule, paid for their partners.

My first sight of Wombwell's Menagerie was one Sunday morning in our village. I do not remember whether it was coming from or going towards London, but it halted quite early in the morning, and the keepers set to work to clean out the cages of the animals, and afterwards to give them their breakfast. There was nothing very eventful in the matter, except that the monkeys were given a large pile of soaked bread, between each layer of which there was sprinkled some brown sugar, and it was curious to see these cunning monkeys reach for slice after slice of sugared bread, and having licked off the sugar, throw them down and snatch up fresh pieces. I think I have seen creatures, supposed to be human beings, imitate those selfish monkeys a good deal.

#### THE OLD ELECTION DAYS.

Some old people look back with a great deal of regret upon the old election days, when candidates often scattered money broadcast; when voting early and often, if not a rule, was by no means an exception; and those candidates who had the largest purses and

the smallest consciences often won even great and important elections.

The voting early and often was by no means a risky business with the Smiths, Browns, and Robinsons, and such familiar names, for they could easily mix up their Christian names in ways that were not easy to unravel ; and as candidates as a rule in those days were not above bribery, neither one side nor the other cared much for a close scrutiny. The worst kind of bribery at the old elections was when candidates had to deal with dishonest voters, who made little secret that their votes and interest were to be had by the highest bidder ; but perhaps the worst kind of voters were those who often received large sums of money from both or all the candidates, and did not vote at all, or if they did, not before they had again been bribed.

One of the most noted elections I remember was the inglorious contest at St. Alban's, in Hertfordshire, between Jacob Bell and Alderman Carden.

Both candidates managed the business so well that the town was disfranchised soon afterwards, and no wonder, for many of the free and independent voters took bribes wholesale, got drunk, fought, and behaved themselves very much unlike honest men or true politicians.

In those days it was the custom for non-resident candidates to drive to the towns in carriages, drawn by two and often by four or more horses, but the horses were as a rule unyoked some distance outside the town, and the carriages then drawn into it.

by some of the free and independent electors ; and "beer, the cause of England's greatness," had much to do with those semi-beasts of burden.

Jacob Bell won the very doubtful victory, but he paid very dearly for his very short privilege at Westminster ; and the Carden side did not seem at all free from election guile, for there were strange stories of bribery by the agents. But I think the Bell side were a good deal responsible for the absence at the proper time of one very important but by no means scrupulous minded elector ; at least, it seemed fairly well known that he received a large sum for his vote, and also received several pounds each for about a score of his mechanics, who were to work well on the polling day. But the worthy master gave each of his men a good sum, and on the day of election he and they were all some distance away enjoying themselves, the report being that he had received a good sum of money from the opposition side not to vote at all.

Of course, from a political, and indeed from a conscientious point of view, a man's vote of any kind should have no actual monetary value ; but certainly in those days, as now, there were thousands of voters who looked upon their votes as their own freehold property, and certainly as of good monetary value to them, and often made them so. It was mentioned at the time that Jacob Bell's return for St. Alban's was never in doubt, for plenty of his money was in the town even before he began to advocate his own cause ; but I forget



whether the small right in Parliament was ever worth anything to him or his country. At all events, he was, I think, in after years, a splendid patron of art, especially of Sir Edwin Landseer, the animal painter, and at his death possessed a fine collection of the great painter's works.

Alderman Carden had some rather foolish traits in his character, which now and then brought the press down very severely upon him. At least, I remember Horace St. John more than once in *The Daily Telegraph* was very severe upon the worthy Alderman; however, he lived to be old and wise enough not to merit severity at the hands of the press in his old days. In fact, he is well remembered, and his name much respected in the City in these days.



## CHAPTER II.

### A BUDDING BLOOMFIELD.

I remember a farmer's boy, named James Turner, who I think should and would have been a good rustic poet had he had a better education, more books, and fairly intellectual society. In fact, could he have had even less chance than myself of seeing the world, men, and books, I think there might have been one more poet to name with Bloomfield. Turner and myself worked on the same farm for some few months, and his mania was for songs and ballads of all kinds. Every penny, and indeed every halfpenny he had to spend, went to an old ballad hawker, who came our way once a week, and was Turner's adviser in song and literary matters, giving him a sort of cue to the tunes of the new songs, either by humming or whistling them. Perhaps Turner's strongest point was whistling; he would whistle faint resemblances of the airs of numerous songs one after the other, and it was almost wonderful what a retentive memory he had, for he could in his way sing or recite song after song word for word without the slightest prompting. Some weeks Turner's purchases from the old song merchant amounted to as much as three pence, and as he carried all his library about with

him, as a rule his pockets were stuffed with the little tissue paper broadsides. I cannot now remember that the old hawker ever sold or tried to sell Turner any songs beyond those of a fairly interesting domestic nature, even if he carried them, but perhaps he did not. Turner had scores of songs and ballads that I have forgotten all about, but he was letter perfect in "Home, Sweet Home," "The Mistletoe hung in the Castle Hall," "The Deeds of Young Napoleon shall sting the Bonny Bunch of Roses," "Lord Bateman was a noble Lord," "Verlin down bray," "On yonder high mountain a wild fowl doth fly, and there is one amongst them that soars very high." Some of those old songs had fairly long lives fifty or sixty years ago.

My reason for thinking young Turner might have been a poet, had the fates willed it, was that he, at the time I knew him, had some little notion of rhyme. He would often add lines and rhymes to songs; in fact, I have no doubt, that in his very young days, he invented many rhymes in his rough way.

So much did Turner's love of song and ballad literature impress me that, many times in after years, when I was plunged in the turmoil of literature, and sometimes almost knee-deep in the poetic effusions of young would-be poets, I used to wonder whether my young Bloomfield had ever had a line printed, or what he was doing. For some years I felt that I ought to go and seek out my young friend

and whistling songster ; but I am afraid I knew too much about the uncertainty of literature to think I should find an actual poet in my young hero.

One day, however, more than twenty years ago, I had just left King's Cross Station, and was walking up the Gray's Inn Road, when I saw a man perched high up on a seat, driving two horses, drawing a waggon loaded with coals, and he was my young whistling friend. It so happened the horses were trotting, and I let him pass. I knew it was Turner, but I was worldly-minded enough to feel sure that he was quite as happy driving a waggon as he would have been as a disappointed rhymmer, or even a poet, and I knew he had not on his mind at that moment a semblance of the cares of the world I had, and in his position was sure never to have ; still I did look at a good many coal waggon drivers afterwards, but I never saw Turner again.

### TWO POOR BOYS.

I remember two poor boys who had been hired at St. Alban's statute fair, whose lot in life was much harder than mine. I was sure of a good meal when I got home at night ; those poor boys were miles from their home, and slept at the farm-house where they were to be slaves for one year for the sum of four shillings per week each. Bread was then very dear ; in fact, for some time in that year it was one shilling for a four-pound loaf, and then for days and days at a time all those boys had with their scant supply of bread was some very thin skimmed milk,

which was allowed them for breakfast and supper. When they were driving a plough anywhere near our old cottage they would draw water from our well, and my mother seldom let them go away without a bit of meat of some kind to eat with their bread ; but the plucky lads had souls above starvation salaries and sullen ploughmen. So they were missing one morning, and I am sure the farmer would have imprisoned them could he have found them ; but I think they were never heard of about our part of the country again. I hope they did well in after life.

#### OUR OLD HOME IN THE WOOD.

My father was a gamekeeper, and in about 1840, having been appointed keeper over some game preserves about a mile away from our village, he removed to the keeper's cottage, which was a very primitive dwelling. The fireplace was built more for the burning of logs of wood than coals. There was a brick oven in one of the chimney corners, in which my mother baked sweet home-made bread, and other homely food, even though often made of wild birds and fruits, and on Sunday a joint of some kind of fresh meat, pudding and potatoes, in large partitioned earthenware dishes. Life inside that old home was very primitive indeed, especially when the ditch at the back of the cottage overflowed, and the water took the liberty of filtering through the back wall and running out of the front door. But that was a matter my father took little

heed of, and in the winter time it was now and then rather hard, even with a big log-wood fire, to keep warm. In the mildest seasons there was no such inconvenience. In the Spring, Summer and Autumn there were scenes of wealth and grandeur outside our old cottage such as only Nature herself produces. Any author with love and power of describing sweet scenes in Nature could have made the surroundings of that old cottage a place for May Queens to journey to. In the Spring and Summer, myriads of sweet-scented wild flowers, of many glorious colours, blue and white violets, primroses, cowslips, snowdrops, wild hyacinths, wild forget-memots, daffodils, bluebells, and I know not how many other pretty wild flowers, whose names I have forgotten, bloomed there.

My father's employer was a rich Irish gentleman. His name was, I think, either Sir or plain Montague Gore. He was by no means a good shot or clever sportsman himself; he only used a single-barrelled gun, and my father used to say, blazed away at any time the fit seized him; but he had amongst his friends some excellent sportsmen, and on great shooting days there would often be some noble lords, one or more earls; in fact, his guests were most of them distinguished men. The lunch on those days was an event at our old cottage, for it was mostly served there or close by, and Mr. Gore was most particular that the food, wines, and spirits should be of the best and in profusion. I suppose it was supplied by some good caterers

in London, for I remember it came in a covered van, and was well served. If the weather were fairly fine the luncheon was served on the grass plot outside, but if very cold and wet, the noble sportsmen would crowd into our old cottage, and make themselves as comfortable as good sportsmen always can under all such circumstances.

The partridge and ground game shooting days were not such events to us at home, for as a rule the sportsmen would divide and start from different sides of the farm, and meet in the day at agreed points.

#### BATTUE SHOOTING—A MELANCHOLY DAY.

I remember a rather melancholy event that happened, and spoiled what should have been a great day's sport at pheasant shooting. It occurred during that most questionable practice called battue shooting, which consists in surrounding game in a wood, driving swarms of it into a very limited space, and then slaughtering it wholesale. One of these battues had been planned by my father and the other keepers, and they had arranged the beaters in the early part of the day, so that when the sportsmen made their last tour through the wood, the former were all to march in a line driving the game before them to the important corner, which my father felt sure was well guarded from the outside by another lot of beaters. There was one important outlet for game which my father had more than once entrusted to the village blacksmith to guard.

However, the peculiar thing was that, as the sportsmen made their way in the wood, they had poor sport, for very few winged birds or ground game tried to escape. This was commented upon in no very pleasant way by Mr. Gore and his companions, but when the fatal corner was reached there were not fifty head of game there altogether. My father was as white as a sheet, and Mr. Gore was rampant with disgust. But the difficulty was easy to solve : when they all emerged from the wood there lay the poor old blacksmith in a bad fit ; the game had rushed in shoals out of the wood at the important corner, and the hedges and fields around were swarming with pheasants, but the day was too far advanced to follow them. Of course, a good deal of the game made its way back to the woods again. But, to make sure of his friends having some good sport a week or two later, Mr. Gore sent from London the night before nearly, if not quite, five hundred live pheasants, and, of course, that was a day of slaughter.

Later in the season, when the game was not plentiful enough for Mr. Gore and his guests, he was in the habit of allowing a rather lower grade of sportsmen to shoot over the preserves, with the distinct understanding that they were not to kill hen pheasants. Two of the most noted of these sportsmen were Mr. Frank Redmond, for many years known as the genial host of the Swiss Tavern, then called the Swiss Cottage ; I seem to remember it looked like one, and I can recall the time



when the old tavern was almost in the country—now it seems to be a good way in London. Another of the sportsmen was Thomas Winter, better known as Tom Spring, the fighting man. Some sportsmen will remember that Redmond, if not a fighting man himself, was mixed up a good deal with the fraternity ; in fact, I think he was once tried for manslaughter at the Old Bailey for seconding a man who was killed in a prize fight. I have a good remembrance of Redmond's liberality, for he always gave me a shilling when I carried his ammunition and game bag for him. Master Spring's liberality never went beyond sixpence for the same service, and so neither I nor any of us boys cared much for him.

I remember a good many nights at our old cottage when my mother and we children gathered pretty closely together, when the night game poachers were in the woods, and the sharp rattling sound of their guns filled us with terror. It was not often they ventured by night into the woods over which my father and his helpers watched closely ; but one bright moonlight night he had just come from his rounds, and was having his supper, and waiting for the night men, when Bang ! Bang ! Bang ! went some guns in a big pheasants' roosting-place not many hundred yards from our old cottage. My father was on his legs in a moment, and with a thick stick, about four feet long, rushed into the wood, calling out at the same time : " You go that way, Dick ; you go this way, Tom," and shouting other



remarks to make the poachers believe there were several keepers about. However, before my father arrived they had killed some twenty pheasants, for there were traces of where about that number had fallen to the ground, and as soon as he was close upon them—he said there were seven or eight of them—they quickly made their way into the under-wood, and were soon out of sight. I think that was the only time I remember that my father showed that discretion was the better part of valour. If he had trusted himself with his gun there would doubtless have been brutal work that night, but he did not, and I do not think gamekeepers then or now carry firearms of any kind at night; in fact, had the other keepers been with him, he would have fought at any risk. No doubt the poachers' visit to my father's preserves had been well planned, some of them knowing about the time the game was unprotected.

During the time the Great Northern Railway was being made, my father had no end of trouble with the navvies, for most of them kept dogs, and most of them were poachers. He never minded tackling one or two of them, but he was foolish enough once to try and take the rabbits, ferrets, and nets away from three of them, and they knocked him insensible, and left him for dead. However, being more stunned than seriously injured, he crawled home, and in a few days was about again.

The craftiness of poachers in my young days (and I suppose they are about the same now) was often

ingenuous. When on high roads and public foot-paths they did not hold a very free hand for their game stealing; but there were rights of way through and near game preserves where poachers caused a good deal of trouble to gamekeepers, for, as a rule, they carried their unstocked guns in their pockets, and often a ferret and nets—but, doubtless, their best help was their well-trained, cunning dogs, who lurked at their heels, and so well trained to silence were they that they would, at the slightest sign from their master, chase, kill, and bring him a rabbit in less than a minute, and anyone had to be very close to see or hear what had happened. Of course, the poacher seldom used his gun unless he was fairly sure the gamekeeper was far enough off not to hear the sound, or for him to get clear away with his booty.

As a rule, in such excursions a poacher would have a bundle of wire snares in his pocket, and such expert snare-setters were most of the tribe that one of them could set a dozen snares in a very few minutes, and be gone on his way as quietly as possible, trusting to his memory to find the wire traps. These bits of blacked smoked wire are not expensive things for poachers to lose, and however expert they are in the almost fine art of snaring, they cannot plant many of them without gamekeepers finding and destroying them. I do not remember a poacher fighting for his snares; but when caught ferreting for rabbits they would as a rule fight for their ferrets and nets, and also for steel traps when they were caught trapping for hares and rabbits;

and it was still more dangerous to try for a poacher's gun. I remember my father used to say the best prize he and some other keepers took from some poachers was a large drag net, about one hundred yards wide and fifty yards long. It was one of the kind used for netting partridges in open fields in the night time.

There is an old saying that the most expert poachers make the best gamekeepers. I do not think the saying is true as a rule; my idea is that when men once take to poaching for a living, they are always poachers. But there came under my notice, about twenty years ago, an instance of a poacher turned gamekeeper that almost startled me for the moment. I could, but dare not give the man's name, because he need not be a very old man to be alive now. He was almost a terror to gamekeepers before he was twenty years of age, and I am sure I am right in saying that he had been in gaol for poaching almost a dozen times before he was twenty-five years of age. I happened to be driving in the country, and on going to a lodge gate of a large estate, the once desperate poacher opened it for me to pass. I knew him at once, and I am sure he knew me; he had grown up a well-built man, looked as clean as a new pin, and his wife, who came to the lodge door, and the children playing about, were all a credit to him. However, I wanted to be quite sure about the matter, so I called upon another gamekeeper I knew very well, and I merely said "That was so-and-so I saw" at a gate I named, and my

old friend said, "That's him right enough ; Master William has been there for years." I feel sure that many of the magistrates and landed gentry around knew him as a young dare-devil poacher, and I should think were more than glad to see him a good honest gamekeeper. I will be bound he knew all the little cunning ways of detecting poachers, from black cotton strained across paths, footprints, spiders' webs, dew beaten off the grass, and numerous other modes of detecting whether anyone had been in the woods or paths in the night or day time. But wily poachers often beat gamekeepers by avoiding the risk of all such marks and signs by walking in the underwood where possible.

#### HIS LORDSHIP OF THE HARVEST.

In the old days it was the custom to appoint a man who was termed "The Lord of the Harvest," who was a most important servant to his master, and often also a very great man in his own estimation of himself and his duties. He had as many men under his control as were required for gathering in the corn. His important duties were to judge when the corn was ripe for cutting, and dry enough for stacking or housing. He carried a horn, which he sounded at sunrise for the commencement of work, at the beginning and ending of meals, and for the ending of the day's work. Some of the farmers boarded his lordship and his men, and it was understood that the men did not begin to eat or go on eating after his lordship had left the table. He

was also consulted by the gleaners as to the time they might glean in the wheat stubbles. That was the time when gleaning wheat, if not a lawful right of the poor, was looked upon as a scriptural right that farmers seldom denied. But a time came when gleaning for stray heads of corn was of little or no profit to the poor. Mowing, reaping, and raking machines came into fashion, and they cleared the corn from the fields so well that the few stray ears left were not enough to repay the poor gleaners for their trouble.

In the days when the stubble of corn, and especially of wheat, was often left twelve or fifteen inches high, the hand rakes and drags always left good gleaning. But that was the time when wheat and other corn straw was of very small value, and the best wheat straw was often sold for sixpence for a truss of thirty-six pounds weight.

I almost think I am right in saying that there were often clauses in leases that the wheat stubble should be left a certain height as a cover for partridges and other game in the shooting season. Another reason was that at that time only the upper portion of wheat straw was used for plaiting for the best kind of straw hats and bonnets. In that case the head or heads of corn were cut off, and the straw not bruised by thrashing. In fact, I feel sure I am right in saying that in the old days the reapers left so much straw behind that that alone would be worth gleaning for in these days, when it seems that it is almost as profitable to grow

the straw as the corn. This seems poor logic, of course, because one cannot be grown without the other ; but good straw in these days seems to be worth double the sum it was in the old ones, and good English wheat less than half its former value.

#### TWO CURIOUS OLD WOOD TURNERS.

During my frequent compulsory rambles with my father in search of game on the outskirts of the farms he watched over, we often passed the end of a garden belonging to two eccentric old wood turners. They were then quite old men, and confirmed old bachelors, so much so that they seldom spoke to or looked at a woman, and when on any public path or highway, if they saw a female near them, they would get as far out of her way as possible. I seem to remember my father telling me that they had in days gone by allowed an old dame into their house now and then to clean it up for them, but after her death they did their own domestic work. When on those rounds my father was mostly in search of any game that the poachers had not caught, for that part of the game preserve was too far off to guard at all well. However, I noticed that he generally had one or a couple of rabbits to give the old wood turners, but mostly with a motive, for he always expected a good large mug of some famous perry which the turners were noted for brewing. But so careful were they of it that the gift of the rabbits did not always meet with a return.

One day when my father had made a successful perry bid, I ventured to walk into the old turners' workshop, as one of the old men said I might do so. And a strange place it was. I can remember it as well as if I were only there yesterday. I think the old turning bench was about fifteen or twenty feet long, and on it were fixed several hand lathes, most of them broken down and useless. At the back of it, on shelves and in racks, were some hundreds of all kinds of tools for turnery purposes—chisels, gouges, rasps, planes, hammers, saws, etc., and they were so covered with dirt and rust that it seemed as if they had not been used for many years. The wooden handles of some of the tools were worm-eaten and dry rotten, and it seemed as if the workshop had not been cleared of the wood, dust, shavings, and chips for ages, for under and near to the lathes the refuse was quite two feet deep. There were hundreds of curious specimens of turned wood, from handsome balustrades to small pill boxes not much larger than marbles. The most curious boxes or barrels in the waste were those made to hold about two quarts. One of the old turners told me they were intended to hold gunpowder, and that they had made large quantities of them for the Government. The tedious and expensive work of turning large and small boxes from the solid wood has long since been the exception and not the rule, but it would be worth knowing what were the old wood turners' charges per dozen or



gross for their smallest wares. It certainly seems that they did not make one box large enough to hold a few pills for less than a penny, and, doubtless, many of their fancy turned boxes cost as much as a gross of neatly-made splint wood boxes at the present time.



## CHAPTER III.

### MY FIRST LANDLADY AND EMPLOYMENT.

THOMAS AND ROBERT COOPER, HOLYOAKE,  
AND OTHERS.

I was more than fortunate in finding a dear, kind, motherly landlady at Notting Hill, for she soon set me at rest about my food for the week. I know I did not look rich, but I felt a great deal less so; and when she told me she would see about my board, and I could settle with her on Saturday, I felt at once in a good position for a fresh start in life. The only drawback in the house was that my landlady's mother was very mad on one point; she would not eat a morsel of food she thought her daughter had even looked at. She had a room to herself, purchased her own food, and actually carried it about with her in a large pocket in her apron, and the moment her daughter looked at her, or touched her when passing, she accused her of throwing poison on to it, at once flung it on to the floor or down the staircase, and demanded money to purchase a fresh supply. There were seven or eight of us in the house, and we all pretended to poison the old woman, but our pretences were no good. It was only the best friend the old

creature had in the world she accused, and, indeed, at times almost drove her daughter mad also.

#### THE JOHN STREET INSTITUTION.

My employer and I became friends at once, for he was fond of theatres and books ; he had just a tinge of what is called free thought in his mind, but he never made it obtrusive ; the fact was, he was then somewhat fond of going to the John Street Institution, not far from Tottenham Court Road, where Thomas and Robert Cooper and George Jacob Holyoake were shining lights in the eyes of many of their followers, who were, a good many of them, more free in thought than the lecturers themselves. Certainly, Robert Cooper and Holyoake were often by no means orthodox in respect to religious opinions. But undoubtedly by far the cleverest speaker of the three was Thomas Cooper, the author of "The Purgatory of Suicides." Away from his half-hearted answers and discussions about religious faith, he was extremely intellectual. I well remember he devoted some three or four Sunday evening lectures each to the lives and works of Wellington and Napoleon. I seem to remember that he considered Napoleon to have been the greater soldier of the two. Cooper indeed seemed to have mastered all that was known at that time in books about the men and their battles, and his word pictures were an intellectual treat. But the moment he was bothered with little questions by the confirmed free thought champions, he would evade them altogether, or sometimes be almost

rude in his replies. Perhaps no wonder, for one of his closest questioners was an old woman, whose mind had got into quite a mixed state. I do not think it was ever quite settled whether she was a champion of true religion or of free thought, and certainly Cooper never helped her in the matter, for in answering her as to whether he believed in God or not, his words were as nearly as possible, "Not in the sort of God you are asking about," and he went no further into the worse than foolish argument. Most of us who attended the John Street Institution were supposed to purchase "The Reasoner," a mischievous little organ of free thought. I remember I had several numbers of it, but I forget who was the editor, if his name was mentioned, nor do I remember whether Thomas Cooper was a contributor to it. But it will be remembered that he turned from the vicious path of free thought and atheistical discussions, and was content for many years before his death to use his undoubted knowledge of life and its great lessons, and to give them to his fellow creatures in a pure and honest form.

#### FERGUS O'CONNOR.

Fergus O'Connor, the noted Irish agitator and politician, was living at Notting Hill when I first went there. I remember him distinctly by his dress alone, which was very noticeable. He wore I think the old-fashioned nankeen breeches, or trousers, buckled shoes, a blue coat with brass or gilt buttons, a light vest, and a white or cream-coloured hat.

When O'Connor died he had a sort of public funeral, and the procession of different societies was of great length.

I was working at Mr. Creswick's, the famous artist's house, in The Grove, Notting Hill, on the day of the funeral, and he proposed that we should go and look at the procession. I seem to remember that several of the political societies represented came from down Whitechapel way, and what seemed to concern Mr. Creswick most was that so many of the men from the East of London were thin, and by no means strong and healthy looking. He said he supposed it was because they lived in close, unhealthy places.

Mrs. Creswick painted very sweetly. I remember one day when I was there she was painting some flowers from Nature in the garden, and they were very beautifully done. I have no remembrance whether she ever exhibited her work to the public.

Mr. Mulready, the famous artist, also lived in The Grove at the time, and with him, I think, lived a younger brother of his, who seemed also to be an artist of note. I was at Mulready's house several times, and saw both gentlemen at their easels. I may be wrong about the brotherhood. May I mention that the Creswick's and Mulreadys' homes were not of the palatial kind some of our modern painters live in in these days? In fact, they were little more than mere six-roomed cottages, with no very large gardens or grounds about them.

## MR. AND MRS. FRANK MATTHEWS.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Matthews also lived in The Grove, and I think next door to Mr. Creswick. Plenty of us old playgoers remember Mr. and Mrs. Matthews when they were quite stars in their own line of business on the stage. Even though Charles Mathews had but one "t" in his name, and Frank Matthews had two, they were often thought to be some relation to each other, but I think they were not.

Notting Hill and Shepherd's Bush were then next door to the country, beautiful and picturesque. Holland House was not bricked in. It was a country walk to Hammersmith, Acton, and Kensal Green; and it was by no means a safe journey for a solitary person late at night between Hyde Park Corner and Notting Hill Gate; for where Lancaster Gate and other mansions now stand, there was a public-house of bad repute, the disreputable Bayswater Tea Gardens and a large nursery ground. A strange kind of hat and cap thieving was carried on from the inside of the old low iron railings of Hyde Park. On dark nights the thieves would skulk down behind the fence, and when their victims were passing would have their hats or caps in a moment, and it was as a rule useless to follow them.

## MY EARLY BOOK-HUNTING AND PUBLISHING.

I was fond of reading when at home, but we had not an abundance of books; so as soon as I settled at Notting Hill, I often in the evenings made my

way to Oxford and other streets, where I could find open book shops, and in the course of a couple of years I had purchased and read a fair selection of our standard authors, and, as I shall mention in future pages, I became fairly well acquainted with the drama and the players. I am afraid I was rather more fond of the drama and works of fiction than of books of more general interest. I often saw good and interesting renderings of Shakespeare's plays at other theatres ; but certainly got my best knowledge of them from the Princess's and Sadler's Wells Theatres. I forget how many "Hamlets" I have seen from 1852 until now, but I may say a goodly number. I could have been better informed on the matter now, but I was foolish enough to lend an old copy of Shakespeare I had kept for some years, in which I marked all or most of the plays I had seen up to that time, and the number of times, and the names of the principal players ; however, I think I am right in saying I have seen twenty-one of Shakespeare's plays performed, the most of them, of course, at Sadler's Wells.

My brother Edward, who was some years younger than I, had made his way to London some months before I made my final plunge into the busy world of London life ; but his start was of a good deal better promise than mine. An uncle of ours on my mother's side was then head of the stores department of the South-Western Railway. He placed my brother in the engineers' workshops at Nine Elms, and as he was a very bright young man,

there was no reason why he should not have been in the course of time an engineer of some repute. In fact, for some months he was a most earnest worker. But just at that time he became acquainted with the then young Lionel Brough, the now noted comedian; and as young Brough's brothers, William and Robert, were at that time very popular dramatists, the two boys had many chances of going to the theatres. The consequence was that theatrical hours at night and six o'clock in the morning for work did not agree. The result was that my brother left the promise of a good career as an engineer to try his luck at the always worrying and uncertain business of literature. Still, had my poor brother been of a less excitable nature, he certainly would have made his way in the world, and more than likely as an author of some note, for he could write fairly well, and was more than well read for his years. In fact, for some year or two before we commenced business together, he had made various attempts at authorship and publishing, and I well remember he wrote a very laudatory notice of Henry Kingsley's capital novel then just published, called "Geoffrey Hamlyn," and he also highly praised a novel called "The Last of the Cavaliers," a new book at that time. Both notices appeared in *The Daily Telegraph* but I am afraid they were written for a young friend of my brother's, who was then on the staff of that paper, but not a great lover of fiction. My brother also held a small appointment in the office of



*Diogenes*, when that paper should have been nearly as successful as *Punch*, had it fallen into as good hands at the right time.

During the time of my brother's various ventures in publishing offices, I saved some little money, and in 1854 we started the business, afterwards known as Tinsley Brothers. The business was in my name only for some time, and, by a strange coincidence, that time and the next three or four years were, as I shall endeavour to show, the most profitable of any during this century for publishers of books for circulating libraries. Mr. Mudie had then introduced his surprisingly cheap guinea per annum subscription for new books. Messrs. W. H. Smith & Son were almost driven into the lending book business ; and, as I shall try to show later on, the ruinous Library Company, Limited, entered upon its precarious existence. I feel sure that W. H. Smith & Son would not have ventured into the book-lending business had Mr. Mudie complied with a request they made to him. They had at that time secured the contracts for selling books and newspapers at most of the principal railway stations in England, and in one of the contracts (that with the Great Western Railway I think) there was a special stipulation that books should be lent as well as sold from the different stalls on that line. The origin of that lending business, doubtless, came more from the officials than the general reading public ; for, as a matter of fact, they saw their way to have the loan of books without much



trouble or expense. However, W. H. Smith & Son had no desire to go into the book-lending business, and so a member of their firm waited upon Mr. Mudie, and offered him a very large subscription for the loan of a certain number of books, so that they might carry out the Great Western contract. In fact, I think a subscription of about a thousand pounds per annum was offered. At all events, if not quite that sum, it was large. But Mr. Mudie was then in the full tide of his popular guinea subscription, and he refused Smith & Son's offer, little dreaming that very soon afterwards Messrs. Smith & Son would not only be lending books on the Great Western, but on almost all the important railways in England, and, in fact, some in Scotland and Ireland.

I venture to print the names of some of the authors my brother and I published for, but his early death caused many of the ventures to be mine only :—Miss Braddon, Ouida, William Black, Thomas Hardy, W. H. Russell, LL.D., J. S. Le Fanu, Joseph Hatton, Tom Hood, Blanchard Jerrold, R. N. Carey, Justin McCarthy, Andrew Halliday, Mrs. Cashel Hoey, Walter Besant, James Rice, Lily Tinsley, Edward Maitland, the Right Honourable John Morley, Benjamin Lionel Farjeon, George Meredith, Guy Livingstone, Mrs. Henry Wood, Edmund Yates, H. Kingsley, Annie Thomas, William Gilbert, Mrs. Lynn Linton, Mrs. Riddell, Percy Fitzgerald, Rhoda Broughton, Jean Ingelow, Mrs.

Oliphant, Florence Marryat, Anthony Trollope, Mortimer Collins, Wilkie Collins, James Payn, Captain Burton, Annie Edwards, George MacDonald, B. H. Buxton, Captain Mayne Reid, William Harrison Ainsworth, Amelia Blandford Edwards, Dr. Charles Beke, George Henty, George Manville Fenn, George Augustus Sala, one small work by the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, Miss Harwood, Mrs. Molesworth; some volumes of fiction and essays by Alfred Austin, the present Poet Laureate, and a large number of works of fiction and fact by well-known authors who elected not to put their names to their works.

The above list of names of authors does not nearly represent the whole number of them and other persons of note with whom I have had friendly as well as only purely business dealings. In fact, I could, were I gifted that way, write quite a little dictionary of biography of people I have known; but I have no intention of trying to insert biographical matter in these, only meant to be rambling notes. Nor do the above mentioned names of the 'authors in any way indicate the number of works I published, which was close upon four thousand new books and new editions.

After some ventures in small volumes of essays by William Blanchard Jerrold, James Ewing Ritchie, and George Augustus Sala's graphic description of the Great Volunteer Review in Hyde Park, came our first serious venture in three-volume fiction, which was George Augustus Sala's novel, "The

Seven Sons of Mammon," one of a good many books that bears some resemblance to greater books of their kind ; for instance, the heroine of Mr. Sala's book is more than a shade of Thackeray's "Becky Sharp," but the general construction of the book contained few elements to give it long life.

Those were the days when new English fiction was the strongest and best in the world. Where is there now a Dickens, a Thackeray, a Bulwer, a Lever, a Disraeli, or even a shade of George Eliot (Miss Evans)? Those glorious authors were each of them a host in themselves ; and it would be easy to mention many other writers of fiction whose works are favourites with the reading public. Scores of what perhaps may be termed second-rate writers of fiction did good, honest, healthy work, and did not rely upon monstrosities for heroes, and the sinful morbid antics of artificial characters in the form of men and women to engross the minds of morbidly-inclined readers.

It is sad indeed to look in vain for the handsome octavos of years gone by, with good clear type and splendid illustrations, as we have them in the glorious volumes of our giants of fiction, where we can read and re-read the old artists' pictures over and over again, and never tire of their humour and pathos. John Leech's pictures have actually made Mr Surtees' weak fictions live for decades beyond their time, and we worship our Cruikshank, Phiz, Tenniel, and Leech, side by side with our Thackeray, Dickens, and Lever.

I must say I regret the passing away of the good old form of two and three volume fiction, and I certainly was sorry to see that the first real stand made against this form of fiction was against Miss Braddon's almost fiftieth novel in that form, especially as that clever lady had seemed to have gained the right to publish her books in the form she wished. But it so happened that Miss Braddon was almost the veteran of the three-volume field of fiction when the stand was made. At least, there were no giants in the field to help her to fight for her three-volume right, and I think it can hardly be said that the suppression of the old form has in any way improved English fiction, for without a doubt, that form of publishing was a safeguard against hundreds of inferior works of fiction finding themselves in anything like a standard one-volume form. As a rule, in the old days, book buyers when they saw one-volume novels at booksellers' or on railway stalls, were fairly certain that most of them were reprints of two and three volume novels that were above the average in writing and interest. But now, hundreds of inferior volumes stand shoulder to shoulder in book shops and on railway stalls, and the unversed in books are as likely to purchase a third-rate fiction as "Adam Bede." No such mistake could have happened in the old days. The remainders of small editions of inferior three-volume novels soon found their way to buttermen and box makers, and seldom had a place on bookshelves with fairly interesting books.

In fact, the number of inferior volumes of fiction in the market at the present time is quite three times as great as it was in the old days. For, I suppose, almost every novel printed is expected to pay expenses, and certainly little less than a thousand copies of each would do so, and so the book market is glutted with very poor fiction which would not have found one volume form in the old days.

I am well aware that some authors, publishers, reviewers, and, of course, lending librarians are not with me in my opinion ; and I think I know a good many of the arguments that would be brought to bear against me ; but when I am convinced that good and inferior fiction should have one common form and shape only, I will try to imagine that the splendid first editions of the noble authors who made English fiction the glory of the world were a useless expense to produce. But at present I will not imagine anything of the kind.

The fact is, when the stand was made against three-volume fiction, there were, as I have said, no giants in the field. Imagine anyone intimating to Thackeray, Dickens, Lever, Bulwer, Disraeli, or George Eliot (Miss Evans), that they must publish their new fictions at about six shillings each.

In fact, there is no sense or reason in trying to argue that great books should not have, if I may use the term, better form and dress than little ones. A book rich in talent or genius, has as much or more right to good dress as a rich man. Where is

the intellectual man or woman who is not proud to possess the glorious octavos of Thackeray, Dickens, Lever, and even some of Frank Smedley's volumes, which are little monuments of book building, as are some of Anthony Trollope's original editions? And even though the original editions of George Eliot's (Miss Evans) books are mostly in crown octavo, they are beautifully printed, in good readable types, and on good paper. There is no huddling the type and matter together, and making the pages a conglomeration of almost invisible lines hard to decipher. It must be well remembered that George Eliot published her two last great fictions in eight volumes each, or at least in eight five shilling parts, made into four volumes, at two pounds each book ; and, as all the reading world knows, the first editions of "Daniel Deronda" and "Middlemarch" are lovely specimens of English printed books. And if I may go back to the early editions of Richardson's, Fielding's, and a host of the old fictionists' books, in eight or more volumes, they are also splendid little volumes to purchase and read. Fiction is, and always was, meant more for lending than for buying, and there is no better proof of this than the fact that there are not twenty complete sets of fiction by as many different authors in one private library in a thousand in England. Those who care for or possess sets of fiction beyond those of Sir Walter Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Lever, George Eliot, Disraeli, Bulwer, and some few favourite volumes by other authors, are few and far between.

It may seem that I am trying to hold a sort of brief for Miss Braddon, as well as for the old form of fiction.

But here is a fact about the publication of "Lady Audley's Secret." It was very nearly published at first in a cheap form, without having a chance in three volumes. At the time, Miss Braddon was writing it as a serial. My business took me almost daily into most of our best London lending libraries, and from time to time I was asked if I knew anything about the book. The fact was there had at some time been some sort of an Audley family secret, and I think the novel and the old story got a bit mixed. It will also be remembered that Mr. James Payn's story, called "Lost Sir Massingberd," by accident resembled a true story of the kind. However, I felt certain "Lady Audley's Secret" was a book likely to sell, so I told my brother to try and buy it of Maxwell, whom he knew very well, and also, if possible, to purchase "Aurora Floyd," which was another of Miss Braddon's fictions then running as a serial. But we at first only agreed for "Lady Audley." In those days the all-round one volume form of fiction was not dreamed of; in fact, new one-volume fictions, except by important or popular authors, were little thought of by the press or keepers of circulating libraries, and, in fact, were often looked upon as mere slips or offshoots of complete books. The sales of such books were, as a rule, much less than those of works in three-volume form by the same authors.



“Lady Audley’s Secret” was a phenomenal success in three-volume form, so much so that, had it been published first in one-volume form, there would have been a loss of several thousand pounds; and the then fair young author might have had to toil on for some years before monetary success came to her.

Perhaps no book that was ever written ever had a more adventurous run for fortune than “Lady Audley’s Secret.” It was begun as a serial in a little publication called “Robin Goodfellow,” which had a short life, even though edited by Charles, afterwards Dr. Mackay. It was re-commenced as a serial in “The Sixpenny Magazine,” which, I think, died before the book was finished. It was announced to be published at two shillings, and a Mr. Skeet, a publisher in King William Street, Strand, advertised it in three volumes, before we gave Miss Braddon, I feel sure, a larger sum for it than she had dreamed of. After that we gave her five hundred pounds and other handsome presents, and then we had a good profit on the book; and we also did very well out of “Aurora Floyd.” We had no very great bargain in the next two books, “Eleanor’s Victory” and “John Marchmont’s Legacy,” for a very short lease of which we paid Miss Braddon close upon four thousand pounds. But, as I will try to show, we had no such chance of sales with these two books as we had with the two first. At the time we published “Lady Audley’s Secret” and “Aurora Floyd,” a great opposition had just come into operation



against Mr. Mudie's and all other circulating libraries in London and the country. A new company, called "The Library Company, Limited," had been started in Pall Mall, the promoters of which were in possession of a large capital. The management, however, was in the hands of men who had no knowledge of how to work a circulating library up into a success, and the shareholders' money was in a very little while squandered in the most deplorable manner possible. As an instance of the gross mismanagement of the business, I may mention that the Library Company started lending as many books for a half-guinea subscription as Mr. Mudie, with his great knowledge of his business, found he could only afford to circulate for double that sum. The consequences were that, although the Library Company was a good harvest for publishers during its best days, in the end it did a great deal of harm : for it led many of those who subscribed to the ordinary circulating library to believe that they had a right to borrow an almost unlimited number of new and even old works for the paltry sum of ten-and-sixpence per annum. Thus, when the Library Company came to grief, the other libraries had then no formidable opposition, against them, and the result was that at the time we published "Eleanor's Victory" and "John Marchmont's Legacy," the subscription for library books had fallen off very considerably ; in fact, the opposition that was good for trade for a time had gone.

Reviewing these facts, I hope I may say, without

seeming presumptuous, that it was a lucky day for Miss Braddon when she made arrangements with us for the publication of "Lady Audley's Secret," for, besides being willing to spend several hundreds of pounds in advertising the novel and her name, we had exceptional advantages of disposing of a large number of copies of the book. In fact, for the space of some months, it was for us a good race between Mr. Mudie and the Library Company, Limited, as to which should purchase the larger number of copies.

I was in the habit of going to Mudie's and the Library Company almost every day in the week during the rage for "Lady Audley's Secret," and it was seldom I left one or both of the houses without an order for the book.

Lionel Brough, the now well-known comedian, was engaged in our office at that time, and my brother and I made a small bet with him one morning that we should sell a certain number of copies of "Lady Audley's Secret" during the day.

As the day went on we found we had made rather a bad bet; so we got Brough to go out on some business, and during his absence hid away a number of copies of the book, and entered them in the day-book as sold. Brough paid the wager, but soon found we had sold him and not the books.

The great competition between the libraries I have mentioned above, and other circulating libraries in proportion, gave "Lady Audley's Secret" and "Aurora Floyd," and any kind of a popular

work at the time, phenomenal sales that had not been heard of before that time, nor since.

The story of "Lady Audley's Secret" is, as is well known, very melodramatic, and as soon as the work became popular, several of the dramatic pirates made dramatic versions of it, and we gained an important injunction against Mr. Lacy, the then theatrical bookseller, to restrain him from printing and publishing dramatic versions of the book. Up to that time there had been no law to prevent any compiler or writer of plays dramatising any novel that the author had not previously dramatised, and registered at Stationers' Hall in the proper way. Mr. Lacy's counsel fought the case very hard against us, and relied upon a custom which had existed up to that date ; but Vice-Chancellor Wood, the presiding judge, gave a very emphatic judgment in our favour. He remarked that the custom relied upon was a very bad one ; for if any number of compilers or dramatic authors were allowed to make printed dramatic versions of a book, the author would ultimately have little or no property in the work at all. However, his lordship said, "As the authoress had not protected the 'playing' right of her book," he would only restrain Mr. Lacy, or anyone else, from printing and publishing plays made from it. It was this verdict which we obtained against Mr. Lacy which was so much relied upon lately in the now celebrated "Little Lord Fauntleroy" action. The judge, however, in Mrs. Burnett's case went further than Vice-Chancellor Wood did for us. He

ruled that the adapter must not circulate, even for acting purposes, any matter in manuscript form taken from her book ; so that, as matters now stand for dramatic copyright, authors are a trifle better protected—though not nearly so well as they ought to be, for an author has surely as much right to his or her own brain-work as a man who builds a house or invents and makes any kind of property by his own hands, ingenuity, or industry. When anyone builds a freehold house and happens to leave the front door open, who dares walk in and say, “This house is mine?” An author writes a good dramatic story, and because he or she has not conformed to a stupid and very unjust law, wretched pirate dramatists may rob them of a right worth thousands of pounds ; and not only that, but perhaps graft on to an author’s work matter foreign to all sense, reason, and justice.

Perhaps there never was a truer saying about an author than can be said of Miss Braddon, an excellent novelist, good inventor of dramatic stories, but a poor dramatist. In fact, Miss Braddon has written, I may say, scores of strong dramatic stories and scenes, and provided the material for several capital plays, which pirate dramatists have made free use of, but, strange to say, has never written a drama with a long life in it. And what is the most strange part of the matter is that Miss Braddon in her young days worked very hard as an actress in light as well as serious dramas, and for many years has been a constant and earnest playgoer, not only

in England but abroad; in fact, she should know the stage and its possibilities from the scene dock to the first grooves. It will be a matter for regret if some day the reading world is not favoured with her own and her husband's very varied and what must be interesting experience in literary matters; for Master John Maxwell was a capital talker, and from him she must have heard much about literary and artistic London. I forget, if I ever knew, how many new serials, and even sixpenny and shilling magazines, John Maxwell started, but certainly he founded some score of them. I think "Temple Bar" was the most important of his ventures; but it is only fair to say that the long life of that magazine was due to the excellent conduct of it for many years by the late Mr. George Bentley. Another of Mr. Maxwell's seemingly most promising ventures in magazines was "The Cloister." He made a rare bid for popularity with it. He sent one or more of the early numbers to almost every rectory in England, but the response from the clergy was very poor, and "The Cloister" failed. Maxwell was fond of drawings in magazines, and if pictures had been as cheap when he and Miss Braddon started "Belgravia" as they are now it would have been quite an art production. It may sound incredible, but the pictures for "Belgravia" and other magazines often cost from two to three pounds the square inch for drawing and engraving, while thousands of pictures in modern magazines do not cost a shilling per inch, so wonderful and inexpensive

has the art of reproduction of pictures by process become. In the old wood engraving days artists often drew lovely pictures on wood blocks which were spoiled by the engravers, so that, if reproduced pictures are often flat and inartistic, they at least fairly represent the artist's meaning.

Mr. Maxwell had good reason to be proud of his wife and the fortune she made him ; but I know he often regretted he did not have a share in *The Standard* newspaper, when that now immense property was in its young and struggling days. But, O those "might have beens," and "might have had"! I might have had at least a score of properties which were not or did not seem to be worth twopence at the time, but are now worth hundreds, and some of them thousands a year ; but after all, it is a blessing we cannot see far ahead in our uncertain lives.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE LIBRARY COMPANY, LIMITED.

I venture to refer again to the Library Company, Limited, for it was a noted if not a great event in the lending book world of England. As a matter of fact, beyond Mr. Mudie getting an enormous advertisement out of his guinea book lending venture, it was very questionable whether there was ever any great profit on it, when those subscribers had a good supply of new books for their small outlay. At all events, upon the face of it, it seemed as though Mudie was making tons of money, for all the world and his wife supported him in the venture.

And so, as it was a good time for limited liability, and plenty of money was to be had from the public for any kind of stupid promises, it occurred to a *friend* of Mr. Mudie that he would start the Library Company, Limited, and offer the loan of new books for just one half the amount of Mr. Mudie's lowest charge. I have ventured to hint that, except for its good advertisement, Mr. Mudie's cheap subscription was no great profit to him.

But it required no calculation in the mind of anyone who could put two and two together to know that the Library Company, Limited, was a venture



altogether beyond the probability of success, and yet the promoters obtained for shares some two or three hundred thousand pounds. With that sum in hand, had they doubled Mr. Mudie's lowest charges and guaranteed a good supply of new books, they might have done Mr. Mudie and all the other lending libraries a good deal of harm commercially, not only for a year or two, but for a long time—that is, unless Mr. Mudie and his contemporaries had followed their example.

If the Library Company, Limited, had only offered old and out-of-date books for their half-guinea subscription, that venture would not have paid the clerks' time for entering the books in and out. But they offered the newest books, and very many of the volumes cost the company from one guinea to two and three guineas each, whereby book thieves reaped quite a harvest of plunder. They took up numerous half-guinea subscriptions at the chief office and the different branches in London and the country, and obtained volumes of three or four times the value of the subscription. In fact, by change of name and going to different branches, they robbed the company of hundreds of expensive volumes before those most concerned could see how easily the nefarious trick was worked.

Even the shareholders themselves were an expensive burden upon the company (of course, unwittingly so), since on a certain number of shares they were entitled to a loan of a number of books free of cost. In fact, that privilege, and of course



the hope of a good dividend, was the tempting bait and the main cause of the company being floated so easily ; but, as I have tried to show, a good dividend under the circumstances was never possible, and, in fact, in a very few years, the great Library Company, Limited, was a thing of the past. The saddest part of the venture was, that the hope of ten or more per cent. for their money, and the loan of new books free of charge, led scores if not hundreds of clergymen and other men and women of limited means into the Library Company folly. One of the chief promoters of the Library Company was Mr. Edgcumbe Rendell, the father of Lady Harris, the wife of the late Sir Augustus Harris. Strange to say, Mr. Rendell lost over fifty thousand pounds in the venture ; but that not always foolish man of business made a plunge in another direction, and made another fortune, which he knew how to keep. It is no great secret that Mr. Rendell was one of Augustus Harris's chief supporters in his early venture at Drury Lane Theatre. I do not claim to have been at any time in my life more honest than my neighbours, but I must say I had a good many battles of words with Mr. Rendell and those associated with him in the ruinous Library Company business ; and yet, strange to say, I never could get them to see, until it was too late, that their venture spelt ruin from the first hour they began business.

Besides ruining itself, it did a great deal of mischief in more than one direction ; and it was a

bad day for some of the old circulating libraries when the Library Company first came into the market. Before its advent, Hookham's, in Bond Street, and Booth's, in Regent Street, were good customers to publishers. But neither of them was strong enough to stand against any great opposition, even for a short time. Hookham's was turned into a small limited liability company, with Thomas Hookham at the head, but in time it collapsed, while Mr. Booth got into monetary difficulties ; and in the end Mr. Mudie purchased the remnants of both these at one time capital old libraries. Hookham's he closed altogether, and what was once Booth's became a small branch of Mudie's, in Regent Street, not far from its old quarters.

In fact, the mad Library Company venture was a disaster in lending-library London. Hookham's library was close upon a century old, and contained a fine collection of old as well as new books which were continually being added, and Booth's library was a very good one indeed.

Booth's, originally, I think, Churton's, or Booth and Churton's library, in Regent's Street, had quite an interesting history. But Hookham's, in Bond Street, should have had quite a volume of history to itself, especially as it had been in existence for many years before a large portion of the reading world made its way to New Oxford Street.

The Bond Street and other lending libraries thereabouts were not only the fashion, but excellent insti-

tutions for the newest, besides rare old books. I have not before me the date of the founding of Heber's library, but it was a capital old library when I knew it, and its founder, or the family of the Hebers, is well-known in the musical history of London. Hookham's library was, it seems, established in 1764. I knew the second Mr. Hookham, who was a hale, hearty old man in about 1860, and he showed me one or more volumes of travel he had written in his time, and after his death I published, in two handsome volumes, "A Life of Margaret of Anjou," by Mrs. Hookham, his wife, who survived him some years. The old library was then being carried on by Thomas and Henry Hookham, who were the third generation of the family, and if ever limited liability did one worse deed than another it was when the idea of it got into the heads of the Hookhams.

But it was just the ready-money opportunity London bred and born Henry Hookham was waiting for; he was by no means an old man, but had then a wife and some five or six young children, and for years he had tired of Bond Street and his business there, and was determined to emigrate. The chance of turning the grand old library into a limited company came, and he took his share of the proceeds and emigrated almost at once.

Years after Hookham's library had been killed by limited liability, I scribbled some few facts about it. My old friend Thomas Hookham did not quite agree with all I said. However, as regards the

splendid old library, with its fine old gallery and underground rooms full of books that are, many of them, now almost priceless, I am glad to let Mr. Thomas Hookham tell its history. In his letter to me he says:—

“The facts of the case were as follows. Our library was established by my grandfather in 1764. According to the obituary notice in the old ‘Monthly Magazine’ of 1819, he was the originator of that kind of business, or, at any rate, his library was the <sup>first</sup> oldest that continued in existence. In 1792 it was finally settled at 15, Old Bond Street, and there, during the two first decades of this century, its large accumulation of English, French, and Italian literature attracted to it the patronage of the great people of that day, many of whom personally frequented the assembly rooms attached to it on the first floor. It was not until 1842, nearly eighty years after, that Mudie started in King Street, Holborn, and invented a scale of terms of subscription, cutting so much lower than he need have done, that the result was, thanks to persistent advertising, the making of his name, but the ruin of many lending libraries in London and the country, and the surrender to the public at large of almost all that made the library business worth doing. In 1848 he removed to the present premises in New Oxford Street, and gained a more extensive and firmer hold upon the public with his new terms. Still, all the principal librarians to the west of him declined to give up what they thought was no more than their

legitimate or fair mode of trade ; and so matters remained until 1854, when, finding Mr. Ralph Bernal and so many others willing to extend their carriage drive from Eaton Square to New Oxford Street for the sake of saving on their library subscription, we were the first to alter our terms to a competing scale. But it was too late. There is no denying that the long delay had been very damaging, and the new scale of terms exercised a continuously prejudicial effect upon our position. Mudie's establishment then became a leviathan ; and, to add to the difficulties of the situation, Smith's was started shortly afterwards, as you so well know, and, with a similar scale of terms, assisted by his capital, it soon became another vast institution. The Library Company (Pall Mall) to which you so largely advert, soon after rushed into the arena, and had it been guided by wisdom and experience of the trade, would have made a third leviathan, instead of dying almost a natural death.

But against all three we were still strong enough to hold our own, in a modest way, and for any time, just as Cawthorn, and Mrs. Westerton, and Day, and Hale have done. Why not ? We had already long been accustoming ourselves to these changes in library business. We had, besides, the profits on our opera and theatre department to assist us over that trouble ; and I can, in perfect good faith, assure you that we were not going to fail or succumb—not we. Our change came about in this way. My brother had a family of five children, and had

besides a hankering to emigrate, thinking he would gain for them a better future far away, and was desirous himself of a more active kind of life. Whether he would not have done as well here had he remained may be a question ; but, after twenty-three years in New Zealand, they are all doing very well there. I looked about me for the means, on the part of my father and myself, to buy his share or pay him out. Our family lawyer in those days, to whom I went, ought to have managed it for me ; but both he and two other friends to whom I applied were rather supine, and I confess I was dilatory myself.

Those were the early great days of companies, and some one introduced my brother to a City firm of lawyers, who were adepts at that kind of work. He was pleased with the idea, and pushed it ; but I was at first not at all disposed to sell absolutely a concern which had then been just one hundred years in our family, and my father was naturally still less so. The superior price to be obtained in this way, however, eventually overcame all our scruples, and the late Robert Bell, who was a personal friend of the lawyer, went to work upon the prospectus.

You may be right, comparatively, in calling it a small liability company ; but I cannot help thinking that nearly £25,000 should, with judgment and knowledge of the business, have been enough backing to have enabled the proprietors to cultivate successfully a book lending and selling business in the face of all opposition.

You next say that "it soon collapsed." Indeed ! It might have collapsed at the end of eighteen months if the gentlemen of the board, who knew nothing whatever of the business, had been permitted to have their way ; for after extravagantly absorbing £7 10s. of the £10 shares, and leaving besides a large debt which necessitated the calling up of ten shillings more, they invoked a general meeting at the end of that time, and proposed to wind up. I dissented, and pointed out retrenchments that could even then enable us to carry on, and was appointed general manager under a new board of directors ; and I did carry it on for six years from that time, making a total of seven years and a half that the English and Foreign Library Company had existed. The Pall Mall Library Company did not live nearly so long, though it had, I believe, a much larger capital.

When we did really collapse—in the month of September, 1871—£1 of the original capital still remained to be called up. The directors chose to sell to Mr. Mudie the subscribers and the books actually in their possession, while the bulk of the stock of the library passed into the hands of the liquidator, to be sold piecemeal, and about as injudiciously as might have been expected. But it was an utter misconception to state that Mudie "closed the library altogether," since our lease expired in the following January ; the fact being that all the board had to sell, or Mr. Mudie to purchase, was a period of four months, after which the premises



were occupied by a tea and coffee merchant, and such of the subscribers to Hookham's as were satisfied with the new arrangement became merged in the *clientèle* of Mudie's. The St. George's Hospital, to which the property belongs, had the only power to close, and the Board of Governors exercised it by disposing of the new lease to a stranger as the highest bidder, after having been satisfied to renew the lease four times previously to my father and grandfather.

I ought to have bought the old library back again myself when it was proposed at last to go into liquidation. I could have had it cheaply; and if I could have induced the publishers, and particularly the publishers of novels, whose interest it was specially to keep the concern going, to efficiently aid me, it would not have become defunct. But for various reasons there was much apathy exhibited; and only about three (I think you were one of them) kindly offered to support me, and to an insufficient extent. I was sick of it; but that was another great mistake I made. And still another was when the Hospital offered to me personally a new lease of the premises at £425 per annum. I hesitated, and they put the house into Rushworth's hands, and the new tenant has had to pay £550 per annum ever since.

Before quite concluding, I see you make mention of Mr. Wingrove Cooke, first editor of the "Saturday Review." I should like to say that I knew him very well. We were the publishers



of the "New Quarterly Review" for him, Mr. Hans Busk, and Sir George Bowyer. It lasted for five years or so, between 1854-9, but G. Wingrove Cooke was the editor and genius of it. You know he had been before then *The Times* correspondent in North Africa, and then in China, and republished both these accounts in volumes. He was also the author of "Memoirs of Bolingbroke" (Bentley), two vols.; "History of Party," three thick vols.; besides other clever standard books. He was a big man, and died suddenly and rather early from the bursting of a blood-vessel as he was dressing on one hot summer morning, perhaps about twenty-five years ago. I must say I rather liked him.

Always yours very truly, T. HOOKHAM.

Mr. Hookham's letter seems to show that he could have written a most interesting and substantial history of their old family library—at least, the little touches of memory he has put into his letter seem to denote as much; for there were no more interesting resorts of the brightest and best society than the old lending libraries, and any librarian, without being at all a prig, could have noted many good things said and done. If I am not mistaken, Leigh Hunt speaks very highly of Hookham's library in his charming book called "The Old Court Suburb." Strange to say, Mr. Thomas Hookham's craze for authorship was to write a life of Kossuth, on which I think he spent some time, but I am afraid the work is still in manuscript form.

At about the time I am trying to scribble about almost all the old lending librarians were most interesting men, and many of them had spent the best part of their lives behind their own counters. Mr. Hutt, of Cawthorn & Hutt's, Charing Cross, was an excellent man of business, who did not let limited liability interfere with his good old business in any way, but kept to his well-paying terms for the loan of books ; and I am told that the business is still in the family, as good as it ever was. Mr. Burridge, Mr. Mitchell's librarian, was quite a curious man in his way. The post he held could not have been of much value to him, but he was almost a rich man, and, no doubt, liked being in Bond Street better than an idle life. Mr. Lacon, and at that time young Mr. Ollier, the librarians at Heber's, were both most interesting men. So was Mr. Bubb and Charles Westerton ; almost all the lending librarians were also agents for the theatres, and consequently interested playgoers, and we often compared notes about new plays, actors, and singers. I well remember being in Bond Street the morning after Madame Patti's first appearance, and Henry Hookham made no doubt about her becoming as great as Jenny Lind, saying that with health and good management Madame Patti would earn more money than Jenny Lind—a prophecy more than fulfilled, I think. Mr. Hookham should have stayed in Bond Street, and backed his opinion by buying seats for Patti's singing, and he would have made a fortune.

There was a daring young librarian not far from Mitchell's, in Bond Street, who seemed to have no end of devilment in him, and now and then played curious pranks with subscribers. I remember when the unfortunate gambling Marquis of Hastings died, the Duchess sent for a novel to read, and he sent her Miss Braddon's "Run to Earth;" also when there was a foolish report that Lady Di Beauclerc had written a book, called "Milk for Babes," which was a good deal enquired for, the young scamp referred them to a librarian whose name readily lent itself to a foolish joke.

#### THE RIGHT HON. JOHN MORLEY.

The future biographers of the Right Honourable John Morley, the celebrated statesman, may like to know that Mr. Morley's first effort in book form was a volume of essays reprinted from "The Saturday Review," entitled "Modern Characteristics," published by Tinsley Brothers in 1865. At that time Mr. Morley was a constant contributor of miscellaneous articles, and a reviewer for "The Saturday Review." He also at that time read and judged several manuscripts for us, and we paid him a good sum of money to read and suggest to Mr. John Heneage Jesse revisions in the last proofs of his "Life and Reign of King George the Third." I say "suggest," because Mr. Jesse was a most earnest and careful author with proofs, who would even travel miles and take any amount of trouble or time to be accurate in facts and dates; in fact, after Mr. Jesse

had been some two or three years over only a portion of the proofs of his book, we suggested he should let Mr. Morley help him in the matter. Rather to our surprise, he fell in with our view at once, and after that the book went merrily through the press. For Mr. Jesse had grown old and very fidgety, and had often kept proofs for weeks for some small verifications ; but Mr. Morley had any amount of energy at the time, and being full of reading knowledge, would and did often satisfy Mr. Jesse about a dozen facts in less than as many hours. In fact, it was certain that but for Mr. Morley's valuable and learned aid, Mr. Jesse's book might have been almost years longer going through the press than it was.

Mr. Jesse assured me that, before I saw the MS. of his work, he had been over twenty years compiling it. During that time he had written and published several other books, and while he had his " Life of King George " in hand, an abundance of matter had been written and published about the King and the period of his long reign, containing numerous versions of stories and facts. Jesse was often vexed, perplexed and puzzled, in his anxiety to be as nearly right as he could be. Of course, as he often said, he could have printed all the hearsay matter and rumours about the King, and left the reading world to judge for itself ; but he was too conscientious as an author to do so. Besides, had he done so, his book would have filled nearer nine volumes than three.

The cost for author's corrections in the production of Jesse's "Life and Reign of King George" was, I think, a curiosity in a publisher's accounts. They amounted to over two hundred and fifty pounds. The sum seems out of all reason, but he had numerous proofs and revises of some of the sheets, and scores of the pages were re-set two or three times over. Even then the book was a commercial success, so the question of charging Mr. Jesse with a portion of the cost of corrections was not, I think, raised in any way.

Reverting again to Mr. John Morley, he next became editor of *The Morning Star* soon after Mr. Justin McCarthy resigned the editorial chair; but I am quite sure Mr. Morley was not more comfortable in *The Star* office than Mr. McCarthy had been, because, for political and other reasons, the paper had to be run on special lines, which to some extent fettered the independent pens of both Mr. McCarthy and Mr. Morley.

During the time Mr. John Heneage Jesse was hunting up materials for his "Life of King George the Third," he got a good deal interested in the mysterious Hannah Lightfoot business. I think I am right in saying that the almost sudden disappearance of Hannah Lightfoot was not looked upon as one of the brightest pages in George the Third's history. At all events Mr. Jesse late in life was, for a long time, hardly doing anything else in literature but trying to hunt up facts about the life of Miss Lightfoot, but I feel sure he found no

trace of how the lady ended her days. Still, he did collect a quantity of interesting material, and had he been a young, instead of an old man, it is possible he would have published a work that might have thrown more light upon the dark mystery it was at that time, if indeed it is not so now.

I remember Mr. Jesse came into my office one day, quite excited at having just purchased, at a general shop in Long Acre, a supposed portrait, painted in oils, of Hannah Lightfoot. But what became of the material or the portrait Mr. Jesse had I never knew. He lived in The Albany at the time, and if his not large but curious collection of books and manuscripts are in existence in any sort of complete form, they should be of considerable value at the present time.

“GUY LIVINGSTONE.”

Captain Lawrence—or, as we knew him best, G. A. Lawrence—the author of “Guy Livingstone,” “Sword and Gown,” and several other novels, mostly of the same kind, but few of them such powerful stories as “Guy Livingstone,” or as daring in construction as “Sword and Gown,” was a man of very unsettled disposition and a great gambler.

We did not publish the original editions of his first three novels—“Guy Livingstone,” “Sword and Gown,” and “Barren Honour”—but we purchased the copyright of those works from his first publishers, Messrs. Parkers, Son, and Bourne, when that capital publishing business in the Strand was being broken up and sold, because the Parkers—

father and son, or nephew—had both died within a short time of each other, and Mr. Bourne, being well on in years, would not carry on the business by himself; and the Parker family, or the executors, decided to dispose of the stock and copyrights, and close the place as a publishing house.

Messrs. Longman, Green, and Longman purchased a large portion of the stock and copyrights.

Messrs. Macmillan also took over to publish on commission, or purchased, many of the copyrights and stock of some excellent authors, including Miss Yonge, the authoress of "The Heir of Redclyffe," Charles Kingsley, and others.

Lawrence was, as I have said, a great gambler, and, like many gamblers, a very honourable man; for, although he had often a good portion of the thousand pounds in advance that I used to pay him for each of his new books, he never failed to complete any contract he made with me.

I remember one day after my brother's death he called at my office and told me he was going to Homburg, or one of the gaming places abroad, and must have some money. We at once agreed about a new book, and I advanced him five hundred pounds on account of it.

In less than a week from the time he left my office, I received a letter from him, asking me to forward him some more money to pay his expenses back to England, for he had lost the whole of the five hundred I had advanced him.

In a few days he was back home, and went to



work on a new novel with as much courage as if he had not had a shilling of the money beforehand.

Lawrence once, and I think only once, tried his hand as a war correspondent.

The proprietors of *The Daily Telegraph* engaged him to go to South America during the war between the North and South, and all of us who knew of the engagement quite thought that the author of "Guy Livingstone," "Sword and Gown," &c., would send home some good work from the South, and, indeed, do some really excellent work for *The Daily Telegraph*. But he did nothing of any importance, and I am afraid the proprietors of the above newspaper spent rather a large sum of money for very little return.

After his return, Lawrence wrote a book for us called "Border and Bastille"; but the extremely one-sided nature of the work hindered it from being as popular as it should have been, coming from so able a writer.

The following lines from "Border and Bastille" will give the reader some idea of the nature of the book, and the curious belief of the author in the right of the South against the North:—

"It may be that darker days are in store for the South than she has ever yet known; it may be that she will only attain her object at the cost of utter commercial ruin; it may be that the charity of the European Powers is exhausted in Poland, and that neither pity nor shame will induce them to break a thankless neutrality here; but, in the face



of all barely probable contingencies, I doubt no more of the ultimate result than I doubt of the performance in His own season of the justice of God."

#### OUIDA.

Late in the year 1863 we purchased for fifty pounds the right to publish in three-volume form Ouida's (Miss Louise de la Ramée's) (at least I think it was) first novel, which had appeared in the "New Monthly Magazine" under the title of "Granville de Vigne." But we, with the author's consent, changed the title to "Held in Bondage," the name by which the novel is now known.

I have very little hesitation in saying that, had we chosen to have driven a hard bargain with the young authoress, we could have had the copyright of the book included for the sum we paid her for the three-volume right.

Ouida was introduced to us by a Mr. Marsh, who was at the time one of the principal managers for Chapman and Hall, publishers, to whom the book had, no doubt, been offered. Mr. Frederick Chapman had not at the time much belief in Ouida's works; but he found out later on that there was plenty of money to be made out of the little lady's novels, although he very unwillingly consented to publish her second book.

I was very certain in my own mind at the time—or, at least, as certain as any publisher can be in such uncertain matters—that Ouida would make a name as a novelist; and, in the absence of my

brother, I purchased her second novel for the same sum and on the same terms as we had published "Held in Bondage." My action in the matter led to a rather disagreeable dispute between my brother and myself, and rather than have a book in our list which might cause unpleasantness between us, I asked Mr. Marsh, Ouida's agent, to let me off my bargain. I had a good deal of trouble in getting him to do so, and at one time during the negotiations law was talked of to enforce me to take the book on the terms agreed upon between us.

However, the matter was settled amicably at last, and Chapman and Hall agreed to publish the book on, I think, sharing terms. Chapman and Hall made a large sum of money out of Ouida's early fictions.

In "Held in Bondage" there is a description of a man saving a dog from being drowned. My brother said he would not have it so, but would alter it to the dog saving the man.

This alteration of the text made the author's meaning wrong. At all events, the lady, I have no doubt, knew what she meant, and, naturally, would have her own way in the matter.

My brother would never acknowledge the folly of his interference about the dog, nor his worse than folly in refusing Ouida's second novel.

No doubt, some of my brother Edward's feeling against Ouida's work was increased because he was a great friend and admirer of G. A. Lawrence, of whose "Guy Livingstone" he was of opinion

Ouida's earliest work was but a poor imitation. He was supported, too, in his opinion at the time by some members of the Press.

Perhaps Lord Strangford's savage attack upon some of Ouida's earliest novels in *The Pall Mall Gazette* gave the lady more notoriety than she gained from any other notice, good or bad, of her work.

*The Pall Mall Gazette* at that time was a great power in the Fourth Estate. There was hardly a good house, club, or institution in the three kingdoms where it was not seen and read; and the remarkable review of Ouida mentioned above, even though it was of the most scathing kind, brought her many thousands of readers at once.

I have not read a novel by Ouida for many years past, and have therefore no knowledge of how the lady has kept her many thousands of readers; but I am quite willing to believe there must be a great deal of good in her work, even though there are some blemishes of taste.

Reference is made above to a scene in which a dog is introduced. The partiality Ouida had for these animals is well known. Indeed, her thoughtful kindness and consideration for all animals is one of her most charming attributes. In most of her novels I understand a dog figures, notably in the novel of "Idalia." The dog there is a veritable portrait of one of her own.

Many of my readers will remember Ouida's characteristic letter in the papers when Sir Charles Warren's order to muzzle all dogs was in force. As

she protested against muzzling dogs, the incident last mentioned was referred to in a letter by another correspondent, who was an advocate for muzzling them.

It is often wondered by readers of her novels how it is that she obtains such a masculine grasp of character, certainly exaggerated, but with a substratum of truth.

I am told that occasionally she used to invite young officers of the Guards, and young gentlemen of a sporting tendency, to dine with her and her mother. After dinner, when they lighted up their weeds and pipes, she would say, "Now, gentlemen, suppose my mother and myself are out of the room. Seat yourselves ; smoke and drink as if you were at the club ; talk as if you were in the smoking-room there ; never think about us." And they did so. Let her readers judge as to whether this is likely to have been the case or not.

All I know is that I have seen the *menu* of a dinner for a number of persons, and at the back of the card, in Ouida's bold handwriting, is written thus :—

*On  
est prié  
d'attendre  
et  
de fumer.*

## CHAPTER V.

### JOSEPH HATTON, THE NOVELIST.

I am afraid it is quite thirty years ago since Mr. Joseph Hatton sent his first novel called "Bitter Sweets" to us to publish. At that time he was editor and part-proprietor of an old Worcester journal; but he had no desire for life in a country town, so made his home in London, and set earnestly to work to make a name as a novelist, with journalistic work combined; and I am sure I may say he has succeeded in both professions. In my time as a publisher I never met a more energetic or reliable author than Mr. Hatton. It would be unfair to say that he ever scrambled over another author's head for special literary work or place. But I think I may say that he has seldom lost a commission for literary work at all in his way for the lack of asking for it. In fact, for some years, so great was his energy, that he was as likely to be found in any part of America as in England; but wherever he was, it was quite certain that his busy pen was at work, and I am sure I may say for some profit. It was no bad sign of Mr. Hatton's energy and ability when both Mr. Irving and Mr. Toole engaged him to do literary work for them; for it seems pretty certain that Hatton's ability and energy has given

him good influence on journalism on this and the other side of the Atlantic. I must say I do not think Mr. Hatton's "Cigarette Papers" in *The People* are as a rule as bright or as readable as Sala's "Notes of the Week" used to be in *The Illustrated London News*; for though some of Sala's gossip was at times tiresome, there have been few writers who could gossip as well and brightly as he could at his best. Certainly that brilliant scholar and novelist, James Payn, never got himself down to Sala's gift of making small things interesting in *The Illustrated London News*; in fact, Sala, when in some of his "Mrs. Glass" moods, almost persuaded some people that they lived to eat, but always kept the fact in mind that it was better to eat to live.

#### FOUR NOTED NATURALISTS.

Four of the most noted naturalists of my early publishing time were Mr. Frank Buckland, Mr. Francis Francis, Mr. Edward Lee, and Mr. J. B. Tegetmeier. Mr. Buckland and Mr. Lee have been dead many years. I remember years ago I published a rather good work of fiction for Mr. Francis, but I think I had no other business dealings with him. I only knew Mr. Edward Lee as a dear and genial friend, and when at Margate years ago, I spent a good many pleasant hours with him in his interesting home on the Fort at Margate.

I mention Mr. Tegetmeier as a naturalist, but all the world knows that the always interesting, learned, and genial man is and has been, I had almost said

for ages, at least for several decades, one of the best judges of pigeons, poultry, and other feathered tribes, and bees, in the world.

Dear old Teg, as we always called him, had years ago one craze, and would then actually go out of his way to get evidence against policemen and the police force in general, and would not bear the fact in mind that the occupation and pay of policemen does not even suggest that they should all be well-bred and polite gentlemen. But I hope my old friend has long since recognised the fact that, even though he did find some black sheep in the force, they are generally the keepers, if not the makers, of a good deal of our best civilization.

A good proof of Tegetmeier's knowledge and ability many years ago was the fact that Mr. Darwin often consulted him when writing his books on the origin of different species, and, if I may so term it, his science of creation. In fact, at one time, Tegetmeier gave Mr. Darwin so much valuable information that some of us thought that he would have given him prominent mention in at least one of his books.

#### BUCKLAND'S BOOKS.

I published two books on fish hatching for Frank Buckland, one a little volume called "Salmon and Trout Hatching," and the other "Fish Hatching." Both of the works are scarce now, and perhaps some of the matter in them is out of date, for I suppose the appliances for fish hatching have improved this last twenty-five or thirty years. Still, there is good matter in the volumes for naturalists



to read. But even though Mr. Buckland was a naturalist of the most practical and truthful kind, he was equally fond of the romantic side of his work. His "Curiosities of Natural History," published by Mr. Bentley, has had an enormous sale, so that there must be a large community of readers who are fond of the light and easy reading side of natural history. I remember Mr. Buckland coming to my office over thirty years ago, wearing a pair of boots that quite cased in his legs. He was even then wet quite up to his waist, and he told me he had been coaching a large salmon some three miles up the edge of a river with a kind of rein through its mouth and gills, to place it in another river. He said it was a very tedious task, but he had accomplished his desire. In fact, Mr. Buckland never seemed more happy than when studying the finny tribes, whether in their native dwellings or in tanks. I remember he was very anxious to publish a rather large work on the cultivation or breeding of oysters, and I think he wanted to include in the volume some account of the habits of other shell fish; but I am afraid I was foolish enough not to agree to his terms, and very likely spent my money on a book of fiction that has been dead and buried this many a year. But that, as they say on the stage, is an aside—in any case not a pleasant memory. I forget how Mr. Buckland lost his health, but I should not be surprised by his being too fond of trying to live where fish most abound. I remember he was what may almost be



termed a Bohemian naturalist. He was a splendid talker and excellent company ; in fact, he seemed when I knew him to be as strong as a lion. I often regretted I did not accept his repeated invitations to see his collection of live and stuffed animals at his house near Regent's Park. I believe it was quite a curiosity shop, for he had little fear of or objection to reptiles, monkeys, and many kinds of animals that every person is not fond of.

The last time I saw poor, dear, humorous Buckland was on The Jetty at Margate. I was with a merry party of friends, when I saw not far from me a man seated in a Bath chair, looking old and very ill, and I soon discovered it was Buckland, who, when I had last seen him, had been in the best of health. I had some conversation with him, but there was no mistaking the road he was going, and I heard soon afterwards that he had passed away—all too soon for his numerous admirers, who loved him and all he said and wrote.

#### FELIX WHITEHURST.

Felix Whitehurst, the correspondent for *The Daily Telegraph* in Paris during part of the reign of Napoleon the Third, received enormous literary assistance from his wife.

Mrs. Whitehurst was received at the French Court, and into a good deal of the best society of that eventful period ; and yet no one who ever saw or was acquainted with the quiet, unpretending lady, unless they knew it, would have suspected her of being a close observer of men, women, and fashions,

and of having no inconsiderable knowledge of politics.

Whitehurst could always depend upon his wife for the daily article, if he himself could not write it or make it up, especially for the Court gossip and fashions, which was often a large portion of the press correspondence to *The Daily Telegraph* at that time.

I published two books by Whitehurst after his death. The first, called "Court and Social Life in France during the Reign of Napoleon the Third," was a selection of articles from those contributed to *The Daily Telegraph*. The second book was Whitehurst's "Private Diary during the Siege of Paris."

The last-named is, I think, one of the best accounts of the miseries and privations of the people shut up in that, at that time, unfortunate city.

The Diary did not sell at all well. The book of social gossip on the contrary sold remarkably well.

*The Times* made a peculiar mistake about the "Social Life" book.

It was reviewed in that paper twice within a few weeks—not a continuation of one review, but two distinct notices. The first review was not very good, but the second was very good indeed.

I think the same kind of mistake has not occurred in *The Times* more than twice or three times in my recollection.

A peculiar mistake of a somewhat similar nature happened, I think, to *The Daily Telegraph*. A whole page of police and other news was by accident

repeated the next day after its first appearance, and I do not think the editor or proprietor had one letter or complaint about the repetition.

#### THE MYSTERY OF AUTHORSHIP.

Any mystery about the authorship of a book has, strange to say, in almost all cases given some one or more unprincipled persons the chance of claiming the same, and of gaining notoriety for a time without the slightest right to it.

The case of the man who claimed to be the author of "Adam Bede," and did or would have had his name as author engraved on his tombstone, was a notorious example of the kind of mean and unprincipled person used to wearing borrowed plumes. In another case, almost scores of gentlemen were pointed out as the author of that famous book "Ecce Homo," and many of them had not the courage to deny the pleasing (to them) accusation ; in fact, more than one of them gained fame, and kept it, until the truth became known.

A peculiar instance of not denying, if not really claiming, the authorship of a book was that of Mr. Robinson, the father of the author of the novel called "Whitefriars," and many other novels of the same historical kind. Miss Robinson, I think, wrote the novel without the knowledge of her father.

Robinson was a seller of old books in or near Holborn, and during her father's absence at book auctions, Miss Robinson took his place and wrote ; and handed the complete book to him, much to his surprise.

Strange to say, Robinson for some years made a sort of mystery of the authorship, and almost, if not quite, led people to believe that he himself was the author.

Perhaps it is too much to say he claimed the authorship ; but certainly for a long time he kept his child out of the proud position she had won as an authoress, by not giving her name out as the author in an unbiassed way to the world.

Andrew Halliday wrote an amusing essay in, I think, "Household Words," called "The Author of Blue Blazes," dealing with Mr. Robinson's peculiar treatment of his daughter.

MRS. RIDDELL'S "GEORGE GEITH, OF FEN COURT."

Late in the year 1864 there came to our office in Catherine Street a very charming young Irish lady, who introduced herself as Mrs. J. H. Riddell, then writing under the name of F. G. Trafford, and author of two capital novels, one called "Too Much Alone," and the other "City and Suburb."

Those two books, and another called "The World in the Church," had been brought out by Mr. Skeet, who was then a publisher in King William Street, Strand.

But Mr. Skeet was getting rather old in his business, and was also more a seller of old books than a publisher of new ones, and it transpired, in the course of our conversation with Mrs. Riddell, that he (Mr. Skeet) was not willing to give nearly so

much money for her new novel as she thought she ought to get for it. The fact was, Skeet had not printed very large editions of either "Too Much Alone" or "City and Suburb," and I think I am right in saying that the payment to Mrs. Riddell had been made according to the copies sold.

At all events, the result of Mrs. Riddell's visit to our office was, I am sure, a surprise indeed to her, and also to Mr. Skeet ; for within a couple of hours after the lady introduced herself to us, she left us with a large cheque on account, and an agreement for the sum of eight hundred pounds for a new novel, to be called "George Geith, of Fen Court."

I am sure Mrs. Riddell never dreamed of such an agreement when she started to come and see us ; and Mr. Skeet told me afterwards that we should never get our money back on the book. However, "George Geith" was an excellent novel, and we had no reason to repent of our bargain, although we had no doubt given the very clever lady quite five times as much money as she had received for any work up to that time.

Mrs. Riddell had also published one or two novels with Mr. Newby, an old publisher of Welbeck Street, and perhaps one or more with Mr. Skeet, before she took the name of F. G. Trafford, and made her name as a novelist by writing "Too Much Alone" and "City and Suburb."

She also wrote a very good novel called "The Moors and Fens." The peculiar thing about the production of the novel was that, at the time,

Mrs. Riddell told me, she had not seen the lowlands of England, which she so well described in the novel.

Mrs. Riddell used to tell a rather amusing tale about herself. When she first came to London she had no knowledge of the kind of publisher to whom to offer a book of fiction, and from her want of knowledge on the subject she actually sent the manuscript of one of her earliest novels to one of our medical book publishers.

A rather curious incident happened one day in our office about a title for a new novel Mrs. Riddell had agreed to write for us, but which, before being published in three-volume form, was to be printed as a serial in "Once a Week," then edited by Mr. Walford, author of "The History of County Families" and many other interesting books.

We had asked Mrs. Riddell to meet Mr. Walford at our office to talk over the plot and title of the new novel. Everything concerning the book was agreed upon satisfactorily, except the title. Neither Mrs. Riddell nor any of us could think of a name that would at all well suit the story; but, after a good deal of talk and a good many suggestions, Mrs. Riddell remarked, "I am not very particular about the name of the book, so long as it gives some notion of a 'Race for Wealth.'"

There was the title! It had come by accident, as many other good titles have come to authors.

Mrs. Riddell has written a large number of books since we published "George Geith," many of them of great ability.

I was delighted to hear that Mrs. Riddell obtained a literary pension, for few authors had done more honest and better writing than may be found in, at least, a great many of her fictions. But the lady herself did not, I am sure, put forth some of the statements that were in the papers about her having had a large family to bring up. As a matter of fact, the charming lady was never blest with any children. And the statement that she never received more than two or three hundred pounds for a work of fiction was by no means a fact. We, as I have said, paid her eight hundred pounds for "George Geith," and close upon that sum for several other novels; in fact, I never paid her less than four hundred pounds for any original novel I had from her.

#### AN INTERESTING SPECULATION NIPPED IN THE BUD.

Some years ago I was asked by Mr. James Willing, senior, the well-known advertiser, to publish for him a new monthly periodical, to be called "England in the Nineteenth Century." I agreed to manage the printing, paper, binding, and disposing of copies of the work.

George Augustus Sala was appointed editor, with unlimited power to obtain the best literary and artistic matter in the market for such a publication.

The title of the work hardly suggested that it was meant to be a gigantic advertising scheme for the benefit of Mr. Willing; but that was, in fact, what it was to be. Both letterpress and woodcuts at times were to advertise something or somebody if possible;



but although in both cases the advertisements were to be well seen, they were never in any way to be obtrusive.

Mr. Sala engaged a large staff of our best journalists and writers for periodicals, and artists, to contribute to the work—but the shop, or advertisement part of the business, was not to be used in any way to the detriment of authorship or artistic pictures.

An elegant wrapper was designed, engraved, and printed. The letterpress and the pictures for the first number were also printed. Four capital portraits—representing a peer, a peasant, a duchess, and a dressmaker—faced the introduction, written by Sala in his best vein. A full-page wood engraving of a crowded scene at the Horticultural Gardens, South Kensington—with letterpress by J. C. Parkinson; a paper on “Yachting,” by Godfrey Turner; a well-engraved double-page woodcut of Regent Street in the season, with some portraits of well-known persons, besides sandwich men carrying boards advertising the “Christy Minstrels” at St. James’s Hall; with a rather prominent omnibus having “Willing & Co.” in large letters on the side, and a capital description of Regent Street, by the Editor; an article on Seven Dials, by George Henty; and a full-page engraving of the Lobby of the House of Commons, with numerous portraits of various members of Parliament at the time, with letterpress by Edward Dicey, made up the greater portion of the never published “England in the Nineteenth Century.”

But the most substantial matter for that or any other periodical was not to hand—namely, a good sheet of advertisements. Such a work should have had quite three hundred and fifty pounds' worth of advertisements in each number; whereas, with several good canvassers, and any amount of energy displayed, but a poor show of them came to hand. So no doubt Mr. Willing saw that the venture did not look promising; and, without the least hesitation, he ordered the finishing of the preparations for the publication of No. 1 of "England in the Nineteenth Century" there and then to be stopped, and all accounts to be paid up at once.

Mr. Willing did not give any reason for the step he had taken; but I had no doubt that he had seen enough to convince him that such a venture was no good without plenty of advertisements, and these, as I have said, were not forthcoming.

The uninitiated may wonder at my laying so much stress upon the importance of advertisements for a work of this kind. The fact is, the monetary success of any daily paper, or weekly, or monthly, or quarterly magazine, depends to a great extent upon the number of advertisements it contains. For example, the advertisement sheets of the "Quarterly" and "Edinburgh Reviews," and of all our best established publications, are the mainstay of the work, and often produce a very large income to the proprietors.

Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, in his very interesting book, called "The Recreations of a Literary Man," gives

a very graphic account of Mr. Willing's "England in the Nineteenth Century" venture. He says:—

"I may add one of the most amusing, original, literary incidents of the generation, which was the foundation of that great enterprise, 'England in the Nineteenth Century.'

"A gentleman, well known from his giving 'bold advertisement' of many things, some years ago conceived the idea of a purely literary venture—a vast encyclopædia which should portray England in all its aspects.

"For the purpose, all the 'eminent' literary men of the day were engaged—these of course included many who had no claim at all to the title—to supply letterpress descriptions; and, under the direction of the vivacious George Augustus Sala, England was to be shown as it had never before been shown—its fashionable, theatrical, seamy, and other sides. To open the venture with all *éclat*, the hospitable speculator invited all his future contributors to the appropriate hostelry of the Albion, to a magnificent banquet—at which, I suppose, some hundred and fifty persons 'sat down' to table.

"It was a curious miscellany of guests, for our hospitable host had gathered not merely *littérateurs*, musicians, and artists, but many who were connected with his own profession, and who would be eager to push 'England' by every legitimate means. Our chairman, who has a special vein for after-dinner speaking, opened the business in one of his best efforts, expounding the plan, complimenting

our host on his enterprise, and announcing, with much humour, that the venture would be started on a particular day from the offices of Messrs. Tinsley Brothers, in Catherine Street, Strand—‘God *willing*,’ he added, devoutly.

“Other speeches followed, everybody lavishly showering praise on the ‘enterprising’ host; though, looking round at the vast number of *littérateurs*, it seemed a puzzle how room was to be found for all in the ranks. It was a pleasant evening, and withal a merry one. . . . Articles were written, the first number even printed—when it was announced abruptly that the plan was given up. Everybody was paid handsomely. I confess I admire this proof of the good sense, and even wisdom, of our host. The truth was, on reflection he had seen the venture could only end in loss.”

The reader will have seen that Mr. Fitzgerald’s account of the venture differs very little from my recollections.

Few men would have had the pluck Mr. Willing had to abandon such an enterprise. But no doubt he saw that, although he could command any amount of advertisements for walls and hoardings, his power over advertisers in books was not so great.

And, as a matter of fact, although “England in the Nineteenth Century” was a fairly good idea, it was not a new one.

Some few years before that time, a publication of a similar but more special character had

been published, called "The Shops of England," and had failed to command any great attention.

Thus, beyond a doubt, Mr. Willing was wise to cut his loss at once, and not to plunge deeper into the venture for want of a pluck which few possess—that of acknowledging a failure.

Few people who see "Willing's" name over the numerous hoardings in London have any conception of the kind of man he is, or rather was. To me, in his way, he was little short of a wonder.

He is one of the few men I have known who can talk to half a dozen business men at one time.

To see him with several men round his office table, giving orders and answering numerous questions as quickly as possible, would surprise many who think their business capacity perfect.

Mr. Willing's recollections, from the time he was a toll-gate boy to the present time, told in his own humorous way, would make, without doubt, a most interesting work. Many years ago he had an interest in several of the old toll-gates; had a good deal to do with the formation of the London General Omnibus Company; and was, I think, the first man to supersede the old flying posting of bills system, by hiring protected stations.

He tells a curious story about one of our largest joint-stock banks, which held a large proportion of the money that had been paid for shares in the London General Omnibus Company. Just at that time, and I think on a Sunday morning, the body of a man largely connected with the bank, named, I

think, Sadler, was found on Hampstead Heath, the death being, it was believed, caused by suicide.

Rumour at once spread the report that the event would seriously affect the financial position of the bank in question, whither Mr. Willing and his co-trustee went the next morning, some hours before the regular time for business to commence.

They found, however, much to their surprise, the bank already open, the manager and clerks in their places, ready for their duties of the day.

The fact was, the directors knew that the reports of the suicide in the morning papers would leave little doubt of the blow the bank had received, and would, no doubt, give rise to many questions from customers, perhaps causing a run upon their supplies.

Any amount of money was, therefore, got into the bank to meet all claims ; and the manager having convinced Mr. Willing and his co-trustee that the money for which they were responsible was perfectly safe, they did not withdraw it. It was easily explained to Mr. Willing and his friend that it would be a serious blow to the bank if the money were taken away, because the doing so would soon be known all over London.

It was Mr. Willing who told me about Mrs. Wilson and her last transaction with the London General Omnibus Company. The *chèque* which Mrs. Wilson received was for a large sum of money ; but the business-like old lady would not give a receipt until a clerk from the company had taken

the hard cash from the company's bank, and placed it safely in her own.

I remember a good specimen of Mr. Willing's shrewd business capacity. Someone with some prejudice or interest against bill-posters was trying in a rather quiet way to get a Bill through Parliament to make it illegal to paste on or affix in any way inflammable matter on the outside walls of private houses, or in public buildings of any kind. Such a Bill, when passed, would have done Messrs. Willing and Co. and other bill-posters a deal of harm, for they had then, and have now, acres of paper on and in such places ; so the fraternity of bill-posters soon raised a good sum of money to oppose it. The quick eye of Mr. Willing saw that it would be a great blow to Messrs. W. H. Smith and Son ; so he sought an interview with Mr. W. H. Smith, M.P., who at first could not see that the Bill in any way affected his interest. But when Mr. Willing pointed to the words, "In or outside any public buildings," he saw at once that the drafters of the Bill meant railway stations, and, indeed, all public buildings, even where charge was made for entering. I think I am right in saying that Mr. W. H. Smith, who was then member for Westminster, as soon as he possibly could, saw the end of that Bill.

The mention of Mr. James Willing, senior, would hardly be complete without mention of his clever son James, the well-known advertiser in the Strand, who has indeed inherited many of his excellent father's best business qualifications.



## DR. RUSSELL'S "DR. BRADY."

I published the maiden novel and, I think, the only work of fiction written by that brilliant Special War Correspondent, Dr. (now Sir) William Howard Russell, whose letters to *The Times* from India, the Crimea, and other seats of war are perhaps the very best examples of war correspondence ever contributed to any newspaper.

But the famous special's attempt at fiction was a sad failure.

I paid him close upon thirteen hundred pounds for the novel in question, called "The Adventures of Dr. Brady," and the book was never worth a fourth of that sum, even though I paid "Phiz" a large sum as well to illustrate it.

I believe Dr. Russell tried very hard indeed to make his work interesting; and when he gave us the title I quite expected he would write a novel full of brilliant sketches of social and military life, after the style of Charles Lever's works, but he seemed to know very little of how to set about such a task. I also published in book form the elaborate review Dr. Russell wrote for *The Times* of General Todleben's great work on the defence of Sebastopol during the Crimean war.

## JAMES PAYN.

I had many pleasant business dealings with the late Mr. James Payn, the noted novelist. We now and then differed in opinion as to the value of his books, but there was never a shade of unpleasantness

between us, and there never seemed an atom of selfishness in his nature. He once jokingly told me he was delighted to find a man who wrote a worse hand than himself. Strange to say, I then, and do now, think my writing as plain as print, but I am afraid that is only my own opinion. However, Mr. Payn, I think, as a rule, understood the intention of my scribble, and so did I his well-written, if sometimes badly-penned, letters.

Years ago there was almost a general understanding that, unless otherwise agreed, authors and publishers shared any sum of money received for books the Baron Tauchnitz paid for the right to reprint in his famous library of English books in Germany. I remember on one occasion I felt bound to offer Mr. Payn a share of some money from the Baron, and I received the following letter from him:—

“ My dear Tinsley,—

“ I certainly shall not take any of the money for either the German or the Tauchnitz rights; the copyright is clearly yours.

“ Yours truly,

“ JAMES PAYN.”

The fact was, when I agreed with him for the copyright of his novel called “A County Family,” by some oversight the Baron Tauchnitz and German rights were quite forgotten, and as I had bought the book on very fair terms, I thought it was only fair that Mr. Payn should receive one-half of the sum I secured for these rights. But, as

may be seen above, Mr. Payn, unlike a good many authors, was quite content with his bargain, and of course I was. But I feel sure the kindly-natured gentleman had in his mind that I had not done very well out of a novel of his I had published without his name to it, and strange to say, a much better story than a "A County Family."

Mr. Payn had some rather strange eras in his life as a writer of fiction. Some time after he wrote his strange story, "Lost Sir Massingberd," he was in great request as a serial writer in England and America. Although at the same time his fictions were of no great value for book form, yet in after years his works became of much more value for book form than for serials, and it actually seems that, had he been ten years younger when he wrote his capital story, called "By Proxy," he would have gained more fame and payment for his work than he had ever done. It is hard to imagine to what standing as a writer of fiction Mr. Payn might have risen had he given the whole of his time to it. But he never did; in fact, for many years he mapped out the hours of every one of the six working days in the week, with a consistency that was almost wonderful. He gave so many hours to writing fiction, so many to reading manuscripts and proofs for the different periodicals he edited, often did some reviewing of books, and very seldom failed to find time to meet his friends at his club to play whist; and I feel sure I am right in saying, never gave way to late hours. I may be wrong, but I

seem to remember he told me that, as a rule, he had done all his work and even played his games of whist before he dined in the evening, and seldom went out afterwards, for as a rule he began his work very early in the day.

I may be wrong, but I think Mr. James Payn was almost if not quite a great novelist lost from the very fact that he did not, or would not, abandon himself to fiction only. He might, of course, have edited "Chambers' Journal," and even at another time have edited the "Cornhill Magazine," and still have given fiction a good deal of time. Either one or the other of the above magazines was quite enough work for a busy writer of fiction to manage; but I think I remember he did a good deal of work for, if he did not edit, "The Indian Mail." He wrote numerous essays and stories for Mr. Charles Dickens and other editors. The marvel was at what an excellent standard Mr. Payn kept his literary works. There would seem to be nothing in such a fact had he, like most authors of note, been only able to write when he felt he could do so. Indeed, it may have been that Mr. Payn's usually ready pen would not move for him quite freely at all times, but it was wonderful what command he had over himself and his way of doing his work; perhaps I may say that some facts about Mr. Payn's consistent way of doing his writings would not be a bad example for many young authors; at least, many I have known might have profited by his courage. I feel

sure Mr. Payn's hard work would surprise a good many authors who think they have worked hard.

I happen to have a goodly number of Mr. Payn's letters, but I cannot find a jarring note in one of them. When not very business-like, they are genial in tone and meaning. I see in his volume of literary recollections he puts rather a slang term to my credit ; and in one of his letters he reminds me that he was once a publisher for about a year and a half, when he was a very young man. As regards the slang term, I almost hope it was a better word spoilt by my bad penning. Whether Mr. Payn had ever been a publisher or not, he always made the meaning of our agreements as simple and as straightforward as possible, and no dispute could or ever did arise during the many years I had dealings with him. I feel sure we never troubled the sixpenny stamp office once. While many authors were not content with numerous folios of "aforesaid," "assigns," &c., Mr. Payn would be satisfied with a simple, straightforward letter ; in fact, the following is a copy of one of many of the kind he sent to me :—

"Dear Mr. Tinsley,—I offer you the right to publish in three volumes — copies of my novel, ———, for the sum of £—— ; you to have the right to print another edition in three volumes for the sum of £——, the copyright to revert to me at the end of twelve months, unless we agree about the absolute copyright of the one-volume edition during the time.—Yours truly, JAMES PAYN."

My answer as a rule was :—"Dear Mr. Payn,—  
Very well."

I remember meeting Mr. Payn one morning in the Strand at a time I knew he was as a rule at his writing table ; and I said, "What's the matter ?" "Well," he said, "Rather a good sum is the matter." "They," pointing to the office, "want a serial from me, and have offered me three fifty." "Well," I said, "that will do, won't it," and he said, "No ; they've a great circulation, and they must pay me four hundred." He got it, and the other parties to the bargain did not repent. Nor do I think anyone ever regretted a business transaction with Mr. James Payn.

## CHAPTER VI.

### HARRISON AINSWORTH.

I published quite half-a-dozen three-volume fictions for Harrison Ainsworth, the author of "Jack Sheppard." It was strange how hard Mr. Ainsworth would contend that his highwayman book had no bad moral tendency; and I am afraid the older the gallant old author grew, the more singular he was in that opinion. I published several very readable semi-historical fictions for Mr. Ainsworth; the one called "Boscobel" is perhaps the most interesting book.

Mr. Ainsworth was a capital man of business to deal with. He too used to boast of having been a publisher in early life; and he was more than proud of having known Sir Walter Scott, and that the great author had praised one of his early books.

Of course, Ainsworth was very indignant with Cruikshank for trying to claim part authorship of the books he illustrated. In fact, that wild idea in his old days did the famous old artist much harm; but his age excused him a good deal in the minds of those who knew him best.

### JOHN CORDY JEAFFRESON.

I only remember meeting John Cordy Jeaffreson once. He was then a very fair writer of fiction,



and author of some very readable volumes about lawyers and doctors. Some years ago he called at my office on some matter of business upon which we, I think, did not agree; but our interview was cut short in a peculiar way. It was winter time, and we were both standing near the fire, when all at once I heard a strange rumbling in the chimney, and before we could think or guess the cause, down came quite a half bushel of soot, and smothered us both so much that we looked almost like chimney sweeps. However, with some brushing and tender dealing with some towels we got enough soot off Mr. Jeaffreson for him not to look quite a chimney sweep in the street, and he then made a rush for the Garrick Club, where no doubt one of the waiters got him partly back to his normal state of cleanliness and primness. I have never forgotten Jeaffreson's look at me when he left my office, and for the life of me I could not help laughing. I have no doubt he muttered to himself, "The fool!" But I could not help being amused at his amazed and vexed expression; in fact, it seemed as if he thought I had planned the questionable treat for him, or certainly that the chimney ought to have been swept before that day. The fact was, no doubt, the heap of soot had collected at some angle out of the range of the sweep's brush, and for some reason moved all at once from its lodgment, and came down like an avalanche. Whatever the business was, Mr. Jeaffreson did not venture into my office again, and I do not think, as I have

mentioned, I ever saw him before or after that time. If the genial author is still in the land of the living, I hope he will not mind me saying that whenever I have thought of the incident I have always had a hearty laugh, for it was just one of those amusing accidents that might not happen once in a century.

#### THE HONOURABLE MRS. NORTON.

I published one book for the Hon. Mrs. Norton, called "A Christmas Rose." I had two or three interviews with the lady respecting the publication of the work. She was then, although well on in years, a most charming old lady, prim to a degree, but very keen, though just, in business matters.

My first interview with her was at her charming bijou residence in Mayfair. It was a dull, dark day; so she had the gas lighted, and seated herself in an easy chair with all the dignity of a queen dowager. Her maid waited upon her in the most attentive way, and all she did for her charming mistress was acknowledged in the kindest manner; indeed, her "Thank you" and her courteous answers were most pleasant to hear.

Mrs. Norton need not have told me she was a descendant of the Sheridan family; but she was careful to do so, and she was never loth to remind her friends and readers that Lord Byron meant Richard Brinsley Sheridan when he wrote the famous lines—

"Sighing that Nature formed but one such man,  
And broke the die in moulding Sheridan."

Lord Byron's eulogy was very great ; but the noble author of the "School for Scandal" deserved all the praise that could be bestowed upon him, for that grand old comedy runs Shakspeare close for popularity in the comedy of the drama.

It is not often that genius springs from genius, or even talent of any mark ; so that it is not wonderful that there was only one Sheridan of great note.

The Hon. Mrs. Norton was proud to boast of having Sheridan blood in her veins, and she was really a very clever woman. She wrote very good prose in the way of fiction, and also poetry—notably "The Lady of La Garaye" was a pleasing poem of some power, and was read and talked about a good deal for a time.

During my interview with Mrs. Norton I was very much impressed with the stateliness of her manner, although no one should have been ill at ease in her presence ; she bade me be seated, and when I suggested I might be tiring her, assured me I was not doing so.

The one thing that most struck me about the Hon. Mrs. Norton was, that she should have ventured to mention the family trouble she had had some years before. She introduced the subject without the slightest prompting, and without doubt had lived long enough to believe in her own mind that the accusation against her and Lord Melbourne was very mythical indeed, Her Gracious Majesty the Queen having written her a letter assuring her of her belief in her innocence. I have no doubt the

charming old lady went down to her grave with a clear conscience—at all events, I hope she did ; for never, in my long experience, have I met a more charming authoress to deal with. Mrs. Norton told me at the time of our last interview she was writing a new novel, and was also busy collecting material for a “Life of the Sheridans.” She could not have failed to write a most interesting volume about the author of the “School for Scandal,” his relations and associates. I forget whether Mr. Percy Fitzgerald had any access to the materials Mrs. Norton had collected when he wrote his “Life of the Sheridans.” The Hon. Mrs. Norton’s “Sheridans” and Thackeray’s “Reign of Queen Anne” should have been two books of importance to the literature of this century, had the authors lived to finish them.

#### WILKIE COLLINS.

I published that very clever novel by Wilkie Collins, called “The Moonstone.”

It had appeared as a serial in “All the Year Round,” and that story and “The Woman in White” were two of the very few exceptions of the many serials that were printed in that excellent periodical which increased the circulation to any great extent, and perhaps did more for it than any other novel that was printed in it as a serial before or since, not excepting “Great Expectations,” by the famous editor himself. During the run of “The Moonstone” as a serial there were scenes in Wellington Street that doubtless did the author’s and publisher’s hearts

good. And especially when the serial was nearing its ending, on publishing days there would be quite a crowd of anxious readers waiting for the new number, and I know of several bets that were made as to where the moonstone would be found at last. Even the porters and boys were interested in the story, and read the new number in sly corners, and often with their packs on their backs, but "The Woman in White" was, I think, rather over the heads of those boys and men.

Wilkie Collins drove rather a hard bargain with me for the right to print and publish an edition of fifteen hundred copies of "The Moonstone," in three volumes. I was not very certain I should sell the whole of the edition, although many more copies in the three-volume form had been sold of "The Woman in White" and "No Name." The fact was, as I have previously mentioned, purchasers of three-volume novels had greatly reduced their subscriptions in comparison with a few years before. However, I did very well out of my agreement for the first edition of "The Moonstone." I sold the fifteen hundred copies all out; and as the type was all standing, Mr. Collins was most anxious I should print another edition of five hundred copies.

I offered to do so, with the understanding I should pay a certain sum per hundred when I had sold them; but he would not accept my terms, and wanted me to pay him for the right to sell the five hundred copies, whether I disposed of them or not. So all negotiations were broken off, and the business seemed at an end.

But, much to my surprise, the printer of "The Moonstone" came to me a few days after my failure to negotiate with Mr. Collins, and asked me if I would allow an edition to be printed off the type, which stood in my name, for another publisher.

I said I had no objection, but that whoever used the type must pay me a certain proportion of the cost of the setting.

I ought to mention that all through the business I had been dealing with Mr. Collins's solicitors, and not with him direct, so that I am willing to suppose that it was the said solicitors and not Mr. Collins who were stupid enough to suppose that I should pay for the setting up of type for other people's benefit.

And so it seemed as if the book would not be reprinted in the three-volume form at all. However, in a day or two there was an excellent review of the book in *The Times*, and Mr. Collins sent to his advisers to accept the terms I had at first proffered.

But I had had a deal of trouble in the matter, and, moreover, did not consider I had been used any too well, so would not agree to reprint the book until I had reduced the terms about fifty pounds.

I heard afterwards, on the best authority, that Charles Dickens had a hearty laugh about this disagreement with Collins over "The Moonstone." In fact, Mr. W. H. Wills told me that Mr. Collins was rather a hard bargain-driver over his serial rights.

The story of "The Moonstone" was dramatised

and brought out at the Olympic. It was but only moderately successful, although the two principal male characters were powerfully played by Henry Neville and Tom Swinburne. Poor Bill Hill played the Butler, and it suited him all round. He looked wine and talked wine. Hill's full-moon face was a picture of mirth in such parts.

#### THE RIGHT HON. W. H. SMITH.

When, early in this century, Mr. W. H. Smith, father of the well-known statesman of the same name, and grandfather of the present Hon. F. D. Smith, was working hard to establish his newspaper business in the Strand, in a shop not far from Wellington Street, he little dreamed of what a gigantic business he was laying the foundation. And he in no way imagined that his son, who often worked in his shirt sleeves by his side, packing important parcels of early editions of newspapers, would in after life become a statesman of importance, and just miss being a peer of the realm. Almost any time before and down to some years in this century, London newspaper proprietors and newspaper vendors had no little trouble at times to get their papers into the heart of the country, and into distant important places. News of importance often delayed the publication of newspapers a good deal beyond the time of the starting of stage coaches, carriers, and the then limited number of railways out of London; and there is no doubt that Mr. W. H. Smith's energy and enterprise in often



conquering such difficulties made his name famous in the newspaper world. Mr. Smith never let a difficulty hinder him from trying to get over it. When all the ordinary means of getting his parcels into the country had gone for the day, he would send messengers on horseback and light conveyances at express speed to overtake stage coaches, and even railway trains ; in fact, more than once he actually hired an express train to take some important parcels into the country, and it was a common occurrence for one of his messengers, mounted or in a light cart, to overtake a London train three or four stations out, which had just left when he arrived at the London end.

In those days, neither Mr. Smith nor men of any standing in hardly any trade had much influence in detaining coaches or trains for their wares. But even the eldest Mr. Smith lived to see the time when London station-masters and guards became very loth to start early morning trains without W. H. Smith and Son's parcels of newspapers, and a good many times, when other most important matters could not detain a train a second, Smith and Son's parcels have detained them several—for the newspaper trade became an important part of the revenue of railways, and had to be seriously considered.

I just remember hearing one of the old servants in Smith and Son's boasting that he or one of his fellow workers in the firm carried some newspapers direct to Dublin on the day of the death of George

the Fourth, and was there before the event was made known by Royal Proclamation. But those were the sort of ventures the founders of the great business were fond of. I forget whether it was at the time when the elder Mr. Smith was actually engaged in the business, but certainly a great many years ago, Smith and Son's order for *The Times* was of so much importance to the proprietors that they had the privilege of having a large proportion of the first copies that were printed every morning. I think those papers were meant for customers in far off places in the three kingdoms.

In those days a second edition of *The Times* before the middle of the day was rather a rare occurrence, and only very important events made them alter their rule; and so when any very important news reached the office of *The Times*, or any one of the old daily newspapers, the presses were stopped and the matter inserted. At such times there was rare confusion amongst the news-vendors, and now and then actual fighting for first copies, for all the vendors were bound to get their papers to certain destinations in some way. But it must be a very important event indeed in these times to keep any one of our important papers from printing a first edition at about its regular time; for a whole column of news can be set, cast, and on the machine in almost no time. In fact, the fewest words may foreshadow another edition of a newspaper, and the machines be kept almost continually going, as long as a demand for

papers exists. And the machinery for distributing London newspapers all over the three kingdoms is now so perfect that, were it possible for the founder of W. H. Smith and Son to see what is being done, he could but stand and wonder at the marvellous way business is carried on in comparison to the time when his deeds of enterprise were really of note.

It is quite possible that my idea of the founders of great businesses is not right or fair to some of them; in fact, I am willing to admit that there have been and are now thousands of men who were and are entirely the architects and makers of their own fortunes, and no one should for a moment begrudge them all the honour they deserve, and every credit should be given to a clever discriminating master who can find good servants and keep them. The elder Mr. W. H. Smith was, doubtless, a master of that kind; and I think he was more than ordinarily fortunate in choosing his men, and in their being spared to serve him and his son as long as they were able to do so. In fact, I think it was quite a case of where a good master made good servants; and certainly the other way about, where good servants made a good master.

I should not bear upon this question so much, but I have known several good masters in my time who would have been rich men had they been as fortunate in their leading hands as Mr. W. H. Smith and his son.

For a good deal over twenty years my business

took me into the headquarters of Messrs. W. H. Smith and Son, and during that time I became intimately acquainted with the heads of most of the departments. When I first knew them, some of them were growing old at their posts, but there seemed in them then as much zeal and energy as there could have been in their younger days, and any one of them was a treasure and a fortune to his employers. Some of them now and then drove hard bargains, but it was a rare occurrence for any one of them to consult Mr. Smith or any one about a trade bargain, whether it was for hundreds or thousands of pounds. The most pleasant part of dealing with the firm was that most of the accounts were paid monthly, and if the goods were delivered the money could be had at once without a murmur.

Of course, when the founder of the business was about in all his energy there was no doubt about the business going on well, but the time came when he was not there, and his successor found that his men were working the business with little need for interference in any way, in fact, making the business earn him a large fortune almost every year. Then it was that Mr. W. H. Smith began to look about for political honours, and, as is well known, he found them—though not all at once ; but in doing so he unseated one of the most learned men of his time—Mr. John Stuart Mill, who could not help being brilliant with his pen, but seemed hardly born to be a brilliant statesman. In fact, from a

political point of view, the House of Commons won rather than lost weight by the election of Mr. W. H. Smith for Westminster in the place of the great philosopher.

It may have been that Mr. W. H. Smith had a seat in the House of Commons in his mind some time before he became a candidate for it, for soon after he left college and entered his father's business, he enticed to his side as his lieutenant Mr. William Lethbridge, who had been his coach and friend at college; that clever stroke was quite in keeping with his father's always keen eye to business, and even though Mr. Lethbridge had never seen the inside working of any kind of business before he joined Mr. W. H. Smith, he very soon picked up a good idea of it. But during the many years Mr. Lethbridge had a good deal of the control of the Smith and Son business, I think only one or two of the heads of the departments left their posts, except because of old age or some other reason not at all against their honourable characters. The men I chiefly refer to are now, I think, all dead but one, and he, Mr. Wm. Faux, the genial and by no means unlearned head of the library department, was not really one of the original heads of departments; but I think I am right in saying that Mr. Faux has, as boy and man, been nearly forty years in the business. Those good men and true who have passed away were Mr. Moor, the (I feel sure) original head of the advertising department; Mr. Elliman, the newspaper department; Mr. Jabez

Sandifer, the head of the book department, and also the purchaser of the railway rugs and other articles sold from the bookstalls. Mr. White, the head of the counting-house in the newspaper department, was not, I think, one of the original heads of that department, but I believe he was there for a great number of years.

Mr. Moor's energy in his department was never in doubt, nor, indeed, was that of his successor, Mr. Cockett. It was, I believe, a fact that, many years ago, Mr. Moor used one of Mr. W. Smith's advertising adhesive labels for sticking-plaster on a man's nose which had been broken by accident in the Strand, and the man went on his way rejoicing.

Mr. Lethbridge had at one time a noted collection of water-colour drawings and fine paintings, and I feel sure that it was Mr. James Payn who told me that one evening when he, some friends and Lethbridge were in the midst of a game of whist, a telegram was given him which informed him that the house his pictures were in was on fire, but he would finish the game.

Mr. Lethbridge was a strict man of business, but could now and then be jocular in conversation; but Mr. W. H. Smith's almost ashy pale face seldom had a smile upon it, and I do not think I ever heard him have a good hearty laugh. As a rule, my business with Mr. Smith and Mr. Lethbridge was of a short and pleasing nature; but I once very nearly offended them both. I had published in a book a statement about their mode of doing business that was not altogether

true. It, in fact, accused Messrs. W. H. Smith and Son of not being fair in the exhibition of publications on their numerous railway book-stalls. However, I had nothing of the kind to complain of myself, so it was, of course, rather out of place on my part to publish such a wholesale statement; indeed, both Mr. Smith and Mr. Lethbridge treated the matter as a most serious offence, and the burden of their complaint was that something must be done, and at once. The book as it stood must be withdrawn from publication, and if republished the paragraph must be cut out, and an apology made.

Now, it so happened that the book in question was written by Stephen Fiske, the now noted American journalist, who was then in London, trying to make his fortune by journalism and literature in general, and here was the very best chance he had ever had. He could have proved part of his case, perhaps not enough to have gained an action at law, but enough to show that a certain periodical in which he had an interest had not been offered for sale on every book-stall in the United Kingdom, or at least not on all the stalls held by Smith and Son at that time. However, I did not see my way to go into the matter in the way Mr. Smith and Mr. Lethbridge suggested; so I simply said—"Well, gentlemen, the author of the book is a very clever American, and if I tell him about this interview, and ask him to do what you require, he will send paragraphs to every newspaper in the United Kingdom, and in America also, and what he will do will annoy you



more than you can imagine ; so my advice is, say nothing of what is done. The book will soon die a natural death, and be forgotten." Mr. Smith said, "I think you are right, Tinsley," and Mr. Lethbridge was quite of the same opinion ; so their verdict was that I was guilty, "but don't do it again."

And so in the Smith and Son, as in several other libel cases of the kind, I had my way, believing, as I always did, and always shall, that a very large per cent. of written libels are almost stingless, until they get into a police or law court of some kind ; and then, when published in most of the important newspapers, their great publicity makes them injurious in the extreme. I am not trying to argue that wrongs of any kind should not be righted ; for, of course, every ill-meaning libeller should be trounced, but if in trouncing one of them you doubly trounce yourself, the balance of victory is very doubtful, because there never was a libel yet that became public that had not some believers in it the wrong way.

There was some idea that the character of Sir Joseph Porter, in Gilbert and Sullivan's opera of "H.M.S. Pinafore," was founded upon some of the incidents in Mr. W. H. Smith's political life. But I never could see an atom of likeness between the two men. In fact, Mr. Smith's ample means and his excellent business qualities gave him much political power without his having to ask for it.

Those who seemed to know blamed the Reform Club for refusing Mr. W. H. Smith admittance, at the time he hardly seemed to care whether he made his political home on one side of Pall Mall or the other.

As regards the "Pinafore" business, there is no doubt that Mr. William Gilbert's father did a good deal to spread the notion that Mr. Smith and Sir Joseph Porter were one, for just about that time he and Mr. Smith were sadly at variance over some literary copyrights of Mr. Gilbert's books. The fact was that old Mr. Gilbert was a most excellent gentleman in almost all ways, but the moment he was rubbed the wrong way he would, for a time, grow rampant, but like all impulsive natures he cherished little animosity. I think I am right in saying that if Mr. W. H. Smith was responsible for his managers having purchased the copyrights, he had no actual knowledge of the transaction, and Mr. Gilbert's claim was certainly against his publisher, who had or had not the right to sell the books. However, there is not a shade of likeness of W. H. Smith in Sir Joseph Porter in any way, for he had not an atom of humour or levity in his bones.

THOMAS HARDY.

I read a good many manuscripts almost every year during the time I was a publisher. One I read, and took an especial interest in, was Thomas Hardy's first novel, called "Desperate Remedies." In fact, I read the work twice, and even though I never thoroughly made up my mind that it was the sort of

work to be a great success, I certainly thought it contained some capital characters and character drawing. But Mr. Hardy had dragged into the midst of excellent humorous writing almost ultra-sensational matter ; in fact, incidents unworthy of his pen and the main portion of the work. Still, I quite thought that there was enough of the bright side of human nature in it to sell at least one fair edition. However, there was not, but for a first venture I do not think Mr. Hardy had much to complain about.

I purchased the copyright of Mr. Hardy's second novel, called "Under the Greenwood Tree." In that book I felt sure I had got hold of the best little prose idyll I had ever read. By "little," I mean as regards the length of the book, in which there is not more than about four or five hours' reading ; but, to my mind, it is excellent reading indeed. I almost raved about the book, and I gave it away wholesale to pressmen and anyone I knew interested in good fiction. But, strange to say, it would not sell. Finding it hung on hand in the original two-volume form, I printed it in a very pretty illustrated one-volume form. That edition was a failure. Then I published it in a two-shilling form, with paper covers, and that edition had a very poor sale indeed ; and yet it was one of the best press-noticed books I ever published. But even though it is as pure and sweet as new-mown hay, it just lacks the touch of sentiment that lady novel-readers most admire. In fact, to my thinking, if Mr.

Hardy could have imported stronger matter for love, laughter and tears into "Under the Greenwood Tree," the book would have in no way been unworthy of the pen of George Eliot.

I tried Mr. Hardy's third novel, called "A Pair of Blue Eyes," as a serial in my magazine, and in book form, but it was by far the weakest of the three books I published of his. However, a good deal owing to my praise of him, and the merits of "Under the Greenwood Tree," Mr. Hardy was engaged to write his novel, called "Far From the Madding Crowd," in "The Cornhill Magazine," and for that he found more readers than for any book I published for him. Of course, Mr. Hardy was quite within his rights in not offering me his third book, although I had paid him rather a large sum of money for "A Pair of Blue Eyes."

However, there is no doubt "The Cornhill" offer was a large one, and started Mr. Hardy afresh on his career as a novelist, for just about that time it was by no means certain he would not return to his profession as an architect, from which he could then have obtained a good income. At all events, he told me, soon after I did business with him, that unless writing fiction paid him well, he should not go on with it; but it did pay him, and very well indeed. Since Mr. Hardy has become a noted writer of fiction, I have seen it stated that I refused more than one of his books. I never refused one of them, nor ever had the chance of doing so.

## MRS. HENRY WOOD.

I published several of Mrs. Henry Wood's novels in three volumes, and afterwards in six-shilling form.

Many young and aspiring authors, impatient for success, will be surprised to hear that Mrs. Henry Wood had written a large number of short and long stories for no great payment in the "New Monthly" and other magazines, before she made a name by writing that truly interesting novel, "East Lynne."

At the time that work was published, a really good review in *The Times* would help the sale of a novel to a very large extent; and in the same, and perhaps a greater proportion, praise in *The Times* would then help any other kind of book not fiction.

I have heard it said, and can quite believe it, that *The Times* review of the "Life of George Stephenson" was worth a good deal over a thousand pounds to Samuel Smiles, the author of the book.

The notice of "East Lynne" in *The Times* was, perhaps, somewhat of an accident. I do not attempt to argue that the novel would not have been reviewed in the paper but for what I had to say in the matter; but still, what I told Mr. Samuel Lucas about "East Lynne" did, I am sure, induce that gentleman to take the book home and read it.

I remember the incident as well as if it had only happened yesterday, although it is nearly forty years ago. I was coming out of Hookham's Library, in Bond Street, when I met Mr. Lucas,

editor of "Once a Week," and reviewer for *The Times*, and he said, "Well, Tinsley, which is the most popular novel out at the present time?"

I told him I thought "East Lynne" was a most interesting book. I then learnt from him that he wanted a new serial story for "Once a Week," and was looking round for a good author to write it. The result of our conversation was that Lucas borrowed a copy of "East Lynne" from Hookham's Library, took it home and read it, and not only read it, but wrote a very laudatory review of it for *The Times*; but I think before the review appeared Mrs. Wood had been secured to write a new serial for "Once a Week," called "Verner's Pride."

I have mentioned that Mrs. Wood had written and published a large number of short stories before she became famous as the author of "East Lynne," and she had before that time been awarded a hundred pound prize for a temperance story called "Danesbury House." The editor of the "New Monthly" objected to long serials, so Mrs. Wood made most of her short stories in the magazine read complete in themselves, but there were connecting links in many of them which gave her in after years no very great trouble to work them into several of her full-length books.

"St. Martin's Eve," "Elster's Folly," "George Canterbury's Will," and I think one or more of the other novels I published by Mrs. Wood were partly reprints of her short stories in the "New

Monthly Magazine," but so well linked together that the most expert reader could hardly imagine such was the case. Indeed, there can be no doubt Mrs. Wood had an idea, when she first wrote them, of welding them together at some future time if she had the chance.

As is well-known, there are several dramatic versions of "East Lynne," but Mrs. Wood never had any commercial interest or benefit in any one of them. She did not protect her dramatic rights in the book at the proper time, and by not doing so lost many thousands of pounds—a cruel injustice, and hardly credible in a civilized country, for the drama of "East Lynne," if copyright at the present time, would bring in a very large sum of money per annum.

There was a rather peculiar fact about Mrs. Wood's story writing; she had, as is well known, a serial story in the "Argosy" every year for a good many years; always, of course, with her name to it. And for almost as many years there appeared in the same magazine a large number of short stories, under the signature of "Johnny Ludlow," in fact, the author's name was not at all public property, and it was often amusing to those of us who knew the facts of the authorship to see Mrs. Wood's serials were sometimes badly noticed in the press, and Johnny Ludlow's stories as a rule well noticed. Tom Hood, in "Fun," and also a reviewer in the "Saturday Review," more than once as good as told Mrs. Wood that she could not write



nearly as well as the author, Johnny Ludlow, little dreaming that Mrs. Wood and Johnny Ludlow were one author. But any mistake of the kind was pardonable, for most of the Ludlow stories were much better written and more interesting than most of Mrs. Wood's other late-in-life fiction.

If any authors at any time should work up facts about the posthumous works of popular authors, I hardly think they need go beyond Mrs. Henry Wood as having left more unpublished work than any other author ever known. At all events, for several years after her much lamented death, serials by her appeared in the "Argosy," and in book form. Of course, it may have been that the stories were part of the almost acres of work she wrote before "East Lynne" gave her a name to conjure with, and with it fame and fortune.

Since writing the above I have read Mr. Charles Wood's remarkable biography of his mother—I say remarkable, without wishing to infer that it is a great book. In fact, I think Mr. Wood's intense love of his mother has caused him to over-rate her as an author a good deal. Of course I may be wrong, but I think that Mrs. Henry Wood's name as an author without "East Lynne" to it would be a good way down in the list of popular or well-known authors. I think, quite half a dozen of Mrs. Wood's early books are more worth reading over again than the, to me, truly morbid story of "East Lynne." I refer to such books as "The Channings," "Verner's Pride," "Trevyln Hold," and "The Shadow

of Ashlydyat." Mr. Charles Wood's belief that Miss Corney, in "East Lynne," is the masterpiece of womanly humour in English fiction, makes one wonder whether he had ever read his Dickens, or heard of George Eliot's "Mrs. Poyser," not to forget the numerous other word and phrase twisters before and from Sheridan's Mrs. Malaprop, Mrs. Partington, and even Arthur Sketchley's Mrs. Brown. His statement that his mother's books have sold better in America, and in almost as large numbers as the works of Dickens in England, is at least curious.

## CHAPTER VII.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

It seems strange that such a brilliant scholar and clever writer, as Mr. George Meredith undoubtedly is, should have had almost a half-dozen lives as a novelist, and yet for the first time in his career and late in life make a commercial success out of works of fiction not half worthy of his name and reputation as a writer. He has always written well, if not always wisely, at least, from a popular point of view; but most of his fiction has been so much over the heads of ordinary readers that they have passed by many of his novels with little notice. And yet now and then during the last thirty or forty years he has written a work of fiction that has sold fairly well, and has just created a little demand for his older novels. But if his late fiction has made him a commercial success, he must even now be a disappointed novelist, for if he cared to parade in advertisements all the good press notices he has had, he could, I think, in that way show that he has been almost the best-noticed novelist of the last half century. I think his first volume of stories, called "The Shaving of Shagpat," gave him little or no profit, and his capital novel, "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel," did not bring him nearly a fortune.

“Evan Harrington” gave him a fairly large sum of money. The book I published, called “Rhoda Fleming,” had a very poor sale. Admirers of Mr. Meredith’s literary work will shrug their shoulders and say I only seem to estimate literary work by the money it realises. I deny any thoughts of the kind. I admire good literary work, whether I find it in works of fiction or in works of fact. But I do think good literary work is almost thrown away in works of fiction, unless the stories, characters, and general construction of the fictions are of a nature to interest, if not the wholesale readers of fiction, at least that large portion of readers who know and appreciate a good work of fiction when they see it.

I may be wrong, but I do not think any literary man of this century has buried more excellent literary work in, if not dull, certainly uninteresting, fiction than Mr. George Meredith has. In fact, dare I venture to go into comparisons and criticisms, I think I could show that Mr. Meredith has in several of his novels written short sketches of character and glimpses of human nature not unworthy of Thackeray, Dickens, and George Eliot; in fact, it is almost surprising that one of Mr. Meredith’s ardent admirers has not made a text book from his different novels, for there are many choice bits of literature in them much too good to be buried with their surroundings.

I think I am right in saying that Mr. George Meredith was the principal reader of manuscripts

for Messrs. Chapman and Hall for very many years, and that he never found one great work of fiction amongst the many hundreds of manuscripts that he must have read during that time. I have no doubt he now and then found one which he quite thought would sell, because it contained some kind of popular element suitable to the taste of the general reader; in fact, containing matter that he himself would not stoop to write. Perhaps Mr. Meredith may be able to point to or name a great or, at least, a good novelist that he discovered when a publisher's reader—I do not remember that he did; in fact, I think Mr. Meredith's own name as a novelist has been in Chapman and Hall's fiction catalogue longer than any other writer of fiction that firm ever had, except, of course, Mr. Charles Dickens.

Mr. Meredith must have winced a good many times when he saw his publishers selling cart loads of Anthony Trollope's often very poorly written novels, and his own earnest works going away in small parcels. Mr. Trollope's success as a novelist for the time he was writing was almost wonderful, and the more so because, as soon as death stopped his prolific pen, the author and the books died almost at the same time, for no one reads or thinks about Mr. Trollope's novels now. And yet, in his time, those who in society had not read his last novel were out of the fashion.

Going back to Mr. George Meredith, I remember a very pleasant day I spent with him at

Box Hill, certainly thirty or more years ago. It was, in the spring time. He was then living at the foot of Box Hill, in a little house called, I think, Flint Cottage. I remember I went down by an early train, because it was agreed we should have a good walk before an early dinner ; I never was a strong or fast walker, but Master Meredith at that time seemed able to walk any distance, and in quick time. After some light refreshment, we started to climb Box Hill ; that was a task for me, and about as far as I wanted to go. However, after looking down upon Dorking and some very picturesque places under the hill and around, my guide proposed we should strike off the hill to the left, where there was some very pretty scenery and peeps into the distance, and one way and another Master Meredith enticed me several miles away from his house, and he was still as fresh as paint when I was a good deal knocked up ; now and then I sat down on a bank to rest, and he walked on, and when some distance away called out, "Come on, Tinsley." However, in time we came in sight of his house, and then I said, "You go on ; I shall be with you in time for dinner, be sure of that." It was a lovely walk, but on such occasions the two pedestrians should be about equal in walking powers.

#### EDMUND YATES AND MRS. HOEY.

In my note about Augustus Mayhew having borrowed literary matter from his brother authors, I do not grumble much, for Master Guss was so

open and candid in the by no means creditable work, that it did not take the form of actual deception—at least, not in my case.

But certainly one of the most daring and curious cases of the kind was carried on for some years between Mrs. Cashel Hoey and Edmund Yates. I am not prepared to say that I lost much money by the secret compact, and there is a saying that, what the eye does not see, the heart does not grieve after. Therefore, knowing no great loss, I do not imagine one—I mean no loss from the actual compact. In fact, had Mr. Yates been so industrious to help to plot and plan the fictions as Mrs. Hoey was to write them, it is quite a question whether there need have been any injury to anyone. But he was not, and late in the partnership he let Mrs. Hoey write the whole of one novel with *his name to it*, and he hardly ever saw a line of the manuscript, but certainly received a good portion of the pay for the authorship. It was chiefly for that reason that the secret was exploded, for Mrs. Hoey was by no means silent about the matter when she found she was not used over well by Mr. Yates. Of course, upon the face of it it seems fairly clear that I as publisher ought to have known who were the authors of books I published, and had Mr. Yates been an unknown author, I should of course have seen the manuscripts of at least the first book before I published it. But before he came to me he had made a name as a writer of fiction, and I did not trouble to see or read his MS.;



so he, or rather Mrs. Hoey, sent their matter direct to the printers, and they were of course instructed to keep the secret of the authorship to themselves. About the honesty of their share of the secret I never had a doubt, and if it had ever been worth my while to carry the matter into a court of law, I should certainly have gone against the printers as strongly as against the authors. I was very vexed when I found out the deception, but as I had published four or five novels before I did so, it was too late to make much bother about the matter.

To the uninitiated in literary matters it doubtless seems strange that publishers should not see the wares they purchase. But in my time as a publisher well-known authors seldom submitted their works for approval, and I suppose do not now. Agreements were made about the length and size of the works to be written, and very often the authors sent their copy direct to their favourite printers, and such cases as I am scribbling about were hardly ever known. Such apparently loose business transactions do not look business-like, but it may be taken for granted that as a rule it is more to any author's interest to complete his contract well than badly, for the price for the next work is lessened if the work is not as good as agreed upon or expected to be. I hope it will not be understood that I object to or even think authors should not lend or give each other help where possible, but I do think, where help is given free of cost or paid for in literary works of any kind, the said help

should be acknowledged on the title pages or prefaces. Perhaps the aid in compiling "Dictionaries" is hard to define, for in the case of Doctor Johnson, he had various assistants in his, and I suppose each of them worked at different sections to find out the various meanings of words, and then the learned doctor selected the material best suited for his purpose, in which he made very few mistakes. I have heard there is one peculiar statement in an early edition of Johnson's immortal work, which is that the garret is the top room of the house, and the attic is the room above that. However, it certainly seems that in dictionaries, cyclopædias, and all works where only one author's name is given, and several helped to write the book, all names should be given. Alexander Pope speaks most graciously of his helpmates in the translations of "Homer's Iliad," and especially of the "Odyssey."

Harking back to the Yates and Hoey partnership, I do not think the lady had any hand in writing "Broken to Harness," nor in one or more works of fiction that preceded "Black Sheep," and it has always been a mystery to me how Mrs. Hoey could have written quite two-thirds of that book, and Mr. Charles Dickens not have found out she did so, for the novel was written as a serial for "All the Year Round." Of course, if Mr. Yates told Mr. Dickens or Mr. Wills that he employed an amanuensis that would have been a fair reason for the serial not going to the office in his own handwriting. However, there is one thing quite certain, that, when Mr. Dickens

printed "Black Sheep" in his journal, he quite believed Mr. Yates was sole author of the work. And I am quite sure in my own mind that the great novelist would not have tolerated the partnership without putting the two names to the book. However, if Mr. Dickens was deceived with only one book, I certainly was with five or six before the bubble burst. It matters nothing now what I say or think about the matter; the chief offender is dead, and I sincerely hope at sweet rest, and if it seems bad grace on my part to rake up such a memory, I am afraid I cannot help it.

The story with Mr. Yates's name to it that Mrs. Hoey wrote is called "A Righted Wrong." On the faith of Mr. Yates being the author, I had advanced close upon one hundred and fifty pounds upon it, and Mr. Yates, in fact, could have hardly finished it. So I gave Mrs. Hoey a good sum of money to finish the book, and published it as it stood, with Mr. Yates's name as author; and as, just at that time, I had got a new novel ready for publication by Mrs. Hoey in her own name, I published the two books within a few weeks of each other. Nearly double the number of copies was sold of the book which had Yates's name to it. As a matter of fact, for some years I was paying Yates four hundred pounds each for the novels with his name to them, and Mrs. Hoey's novels with her own name to them were not worth half that sum; this is a fact, curious as it may seem. Going back to the "Black Sheep" business, there was

almost a general understanding that Mr. Dickens would, if possible, persuade authors who wrote serials in "All the Year Round" to let Messrs. Chapman and Hall (his own publishers) have the first refusal of them for book form. And Mr. Yates had, of course, conformed to Mr. Dickens' desire, and let them have "Black Sheep." However, some little time after he had settled with Chapman and Hall, Yates told me he thought they would let me have the book if I would give them fifty pounds for their bargain. I was rather sweet upon the book, and said I would, so he drew a bill upon me for four hundred and fifty pounds, which he took to Chapman and Hall, and brought me a transfer of the copyright. Yates had had close upon twelve hundred pounds for "Black Sheep," and Mrs. Hoey declared to me she only had a very small portion of the money. Even when he had *The World* newspaper, worth about ten thousand pounds a year to him, Yates never seemed to remember the days when my handwriting was worth thousands of pounds to him; and when my turn came to be in monetary troubles, and I asked him to help me, the aid he sent me I returned; but that was a foolish act, for he did not send a large sum. I was the more hurt because I knew he had settled with some very influential men in the City whom he did not care to attack in his paper or meet in society whilst owing them money.

Librarians may safely write Mrs. Cashel Hoey's name as part author of "Black Sheep," "Rock

Ahead," "Forlorn Hope," "Land at Last"; and Mrs. Cashel Hoey's name on the title page of "A Righted Wrong" as sole author.

#### CAPTAIN BURTON AS I KNEW HIM.

Captain, afterwards Sir Richard Burton, as I knew him in about 1860, was a very different man from the almost maudlin sentimental hero Lady Burton made, or pictured him to be in the last years of his life. Let me say at once, that I sincerely hope that Lady Burton did win her gallant husband over to her own noble faith, but she would have obtained more credence had she not over trumpeted her victory, for there was plenty of reason for many years that he might have had some pure religious faith in his mind; for about our best religious beliefs he was often terribly plain spoken. In his younger days, in fact for many years, exceedingly clever devil-may-care Dick Burton had not an atom of religious sentiment in his mind, and he was as free in thought as Darwin on the origin of man, and was one of the firmest supporters of the old Anthropological Society, in St. Martin's Place, in about 1860. I do not imagine any man or woman is always of one mind, and especially in the matter of religious belief; and, but for the fact that, in the later years of his life, Burton was lending his name to literature by no means pure and holy, I could well believe he might have died a noble Catholic in faith, but to me, at least, it seems hard to believe that any truly noble-minded man or woman could, or would, lend their name to literature

full of innuendo, if not worse matter. I refer to Burton's free translation of "The Thousand Nights and a Night," and other books even more against the taste of the pure minded reader. But the voices of Sir Richard and Lady Burton are silent, and perhaps mine should also be about them. But I had so many pleasant business dealings with Burton when he was almost a young man, and I saw so much of him, that when I read Mrs. Burton's account of the later years of his life, I almost wondered whether I had ever known the man the doubtless well-meaning wife pictured.

Perhaps it is not too much to say that Mrs. Burton did not know her husband well during their early married life, and certainly had no control over him until they were both fairly well on in years. For Burton was a rover and traveller at heart; his wife seldom travelled with him, and his best friends never knew when and where he would be likely to turn up. In fact, adventure was his pride, and surprise his delight; for he was as likely to be heard of disguised as a pilgrim off to Mecca and Medina, or exploring "The Lake Regions of Central Africa," as in the Strand with a few Bohemian friends, seeing and enjoying London life. In fact, his was a restless, almost reckless disposition, and travelling over new ground in Africa was his especial delight.

Although Burton was so fond of going almost alone to out-of-the-way places and unfrequented parts of the world, when at home, in light

drawing room society, he was capital company, and an excellent talker. Those of us who knew George Sala in his best mood know what a capital talker he was, and how the ladies would flock round him. But I remember one night, at a rather large gathering of notables at my brother's house at Putney, when Master Burton eclipsed Sala, and had all the ladies round him, even to Mrs. Henry Wood and Mrs. W. H. Wills, two ladies who had no ears for foolish talk.

When Mrs. Burton came to my office with her husband, and we were talking business, she seldom ventured a suggestion of any kind, and as a matter of fact he would not allow her to do so, for if she only half uttered a word, those wonderful eyes of his were upon her, and she was silent in a moment. Burton had not at that time any belief in her business or literary qualities, and he would not let her interfere in his business, even in small matters. I am rather emphatic in this matter, because the time came when Burton was no longer lord and master of his wife, but became almost, if not quite, a slave to her will. As an example of what I mean by his control over his wife's actions, I may mention that once, when he was away from England for some few months, Mrs. Burton wrote, and we put into type, a book about "The Great Teneriffe," and a set of proofs, making between three and four hundred pages in book form, were given to Burton as a surprise. But Mrs. Burton was the most surprised, for he



ordered every particle of the book to be destroyed, and paid the costs, which were over a hundred pounds, out of his own pocket. I do not think he cared a dump about the expense, but his estimation of the book was not complimentary to the author. The above incident will sound rather strange to those who know what curiously laudatory matter Burton in after years allowed his wife to write about him and his life. I published quite a dozen books of travel for Burton, and I think most of them are quite in the front rank with any books of travel of the last half century, while not forgetting Barth, Beke, Livingstone, Du Chaillu, Speke, Grant, Baker, Stanley, and several other travellers of note. But here is a strange fact—not one of Burton's books sold to anything like the same extent as any one of the authors' works I have mentioned. But worse than all, young Winwood Reade went to the coast of Africa, thought he saw a gorilla, and came back and published a volume called "Savage Africa," which had a very good sale, in fact more than any one of Burton's books; as also did two or three volumes by "The Old Shekarry." In fact, several other travellers of the romantic school found good sales for their books.

But here is a fact worth noting—a complete set of Captain Burton's travels are at the present time, and, indeed, have been for some years, worth double the sum of all the complete sets of books of travel by all the travellers I have mentioned. I mean Barth, Beke, Livingstone, Du Chaillu, Speke,

Grant, Baker, Stanley, Reade, and "The Old Shekarry." I lay stress upon this fact because I believed in Burton's books when I published them, and even though they cost me many thousands of pounds for the author and production, for which I got but a poor return, I am glad.

Of course, I am bearing in mind that the fact of there not being a large number of most of Burton's books in existence makes them more scarce, but it does not make them less notable literary works.

I think I may say that even when Burton was lord of himself he was a poor diplomatist, and when the time came that he was ruled by his wife, his reputation as a public man sadly diminished. Burton so much disliked missionaries that he dedicated the first book we published for him, called "Wanderings in West Africa," "To the true friends of Africa," "and *not Exeter Hall.*" At that time Exeter Hall was the main starting point of all English missionaries who went forth on their, as a rule, praiseworthy and mostly dangerous missions. But I am afraid Burton in his, at that time, many travels, had seen some missionaries who were not exactly self-sacrificing men; in fact, he often declared in my hearing that he had seen some whose moral courage and good work in their mission was of a very poor nature. But doubtless Burton's rather one-sided or curious thoughts about religious teaching made him rather severe upon its teachers. Besides, he was no admirer of the dark

racés, and certainly did not consider the poorest kind of black to be much beyond the dumb animal race ; in fact, although he went on a kind of friendly mission to the King of Dahomey, I know he would rather have gone with an armed force strong enough to have knocked that brutal ruler and all his followers into small fragments. Many years ago Burton wanted me to publish his rendering of the "Arabian Nights," but I refused to do so, for at that time there was in the book market a beautiful revised edition, in three volumes, of the same work, by Mr. E. W. Lane, and it is a book that need not be under lock and key in any house. However, all the morbid-minded reading world knows that Burton did publish his version of the old tales, and that after his death Mrs. Burton published an expurgated edition ; indeed, she took a very great interest in the production of the whole of the book with her husband. My limited understanding will not let me believe that such literary work was of a true womanly nature. As regards the great profit said to have been made out of the production of the books, the sum mentioned was as outrageous as some of the stuff in the books themselves, and the story of the destruction of the five thousand pounds manuscript was, I think, equally as outrageous ; as was also the statement made by Mrs. Burton that Burton received hardly any money for his books. I paid him quite three thousand pounds. I willingly admit it was bad pay for such excellent literary work, but I could

easily prove that my profits were a long way behind those of the author.

I am afraid I seem to more than throw some doubt upon some of Mrs. Burton's statements. I am truly sorry the lady is not alive to contradict me. But here let me declare that I never heard the gallant Richard Burton make a statement anyone could, or dare, contradict in his presence ; he was truth itself, and hence, may I say, a bad diplomatist. He had, as I have said, peculiar opinions, to say the least of them ; but they were his own, and he never threw them at anyone in an offensive way. As a matter of fact, Burton hated Consulships ; but he was not a rich man, and these offices gave him good opportunity for travel, and he loved travelling. But can anyone imagine any man more unfitted for the Consulship of Damascus than Captain Burton? He had not, I repeat, at that time, any sympathy with any religion or its professors. He took Mrs. Burton to Damascus with him ; she was, as I have also said, a rigid Catholic, and at Damascus Burton had little sympathy with pilgrims of any creed. His wife pandered only to those of her own faith, and had little regard for those who did not think and say as she did. Thus, Damascus only knew the Burtons for a time, and instead of rising high in the diplomatic world, as Burton's great learning and travels warranted, he was relegated to Trieste, to moulder away his latter days making literal translations of matter of no value to the literature of his own or any other country.

## MR. GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

A portion of the following matter appeared in printed form some years ago ; but as the brilliant writer and journalist has now gone to his long rest, I have modified some of my apparently harsh remarks. Not that I am afraid of a line or a word I have written or may write about Mr. Sala, for I claim to have been a liberal publisher to him for many years. And he not only owed me a large sum of money, but owed me as well some little gratitude for my liberal dealings with him in several ways ; the money is still owing, and the gratitude was never repaid in any form. It was once acknowledged by him, and for a little time it seemed that we should some day stand on fair terms with each other. But, as I shall try to show, I was sadly mistaken.

One of Sala's best volumes was called "Dutch Pictures." We published, I think, his first full-sized novel, in three volumes, called "The Seven Sons of Mammon."

Sala once said he could not write novels. Perhaps he might have added that he tried very hard to do so. However, unless he could have almost equalled Dickens or Thackeray, it was best he should leave the writing of ordinary fiction to less able pens ; for, had he given his pen up to fiction entirely, the Fourth Estate would have lost one of the most brilliant, able, and withal perhaps most prolific writers that ever wrote for newspapers.

After "The Seven Sons of Mammon," we pub-

lished a second novel by Sala, called "Captain Dangerous," a book of much the same pattern as the one first mentioned, but not on the whole so clever. Sala also wrote the greater portion of a third novel, in "Household Words," called "Quite Alone," but failed to send in the last portion of the copy in time for the serial; so Charles Dickens prevailed upon Andrew Halliday to finish the book.

Some years ago, too, I had in my possession some portion of a book of fiction by Sala, to be called, I think, "A Chapter of Accidents"; but after holding it some time I gave it back to him, and I do not think he ever finished the work. So it will be seen from this that Sala did try to make a name as a writer of fiction.

It would be unfair to compare Sala with any writer of fiction now living, and especially to any one of our second-rate novelists. If I did so, I think he should have the best of the argument, but not as a writer of novels of the ordinary length.

And yet his writing is brimful of romance. He was a marvel at metaphor, and his word-painting is always excellent reading, and therefore seldom or never dull.

I think I have known the time when Sala's eyesight was so keen and his penmanship so wonderful that he could almost have written the Lord's Prayer on a sixpence; while, if it suited him, he could write enough matter about a sixpence to fill a good sized volume.

So I take it that the reason why Sala was never

a great writer of fiction was because he must have some subject to write about, be it ever so small ; whereas a writer of fiction—at least, a writer of ordinary fiction—can imagine a lot of sometimes wooden images, move them about, and make them do things possible or impossible, in marionette fashion.

But, after all, there is no doubt that novelists are like other people who have special gifts—these gifts are born in them, not acquired, even with any amount of education or industry, and every inclination.

I should think Sala could, if he had cared to have done so, have boasted of having had reprinted in book form more of his contributions to newspapers and magazines than any writer of the Fourth Estate of his time, and yet there is good readable matter enough of his in the pages of *The Daily Telegraph* to make scores of volumes of excellent literary work.

One of the most interesting books we published for Sala was a work in two volumes, called "My Diary in America in the Midst of War." The greater portion of the matter was reprinted from *The Daily Telegraph*. Some of the chapters are exceedingly amusing, notably one called "Worms," and another called "Niagara in Winter."

I acted as printer's devil to a good many authors in my time, and did so a good deal upon the old principle that when you want anything done, do it yourself. One of my first experiences of printer's



devilship was by no means encouraging. We wanted some matter from an author who had a by no means small opinion of himself, and who had very swell chambers near the City. My brother asked me if I would go to him and explain the urgency for the copy. It so happened the author knew my brother, but he did not know me ; so I journeyed to the Inn, climbed up two flights of stone stairs, and after I had knocked at the outside door several times, the great, at least important, author (as he thought himself) at last opened the inner door, and shouted through the slit of the letter box, "Who are you ; what do you want ?" and then almost barked at me. Finding the sort of gentleman I had to deal with, I merely said, "I am a messenger from Tinsley Brothers, and they will be glad of the promised copy at once." Another bark, and "Tell them it is not ready." "Oh ! very well," I said, "we shall go to press without it." By that time he had opened the door of his den wide enough to see me. He evidently saw there was a likeness between me and the Mr. Tinsley he had seen, and wanted to ask me then who I really was ; however, I was a good way down the first flight of stairs before I merely said, "I will tell my brother what you have said ; in the meantime, pray don't mind about the copy now, we can do very well without it." However, the genial gentleman soon brought the copy to us himself, and was rather apologetic to me for having been so brusque. I merely said, "Don't bark

at me again, even though I may be acting printer's devil." There was nothing in the little event of any importance. The author and I were never bad friends again, and not many years ago, close upon forty years afterwards, we had a genial chat and a glass together.

But no author I ever had dealings with gave me so much trouble about proofs as did George Augustus Sala. As a rule, the books I published for him before and after my brother's death were reprint matter, and therefore it would seem that, after appearing in *The Daily Telegraph* and other important journals, proofs to the author would not be of great importance, but as a matter of fact, they were. Sala's corrections, and often valuable additional matter, were most important for book form, and I was always determined to get the corrected proofs if possible. I have often hunted and found the erratic author in very curious places; for in his young days, when he got on the spree, he was as likely to be unfit for work for weeks as days. At those times he was more than a discredit to his better nature, for when he was himself, he was all an English gentleman should be. I always had an excellent friend in Mrs. Sala (his first wife), and when I called at their house, if she said, "Come in, Mr. Tinsley," I knew her lord was at home and at work, but if she shook her head, I knew it was no use to stay. And what a charming little woman she was, one of the sweetest and most patient wives that ever graced a man's home! She never

professed to be learned or witty, and at her husband's table, as I have seen her, surrounded by a goodly company of men and women of wit and learning, not one of them could have imagined that she had worked hard in her young days. For some years Sala's excellent wife had ample cause to have abandoned him altogether, but she loved her lord too well to resort to such measures. Besides, she knew he was a good and loving husband to her when he was in his right mind. She would not follow him about when he was away on his drinking bouts, but as a rule went to her parents or some relations at or near Greenwich, and so highly was she respected by Mr. Joseph Levy and his son Edward, now Sir Edward Lawson, of *The Daily Telegraph*, that they always advanced her all the money she required for pressing claims and personal comforts.

When Sala returned home after one of his mad freaks, he was very miserable ; but his ever-forgiving guardian angel would soon be by his side, and down he would sit with a huge wet towel round his head, and his gifted and ever ready pen would not be still for hours at a time, until a heap of good literary work had been done.

I think I am right in saying that Sala received a large sum per annum for his work on *The Daily Telegraph*, but for his pay he had to write a stipulated number of columns of matter during the year. He was often behind with his work, and the best chance he had of making up his lost time was his Royal Academy work. But even though he did that

dead horse work wonderfully well, it was seldom as palatable to him as many of the artists thought, and some of the words I have known him use would have astonished some of his best Royal Academy friends.

Doubtless, this little growl at the dead lion is somewhat out of place and time, but it would not have been written only that years ago, after his more erratic days, when I had long ceased to have dealings with him, and, in fact, had given up all hope of my money, one day after Mrs. Sala's death, he walked into my office with as much good humour and freedom as in the old days, and said frankly, "Tinsley, I owe you some money, and I want to repay it." The announcement was like a gleam of sunshine to me, for I was a good deal in difficulties at the time; but, luckily, I did not for a moment imagine he was going to dole out the notes and gold, so I was not disappointed in that way. What he proposed was to write a series of interesting articles for my magazine, and allow me to reprint them in book form. In fact, I was not to pay him any money until the old debt or most of it was paid. I was glad of the offer, and was content to think the conditions reasonable, especially as the matter in book form alone seemed certain of a large sale. He himself proposed that I should be printer's devil to him again. In a most earnest manner he said, "You pass my house every morning to business, and copy shall be ready on a fixed date every month." In fact, all the

business part of the arrangement was made as plain and straightforward as it could be ; and his last injunctions to me were, " Now don't forget the date, and copy shall be ready, and if it is not, don't leave me until you get it ; in fact, call and call until you do get it." In Sala's younger days no such promises would have influenced me a great deal ; but he had sown most of his wild oats, and as I have said, his charming wife was dead, and he seemed in great sorrow. Even though then not an old man, he was not strong enough to play with his constitution again much, and I quite thought he would at least keep his promise to a good extent, if not in full. However, I began again in earnest to act printer's devil to him. The first time I called there was perhaps some trifling excuse : he had not been very well, but said copy should be ready in a day or two. After waiting that time, I got no copy at all, and had to insert in my magazine a paltry excuse about Mr. Sala's health, for he was quite well enough to do other work. Still, I was to have double quantity next month ; but after haunting his doorstep until I was ashamed to do so, I got about a fourth of the matter promised. The next month I got less copy still, and in the third month I got none at all, and was insulted into the bargain ; for he sent me word by his maid servant that he would not be worried by me any longer, and yet, as I have, I think, shown, I had only done what he told me to be sure and do. However, I did not mourn over the loss, although I was vexed at being fooled

into believing a man who had fooled me so often in times gone by.

Happily it is very rare that literary men go to law with one another. One of the most stupid, and, as it turned out, the most cruel, cases of the kind I remember, was George Sala's action for libel against poor, harmless, and as a rule well-meaning Hain Friswell. About that time I had some influence with Sala, and I have always thought that had I heard of the foolish action before it was too late, I could have saved some ill-feeling, and Friswell a good deal of money. However, by accident or from some other cause, I only heard of the case a day or two before it was to be tried at Guildhall. Even then I made my way to Sala, but found any intervention of mine was too late; for Sala was in the hands of some shrewd solicitors, who knew he was right in law. For Friswell was decidedly wrong. He had accused Sala of being the author of some very questionable literary matter, and had been stupid enough to reprint it from a dead journal into a live book. But even then the libel was so well within doors, and so little known, that the harm to Sala in any way, except for perhaps some feeling, was very small indeed. However, the case was tried very quickly at Guildhall, and Sala got five hundred pounds damages, and then, in my humble way of estimating such actions, the actual force of the libel began. For long before the verdict was given, the journal in which the accusing matter had been written was dead and

forgotten, even in the street where it found birth. And the volume in which Friswell had reprinted the libel matter would certainly have had a very limited sale, and, therefore, the knowledge of the libel was also likely to be very limited.

But the moment the case was tried at Guildhall, it became the common property of every reporter and newspaper in the world, and who knows how many readers believed Sala or Friswell?

Those who are fond of law, and what they are often pleased to call their rights, will not, of course, believe in my way of regarding the law and the spread of libel. But I dare repeat here what I have scribbled more than once or twice in these rambling notes, that, as a rule, even a vicious and wholesale libel is almost harmless until it gets into a court of law, and then it is, as a rule, sown broadcast, and mostly grows rank and mischievous in the extreme.

Poor Friswell never recovered the loss he sustained in the action, and not being in anything like good health at the time, the shock of the loss of some hard earned means doubtless hurried him faster on to his early grave than good fortune would have done.

Friswell was doubtless a happy author when he was allowed to dedicate an edition of his book, called "The Gentle Life," to Her Majesty the Queen.

Even if the money Sala made Friswell pay had done the former any good service, there would have seemed some good in it. But he declared to me



over and over again that the "damned" action gave him more trouble in money matters than he had ever known, for what with pressing creditors and begging letter writers, it seemed to be imagined that he had inherited a large fortune.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ROBERT CRAWFORD.

“Mr. Tinsley—my friend Mr. Robert Crawford, of Edinburgh”: those were as nearly as possible the words Christopher Pond used when he introduced the noted distiller to me more than a year ago, and from then till now I have, I hope, had the good opinion of Robert Crawford. Pond sleeps the sleep of the just while Crawford lives. He and old age seem to be no relations yet awhile, and I hope I may say, may the day be far distant before old age does knock at his door. It would have taken a good deal to have ruined either Crawford or Pond; but I well remember the time when it was the delight of one or the other to find that he had been more liberal than the other in a good cause.

But for some years now Edinburgh and home comforts have had more claim and attraction than Bohemian life in London for Robert Crawford. What was London's loss is Edinburgh's gain, for Crawford is a true lover of science, literature, art, the drama, and music; had Robert Burns met such a man, Scotland would never have had to regret the neglect of its poet, whose works are the admiration of the civilised world. Robert Crawford's love of

the fine arts generally reminds me of Mr. Gillot, in his time the noted steel pen maker, and Mr. Sheepshanks. Both had splendid galleries of pictures, and Gillot a fine collection of stringed instruments, perhaps mostly of the violin kind. Mr. Sheepshanks also, after collecting his gallery of pictures, turned his attention to forming a very fine library of books, old and new. There was some mystery as to where Mr. Sheepshanks obtained his rare knowledge of old books, which was so great that he often bought books of great value for a few pence or shillings that were worth pounds each, even from the most noted old booksellers in London and the country. Percy Holmes, of Holywell Street, who had been a bookseller all his life, made a small fortune out of scarce books and valuable information about them, which knowledge Mr. Sheepshanks gave him. And now in our day there is Robert Crawford, who can boast of a fine gallery of pictures, some good books, an almost unique collection of the oldest and best violins, while his interest in the drama and theatres is great, for he is a good part owner of several, and a shareholder in a number of theatres. In fact, it would seem that Crawford, finding his distilling business running merrily, has turned his attention to pictures, books, music, and the drama almost as a pastime. But over my shoulder there seems to come a command from an old friend to leave his business alone, and there is just a Scotch accent in it that reminds me of a voice I seldom hear now.

## CHRISTOPHER POND.

I am afraid it has already been too plainly seen that I am apt to try to make heroes and heroines of men and women whose good deeds have not always been publicly known, although I certainly dare not insist that, because I happen to think some of the men and women I have known heroes and heroines, it follows that they were or are. But I cannot help saying that I have a great admiration for any man or woman who does a good deed, and hardly cares to find it fame. In fact, I think I may say I have known some good men and women who gloried in doing good deeds, and were more content when the receivers of their aid were thankfully silent than with a thousand empty words of thanks.

At all events, if I am not right in the main about those who delight to give in the name of what they are pleased to call charity, I think I am about those who look upon being kind to their fellow creatures as a true religion, and are often more truly happy after having done a good deed than the poorest receiver of the richest gift ever given.

Such a really good man was Christopher Pond who was, if not quite the main founder, certainly the principal maker of the great business known now as Spiers and Pond, Limited. Pond had not always been a rich man; in fact, it is pretty well known that when quite a young man he kept a not very large refreshment stall or tent outside the gates of some public gardens in Melbourne, and soon after became

a partner with Mr. Spiers as a refreshment caterer. The energy and enterprise of both men was doubtless great, but Pond soon became the real business man in their venture ; in fact, some years before his much too early and certainly much lamented death, Mr. Spiers hardly ever questioned any speculation, however large, that Pond was in favour of. Indeed, I once heard Spiers say that he felt sure that if Pond had built a hotel or restaurant in the middle of Salisbury Plain it would have been a success. And there was little doubt about the secret of Pond's success as a trader and a man, for the moment he began to make money he became a very liberal and humane man, and his eyes seemed ever on the watch to do a good deed ; in fact, his liberality was often so great that had his partner known one-half of the good deeds and their cost he would have rebelled ; but Pond did not run any risk of that, for as a rule he gave large sums out of his own pocket, even when the firm had the credit of the good done.

I think I am nearly right in saying that there was only a verbal agreement between Spiers and Pond, and that of a kind that would startle some partners in a large business ; this was, that whichever partner retired or died first, only the actual value of the property *without any goodwill* should go to the heirs of the deceased partner. It so happened that the estate when Pond died was very great, and there was plenty of money for all concerned, but had there been only the goodwill of any

value the agreement might have been hard upon Mrs. Pond and her children.

Perhaps I am right in saying that at Pond's death Spiers did behave liberally to Mrs. Pond, for he offered a few thousand pounds more for Pond's share of the stock than it was valued at for Pond's heirs.

I am sure the wish was not father to the thought, but Pond did remark to me, "I feel certain Spiers will break his neck in the hunting field one of these days." I hope I am right in saying that Spiers is still living, but he laid his more than generous hearted partner to rest many a year ago.

I feel I must try and make a hero of my good friend Pond, but let me declare at once, not because I ever had a shilling of his money, although he more than once made my heart glad with specimens of vintages that would have graced better tables than my own, and, even though I often tried, I could never in any way equal his good nature to me.

If the following account of some of Pond's good deeds is not a proof that he was a most generous man, I would humbly ask the reader to let me think he was. I do not remember the year or date, but it was soon after the Gaiety Restaurant had been remodelled and opened by Spiers and Pond. I was there with Pond and some other friends, and somewhat to my amazement, Henry Sinclair, a very good actor in his time, came and took a seat not far from where we were sitting. I saw at once that the poor fellow looked very ill indeed, so I went to him. I

found he was vainly trying to finish a plate of soup, and I was sorry indeed to see he was so ill. After some conversation, poor Sinclair walked very languidly away, and I am almost ashamed to remember that I had almost forgotten the incident, until, when a few days afterwards I was at the same place with Pond, a friend came and whispered to me that poor Henry Sinclair was dead, and had left four or five orphan children, one a bad cripple, his poor sickly wife having died some time before.

I was then more than amazed, for although I had seen Sinclair was very ill, I had no thought that he was so near his end. Pond saw I was concerned, and asked me what was the matter. I tried to remind him of the day I had spoken to poor Sinclair, but he had not noticed me doing so. But that fact made no difference to his good heart and splendid right hand, which was in a moment in a breast pocket of his, in which he always carried a bundle of bank notes, and was always even proud when he had given one or more of them for a good cause. He pushed one into my hand and said, "There's a tenner, Tinsley; send it on to the family at once," saying at the same time, "If the family will let me, I will pay for the keep and education of the crippled child for three years to start with"; he added, "Mind, the child must have a good outfit of clothes, for which I will pay the moment I know the cost, and as regards the different things, cutlery, towels, books, &c., she will require at the school,



Mrs. Pond will see about them." Pond was very emphatic about the child going to the school well dressed and provided for in every way, for he said, "It is quite a ladies' school, and I know it is a good one, for there are three other orphans there I am paying for."

Mrs. Lionel Brough, who was then a neighbour of the Sinclairs, kindly undertook all the work to get the child ready for school; and I well remember she wrote and told me she had taken little Jessie Sinclair there well provided for, even to a *new crutch*. I do not think that Pond ever knew or spoke to little crippled Sinclair, and perhaps the child never saw her benefactor.

The above was only one of a good many times I saw Pond's good right hand go to that breast pocket that was so near his good heart.

Just one more instance of Pond's thoughtfulness at the right time. He never allowed one of their barmaids, who had been in the firm any reasonable time, to leave to get married without a present of a five pound note at least. Ten pounds was more usual, and I once saw him give a manageress, who had been some years in their service, fifty pounds.

In fact, I think I may say that Christopher Pond knew well how to make money, and that he even knew better how to spend it. And I dare to say I wish he had known how to live, or at least to better nurse a constitution when it was not too late. I am not hinting at a depraved life, but he would work when even doctors and nurses tried

very hard to show him how unfair he was to himself. At the risk of seemingly pandering to a memory, I cannot help mentioning my last visit to Pond, at his residence, just outside of Margate. I was at Margate at the time, and he would send for me, even though his doctor had begged of him not to see any company. When I went into his room he would get up, worse than all, would go round the grounds with me in a sedan chair, and when his good nurse begged him to have some medicine, he told her if she gave it to him he would throw it at her, glass and all. I tore myself away from him, knowing I was doing harm by staying ; but had I have known his end was so near, I would have begged to have held that good right hand of his in mine as long as his noble heart was beating, and have felt I was a better man for doing so.

#### THE DEGENERATION OF ENGLISH PANTOMIME.

The old order as regards English pantomime has changed indeed during the last thirty years in London, and, in fact, in most of the cities and towns of the three kingdoms.

During the early part of this century, and certainly up to the number of years I have mentioned, pantomimists were very much in request in London and in all towns and cities at Christmas time. By pantomimists, I mean in this case clowns, pantaloons, harlequins, stage policemen, and often clever sprites, and other acrobats.

Nelson Lee was the prime factor of pantomimes

for the "down Shoreditch" and "over the water" parts of London—having in his time written, I think, the astonishing number of over one hundred pantomimes for different theatres. That past master in the knowledge of Fairyland and its inhabitants, E. L. Blanchard, for about half a century turned into sweet verse and song our old fairy stories for pantomimes for Drury Lane Theatre.

About thirty years ago pantomimes were produced at Christmas time at Covent Garden Theatre, the Haymarket, the Princess's, Sadlers Wells, and I think one or two other West End Theatres of importance. There were also pantomimes at the Standard, the City of London, the Surrey, Astley's, the Grecian, the Victoria, the Britannia, and other theatres "down East."

The City of London has long ceased to exist for pantomime or any other kind of drama. Sadlers Wells has also ceased to give even a shade of Grimaldi fun.

But in Shoreditch and the East of London, theatres offer about as many pantomimes as of old. The destruction of Astley's is a loss indeed to the patrons of circus as well as pantomime.

One can almost imagine the amazement of Mr. Payne (father of Harry and Fred of that name), the elder Lauris, Flexmore, Boleao, and other excellent pantomimists, were they alive to see the scarcity of true English pantomime at the best theatres in London for pantomime entertainment. They would be still more amazed to find

that the harlequinade of so-called pantomimes at this date is but a shade of what it was in their days.

But the cause, or rather causes, of the degeneration of English pantomime, as known in the time of Rich, Grimaldi, and down to about 1850 or 1860, are perhaps not far to seek.

I am afraid that when pantomimists began to talk in harlequinades they struck the first blow at their art, for pantomime clowns and pantaloons were not always witty in speech, though excellent in dumb show. These remarks do not refer to jesting clowns, whose business it has been, and in circuses is to be, at least funny, if not always droll in speech.

Another cause was the introduction of broadly comic scenes into the opening of pantomime—scenes altogether foreign to the stories of the pantomimes themselves.

A noted case of the kind happened at Drury Lane some twenty years ago, when that noble house was managed by Frederick Chatterton. The comedians in the dramatic portion of the pantomime acted a kitchen scene on a washing day, and played merry games with each other with hot soapsuds and a steaming copper, hot flat irons, and I think a red-hot poker, much to the disgust of the clown and his companions, who, at that time, had good right to claim that and such scenes for their harlequinade.

Andrew Halliday was behind the scenes at Drury Lane one night, and heard the clown and his companions protest very strongly against their business

being infringed upon, and wrote for *The Pall Mall Gazette* two or three articles on the subject, called, I think, "Joey's Lament," or "Joey's Occupation Gone." In fact, he printed some of the remarks he had overheard—much to the amazement of the speakers, who had not dreamed there was a "chield among them taking notes," who meant "to print 'em."

Nevertheless, from about that time the openings of pantomimes have grown in length, and harlequinades have withered away in proportion—the latter being now thought little of by managers, and, I am afraid, audiences.

In what was called the "good old days" of English pantomime, the openings, as a general rule, were good dramatic renderings of well-known fairy stories. Children followed with bated breath the fortunes of their favourite heroes and heroines of fairy land, and were delighted when the fairy queen in the transformation scene made everyone happy, and called forth the clown and his companions to romp through the side-splitting scenes of the harlequinade. I suppose it would be almost impossible to name the clown who first talked some of his part. I should guess not Grimaldi—except, of course, when he sang "Hot Codlins."

But the innovations in pantomime grew from very small beginnings. Did the lack of good trick scenes and pantomime surprises ruin harlequinades? Perhaps this had a good deal to do with it. Clowns and pantaloons should have been

very much on their mettle for new and surprising scenes and tricks the moment they found music hall and other comedians trenching on their sacred ground. But they were not, and, as a result, the entertainments in these days that are called pantomimes are nothing of the kind. Take, for example—and no doubt a clever example—one of the Drury Lane Theatre gorgeous Christmas so-called pantomimes, in which there is, as a rule, over three hours' witty talking, singing, dancing, and processions, ending with a harlequinade less than an hour long, and not all of that, in the strict sense of the word, pantomime.

What a change from the time when audiences waited impatiently for Mr. Clown and his merry companions, and a harlequinade of over three hours' duration, and at some theatres a double company of pantomimists to keep the fun going! Yet one cannot help feeling sorry that the old order of things has changed so much, and that simple-storied pantomimes, with plenty of excellent scenes and tricks in dumb show, are, if not lost for ever, at least very much out of fashion at the present time. For the old pantomime did not require the smallest effort of thought. We were interested in the simple fairy openings, laughed until we were tired at the harlequinade, and went home without having been almost bewildered by the sayings and doings of a whole host of clever actors and actresses, gorgeous dresses, beautiful processions, almost too elaborate even in this very much educated age.

Quite an interesting volume might be written about the scenes and tricks in the old pantomimes, when pantomime artists made a study of their business for harlequinade from year's end to year's end, so as to be quite ready with the tricks and properties complete, or models of them, at Christmas-time. Many of the best old tricks no doubt came up from time to time, and always went down well with the youngsters. The clown and pantaloon murdered the harlequin, and the stage policeman was not only killed, but blown to pieces too many times to count.

There were very good pantomimes played at the Haymarket Theatre during the early part of Buckstone's management. At that time the clever Leclercq family were banded together, and did much the same sort of acting, singing, and dancing that was done some years afterwards, by the also very clever Vokes family.

There was a scene in one of the Haymarket pantomimes, which was, I think, a very good specimen of pantomime art.

It was a very well arranged kitchen, furnished with an abundance of chairs and tables, a good trick dresser with a revolving top, and plenty of plates, dishes and dish-covers displayed on the walls. When the scene opened, the clown and pantaloon were discovered dressed as a cook and kitchenmaid, and busy rolling out an enormous piece of dough. In doing so, they of course made a pretty mess, and got peals of laughter for their merry gambols.



After a time the dough was rolled out to the size of a small blanket ; then came the question—what was to be put inside the proposed pudding ?

However, this was soon answered. The harlequin came upon the stage, and the clown and pantaloon killed him and, placing his body on the dresser, set to work at other comic business to attract the attention of the audience in another direction. The top of the dresser meanwhile revolved, down went the real, and up came a mock harlequin, whom, to the extreme amazement of the younger portion of the audience, who had not seen the trick, the clown and pantaloon presently proceeded to cut to pieces. As they cut off limb after limb with much seeming brutality, some of the little ones shrieked with fear, while those who were in the secret shrieked as loudly with laughter. The harlequin's limbs were all wrapped up in the dough, and the pudding, tied up in a huge pudding-cloth, dropped into a seemingly boiling copper. Then the table was laid for a large number of guests. As soon as these had arrived, the pudding was taken from the copper, placed upon the table, the string cut by the clown, and up from a star trap below, and through the table, came the living harlequin, as full of mischief, and as lissome as ever.

Mine is a very poor description of the scene, but those versed at all in such tricks can, I hope, see what a lot of fun could be made out of it. It was one of thousands of good scenes and tricks played in old English pantomimes. But I suppose, if proof

were wanted that dumb shows are out of date in these days, we need go no further back than a few years since, when Mr. Freeman Thomas and Mr. William Purkis, with the veteran Joseph Cave as stage manager, tried the experiment of what they called good old English pantomime at Covent Garden Theatre, and paid very dearly for the speculation.

Mention of the above reminds me of the peculiar failure of one of the cleverest circus clowns living, who did not succeed in that pantomime. This was Little Sandy, who did not seem half so funny on the stage as when fooling on the sawdust.

No history of more modern pantomime would be complete without a record of the surprising work of Mr. George Conquest and his clever companies at the Grecian Theatre in the City Road. Mr. Conquest's wonderful acrobatic feats in the openings of his pantomimes were almost equalled by his acting. His clever impersonations of several animals, a tree, some human monstrosities, an octopus, etc., were nothing short of creations, so Mr. Conquest troubled himself very little about the length of his harlequinade. He and his son George, and from time to time such artists as Arthur Williams, Harry Monkhouse, Herbert Campbell, Harry Nichols, and other clever actors and actresses, in the openings of the Grecian pantomimes, gave the clown and his companions hard work to extract hearty laughs from the audience.

Mr. Conquest's impersonation of a monkey was one of the most surprising things of its kind ever seen. Mr. Frank Buckland, one of the most learned naturalists of his time, and who for years studied the ways of living monkeys in his own house, gave it as his opinion that Mr. Conquest's impersonation of the animal was wonderfully true to nature. In one of the scenes Mr. Conquest managed to get his monkey's tail on to the footlights. After doing so he very gradually ceased his merry gambols, turned his face slowly to where his tail was being singed, and ended by giving a truly marvellous exhibition of monkey wrath. It seemed as though he would tear the stage to pieces. He bit and shook the footlights' guard-wire, hissed and growled at the burning lamps, and so well represented the rage of a savage beast that it might easily have been imagined he was really and truly a monster monkey and not an extraordinarily clever actor playing the part. The chase after the monkey was a sight to behold. Mr. Conquest made numerous aerial flights to the roof of the theatre, and from there down through the stage, thirty or forty feet each jump. The star traps in the Grecian stage were capital specimens of the kind; indeed, the whole stage was so perforated that no one in the front of the house could guess whence the monkey would next appear.

It will be seen from the above remarks that in speaking of degeneration of pantomime I more especially refer to the harlequinades, for I take it that they were the origin of dumb show—the true meaning of

“pantomime.” No part of an entertainment in which there is singing and talking can be truly so described. But beyond all doubt “pantomime” is the most attractive name for a Christmas entertainment, and it is more than likely that if any manager dropped it and called his production by any other title, such as a Fairy Extravaganza, he would lose money by so doing.

It is a peculiar fact that for some years past there have been more complete pantomimes played at music halls than at theatres, where Charles Lauri, Paul Martinetti, and many of their profession, play capital short dumb shows all the year round.

#### MOTHER SHIPTON AND DOCTOR CUMMING.

When I was a boy at home, Mother Shipton's book of prophecies was quite a text book that country people quoted, and often a good deal believed, and when any startling event occurred, that or something like it would be found in the old witch's foretellings. Old Moore's and Murphy's almanacks contained even the weather forecasts, and now and then seeming prophecies of great doings, events, wars, &c., in the same way that the dreamer Zadkiel made money in after years.

But perhaps the most dangerous prophet of his time was Dr. Cumming, who for some years preached and wrote about the end of this world so many times that happily his word at last was not taken at all seriously. But I well remember that, at the time of one or two of the earlier

dates that Cumming gave for the end of all things on earth, thousands of weak-minded and superstitious people neither ate, drank, nor slept for days and nights until the dates were past. It was strange how so learned a man as Dr. Cumming could believe, or that many of his equally learned followers could be persuaded by him into believing, that any mortal on earth could name the time of the Judgment Day; for is it not in Holy Writ positively stated that "The day and the hour no man knoweth?" In fact, it seems to me that Dr. Cumming was for some years a much more mischievous prophet than Mother Shipton ever was; for she put her date for the end of the world a long way beyond the at all likely lives of human beings of her time, and, in fact, centuries ahead.

According to the history of Mother Shipton, her mother was living at Knaresborough, in Yorkshire, in 1484, the second year of the reign of Henry the Seventh. She was an old impostor, and rather commanded alms than obtained them in a humble manner; and her chronicler says that "the devil, who is a good scholar" (a rather speculative remark, but perhaps Miss Corelli can better settle that question than I), seeing Miss Shipton sitting melancholy under a tree by the side of a river, accosted her in the form of a very handsome young man, and said, "Pretty maid, why so sad? Thy age is too tender for thy head to be troubled with the cares of the world; come, tell me what is the matter, and if it be within my power to assist thee,

as I am sure it is, thou shall not want a friend in me." Agatha Shipton cast up her eyes, and did not expect a devil in such a comely shape ; in a lamentable tone, she recounted all her troubles and inability to obtain the necessities of life (query Miss Corelli's poor author ?). "Pish," said the devil, "this is nothing, all shall be well." He then ordered her to meet him at the same place the next day, and he would bring some friends with him ; for he told her he was resolved to marry her. She kept her promise, and he took her to his grand home, where rich garments were provided for her and a banquet was served with all the varieties the whole world could afford. (Dare I once again query Rimânez banquet in "The Sorrows of Satan"?) After the banquet, the devil took her into his private room, and told her who he was, and the wonderful things he could do—in fact, that he was a spirit immaterial, and not burdened with a body ; so that he could pierce through the earth and ransack its storehouse, and bring its richest treasures to those who served him. He also told her he could disturb the elements, stir up the thunders and lightnings, destroy the best things that were created for the use of man, and appear in any shape he pleased ; and he promised to bestow upon her the same wonderful powers he himself possessed. It is something to the credit of the devilish narrative of Mother Shipton that there is no mention of Heaven in it.

It is not surprising that the devil behaved in a

most shameful manner to Agatha Shipton, and then he and his palace vanished in a fearful storm ; but he sent her back to her own home, bound to a chariot, which was drawn through the air by two flaming fiery dragons. Of course, it is not fair to mention Milton or Schiller with such rubbish as Mother Shipton's mythical adventures, but perhaps there is some likeness in all the devils authors have invented, from Mother Shipton's even to Miss Corelli's Rimánez. When Agatha Shipton returned to her own home, the neighbours flocked round, and were amazed to see such a change in her. When she went away she had been plump and fresh ; when she returned, the pale shrivelled skin on her cheeks seemed to collapse to be devoured by her hunger-starved jaws ; but she would not eat or take alms, and took no delight in human society, and she bade her neighbours leave her. It was not long before the devil came to her again, in the same handsome form as in the first instance, and played her devilish pranks and bewitched her, and gave her the power to conjure up strange sights and sounds to amaze and frighten the people around. And many pranks she played them.

In due time Agatha Shipton gave birth to the most horrible child that was ever born, and at its birth she ended her miserable career ; the child, which was supposed to be by the devil, became in time called "Mother Shipton." And even though her deformities were almost horrible in the extreme, she lived to be a wonderful



witch, and hundreds of weak-minded people consulted her on many things and events about themselves and other people.

There is a peculiarity in the story of Mother Shipton, which is, that the devil, her father, never seems to have visited or personally influenced her in any way. How much unseen power and influence he had over her is, perhaps, a matter for speculation. At all events, there is no denying the fact that, whether the old prophecies were made by Mother Shipton or her mother or father, some of them have come to pass, if not to the letter, certainly in many respects. Of course, it was nothing very wonderful to prophesy that the stones of a wrecked church would be used to build a bridge with, nor that a (or the) great fire of London would happen, for the City was for centuries a huge mass of houses, mostly built with wood, and many of the streets and alleys were so narrow that when the town was well on fire the flames were likely to have their own way until they had no more fuel to feed upon, and would have been as likely to begin and end at Bread and Milk Street as Pudding Lane and Pie Corner. Mother Shipton's prophecies about Henry VIII. and Cardinal Wolsey are certainly curious, if not at all wonderful; and her foretelling that Wolsey would see York, but never go there, gave her no doubt some standing as a prophetess.

It would seem that in the old days there was some reason in burning witches and putting down

witchcraft, as much as possible; for even if such women as Mother Shipton were serious and clever in their often devilish works, thousands of fairly sane men and women in those dark ages suffered much from pestilent prophecies about themselves and those around them. Whether Shakespeare believed in witchcraft or not—except for dramatic purposes—is not clear. At all events, burning would have been too good for the three old hags who lured Macbeth on to his devilish work, and the destruction of Macduff's innocent wife and children. It seems to me not at all improbable that Shakespeare, when he wrote the play of Macbeth, had the destruction of the power of witches and witchcraft in his mind, for had he believed in witches and their craft, he might have made Macbeth kill Macduff, and left him to reign in all his bloody-minded power.

I have not quoted or hardly hinted at one half of the hellish deeds, acts, and strange prophecies mentioned in the Shipton book, nor of the convincing ways she had of showing those who visited and consulted her. When the two lords consulted her about Wolsey's visit to York, to convince them she could do strange things she took her linen handkerchief from her head and laid it in the flames, and it did not burn. And she told one of the lords he would be beheaded, and so he was, at about the time she mentioned; but of course the hearsay of events and prophecies of Mother Shipton of about 1500 would not in these days be worthy of the smallest

credence, but for the peculiar lines at the end of the little book, which of course do not name the Crystal Palace, iron ships, railways, and electricity, &c. But the reference to them is peculiar, if nothing more :

“Great accidents the world will fill with woe,  
And carriages without horses go ;  
Whilst in the twinkling of an eye  
Around the world our thoughts shall fly.  
In England now will come to pass,  
A house that shall be built of glass.”

And the couplet about iron boats is strange :

“In the water shall iron float,  
The same as now a wooden boat.”

And her mention of the discovery of “a herb and a root that all men shall suit” seems to point to potatoes and tobacco. But her prophecy of the end of the world was as bad as Doctor Cumming's :

“The world to an end shall come  
In eighteen hundred and eighty-one.”

I hope it will not be thought I have taken the Shipton prophecies seriously to heart. I have only taken the old chat book, or at least portions of it, as I found them. It seems that Mother Shipton lived to a good old age, and that the epitaph on her tomb stone is, or was some years ago, as follows :

“Her prophecies shall still survive,  
And ever keep her name alive.”

#### MR. GEORGE HUMPHREYS.

I have several times been the guest of my friend Mr. George Humphreys, Past Master of the Tin Plate

Workers, at jolly City banquets, one of the merriest of which was with the Playing Card Makers, when Mr. P. T. Barnum was at Olympia with his great show. Mr. Barnum was the guest that evening of Sheriff Harris; but the moment he was presented to the master Mr. Harris left him on some business matter, and, strange to say, no one seemed to know or speak to the great showman; so I at once made my way to him, and even though we had not met for close upon twenty years he recognised me at once, and asked kindly after several old friends. Being fairly well known myself, I was almost pestered for introductions to my old friend, and I soon found he was getting as much attention as the Lord Mayor and "the Master of the Playing Card Makers"; so I called my pack off, and Barnum, with a merry twinkle in his eye as I was going, said, "Guess, Tinsley, you are a pretty good showman," and I did not imagine the parting shot a bad one from such a showman. But he forgot I had got a capital exhibit; at least, he was more easy to show and caused less anxiety than one of his own exhibits many years before, called "What is it?" All eyes were on Barnum that evening for a speech, but he was never a great speaker; still, when on his feet for that purpose, he always succeeded, for his memory was stuffed with amusing stories, and he had, as a rule, a story for the time and place. It seemed that soon after his second marriage he was elected mayor of one of the towns in the States, and his wife expected he would have a grand coach, like the Lord Mayor of London,

and all the surroundings, and when she found there was to be no civic procession she was very much cast down, the more so when he told her there would certainly be no silver cradle.

Unfortunately, I was not with my friend Humphreys at a City dinner, which would have been his last dinner of any kind but for his strength and courage and wonderful presence of mind. A scoundrel grabbed his watch, at the same time striking him a terrible blow in the face, and tried to push him under a train in Moorgate Street Station ; but he saved himself, and caught the vagabond by the throat. The strangest part of the matter was that the man Humphreys was holding seemed a most respectable looking fellow, who cried bitterly, and declared that the man who did the deed had jumped into the train and got away ; and still more strange, when he was searched in the railway station by a policeman and the porters, not a sign of the watch was to be seen, so the railway people tried to persuade Humphreys to let the man go. However, he felt sure he had got the right man, so he kept firm hold of him until he was in the police station, where he had him stripped, and it was not until his last sock was taken off that the watch was found in it, he having concealed it under the sole of his foot. But so much impressed were the police by the man's behaviour during the searching that they assured Mr. Humphreys that he had accused the wrong man. When the watch was found they bundled him headlong into a cell and threw his

clothes after him, and I am afraid Humphreys offered a small bribe to the sergeant in charge to let him go into the cell with the scoundrel for about five minutes. At the trial of the man at the Old Bailey, the presiding judge complimented Humphreys upon his courage and persistency in the case. The prisoner proved to be one of a gang of desperate swell-mobsmen, and so enraged were some of his comrades at Mr. Humphreys' pluck in the case that they sent him several threatening letters.

I remember another case of pluck and daring shown by a gentleman I know, who visited the Crystal Palace on the day the Shah of Persia was fêted there. My friend was a very careful man with his money when going anywhere into a mob, so he seldom took more with him than he was likely to want. On that occasion he had less than a pound's worth of silver in his trousers pocket, when fenced in by the mob at the entrance to the High Level Station, and he noticed that three gentlemanly looking men paid him a good deal of attention—in fact, offered to protect him against being too much squeezed. Presently he found his money gone, and, in addition, a strange hand in his pocket. Evidently the thief was not satisfied with his first draw; however, my friend had the hand in his grip in a moment, and called out, "Pickpocket!" and "I've got him!" and held him until he got aid. When the fellow was searched, although he had not about him silver to the amount

my friend had lost, he had a purse containing about one hundred pounds in bank notes, and some gold. Still, my friend was so sure that he had got the right man that he persisted in having him locked up for the night ; but the two other gentlemen appeared on the scene, and offered bail to any amount ; but as their security was in America, nothing could be settled before the next morning. During the time the discussion had been going on, a message came from another police station not far off, to the effect that a robbery of bank notes and gold had just before been committed, and intimated that if any prisoner was taken with money of the kind, he was to be detained. The prisoner had, no doubt, passed my friend's money to one of his companions, but had retained the valuable purse. The defence made by the thief was very poor ; he declared he had won the money on one of our racecourses, and on a race that was run too late for him to have got to the Crystal Palace at the time he did ; in fact, the owner of the purse and notes proved beyond a doubt the money was his. The two gentlemen who were so ready with security the night of the charge did not appear the next morning, but the police marked them so well that they soon had them in safe keeping for a good time, for they were part of an American gang of clever thieves, who lived well on their dishonest work for a time. I think I am right in saying that the owner of the purse gave my old friend ten pounds for his gallant conduct. If this account



should meet the eye of the gentleman I have presumed to call an old friend, I hope he will excuse a bit of familiarity perhaps hardly warranted on my part.

## CHAPTER IX.

HENRY S. LEIGH.

A short note I printed in "Tinsley's Journal" about Henry S. Leigh did not please my old friend James, better known as "Jimmy," Hitchman, and drew from him the following interesting facts about our mutual friend, the noted Strand Bohemian. I need hardly say that Hitchman wished me to print the matter, and I more than willingly do so:—

MY DEAR TINSLEY—Your interesting little note about my lamented friend, Harry Leigh, is—pardon me for saying it—so imperfect, and so taken up with one side only of his many-sided character, that it grieves me, and will, I am sure, unless supplemented in some way, be a source of regret to his multitude of friends. Wherefore I venture to send you a few notes concerning him, which you are welcome to use in any way you please, and which, if they do not interest your readers, may at least have some value for yourself individually.

I believe that I was at the time of Leigh's death the oldest friend he had in the world. Our acquaintance began in the autumn of 1853, and continued, with only those interruptions which were inseparable from our different manner of life, unbroken and unchanged from the first. I was

“Jimmy” in his mouth, and he “Harry” in mine, from first to last. Our first introduction took place in the office of Messrs. Sadler, Harrison, and Co., of 17, Austin Friars, where H.S.L. had taken his place on a high stool on leaving Christ Hospital in 1852. My own name (H——) is a rather uncommon one, and I was not surprised at his remarking upon it with a particularly stupid old schoolboy joke. Presently he said—

“I say, you fellow, did you ever have a brother in Christ Hospital?” (“Christ Hospital,” please Mr. Printer, *not* “Christ’s”—a matter about which H.S.L. was over punctilious.)

“No,” said I; “but I had a cousin, H—— H——, who left last year.”

“I thought so. He and I slept in next beds in No. 11.”

That was enough. We became friends forthwith. Both of us were working hard at modern languages. We hated German with a holy hatred; stuck to French, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese, though I think Leigh did but little in the two latter at any time in his life; but when, in 1857, I made my bow to the readers of a now forgotten London magazine as the translator of some Portuguese stories by Herculano, H. S. L. looked over my proofs. Long before this, however, I had been invited to his father’s house, and made more than welcome there. I was rather a silent, studious boy, with a great deal of leisure time, an omnivorous appetite for books, and a secret passion for authorship. If “Jemmy

Leigh," as everybody called the old man, had been as wise as he was brilliant, he would perhaps have discouraged me ; but he chose instead to encourage me in every possible way, lent me books, unbent himself in my presence, taught me a thousand things, and treated me more like a son than as the friend of his clever and brilliant boy. For several years I visited the house—always once, and not unfrequently three and four times a week ; and during the whole of that time I never heard from Mr. Leigh one word of unkindness, though he sometimes tested the powers of his friends in endurance of "chaff" rather severely. He was goodness itself to me, and I love his memory.

The Leigh family were essentially London people—"Cockneys of Cockneys" H. S. L. used to say—and they were proud of the fact. H. S. Leigh's grandfather kept a shop in the Strand, a few doors from the Adelphi Theatre, and was the predecessor of Mr. Murray in the issue of Continental guide books. Long before the familiar red volumes were issued from Albemarle Street, Leigh's guides were popular and indispensable. The old man had some theatrical connections, the details of which I never cared to inquire into, and Charles Mathews, the elder, was his first cousin. After him the father of H. S. Leigh was named James Mathews Leigh. It was at first designed that he should stand behind the paternal counter at the shop in the Strand ; but James Mathews Leigh hated trade, and declared for literature and the arts. I do not think he ever

achieved very much in the former. At one time, I believe, he wrote a little for *The Athenæum*, and later on for the long defunct *Critic*; but his principal achievement was a five-act tragedy—"Cromwell"—which his father printed for private circulation, without, I fear, much success, though it was "read" at Drury Lane, under Macready. I doubt if there is a single copy now extant. The author himself told me that "the ham and beef shop in Russell Street knew most about it." From literature Mr. Leigh turned to art. He exhibited a few pictures, travelled a good deal, saw many men and many cities, and, coming home, married and settled at 79, Newman Street, where he established the famous School of Art, which is still carried on by Mr. and Mrs. Heatherley. Of H. S. L.'s mother I knew nothing, but I fancy she died before he went to Christ Hospital. Her name was never mentioned in Newman Street, and an inquiry by my own mother about her was received in such a way that the subject was never resumed. In his later life Mr. Leigh was always at home; but his instincts were those of a thorough Bohemian, and he loved nothing so much as a gibe at "the domesticities."

His school was a much more important place than is generally imagined. There are some who fondly believe that it served as the model for "Gandish's," in the "Newcomes." That notion, however, was assuredly unfounded, though Mr. Thackeray was an occasional visitor at the house in my time, and had a genuine regard for its master.

“Gandish’s” was really “Sass’s,” well known to the readers of Mr. W. P. Frith’s “Reminiscences.” The only matters common to Gandish and Mr. Leigh were the black velvet dressing-gown which both wore in the studio, and their love of classical as distinguished from romantic art—“the Blanket School,” as H. S. L. called it. For the rest, the two men were as different as light from darkness. Mr. Leigh was a scholar and a gentleman, Gandish was a snob of the first water. Gandish could not speak six words without a misplaced aspirate or a false concord; Mr. Leigh spoke the purest English, and was even fastidious in his choice of words; had his “Horace” at his finger-ends, and could on occasion quote the English classics with remarkable felicity. Finally, Gandish was one of the tradesmen of art, while Mr. Leigh represented some of its noblest traditions, and was the fitting associate for its most distinguished sons.

Looking back at this moment over the past, I can recall a strangely long list of distinguished men of to-day who learned their *technique* in the dingy old gallery at 79, Newman Street. The present president, Sir Frederick Leighton, was, I believe, one of Mr. Leigh’s pupils before he went to Italy; and I well remember the enthusiasm with which the dear old man bade me go to the Academy again, and study the Procession of the Madonna, that wonderful picture which placed the unknown youth from Florence in the front rank of English painters. Another of Mr. Leigh’s pupils was Sir John Millais,

R.A., whose beautiful head I well remember towering over the ruck of outsiders who had brought their work to Newman Street on the Saturday evening before Show Sunday, in the days when the Langham was not. Amongst other names, I can recall those of Mr. Calderon, R.A., whom I chiefly remember by an epigram anent Mr. Ruskin and the "Stones of Venice," which, though exceedingly witty, might possibly fail to please the "young person" of the period; then in quick succession come the names of H. S. Marks, R.A., who first sang comic songs in the semi-publicity of the first floor front of 79, Newman Street; E. J. Poynter, R.A., of whom J. M. L. predicted great things; E. A. Storey, R.A. (with a song, "The Déjeuner à la Fourchette"); D. W. Winfield, R.A., celebrated at that time for his remarkable photographic portraits *in costume* and *out of focus*, the forerunners of Mrs. Cameron's work; Prinsep, Boughton, Hodgson, Yeames, Moore, Wells, Morten, Smallfield, and—if last, not least—Walker. This last-mentioned painter, surely one of the truest artists the English school has ever produced, was a great favourite with Mr. Leigh; and when on a certain memorable day he went to the old man, almost in tears, to explain that for pecuniary reasons he was obliged to withdraw from the School, the old man "spoke to Mrs. Lish," the excellent housekeeper, and the fees ran on until some time after Mr. Leigh's death, when they were fully and honourably paid up. Walter Thornbury and Dutton Cook



were the only two writers whom I remember to have met at that house.

Mr. J. M. Leigh died at a comparatively early age. He was an inveterate smoker—in fact, his pipe was seldom out of his mouth from breakfast time until, at some unknown but small hour of the morning, he sought his couch. Finding that the churchwarden interfered with his painting, he contracted the habit of resting the stem against the gum. The result was a cancer of the throat, which carried him off very speedily after the disease once developed itself. I last saw him about ten days before his death. He was then, though I did not know it, dying of starvation through the impossibility of swallowing; but his pipe was still his inseparable companion. On that night his brain gave way, and between two and three a.m. the policeman on duty in Newman Street found him walking about in the rain, clad only in a night-shirt, slippers, and with an umbrella. He was soon got back to bed, and never left his room again until his body was carried to Highgate Cemetery.

One very curious thing remains to be told. After his death Mr. Leigh's face, which had been hideously swollen and distorted by disease, resumed its normal appearance—so much so, indeed, that but for a slight "waxiness" of the skin, he looked exactly as I remembered him on the night of my first introduction to him. There was no portrait of him extant, and Mr. Henry Burchett, of South Kensington, his friend and pupil, was

called in. The corpse was propped up in the bed, and wrapped in the black velvet dressing-gown and cap which Mr. Leigh habitually wore in life. Mr. Burchett made two large chalk studies—one full face, the other in profile—which were pronounced to be perfect likenesses. Their fate was remarkable. Mr. Burchett had them photographed, and I, amongst other people, had copies of the photographs. These I stowed away in a portfolio, until in June, 1867, when on leaving London I came to overhaul my belongings, I found that the photographs—genuine South Kensington work—had utterly faded. Two pieces of dirty yellow paper were all that was left. Not all, however, that I have to remember my dear friend by. One of the last things he said that was intelligible was, “Give Jimmy ‘St. Katherine’ — he liked it.” “St. Katherine” was an oil sketch (14½ in. by 9½ in.), representing the apotheosis of St. Katherine of Alexandria. My admiration for the work is perhaps not quite as great as it was thirty years ago, but I cherish it and value it for personal reasons.

When Mr. Leigh died there was, I have good reason to know, but a small amount of ready money in the house, and but little else that was immediately available. But there were kind relatives who took the management of affairs off the shoulders of poor H. S. L., and in a few weeks his business matters were fairly settled. The house in Newman Street was transferred to its present tenant, and H. S. L. himself went into chambers in Furnival’s Inn. For

a short time he continued his City connection, but he soon tired of "the desk's dull wood," and devoted himself to literature and Bohemianism—rather more of the latter than of the former, I fear. At this time I saw a great deal of him. I had just begun newspaper work, and he was living on the money left him by his father, and derived from the sale of his pictures, and the occasional guineas he picked up for stray copies of verse. His capacity in this line had developed itself very early, and, curiously enough, some of the very best lines he ever wrote were the work of his earlier life. Thus I remember one evening—I think in 1857—I was sitting with him in the room in Newman Street, in rather low spirits over the exile of my only brother in Portugal. H. S. L. condoled with me in a half-melancholy, half-comic fashion; turned away to his beloved piano, rattled off some pages of his favourite Chopin, and then, turning round, scribbled off on a slip of paper three or four verses, which he threw at my head, and which, years afterwards, I found in "Gillott and Goosequill." One of the verses I can still recall :—

"Joy's brittle bubbles shine and burst,  
Our tears wash out our laughter;  
Fate makes us take the sugar first,  
And drink the physic after."

It was soon after this that the strumous disease which worried him through life began to make itself most unpleasantly felt, and it was whilst labouring under one of its attacks that he wrote the song which has for its burden—

“Be sure you remember your pill at night,  
And forget not your draught in the morning.”

On another occasion he came into my chambers in Lincoln's Inn Fields with a large bagful of apples, to which he addicted himself rather unwisely. The usual results were produced, and he left me in search of hot brandy and water. The next day he showed me his parody of Wordsworth's "We are Seven," which, as the reader will doubtless remember, describes the sorrows of the little girl who ate eleven unripe cooking apples, and persisted they were but seven, because "four were in a pie." Several of his parodies were written or suggested in my chambers, amongst others the famous "Twins," which poor Harry Montague (not then of the Vaudeville), H. S. L., and I talked over and laughed over many months before it was printed. Oddly enough, I believe the last stanza was written immediately after the first—at all events, it stood so in the original draft.

When I left London, in 1867, H. S. L. was dropping down more and more deeply into the gulf of Bohemian impecuniosity. In the winters of 1865-6 and 1866-7, Mr. W. S. Gilbert had chambers on the second floor of 3, South Square, Gray's Inn, and mine were on the same landing with his. On Saturday nights there was a gathering of the clans, and H. S. L. was a constant visitor. On his way he habitually called on me, smoked a cigarette or two, imbibed a very moderate quantity of liquor, and usually left me about twelve or half-past. The

signs of a catastrophe were not wanting, so that I was not surprised a few months later to hear that he had disappeared from Furnival's Inn, and had taken up his abode in his beloved Strand—a street which he left but very seldom, and for but the shortest periods, during the few remaining years of his life. When I returned from my seven years' exile in 1874, I found my old friend greatly changed, but as cheery, as humorous, and as full of fun as ever; though with a curious habit—which always annoyed me absurdly—greatly accentuated; the habit, that is to say, of using the most commonplace quotations in all sorts of languages, and at once translating them. It was childish, perhaps, to be angry; but one's *amour propre* was apt to get exacerbated at the information that *cæteris paribus* meant "Other things being equal," or that *mon cher* had a meaning in French very different from the meaning of "my dear" in English. One of his friends was even more annoyed than I; and in a capital Elia-ish article in some magazine, "The Misery of being thought a Blockhead," drew a portrait of H. S. L. which everybody who knew him recognized.

One thing struck me very forcibly in these last years of my poor friend's life. H. S. L. had never been a pious man—indeed, it would have been strange, under the circumstances, if he had retained the smallest particle of reverence for sacred things. His father, with a thousand good and engaging qualities, had an almost fanatical hatred for something

which he called Christianity, but which was as unlike the Christianity of the four Gospels as the sermons of Jonathan Edwards are unlike the Sermon on the Mount; and poor old Leigh never lost an opportunity of saying something sarcastic or bitter about the bishops, the clergy and the Church generally. H. S. L., however, in his later life, developed a remarkable sense of religion. I was told by his landlady at the Lowther Hotel (where he lived for several years) that he constantly read the sermons of Robertson of Brighton, and Charles Kingsley; and I more than once heard him myself "shut up" a speaker who was trying to brighten a dull conversation with blasphemy.

There is one point about H. S. L. which I think has attracted too little notice. I mean the marvellous facility of his versification. Many of his repartees and sarcasms were, I know, prepared beforehand, and were sometimes repeated more frequently than was altogether desirable. And when he first began to write verse—about his sixteenth or seventeenth year—he would make a rough draft overnight, which he would polish with a good deal of care the next morning, and sometimes for days afterwards. As time went by his facility rapidly increased, until in about the years 1862 to 1866 or 1867, I have known him many times turn out a copy of verses at a sitting, with fewer corrections than a good many men would find necessary in a single letter. A great number of these verses went to *Fun*, from whose pages a

few, but only a few, were reproduced in the little volumes which bear his name. Another customer for his verse was the firm of Moore & Burgess, of Minstrel celebrity, for whom he wrote a great number of songs, which were set to music, sung, and after a while forgotten. The usual price for a production of this kind was, as he told me more than once, two guineas and a share of a bottle of champagne. If he left a literary executor — and I presume one of his cousins, who were men of great ability, would be the proper person to act in that capacity—he might find a good deal of matter in the archives of St. James's Hall.

Strange to say, with all this remarkable facility of composition, Leigh was one of the worst letter-writers. In the more than thirty years of our acquaintance I do not think I received more than a dozen letters from him, and of these, two at the outside exceeded a page. The remainder were matters of three or four lines—none of which, unfortunately, have I preserved.

Here I end. To those who did not know H. S. L. personally, my name is of no consequence; those who knew him between 1853 and 1867 will hardly have forgotten his constant companion,

“JIMMY.”

London, May, 1889.

ALFRED BUNN AND “PUNCH.”

*Illustrated mostly by Sala.*

There was a very pretty quarrel in, I think, 1847, between Alfred Bunn, the celebrated *impresario*



and operatic librettist, and *Mr. Punch* and his staff. The four gentlemen most concerned in the row were Bunn himself, Mark Lemon, Douglas Jerrold, and Gilbert A'Beckett. All three of them, but Jerrold mostly, had been a good deal offended because Bunn had refused them certain free privileges of entering his theatre. The fact was, Bunn did not see his way to be over-criticised, and, in fact, held up to a good deal of ridicule about his libretto work, by such sharp pens as these four gentlemen used, especially the one used by Jerrold, often dipped in the bitterest gall when it suited him, or when he was, or imagined he was, offended or slighted in any way. For Jerrold was not of the sweetest temper, and consequently easily offended. Bunn, in his *brochure*—published, by the way, very much in the form of *Punch*—said many smart things. The title of the work was “A Word with *Punch*, by Alfred Bunn,” No. 1, “and to be continued if necessary.” I forget whether there was any call for No. 2, or whether the paper was too much of an imitation in size and plan altogether not to be an infringement of copyright. At all events, I don't think a No. 2 was ever published.

I mention this because I have no remembrance of authors' quarrels being taken up in the form of Bunn's skit against *Punch*.

The front page was a good deal in imitation of one of Richard Doyle's drawings—the size of the paper, and the letterpress, interspersed with comic

illustrations—in fact, very like *Punch* in many ways, except that there was no cartoon page. Bunn's instructions to his artist must have been to be very severe, and he was so without flinching. *Mr. Punch* was pictured in the pillory; his dog Toby hanged on a gibbet by his side; the drum-head broken in, and the property wooden figures, all made in imitation of contributors to *Punch*, lying upon the ground in the most grotesque attitudes possible, and Lemon trying to grasp a quart pot.

Bunn's strongest point against Lemon was his having, some few years before that time, kept a well-known tavern in Wych Street, Strand, which had been in its time a celebrated rendezvous for the wits of the period, being much frequented by the Templars so far back even as the time of Charles II. It is said that here Izaak Walton used to show his fish against those caught by brothers of the angle—fish caught by him in his favourite river Lea. Mr. Bunn's artist pictured Lemon in various ways as a podgy, hook-nosed publican. Jerrold and A'Beckett were both drawn as very objectionable figures.

Shortly before the old tavern was pulled down, it was the headquarters of perhaps the first Bohemian Club started in London in modern times. This club, the forerunner of the Savage Club, was first termed the Meet Glee Club, afterwards, when it migrated to Haxell's, in the Strand, it was called the Chameleon Club. The cups and tankards belonging to the club bore the design of a chameleon, with the

legend springing from its mouth of "We meet for glee." The design was by Michael Halliday, then an artist of some position.

The club was originated by Horace Mayhew (Pony), one of the Brothers Mayhew, then on the staff of *Punch*. Amongst its theatrical members were Leigh Murray, Robert Roxby, young Jack Reeve, Bellingham, Kinloch, &c. Amongst musicians were Alfred Mellon, Laurent, Edward Fitzwilliam, and the eminent flute player, Sydney Pratten. Besides these there was a sprinkling of artists and some literary men, including Watts Phillips, Charles Kenny, and others.

On the occasion of Bellingham and Kinloch taking a benefit at the Lyceum, their bills stated that it was under the patronage of "the members of the Meet Glee Club." Madame Vestris was fearfully disgusted at this announcement, and insisted on its being withdrawn. "Other times, other manners." Would Mrs. Kendal or Mrs. (now Lady) Bancroft be likely to object to a "Savage" stating that his benefit was under the patronage of his club? I think not. Nor is it likely that either of these ladies would term that club a "public-house sing-song." Yet such was the opprobrious epithet Madame put upon the Meet Glee Club.

The letterpress of "A Word with *Punch*" was meant to be, and indeed was, very severe and personal in the extreme.

The back page was devoted to imitation advertisements, of which I give two or three specimens:—

“CHEAP BREAKFAST FOR THE POOR.—Any quantity of milk and water may be had every Thursday, at 3d. per pail, by applying at 85, Fleet Street.—N.B. Calves are known to thrive on it.”

“HANDSOME REWARD.—Any perfumer who can invent or procure a permanent *rouge*, capable of producing a blush for themselves, shall be handsomely rewarded.—Apply at the Porter's Lodge, Temple, between the hours of 10 and 2.”

And then followed the old joking advertisements about pastrycooks and trunkmakers:—

“To be sold, a bargain, a great quantity of the *London Charivari*, issued on sale or return, and other periodicals not issued at all. Warranted not to stick to the bottoms of tarts and puffs, as they never stick at anything. Apply to Mr. Mull-it Heavens, Church Row, Stoke Newington.”

It will be seen that Bunn was very severe upon his three opponents. I never heard whether the four gentlemen hobnobbed together afterwards; but I should not be surprised if they did, for theatrical managers and influential pressmen are apt to have desperate quarrels, and are quite as apt to be friends at very short notice, especially when interest steps in.

Bunn lived long enough to see *Mr. Punch* become a great institution in the land; and his little joke about the sale or return of the parts, and the waste copies for trunkmakers, was not very prophetic, for the original volumes of *Punch* are now much sought for, and a capital price is paid for

them by our best booksellers and collectors. In fact, no library, public or private, can possibly be complete without a set of *Punch* up to the last number ; and is it too much to say that *Mr. Punch's* satirical, but mostly good-natured, reflections upon the manners and customs of all sorts and conditions of men, women, and children are the best and truest history of our own time ?

No new religion (if such a thing were possible), no new politics, no new fashion in dress, no public man or woman of any importance, or events worth mentioning, have escaped *Mr. Punch's* keen observation. In fact, for the most reflective turn of mind, a run through a volume of *Punch* is interesting to a degree, and excellent enjoyment.

The proprietors of *Punch* were in the habit, some years ago, of inviting their staff of authors and artists and a number of friends and acquaintances to luncheon on great celebration days in the City. My wife and I were guests on that memorable day when the Queen, the Prince and Princess, and other members of the Royal Family went to St. Paul's Cathedral to return thanks for the return to health of the Prince of Wales after an attack of a most dangerous fever.

Perhaps there has not been a day in English history when there has been more rejoicing and truly heartfelt thanks. For the time, all shades of politics and differences in forms of religion were forgotten by all well-meaning men and women, and

all with one voice shouted, "God bless the Prince of Wales."

The members of the staff of *Punch* were in full force that eventful day ; and both Her Majesty and the Prince smiled and bowed most graciously when they saw a well-made figure of *Mr. Punch* seeming to offer earnest congratulations, and his splendid band of humorists in pen and pencil cheering England's Queen and Prince.

At that time, one of the most disloyal of newspapers in England, that had vilified the Royal Family in most disgusting ways, and a thousand times more than it dare scandalise one of its most morbid-minded readers, was mean enough to make money by issuing gratis with the paper one of the best lithographic portraits of the Prince of Wales published at that very critical time in his life. I am sure they would have published a vicious caricature had they not been sure their office would have been pulled down about their ears.

#### J. R. PLANCHÉ.

I think I published more books about the stage and stage players than any publisher of my time ; but I did not take more interest in any one of the works than I did in "Planché's Recollections." Perhaps it was because Mr. Planché was close upon eighty years of age when I tempted him to let me have the charming book as it now stands. I use the word "tempted" with its true meaning in this case, because, even though the excellent old

author was very proud of his work when he had finished it, he was by no means happy during the time he was writing it ; in fact, I feel quite sure that had he not been at the time an almost needy man, and I continually cheering him on, the book would never have been worthy of him.

My interest in the book came about almost by chance. One day in about 1871 I happened to be looking into some of the monthly magazines, and in "London Society" I found some bright sketchy recollections by Mr. Planché. They seemed to me to be very incomplete, but still very readable, and I felt sure the veteran author could write a good deal more about himself and the times he had lived in. So I wrote and asked him to call upon me, and he did so ; but he quite seemed to think that the matter in "London Society" was all he cared to write about himself or anyone else. However, I made him an offer for a good-sized volume that seemed rather to surprise him, and, indeed, tempted him to say "Yes !" A few months after he called upon me in some trouble, because he had written about the quantity of matter agreed upon between us, but he had not covered more than half of the time of his literary life. I said : "So much the better. Write about as much more, and I will double the price agreed upon." But, even though he could see I would not let money stand in the way, he said "Yes" again ; but he was in no way very cheery about his task, for writing at that time was often a task indeed ; his right hand would



be sometimes for hours and days in a kind of trembling, palsied state, and when it was at its worst he could not use his pen. Even when his hand was fairly free from its trembling, his handwriting was very curious. The letters and words were all well formed, and the lines as straight as possible, but there was a perceptible sign that the hand had a continual tremble in it. And, to make matters worse, Planché had not kept a diary or made any notes of his long life; and, as he often said, to remember the past at his age was a task indeed. Of course, had he cared to touch scandal in any way, he could have filled a dozen volumes; but, strange to say, even though his first venture as a dramatic author was in 1819, and from that time to 1867 he was behind the scenes, and in society where there was plenty of matter for morbid minds to revel in, the excellent old author was as pure and sweet in his book as he was always in his dramatic works, which are a golden monument to him, especially as he lived and wrote for the stage when there were often plays on it that were no credit to authors, managers, or players. Planché used to say he was "over eighty and over-rated"; but, strange to say, he himself somewhat over-rated his own dramatic works, and could not see, as I have mentioned in another chapter, that his fairy plays and extravaganzas were only time plays. In fact, he made no bones about declaring that they would come into fashion again. They had, it is true, given place to a broader kind of punning

burlesque ; but that kind of entertainment had its day, and, of course, the "something new," especially in the light drama, ever was, and, I suppose, always will be, in demand. At all events, even though it is fairly certain that playgoers will never again see Planché's best work on the stage, they will never see work that more adorned it in its time.

Planché not only would not write scandal, but he would not talk it. He was a very good talker when in the mood, but he was not always so. I have mentioned that he was a needy man. But it is only fair to the gallant old author to say that the cause of his being so was that he partly supported a widowed daughter and her rather large family of young children, and I think I am right in saying that Planché's daughter (Mrs. Mackarness) was the widow of a bishop of the Church of England.

The following letter shows that Planché had arrived at the time of life when literary work was no easy task to him :

" 2, Milborne Grove, Boltons, Brompton,  
S.W., Tuesday, May 7.

" MY DEAR MR. TINSLEY,

"Never was any wretched man so weary of his 'Life'! No maniac ever made more desperate efforts to end it! I am only thankful that I am not a cat with nine lives, all bought by a publisher's cash, with as many 'tales' as I have to unfold in it. As it is, I am leading the life of a dog who has had his day, and has got to run through it all again with a tin kettle attached to his latter end. Seriously, I

am working day and night at the book, under every impediment that can be conceived to progress—in a lodging away from my books, and which are at present inaccessible at home—being stowed away and covered up, to escape the tender mercies of painters and plasterers. Add to this the worry of my unfortunate hand, which retards my exertions *mechanically* to a most provoking extent. However, there are, or should be, nearly two-thirds of the second volume in type this week; and you may rest assured that for my *own sake* I will clear my table of it as soon as possible. The misfortune is that I have used up all but two columns of the ‘Recollections’; and as they come down only to 1856, I have sixteen years’ more experiences to record, and also to write every word of it. I hope, please God, to do this before the end of the month; but, in justice to you as well as myself, I must not *scamp* the conclusion of the work, and cause the critics to complain of ‘padding.’

“I must go to the College of Arms on Thursday next, and will therefore call upon you on my way, between eleven and twelve, when I will ‘report progress, and ask leave to sit again.’

“Regretting to hear you have been unwell,

“Believe me, dear Mr. Tinsley,

“Your faithful and obliged,

J. R. PLANCHÉ.”

“W. Tinsley, Esq.”

There are, it is true, some few old-fashioned prejudices in the work that such a sensitive man of

his age was likely to have, but his remarks were doubtless true of the time he wrote. The one I most refer to is, that the legitimate drama had no real home at the time, and there were no signs of it finding another. Charles Kean had left the Princess's, and Phelps had left Sadler's Wells. Both gentlemen had done excellent work with great plays ; and so, with the exception of some praiseworthy attempts at Drury Lane and some of the minor theatres, the "legitimate" did not look very flourishing.

Planché quotes an article from the *Quarterly Review*, to strengthen his argument that the increase of theatres and the open right to act stage plays was of little use, because the increase of good players was not in proportion.

The old-fashioned notion that one age uses up the ability of a country, or almost the whole world, is exploded. Former times no doubt produced actors and actresses of rare ability, and equal to the occasion ; but so has this age, and so will the next. It is a fine reverence a people has, and should have, for its own time and people ; but it would be a poor world if it did not keep sending forth men and women whose talents or genius are equal to those of their own time or any past age. I do not argue that there was then, or is now, an abundance of excellent new plays ; but I hope I may at least say that the stage work and the players of the present time are equal to the demand upon them.

Threescore and ten, and five years over, is a great age to do any kind of work requiring

even little thought ; but to take in hand and write the remembrances of over sixty years of a life, without note or diary, was, I think, a wonderful effort, and required a clear memory and an intellect given to few men. And although Planché shows signs of impatience in the above letter, there was none in his many talks with me about the book ; nor did I attempt to hurry him in any way. I knew I should have a good book, and I knew my author would not discredit his well-earned name and fame. It would have been pardonable in a man of the age of Planché to have been bitter at seeing, as he did, his pure, healthy dramatic work shelved to make room for a lower class of burlesque. The venerable author no doubt did feel his position to a great extent ; but he took his beating in a fairly good-natured way, always believing that his work and its kind would come into fashion again.

In the above letter, Planché mentions his hand being a trouble to him. His partially palsied right hand would hinder him from writing for two or three days at a time. I always knew when the trembling was on, or just coming on, the difference in his penmanship was so great.

I have mentioned above that Planché was no lover of scandal. In the advertisement note to his book he says of his "Recollections" :—"They are limited as strictly as possible to such public and professional matters as it appeared to me would be interesting to the general reader, or on which I felt

myself entitled to comment, avoiding reference to my own family and private affairs, except where it was necessary for explanation, and rigidly observing the same reticence with respect to those of others."

Planché's humorous account of his beginning of life is, if not original, amusing. On the first page of his book he says he was so young when he was born that he scarcely remembered the circumstance. His parents were French refugees; and after having the measles and other complaints childhood is heir to, at the age of ten he perpetrated several "odes" and sonnets. He was fond of cricket, but could not get a living as a longstop, or in a few innings; so his father determined he should have a trade or profession, and he began to learn watch-making, but soon declared for the pencil; but his drawing master died before he had discovered the quadrature of a circle, and his teacher's death was the vanishing point of his perspective.

Then he had ("still very much in his teens") what he calls another attack of his scribbling complaint, and was articulated to a bookseller, but soon afterwards turned amateur actor; but finding nothing in Sheridan or Shakespeare worthy of his abilities, he determined to write a play in which to play the leading part himself. The result was a burlesque called "Amoroso, King of Little Britain," which was played at Drury Lane Theatre in 1818; and his last dramatic work of any note was the lyrical parts of "Babil and Bijou," a gorgeous spectacular play at Covent Garden, in 1872.

I have mentioned that I had some trouble to persuade Planché to give me enough mat'er for two volumes. I venture to print another letter to confirm what I have said :—

“ 1, Royal Crescent, Margate.

“ DEAR MR. TINSLEY,

“ I enclose the bill you so considerately offered to accept for me ; and I trust, for both our sakes, that in writing ‘value received’ I shall have said no more than the result will justify.

“ I certainly never contemplated republishing my ‘Recollections’ in two volumes ; but, as it seemed to be your wish, I have taken great pains that in doing so I should avoid diffuseness, and unwarrantable padding. Hoping to see you quite well next week,

“ Believe me,

“ Yours very sincerely,

J. R. PLANCHÉ.”

“ W. Tinsley, Esq.”

I could cull scores of capital stories from Planché’s charming volumes, but they would not be my “Recollections,” and I leave the book to those of my readers who may not have read it. I will therefore end my poor account of the genial and clever author with a quotation from the last page of his volumes, where he says—“ I have outlived any resentments I may have felt at the conduct of others, and quietly endeavoured to live down prejudices which have been unjustly entertained against me. I am still, thank God, able to work, and am working as hard as



I have ever done during the last fifty years. The Queen has been most graciously pleased, at the instance of the Right Hon. the First Lord of the Treasury, to grant me a pension of £100 per annum from the Civil List; and till my right hand shall forget its cunning, it will endeavour to justify the flattering 'consideration' expressed in the grant, by labouring in the cause of art, especially in that of the one by which I was first fascinated, which has been aptly described by the poet as—

‘The youngest sister of the arts,  
Where all the graces meet’—

*videlicet*, the Drama.”

But Planché's (to him doubtless troublesome) Recollections would seem to have been light work indeed, as compared with the writing of the two handsome volumes on "Costume," which he subsequently published.

Planché tells a rather good story about his father, who was watchmaker to King George the Third.

One day, going to St. James's with the King's watch, he remarked to the page that the ribbon was rather dirty. His Majesty, hearing the remark, said, "What is that, Planché, what is that?"

Mr. Planché repeated his remark about the royal ribbon, and suggested a new one. "New ribbon, Planché! Can't it be washed?" remarked the King.

## CHAPTER X.

H. J. BYRON.

I had known H. J. Byron for many years, but it was only a few years before his death that I had business transactions with him ; and I was not a little surprised when one morning he put before me a plan all cut and dried for a new monthly magazine to be called "Mirth," saying he was quite willing to take the whole risk of the venture himself. However, I was taken with the idea, and so proposed to have a half-share in the venture.

The strangest part of all was, that Byron was at that time in a very poor state of health. However, he worked very hard to get a good staff of authors together to contribute to "Mirth."

The veteran Planché contributed some very clever verses by way of introductory matter.

Mr. E. L. Blanchard wrote some sweetly pretty verses, called "The Song of the Hop-pickers," ending with the following lines :—

Creeping and curling, and twisting and twirling,  
Still climbing on till it gets to the top ;  
Never despairing, and finally bearing—  
A lesson in life may be learned from the hop.

Humorous papers by Sala, Robert Reece, W. S. Gilbert, Godfrey Turner, John Hollingshead, James Albery, and some excellent matter by Byron

himself, made up the first number of "Mirth," the sale of which gave some promise of success.

So Byron went to work with a good heart to make up No. 2.

At that time Edward Terry, the comedian, was singing the now well-known and extremely witty "Showman's Song," and it occurred to Byron that it would not be a bad idea to print it with the music. Strange to say, this was the making of the second number, and the success of "Mirth" seemed assured.

But although Byron wrote some additional verses of the "Showman's Song" for No. 3 of "Mirth," the venture began to go down in its sales; and so, after the publication of the seventh part, Byron wished to withdraw from any further risk in the publication, and asked me to make up the account. I did so, and he at once paid his share of the loss without a murmur.

The following letter from my generous partner in the speculation of "Mirth" will give some idea of his goodness of heart:—

" Brixton, May 29, 1878.

" MY DEAR TINSLEY—I consider your offer a generous one, and I accept it, assuring you that I shall work for the magazine more earnestly now than ever. I shall contribute as much as before *gratis*, though this need not be known to any but ourselves, and devote myself to selecting and accepting, or rejecting, as before, the contributions. However the numbers turn out, I never know what

favouritism or bias means in editing. But no one is infallible. I think number seven excellent. I will call on Friday, about one, and square up. Kind regards. Yours always sincerely, H. J. BYRON."

I continued "Mirth" till the publication of the twelfth part, and then, much to my regret, had to give it up in despair.

I venture to reprint Planché's verses, but of course they deserve a better place in book form than in these random notes.

### INTRODUCTORY VERSES TO "MIRTH."

By JAMES ROBINSON PLANCHÉ.

"MIRTH. A new humorous Magazine!" Preserve us!  
 Another can the Public really need?  
 It is enough to make Minerva nervous,  
 They seem so fast each other to succeed;  
 "Follow," perhaps, would be the better reading,  
 For some, 'tis said, succeed without succeeding.

Well! That's the Publisher's affair, not mine;  
 From standing in his shoes, kind stars protect us!  
 The Editor declares the prospect fine—  
 The prospect's always fine in the Prospectus!  
 With a strong staff, his fun at all he'll poke,  
 But what I have to do I find no joke.

He has asked me to write "An Ode to Mirth,"  
 For love—at least he hasn't mentioned money;  
 Now if there be a wet blanket on earth,  
 It's asking a poor fellow to be funny.  
 The wag! He knew an ode from me requesting  
 Would prove his own capacity for jesting.

I don't refuse—I never could say no,  
 So, snatching up a pen in desperation,  
 I turn to Milton, who wrote long ago  
 An Ode to Mirth, which had some reputation.  
 It's safe to pilfer from a grand old poet,  
 For now-a-days not one in ten would know it.\*

I'm sure I recollect a line or two  
 I might adapt, or as quotations give—  
 Yes! Here is "Mirth, admit me of thy crew!"  
 And "Mirth, with"—no, "*by* thee I mean to live."  
 Poh! Stuff! my Muse is not at all Miltonic,  
 It's more akin to the (H. J.) Byronic.

"An Ode"—an odious fancy of the Editor's—  
 "Or other composition." Ugly word!  
 Suggestive most unpleasantly of creditors!  
 But stay! a thought to me has just occurred.  
 'Stead of an "Ode to Mirth," suppose I should  
 Invoke Mirth's great good Genius, Thomas Hood!

Matchless Past Master of our craft! O let  
 Me strive to pay to thee a tribute fit!  
 In thy imperishable coronet,  
 Beside the flashing diamonds of thy wit,  
 Shine pearls as pure as Pity shed  
 Over the poor, the suffering, and the dead.

Best humorist! Beneath thy wildest fun  
 The kindest current flows of human feeling,  
 While splitting sides with some outrageous pun,  
 Into our hearts insidiously stealing  
 By tropes which seem intended but to tickle us,  
 Extracting the sublime from the ridiculous.

---

\* I asked an Eton boy fresh from the cloisters,  
 "What do you know of Milton?" He said, "Oysters."

Let thy pure spirit point and guide the pen  
 Of each contributor to England's Mirth ;  
 May they be wise as well as merry men,  
 And show of real wit the sterling worth  
 In verse or prose, didactic or dramatic,  
 Never a bore—howe'er e-pig-rammatic.

I said but now, I never could refuse,  
 And yet I feel I daily am declining,  
 And soon to Mirth shall pay my last adieus,  
 To younger, brighter bards, the harp resigning.  
 I'm over eighty. Thus associated,  
 I fear, dear friends, by you I'm over-rated.

Byron was a word-twister and a punster to order for the Strand and other theatres for years, and often a good wit, and almost a poet—in any case a writer of excellent, witty verse ; and withal a better talker than punster, versifier, or writer of dramatic dialogue.

He could be very smart at times in his remarks about those he disliked, although he seldom troubled himself much about dislikes or quarrels.

If Dr. Johnson was such an intense hater of puns and punsters as he is represented to have been, how he would have hated H. J. Byron for a time ! But I venture to think that could the burly doctor have been a short time in his (Byron's) society, he would have liked him perhaps better than Wilkes—I mean John Wilkes, of Liberty.

Is it possible that in the future some kind of Shakespearian grave-digging jester may unearth the skull of H. J. Byron ? If so, he should be pardoned for making a pun or two upon it, and for

being more loquacious than the First Gravedigger is wont to be over the skull of "poor Yorick."

I have mentioned that Byron was in a poor state of health when we began "Mirth." Thomas Hood wrote witty and merry works on his death-bed. The following letter will give some idea of the state of health Byron was in when he set his mind on making a success of a humorous magazine, and was at the time planning and writing dramas full of wit and merriment for J. L. Toole and other actors and managers:—

· "DEAR TINSLEY,—I have been in the wars. I vomited a good deal of blood last Saturday fortnight, and have been in the doctor's hands. He, however, assures me it is not from the lungs. Now I have a nice little sharp attack of gout, and can't move off my chair without great pain; but they don't last long with me, for this is my fifth touch. I have discovered some pretty good outsiders since "Mirth" started; but we want *names* for the future. Leland (the celebrated Hans Breitmann) has sent me a Breitmann ballad. His name is *very good*, and he has written no other, he says, for years. He says he leaves remuneration to me (or rather, you). Now, what shall I do? Accept it, and refer him to you, I say. I hope this weather has improved Mrs. Tinsley's health, and that you are all right. Yours ever, H. J. BYRON.—June 27."

But I am not able to do anything like justice to the author of "Our Boys," and over a hundred other dramatic pieces, and thousands of really witty sayings.



Few authors would have been as loyal to a child of their brain that had deceived them as Byron was to "Mirth." In fact, I am sure he was even more earnest for its success when he had no monetary interest in it than when he had. In fact, he never tired of working and hoping that success would come to me in the venture.

As a proof of his loyalty he would not let the last number be published without an amusing page of witty bits, such as, "Never ask a favour of a man with tight boots," "Never know your next-door neighbour," "Never slang a cabman, he can beat you," "Plain food for delighters in the old dramatists," "Shakspearian common taters," "Poverty and eccentricity are very bad bed-fellows."

And, reading the volume backwards, there are scores, if not hundreds, of bits of humorous reading that, I think, make one wonder how a man in very bad health could think of and write them.

In the last number but one, Byron's verses, called "After Lobster," are very smart, and, in fact, show that his knowledge of men and times was more than a few years deep. I venture to quote a verse, but it hardly gives a notion of the smartness of the whole poem :—

“ On a sudden, in a hurry—  
 In a hurry and a scurry  
 Rushed in learned Lindley Murray,  
 Calling loudly for his lunch ;  
 Whilst Ptolemy and Pliny,  
 Chaucer, Kant, and Coote, and Tinney,  
 Porson, Pitt, and Paganini,  
 Fought like fiends for Wednesday's 'Punch.' ”

“A Burnands worth two in the bush” was not bad on the witty editor of *Punch*.

In number ten I printed the above mentioned verses, by Charles Leland (Hans Breitmann), but the press took little notice of them. In fact, strange as it may seem, as I have said, the only number of “Mirth” that had a fairly good sale was number two, which contained the “Showman’s Song,” from the Faust burlesque. To have written the verses it would almost seem that Byron must have been in the Zoological Gardens, or had a catalogue of all the animals there, for he named most of them in his witty verses. I venture to print a portion of the first verse, which is not the best of many in the song.

“Will you walk into my show, sirs, I’ve no end of things  
 you know, sirs,  
 I’ve a dappled dromedary who can very nearly speak,  
 I’ve a brace of ring-tailed monkeys, as obedient as flunkeys,  
 I’ve an ostrich who can see into the middle of next week.”

I forget the title of a melodrama Byron wrote for the Adelphi Theatre not long before Mr. Benjamin Webster withdrew from the old home of West-end melodrama. The said drama was by no means a success, even though fairly well staged and cast. However, the late J. S. Clarke purchased the copyright of the play for his Philadelphia theatre in America, and Byron told him “he hoped he would fill Adelphia in America, for it would not fill Adelphi in London.”

Byron made rather a mark of old Mrs. Swanborough and her often amusing malapropisms; but

he more often invented the skits entirely out of his own fun-inventive brain, for he had a love for topsy-turveyisms in words and phrases. His outrage of the title of Doré's picture of "Our Saviour leaving the Prætorium" is almost shocking, and does not smack of good taste even in punning. But his answer to his coachman, who told him that one of his horses wanted a ball—"How many does he want to invite?"—was smart for the moment. And his reply to the man who told him he had first lost his father and then his mother, that "he must be a very careless man," was not bad, because Byron never tried to be funny or smart in replies with the intention of being ill natured, and he certainly never waited, when he said a clever thing, to say, "Isn't that clever?" His smart sayings do not tell well in print; his wit was so good for the moment that it should have been better for a longer time. But I am sure the worthy wit had no care, or at least very little, or hope of posterity in his writings. In fact, he never swore by any one of his plays except "Cyril's Success," but I think he thought that comedy would have a fairly long life. Am I right in thinking that the author who writes for his own time seldom or ever writes for all time? I am afraid I am almost right in thinking so, for Byron's writings are sure evidence of this fact. He wrote quite a hundred books, plays, and dramatic sketches, and not one of his dramatic works has any permanent hold upon playgoers. Mr. Toole could now and then have revived "Dearer than

Life," and "Uncle Dick's Darling," but when the genial comedian's good health had passed away, the popularity of these two dramas also went. There is a good deal of true human nature in "Dearer than Life," but there was a great deal also of Mr. Toole's own personality in "Michael Garner," which seemed to more than indicate that the play was, as it were, written for him, and him only. I am not forgetting some notable minor parts in "Dearer than Life," and the players of them; but the drama without Mr. Toole to keep it alive would, I am afraid, have been dead years ago. Even in "Dearer than Life" Byron seemed bound to pun and say smart little things. In the squalid, high-up old room to which Michael Garner and his niece are relegated in their poverty, dear old Michael says something about being "highered to be lowered." And when Lucy Garner says she thinks she hears drunken Uncle Ben's tap at the door, Michael's reply is, "Excuse me, my dear; Uncle Ben's tap is round the corner." It may have been bad taste on my part, but I always preferred Toole's rendering of "Michael Garner" to his "Caleb Plummer," but both renderings were splendid examples of the actor's art.

I do not remember any better evidence in favour of my remark as to Byron writing for his own time than the following quotations from some of his old burlesques, which were certainly written for the time, and often to suit the peculiar talents of those who played in them. I remember one day

when Byron was in my office he told me that a manager we knew wanted to revive one of his dramas, but did not want to pay a heavy fee, and was rather apologetic in his request, and I said, "What are you going to charge him?" "Any sum he can afford, and that won't be much, I know," said Byron.

No such answer would have been given by Planché about one of the oldest of his plays, for he never ceased to believe that there was not only life but money in all his dramatic works, but the dear old author never saw much gold out of one of them after their first run. As is well known, the sweetly-turned rhymes and tunes in Planché's extravaganzas were a deal more elegant literature than the almost rough-and-tumble jingles and far-fetched puns of any one of the burlesque writers who displaced him.

It is a strange fact that some authors—at least I have known more than one—have gone out of the world in the full belief that their works would have the monopoly of popularity for ages. I suppose it is sweet to believe so much; but should not the author die more happy who is content to believe that he or she has had his or her time and chance, and be thankful for so much?

In fact, there seems to be just a shade of selfishness in those who think they write for more than one age, and they must live with their eyes shut when they cannot or will not see that they are only mortal.

However, it is fairly certain that Byron, Frank Talfourd, William and Robert Brough, Mr. Burnand, Andrew Halliday, and others of the earnest band of writers of the fleeting drama, never sighed much for future popularity, and seldom tried to write for it; and I am fairly sure that H. J. Byron would have made an outrageous pun indeed had anyone mentioned to him that he and his works would live for ages.

Can anyone who knew clever, and very often serious, Byron well, imagine that he was thinking of future ages when he wrote the following rhymes, which are only a few of the tens of thousands he wrote to please for the time, in fact, the hour?

In the burlesque of Lord Byron's "The Bride of Abydos," Giaffir says:—

“ My child, I'm bankrupt; bailiffs even now  
Are in the court—a-kicking up a row.  
The royal bakers crusty, turn and beat  
My gates, in angry groups the butchers meet;  
The brewer like a perfect bruin's used us;  
And the grocer has most grocerly abused us.”

Haroun the slave says:—

“ When I die he will, he do declare,  
Give me a statue in Trafalgar Square,  
Where with the fountain's sprinkling that they get,  
Each statue soon becomes a statue wet.”

In "Fra Diavolo," Giaco says:—

“ I'm rather radical, and will talk big;  
I've always bawled, and always were a whig.  
Down! down! with despotism! That's the thing—  
Let's all be equal—and I'll be your King.”

Byron's hit at the melodramatic villains is, I think, amusing :—

BEPPPO ——— don't smile,  
But imitate your betters, which I am,  
The hero of transpontine melodrama.

\*                    \*                    \*

That's well, don't be clean, don't comb your hair,  
Let it grow thick and matted, like that ere ;  
When speaking of an infant call it a brat,  
And when you are astonished say ha, ha, like that.

\*                    \*                    \*

My last advice is, mind how you fall,  
Trust in the gods, red fire, and the great Fitzball.

Fitzball was quite a noted play-writer for many years ; his dramas were mostly of the old Coberg pattern, and he was also the author of some good librettos, and of some songs that had fairly long lives.

In the burlesque of "The Maid and the Magpie, or the Fatal Spoon," Marie Wilton (now Lady Bancroft) as Peppo, made all the fun possible out of the following lines :—

"To think that I was born to tread the boards,  
And wield the heaviest of combat swords ;  
Whose mission is to wear a spangled dress,  
And succour lovely woman in distress.  
To single-handed fight against a crowd,  
To gasp and fall, then rise, with accents loud—  
Shout 'Recreant robbers, come one, come all,'  
And with a gurgle and a stiff back fall.  
Conquered by treachery and fearful odds,  
Bring down the curtain and the gods."



Pauline, in the "Lady of Lyons" burlesque, says to Claude—"Is this thy crystal palace to the skies? It seems to me they were all crystal lies."

As the mimic "Widow Melnotte," Jimmy Rogers was exceedingly funny, and not vulgar, even though in woman's clothes.

Robson and his company were very funny in Byron's burlesque of Lord Byron's "Mazeppa." Mazeppa, speaking of his mimic horse, says:—

"This horrid knacker's frightened at the rumbling,  
He's also got a horrid knack of stumbling;  
A piece of carrion soon I fear he'll be,  
And then, of course, he'll leave off carryin' me."

Further on Mazeppa says:—

"I'm on a yellow steed, with pale pink eyes,  
Which round the ring methodically flies:  
See, there's the clown, he stands there in the middle,  
About to ask an idiotic riddle.  
A tune, too, I remember years ago,  
Floats on the breeze, Oopla! and off we go."

Perhaps some modern playgoers will say that we old playgoers were easily pleased—perhaps we were. But I venture to think that our slightest and lightest, and certainly our more serious drama, had in it more honest dramatic motive than could be distilled out of some of the modern undramatic, unhealthy problem stuff now called stage plays.

#### ALFRED AUSTIN AND OTHER POETS.

I published some works of fiction and a volume of essays by Alfred Austin, the present Poet Laureate, who undoubtedly holds that position

from the fact that he has generally been a judicious poet, and knew well how not to offend his Queen, who might one day give him the honourable position in the world of letters he now holds. However, I will not say that Mr. Austin never dreamed of being Poet Laureate ; but, when I published for him, he certainly did dream now and then of being some day a man of more than ordinary note, if not in a very high position ; for, even though Mr. Austin could never boast of a great number of inches in his height, he always had a very high opinion of himself as a writer of prose and poetry ; perhaps, three or four times in his young days he was not quite as discreet with his pen as he might have been. In "The Season, a Satire" there are some very smart lines, and there are also others not in the best taste ; in fact, the line in which he says "And Saucy Wilton hints at more than she can say," must a good many times have made Mr. Austin vexed he wrote the words, for the lady has lived to do much better dramatic work than she did in burlesques of not the best kind ; and even though Hepworth Dixon, in "The Athenæum," was perhaps rather hard on Mr. Austin as a young poet, I have little doubt the latter has since regretted calling Dixon "A counter-jumper from the country," and saying "he rehabilitated his Bacon." However, such literary flings were not immoral, if not in good taste, and did nothing to mar his prospects for the Laureateship ! Certainly, in no other past reign would Mr. Alfred Austin have been

made Laureate over the head of such a poet as Mr. Algernon Swinburne ; for of course, as poets, there is little comparison between them. But Mr. Swinburne has seldom studied the taste of a large portion of English readers ; and if he ever for a moment dreamed of being Poet Laureate, he must have forgotten the Queen's taste and judgment in poetry and literature of many kinds. Mr. Swinburne has written a good many lines that are not by any means strictly Victorian ; and his execrations of Napoleon the Third were not at all to the national taste or in accordance with general feeling. But after all, it may have been that Mr. Swinburne neither dreamed nor cared for the Laureateship in any way. If he personally did not care for the honour, there were plenty of his admirers who did, and they put in pleas that were hard to confute.

One can almost imagine Lord Byron being alive, and the question of the Laureateship being between him and any latter day poet ! But perhaps the noble lord would have lost the honour, and all from the fact of having written his amorous poem, "Don Juan." I think in about 1860, or a year or two later, Mr. Swinburne sold the MS. of his poem "Chastelard" to me and my brother. However, a few days after he had done so, Mr. Swinburne called with a friend, and pleaded hard to have the MS. back. It seemed that Monckton Milnes (afterwards Lord Houghton) and some friends had assured him that his works should be issued from Mr. Moxon's in Dover Street, who was a great man with poets and

Poets Laureate ; at least, I think he had published for more than one Laureate. At all events, I gave up the excellent bargain, which was one hundred pounds for the copyright.

It may be that Mr. Swinburne will even at this date deny that he was ever pandered to or in any way spoiled when a young man ; but I well remember the time when he had those around him who should have shown him that many of his often worse than wild flights in poetry would stand black against him in time to come. So questionable in taste were some of his lines and complete poems that they were withdrawn from publication—a fact that is to stand against a poet in the latter part of the nineteenth century. And no one was, I think, more to blame in the matter than Monckton Milnes, who was no mean poet himself, and seldom wrote a line discreditable to him or English literature ; and yet he stood by and let young Swinburne mar his name and fame with matter he himself would have been afraid to have written. Another friend of Mr. Swinburne's about that time was Mrs. Richard (afterwards Lady) Burton.

If Mr. Swinburne had met Mrs. Burton twenty or thirty years after, one could not have wondered that she did not try to persuade him to revise his dangerous lines, for she was then well-versed in literary matter of which purity was not the chief aim ; but at that time, in about 1860, Mrs. Burton was, I think, not so well versed in the old Eastern romances as she was later in life. And womanly

instinct should have reminded her that the young poet she so much admired had a Queen over him who would show him no favour for indiscretions in his poetry that only pleased morbid minds. And, indeed, there were several writers about Mr. Swinburne at that time who could have saved him from himself, and taught him to pave the way to the Laureateship which would have been easily his for the trying.

Those who considered that Sir Edwin Arnold stood before Mr. Austin for the honour of the Laureateship did not know that the former was not known as a poet of any great standing before he published his charming poem called "The Light of Asia." In fact, Mr. Arnold had not nearly so many volumes of poetry to show the Queen as Mr. Austin had. The fact was, many readers, knowing how much Her Majesty admires and works for her Eastern possessions, thought Sir Edwin Arnold would win the much-coveted distinction in literature, but the one swallow in poetry did not win the Laureateship.

The next poet to Mr. Swinburne for favour was undoubtedly Mr. William Morris, author of "The Earthly Paradise," but he had so bound himself up with Socialism of a revolutionary kind that for him to have been Poet Laureate to the most solid monarchy in the world would have been almost a farce in literature in general, especially poetry.

I suppose had Robert Browning outlived Tennyson he would have been Laureate, but that

was not to be. In fact, so much in want of a great and popular living poet was England, for some years after Lord Tennyson's death—and indeed is now—that it seemed not unlikely for a time that the Laureateship would be given to John Ruskin or some such poetiser of prose, art, and letters combined, and it seems fairly certain that had Matthew Arnold been alive at the time he would have been offered the office ; but such an appointment would have been at least curious, because Mr. Arnold was more of a brilliant essayist and sweet verse writer than a true poet.

Harking back to Mr Alfred Austin and young poets who began their careers perhaps a few years before his time, two of them who certainly made better starts for poetic fame were Mr. Gerald Massey and Mr. Robert Buchanan. In fact, a good many years before most of Mr. Austin's poems found any book form beyond their original editions, Mr. Massey's and Mr. Buchanan's poems had been printed in several standard editions, and also in finely illustrated volumes.

In fact, but for Lord Tennyson living to a grand and well-merited old age, there might have been, say about twenty years before, not a little contention over the Laureateship, for about that time Matthew Arnold, Owen Meredith (the late Lord Lytton), one or more of the Rosettis and their school, Lord Houghton, and some other poets would have had claims to be considered. But the degeneration of the poetry of some, the death

of others, and the fact that Mr. Swinburne and Mr. William Morris were not great favourites for the Laureateship, made Mr. Austin's chance not so hopeless as it seemed to those who wondered who would gain the coveted honour. Having been a publisher myself, certainly not of so much poetry as of prose of one kind and another, the commercial side of literature will for some reason or no reason at all force itself upon me. I think it is well known, in fact, much too well known, that some of our greatest poets have been very indifferent commercial men. It is also true that many of their works have not been of much seeming commercial value during the lives of the authors ; in fact, poetry and poverty have often dwelt together. Who does not sigh and almost weep to know that Robert Burns died a melancholy death in a poor cottage home ?—and yet the value of his poems was hundreds of thousands of pounds. Oliver Goldsmith was almost always in debt and trouble ; and yet, if anyone could claim the copyrights of his works, even at this date, they would be worth an immense fortune. The sum paid for Milton's wondrous works makes anyone versed in such matters almost wonder that such misfortunes to great authors should have been passed over at the time unnoticed. I have no idea when poets became somewhat business-like, and began to know the value of their works, and claimed it ; and I do not know who was the best business man amongst them



before Alfred Tennyson. He, I feel sure, received more money for his poetry than all the other Poet Laureates, from Dryden to Wordsworth. I do not forget that Southey, Eusden, Whitehead, Pye, and others received good sums of money for their work ; but there is no intimation of one of them having been such a shrewd business man as Tennyson was. Lord Byron did not make a large fortune by his poetry ; and I think I dare include his and Sir Walter Scott's receipts in my estimate, and even then the balance would be largely in favour of Tennyson. In fact, the number of words and price of Tennyson's original volumes plainly show that he did not write for "just a half-a-crown per line," and that he was a "son of song who did descend to trade." But his bays were not "sere, nor did his laurels fade." He knew his words were golden, and he charged much of the real metal for them.

Some of his new volumes were published at seven shillings, and they are most of them easily read in two or three hours ; and his new five-shilling volumes could be easily read in about half the time. Mind, I am not even trying to blame Tennyson for his business tact ; nor because he weighed out his precious words at such a great price.

I remember Mr. Alexander Strahan rushed into my office one day, all excitement because he had signed an agreement with Tennyson to publish his books for a certain number of years, and boasted he had gained the blue ribbon of the publishing

trade. I also remember the time when he was glad when the contract was out, for he had to pay several thousand pounds a year to publish the older books, and on each new volume an astonishingly large royalty ; in fact, if any future relation or descendant of Lord Alfred Tennyson ever imagines that their poet relation was not well paid for his work, and could not guard his own monetary interest in his books, let them beg of more than one publisher to show them how shrewd the poet was. I may be wrong in imagining that Tennyson's business qualifications are a trifle interesting, but I think I am not wrong in saying that one English poet has passed away whose death left no stain upon his country's character for neglect in any way whatever.

#### AN OLD WOMAN'S CURSE.

A good many years ago I was staying at St. Leonards-on-Sea with my wife and our rather large family of young children, and had no desire to be troubled with business for at least a short time. But such was not to be my good fortune, for after I had been there not more than a day or two, a very smart old lady called and requested to see me. I did not know her even by name. However, I told the servant to show her in, and in the dear old old creature came, all smiles and polite bows. I bade her be seated, and she informed me that she was the wife of the editor of the most important paper in the town, and that her husband wished to write a special paragraph about my

important presence in the town. I desired her to tell her husband to do nothing of the kind, for I had no particular desire for my name to be even in the visitors' list. But in spite of my protests, the dear old lady said she must have her way. She made herself very affable to my wife, and had actually brought a parcel of dolls for our children—her doing so was rather a mystery, for, as I have mentioned, we had never known her before ; but those wretched dolls were partly the cause of my losing a rather large sum of money, for the old lady's visit was very much of a business character. She informed me that her husband had written a work of fiction, in which there was one character, a sort of lady lawyer, that would set all the reading world wondering at the originality of the conception, and, indeed, make the fortune of the author and publisher. I had had that sort of promise from a good many young and old authors before that time, but none of them kept their word then or after. However, I could not do less for the lady than offer to have the manuscript read, and so I told her to send it to my office at once, and there should be as little delay as possible about my decision. But that promise was not enough. She said in her nice winsome manner, "Would I mind looking at it during my stay at St. Leonards?" but I was firm against doing so, and so she said, "I will send it to your office at once." She then kissed the children, bade Mrs. Tinsley good morning, and I saw her to the door, where a man with a Bath chair was in

waiting for her, and on the seat there was a parcel, which I had little doubt was the great work of fiction that was to bring me a fortune. However, the dear old lady did not try to get me to do more than I had promised about it. I was at my office a few days after, and found the great, in fact, very bulky work there, for upon looking at it I found there was enough matter for six volumes instead of three, and it was very badly penned into the bargain; so I returned it to the author with a request that it should be shortened almost one-half if possible, and intimated that when I was in St. Leonards the next week I would call upon him, and perhaps better explain what he must do before the MS. could go to a reader or the printers. When I called I found the old fellow had reduced the MS. a good deal, but not nearly so much as I desired. However, the old lady was so gracious and the author pleaded so hard for the life of all the matter as it then stood, that I consented to have it looked over, and publish it on certain terms if suitable. I sent it to one of the readers and he scanned it, and said he thought it was not bad. So I put it into the printers' hands, but I looked in vain in the proofs for the character that was to set the reading world ablaze, for I only found a very much washed-out imitation of "Miss Sally Brass." When I published the book the press took very little notice of it; those who did mention it were not over complimentary, and at the agreed time I rendered the accounts to the author of the

costs and receipts, the former very much preponderating. However, such losses to me were in no way uncommon, and I thought perhaps the author would write and say he was sorry, and that his most gracious wife would almost shed tears of sorrow at the loss I had sustained and their disappointment ; but I had reckoned without my host. I had at first a rather curious letter from the author, intimating that I must have made a mistake about the cost, number of copies sold, etc. In reply, I offered free inspection of all matter relating to the publication of the book, and said I was truly sorry. But my reply only seemed to add fuel to the fire that had begun to burn.

I was busy in my office a day or two afterwards, when I heard a woman in a most commanding tone say, "Is Mr. Tinsley at home?" My clerk said, "Yes, madam ; kindly step in." She did so, and it was the old lady from St. Leonards. I asked her to take a seat. She would not, and there was not a sign of her old politeness in her manner or tone as she almost shrieked out : "No, I've come to curse you," and straightway she set to work. My clerk came to the door of my office and looked amazed. But on she went with words upon words of the most frightful kind ; and as she belched them out of her mouth, there seemed to be an actual fiery hiss with them, and they almost made me tremble. Fighting women was never in my way. No man as big as a house would have escaped without some change for using

such language to me ; and I should have been content with any change I myself received. But the wretched creature who stood before me looked so positively awful that I was really afraid of her. She seemed to have read up all the noted curse speeches in the English language, and vulgarised them ; for she in rapid succession reminded me of King Lear's curse, Miss Bateman Leah's curse, Constance's in King John, Goody Blake's, and a dozen other noted curses, and mixed with them words so unwomanly that they were shameful in the extreme. However, after what seemed to me almost an age, she left my office, but outside she still went on with her cursing. From there she went to the front door, and into Catherine Street, still shrieking forth her supposed wrongs ; in fact, her ugly maledictions only died out of my hearing when she mingled with the noisy traffic of the Strand. I am willing to confess that that old woman's curse unnerved me for some hours, and whenever I have thought of it since, and even now I almost tremble at the recollection of it.

I never saw the frightful old woman again, and I think she and her husband left St. Leonards soon after they found what a fiasco the book was. But I had two or three curious claims upon me, for which there was no authority. It seemed that the author and his wife had made so sure that the book would give him a good profit that they had obtained a large amount of credit from various tradesmen, and given

them orders on me to pay the accounts—a proceeding in no way thought of or justified.

#### DISCREET AUTHORS.

It is almost wonderful how discreet all kinds of place and notoriety hunters become when once they obtain lucrative preferments. In such cases the many-coloured opinions of "The Vicar of Bray" are much in evidence. Most of us now living can remember a rather large number of individuals who could shout loudly at vestry or any other kind of meetings up to the House of Commons; but any kind of place, and especially with some petty power, has completely silenced most of them.

I beg it will be quite understood that my remarks do not refer to a goodly number of honest workers in and out of the House of Commons, whose convictions have often mastered their feelings and discretion, and at such times have offended their friends almost as much as their enemies.

But past acts and opinions of no classes of public men would seem to be so hard to hide as those of, if I may term them, political barristers. Men in almost all branches of the public service may in their young days have said and even done very unpatriotic and, in fact, unconstitutional things; but their subsequent good deeds have easily blotted them out of the minds of even their bitterest opponents.

Therefore, it certainly seems there is (and perhaps it was more the case in days gone by) no more difficult past to blot out than the often very



special pleadings of over-zealous young barristers, whose work at the Bar has been to defend men whose acts of treason have brought them within the clutches of the law. In such cases their defenders have often used words, and, indeed, made speeches, that seemed likely to preclude them in after life from any chance of constitutional preferment, and certainly from becoming judges of the land, especially as the natural ambition of a counsel at the Bar is, as a rule, to become a judge. With that honour in view it seems curious that some barristers have not been more discreet in their pleading than they have been. But such has not always been the case—to win at the time has been in the mind of the counsel, regardless of the future in any way.

I remember a peculiar case of the kind some years ago. A friend of mine, and also an old friend of Justice (then Sir Thomas) O'Hagan's, offered to help him hunt up and edit the most noted speeches he had made when he was at the Bar. But evidently the then learned judge had not read, or, if so, had forgotten, a good many of the words he had once used; and when the matter went before him in proof for book form, his sentence upon them was very severe, for he denied them new life in any way, and they were left to sleep quietly in old newspapers and law reports. I have many times in English law courts heard counsel refer to old trials, and heard them say, "And I think your lordship was in the case!"

And, as a rule, the judge has smiled, and doubtless has had in his mind that pleadings at the Bar and justice on the Bench do not always go hand in hand.

For instance, Thomas O'Hagan, when at the Bar, defended some very risky cases. As a Judge and, afterwards, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, he had to work upon very different lines; and it is possible that, had he been bold enough to have issued his speeches in a permanent book form, more than one over-zealous young barrister might have quoted him against himself. Of course, such a proceeding in court would in no way be tolerated; but out of court some of Thomas O'Hagan's speeches at the Bar would have been curious reading in comparison with his many excellent judgments as Lord O'Hagan. Of course, the speeches could be found then or now, but the question was, as doubtless Justice O'Hagan knew, that in their old reported form he could to some extent ignore them, but, if he had once fathered them in book form, they would have gone a good deal against him.

I think I remember another excellent Irish barrister, Mr. Whiteside, who was not at all afraid to defend a lot of treason, and he in time did good work as a learned and honest judge. I seem the more to remember Mr. Whiteside, because I think he wrote one of the best essays on "The Life and Works of Oliver Goldsmith" I ever read, even bearing in mind John Forster's lovely reading life of the excellent poet.

I hope I have not shown—for I certainly have no

desire even to intimate—that Thomas O'Hagan or Mr. Whiteside talked for place or power, nor were they men with minds of "The Vicar of Bray" mould. But a most curious chapter in history could be written about men who have actually made themselves notorious in and out of Parliament for the sake of any sort of place or petty power, and, strange to say, many of them have obtained their desire.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE TWO JAMES GRANTS.

James Grant, the journalist and for some time editor of *The Morning Advertiser*, and James Grant, the noted military novelist, were often confounded with each other, but I do not think they ever knew each other by sight. They were both Scotchmen, and very prolific authors. I published books for them both, and strange to say, when I mentioned one's name to the other it was almost like a red rag to a bull, for each had a notion that they were a good deal wronged by there being two such Richmonds in the literary field. Which was the more clever author I dare not attempt to say, but the James Grant who edited *The Morning Advertiser*, I am sure, thought he was a much superior man in all ways to the man who wrote fiction.

It was almost strange to know two men of the same name and time, who were so quick with their pens, and so given to quotations in their books that either of them could, I feel sure, have prepared for press a good sized volume of matter every week of their lives. During the time James Grant was editing *The Morning Advertiser* he wrote and compiled quite a large number of semi-religious books under such taking titles as "God is Love," "Grace and Glory," "The Comforter." Such books

being in any way connected with the publican's newspaper office seemed a curious fact, but such was the case, and I have no doubt large portions of these religious books were written in Mr. Grant's room at *The Advertiser* office. Even though Mr. Grant's publisher was Mr. Darton, of Holborn Hill, he (Grant) for years kept a supply of the volumes in his office, and had no compunction in selling copies to his friends or anyone who called upon him. He always declared that they were beautiful books, and full of sound moral teaching. About that time my brother and I were rather large booksellers, as well as publishers, and Master Grant pushed the sales of his books with us without much compunction. I am afraid I was now and then bribed to purchase copies when we had some in stock, for Grant always had a supply of orders for theatres on hand, and he would often say, "Now, young Tinsley, take a half-dozen or more of my books, and I will give you a couple of orders for a good theatre to-night," and in that way, now and then, his "grace" and "glory" books were often imposed upon me. I see I have one of Mr. Grant's own letters about the books :

" 127, Fleet Street.

" Dear Sirs,—Will you make up 39 of my new book, 'Grace and Glory,' as I am most anxious you should have it in your place.

" Yours sincerely,

" JAMES GRANT."

I forget the year when Grant took up the

editorship of *The Morning Advertiser*, but perhaps it was about 1850; before that time he had done a good deal of good journalistic work, and had written several books, two of them, even though not reliable as regards facts, being in many ways very readable works. I refer to his "Random Recollections of the House of Commons" and "The Great Metropolis." For some reason Grant was by no means a popular literary man or editor, but he doubtless would have over-ridden many prejudices against him if he had succeeded in only one of his walks in literature, or if as a rule he had striven to be accurate in his dates. However, after my brother's death, he persuaded me to let him write a history of the newspaper press. I certainly had no hopes of his giving me a very great literary work, but I quite thought his then rather long life as a press-man would enable him to write me a work of fair credit to himself and to me as his publisher; but he began badly, and continued worse. *The Saturday Review* had never left Grant alone when it had the slightest chance to have a dig at him; in fact, knowing he was the author of the semi-religious books I have mentioned, they now and then mauled them in a most unmerciful way. So when he wrote his chapter on *The Saturday Review* in his press book he, in his turn, tried to flog *The Saturday* with its own sort of weapons. There was a good deal in the book I did not know much about, but it so happened I did know the beginning and rise of *The Saturday* fairly well, and Grant's account of it was

personal in the extreme, very inaccurate, now and then libellous, and most foolish in every way. I cut out the matter. I then remonstrated with Grant, we had high words more than once, and at last as nearly as possible got to law. George Sala was living at Brighton at the time, so I went down and asked him to run over the chapter with me; but he was afraid of it, and his advice was to burn it. However, I left it with him for a day or two, but he would not touch it, even though he at about that time had reviewed a single number of *The Saturday Review* as if it were a book, in, I think, *The Daily Telegraph*, and in his clever way had torn the snarler and its contributors into very small pieces.

However, after more angry meetings, Grant and I came to terms. I let him be foolish with his matter, and now and then inaccurate; but I got rid of the risky stuff, and even then, in mentioning the book, *The Saturday* had all the best of the argument, not only about themselves, but a good many other matters in it. In Mr. Grant's endeavours to lighten the abundance of heavy reading, he printed some anecdotes which were not of a very hilarious kind, and dragged into his volume some very old stories. The old one about the reporter who, when his wife threatened to throw herself over Waterloo Bridge, said he would report it to the newspapers, was neither witty nor wise; nor was the one about the two American reporters who declared that, when in a railway accident, each groped for the other's dead body; and his enemies made rare



sport of his putting it down as a fact that an important speech was delivered by Mr. Disraeli, when it was well known to be John Bright's.

It was by no means fair to Mr. James Grant, because he was of a very trustful nature even as an editor, that some shameful jokes were played upon him and in his paper, for, whatever faults he may have had, practical joking was not one of them, and if he was less Bohemian than almost any editor of his time, he certainly was a good father and an excellent husband, always kept a good home over his head, and did not beg or borrow of anyone.

It was curious how James Grant lost the editorship of *The Morning Advertiser*. He had a good sum for his editing, and about one hundred a year for extras, such as cabs, broughams, night work, &c.; but some of the committee were mean enough to notice that he was seldom seen even in an omnibus; and so it was resolved that the money for extras should be discontinued. Grant then sent in his resignation, not dreaming he would not be asked to remain; but such was the case, for some of the committee had long been anxious to remove him, and he had to go. After Mr. Grant left *The Morning Advertiser* he tried another venture in a kind of a religious journal, but it made no great headway; and so, after founding, editing and writing close upon one hundred literary works of different kinds, I am afraid he was not a rich man in his old days.

## JAMES GRANT, THE NOVELIST.

I do not think James Grant, the military novelist, came London way to live until many years after his namesake had settled there, and there should not perhaps have been as much confusion about the two men as there was. But there was some excuse for the confusion, for I had both their names in my catalogue of authors' books for some years, and it was often remarked, "What a prolific author that James Grant is." They were, as I have said, both prolific authors; but if there had only been one Grant, his literary work as regards quantity would have been indeed prolific, if not wonderful.

It is sad to remember that James Grant the novelist, who wrote that by no means bad novel, called "The Romance of War," before he was out of his teens, and lived, I think, to write over one hundred works of fiction and other military books, died anything but a rich man.

If I may point out a moral to young authors as regards Mr. Grant's career as a novelist, I feel bound to say I feel sure he was never honest to himself and his reputation. He had an excellent gift for romancing, wars, and adventures, but he never worked well at his stories. He often made more than free use of books and newspaper descriptions of battles, and in a curious way used up old materials when he could have made ten times better fiction by relying entirely upon his own inventive brain. I have often thought that Grant, had he shown a tithe of the patience and

care over his work that Sir Walter Scott did he would have made a good deal better name than he ever did.

#### VOLUMES OF POETRY AND RHYME BY WOMEN.

Nearly forty years ago there was a rather mysterious (in his manners) old gentleman, who spent much time and money in collecting any sort of books of rhyme and poetry written by women. He told me he was trying to make as complete a collection of books of the kind as he possibly could. He was certainly mysterious about his name and address, for he never gave them to me nor, I think, to any other publisher or old bookseller. He generally came to my office about once or twice a week, and never bartered about the price of the books he required; in fact, as a rule, he insisted upon paying the published price of any volume of good, bad, or very indifferent matter in the form of woman's poetry. At that time I was in a good position to obtain many volumes for the earnest old poetry buyer. However, without any notice or warning, he left off calling, and I never again heard of the only customer I ever had of this kind. Nor did I ever hear what became of what must have been, even at that time, a very curious collection.

#### WILLIAM GILBERT.

Mr. William Gilbert, the father of Mr. W. S. Gilbert, of Gilbert and Sullivan opera fame, used to tell rather a good story about a mute who also acted

as a waiter. Mr. Gilbert attended the funeral of an old friend, and there were two of the old-fashioned mutes stationed at the door. In the evening Mr. Gilbert was at a rather large dinner party, when he noticed one of the waiters was very attentive to him, and the moment this waiter had a chance he informed him they had met before in the day, and said, "I was one of the mutes at the funeral to-day, sir!"

There is rather a grim story about an undertaker who was making himself rather active after a funeral, and informed the company that the brother of the corpse would like to say a few words!

Another story is told of a man whose wife was dying, and leaving him a large sum of money. The poor woman was rather anxious about her funeral arrangements, and the worthy husband seemingly humoured her in every way, and promised her that the funeral should be very grand. But as soon as the poor woman was dead, he set to work to make the funeral as cheap as possible, except the mutes—and these he gave her because they attracted the notice of passers-by. The day was very cold, and so the mutes asked for a drop of warm grog; but the indignant widower sent them word to jump about to keep themselves warm!

#### BILL ROMER.

William Romer was indeed a Bohemian, and a painter of some talent, who had in him the making of a capital artist, but had very little energy to do

anything good for himself in life. Dear old Bill Romer ! We all loved him, and so did his sister, Mrs. Ansdell, the wife of the celebrated artist of that name, who made it a rule to have her Bohemian brother with them at Christmas time, and also made sure he had a new dress suit for those occasions. Those clothes were always money for Bill afterwards, for he did not dare or care to wear them when amongst his brother Savages; at least, there would have been a few personal remarks, for dress clothes were not plentiful, and by no means the rule in the Savage Club in those days, and Bill did not care to lend them to his "uncle," so he generally disposed of them at the best price offered.

Bill Romer used to tell a rather good story about one of his visits to the Ansdells. It appeared he was on rather good terms with the servants, and one Christmas time the cook asked him to help her draw the sinews from a turkey's legs. In the by no means easy task the housemaid lent a hand, and after some pulling and tugging the sinews suddenly gave way, and down on to the floor went Bill, the cook, and the housemaid, all of a heap. Just at that moment Mrs. Ansdell appeared on the scene, and ordered Master Bill out of the kitchen at once.

#### ANDREW HALLIDAY.

Andrew Halliday Duff was a writer of no mean ability. He used to jokingly remark that he dropped his name of Duff for fear his friends might call him

a duffer, hence he was known by his middle name, Halliday. He was a fine, handsome young Scotchman when he first came to London, and served as a tutor in a private school, but soon turned his attention to literature. He at once found profitable employment for his ready pen as a contributor to *The Leader*, *The Morning Chronicle*, and several country newspapers, and afterwards he became quite a favourite writer for "Household Words" and "All the Year Round." Some of Halliday's essays and stories, like some of Mr. Sala's, were thought, by ordinary readers, to have been written by Mr. Charles Dickens. Halliday was an early member of the Savage Club—by early I mean I think not one of the original members. He soon became quite a favourite of William and Robert Brough, and, with William Brough, wrote several light dramatic plays for the Adelphi and other theatres; but perhaps one of his earliest attempts at writing for the stage was with a Mr. Lawrance, when they wrote a popular burlesque of "Kenilworth" for the Strand Theatre, in which Marie Wilton, now Lady Bancroft, made quite a hit as a very sprightly Sir Walter Raleigh. To her was allotted the joke about Raleigh's cloak. Mrs. Charles Selby was, I think, Queen Elizabeth, and before she stepped from the mimic barge Raleigh took off his cloak and spread it on the ground for her Majesty to step upon, and she, noticing Raleigh's anxiety to have it again, asked him why it was so. Raleigh's reply was, I think, "I should like to

have it because, if I wanted to pawn it, I could say 'I have had a *sovereign* on it.'

No author, I think, before or since Halliday's time, has made better, if as good, stage versions of Sir Walter Scott's and Charles Dickens's books. He made several very interesting plays from Scott's works for Drury Lane Theatre, and some quite noted plays from Dickens's for the Olympic and other theatres. The play called "Little Em'ly" was a great success, and is doubtless the best dramatic version of what, perhaps, may be termed the Peggotty episode in "David Copperfield."

There is a sort of dramatic likeness between Mr. W. S. Gilbert and Andrew Halliday. Mr. Gilbert has gone more than once to his early writings, "The Bab Ballads," etc., for the outline of some of his librettoes for the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. In the same manner Halliday dramatised several of the stories he had, years before, written for "Household Words" and "All the Year Round"; several of them were produced by Pattie Oliver at the Royalty with a good deal of success. Halliday was no mean judge of paintings and pictures, and I remember during the time he was one of Mr. Dickens's most trusted contributors to "All the Year Round," he wrote rather a smart essay upon the works of several noted artists of the time. Apparently the article was sent to the printers before being read by Mr. Dickens, who, however, when he saw it in proof, found that, even though it was very true, it was much too plain spoken to suit the taste of



several of his most intimate friends. So he returned the MS. and proof to Halliday, and also a cheque in full payment for the article, together with the kindest letter possible, intimating that the essay was very good and very true, but would not be quite to the taste of several of his artist friends. He also intimated that, even though he did not care to publish it, there was not the slightest reason it should not be published in any other journal or paper; and I seem to remember that it did appear in a magazine, but not I think mine—at least, I am unable to find any trace of it, even though, if I remember rightly, the arguments or bearings of the article were very much to my way of thinking.

Two essays Halliday wrote for "All the Year Round" were wonderfully popular. The one called "My Account with Her Majesty" did as much to advertise the Post Office Savings Bank as Henry Russell's songs in praise of emigration had done for emigration some years before. The article was printed as a penny tract, and was sold in hundreds of thousands. The other article, called "Exceedingly Odd Fellows," also did much good for Benefit Societies. I published three volumes of Halliday's stories and essays, and each of the volumes was brim-full of very readable matter. Halliday also edited the two very handsome and most interesting volumes I published, written by members of the Savage Club, and called "The Savage Club Papers."

Poor Halliday was what may be termed badly married. He himself was a well-bred, well-educated Scotchman, and really, as I have said, very handsome, and always as clean as a new pin, and perfect in manners. His wife was a little, stout, homely woman—by no means a bad wife, but much too jealous of her handsome husband for theirs to be anything like a happy home. Halliday was, I am sure, very fond of her for many years, but her continual jealousy, for which there was not the slightest cause, soured his feelings against her, and when the poor fellow drifted into bad health he had gone too far in his dislike to appreciate his comforts, and, what was worse, the disease of the brain that came upon him made him—as it has in thousands of cases—more prejudiced against his friends than his enemies.

Perhaps Andrew Halliday was one of the few literary men and dramatists who, even though he never had any very great successes, as a rule made money and saved it, and, in fact, would always rather give away five shillings than lend a sovereign. However, in an unlucky moment, he got mixed up in a rather large bill transaction, and, being the only monied man, had to pay. Unluckily the loss came just at the time his brain was giving way; he had told me about the matter some months before the crash came. Then I lost sight of him for some time, but heard from time to time he was at home, though not in very good health. However, one day Charles Millward called upon

me, and asked me if I had seen Halliday lately. I said I had not, and added that I hoped he was getting into better health. Poor Millward was much concerned about him. However, he said, "If you see him, don't seem to notice he does not look well," and strange to say, within two or three days the poor dear fellow walked into my office with a large bundle of manuscript plays, and he was little more than a skeleton of his former self, certainly not in a fit state to be about alone, but with no knowledge of that fact himself. Strange to say, even though we were great friends, his malady had not made him turn against me. He asked me to put the manuscripts into my safe, and not to deliver them to anyone without his order. I think he came a second time with some other manuscripts. He said he had been trying to find his way to my private house, but he had forgotten the way; the dear fellow had been there numerous times. However, happily the cruel disease soon sent him to rest.

After poor Halliday's death there was an unseemly scramble for his property. The will was disputed, and expensive law proceedings were resorted to by Mrs. Halliday and one of Halliday's brothers, and then, as is often the case, they were to some extent settled out of court. One of the worst phases of the quarrel was that, after the executors had ordered a handsome slab of Aberdeen granite to be placed over Halliday's grave, none of the contending parties would confirm or pay for the granite, nor for the work that had been done to

make it ready for the grave. However, Charles Millward, the mason, did after some trouble get his expenses, and then re-sold the slab for another grave.

I venture to print the following rather smart little address, written by Halliday in the bright time of his life, when he was supplying Miss Oliver with very good little plays for the Royalty Theatre:—

AN ADDRESS WRITTEN BY ANDREW HALLIDAY AND SPOKEN  
BY MISS M. OLIVER, ON THE OCCASION OF HER BENEFIT,  
AUGUST 9TH, 1869.

“A thousand thanks, my friends, for your kind greeting,  
Please to regard this as our Annual Meeting, [room, me  
You the Shareholders—this (*pointing to the Theatre*) the Board  
Chairwoman of our limited Company,  
Formed in Soho to work the Mines of Mirth—  
To kill Dull Care and give Good Humour birth—  
To make poor hearts that Working Day devours,  
Rich for an Evening with three golden hours.  
Our Company was founded for this end,  
Say, have we paid you a fair dividend  
In mirthful Comedy and honest Fun  
For every Shilling paying you a pun?  
And 'tis our boast—I hope you will not mock it,  
'Tho' we've made puns we have not picked your pocket.  
Who could have hoped some three, four years ago  
For such a Royalty from the Soho?  
When I came prospecting, as diggers say,  
To this unlikely spot one doubtful day,  
My friends all stared at me with wond'ring eyes.  
'Soho!' they cried, 'sure that way madness lies!'  
'Dean Street the road to Fortune! nay Miss, nay,  
To Basinghall Street 'tis the nearest way!'  
I have not found it so—with you to thank—  
I've got no nearer that Street than the Bank,

Where I've a million—the report is such,  
But *entre nous*, it isn't quite so much.  
But if I really had so great a store,  
Still greedy Oliver would ask for more ;  
Not that she covets that which wealth affords,  
But that she dearly, dearly loves the boards,  
To which as yet she cannot say adieu,  
But still will tread them while it pleases you.  
I mention this because I often hear  
I'm going to retire this time next year.  
It isn't true—my lease is out, but still,  
I'll take a new one if I've your good will."

It will be in the remembrance of many playgoers that pretty Miss Oliver was a great favourite in Mr. Burnand's burlesque of "Black-eyed Susan," and, in fact, made a good sum of money out of the venture ; her singing of a song, called "Pretty Susan, don't say No," was the talk of the town.

#### ALBERT SMITH AND THE EGYPTIAN HALL.

Many of us now living can remember the many pleasant hours spent at the Egyptian Hall during the time it was occupied by Albert Smith, of Mont Blanc fame. He was a very bright and entertaining lecturer. At times he could be very severe, and was not at all averse to speak the truth even at the risk of offending his audience. He had a wholesome horror of anything like cads and their ways, and was very severe upon old maids with ringlet curls. He called them "prancers," and would mimic them very often in his entertainment. In those days the cork-screw or ringlet curls were much more worn than now, so that Smith's mimicry was often very

personal; and although those mimicked laughed at the time, it was plain to see there was annoyance, if not pain, behind the laugh.

It was Albert Smith, I think, who first made St. Bernard dogs well known in London. He took a great interest in the monks of St. Bernard, and for several years brought a number of the young St. Bernard dogs to London, and sold them for the benefit of the monastery. He himself had a very fine specimen of the dogs, which used to accompany him in his walks, and he seldom lost an opportunity of recommending the breed to friends or strangers who noticed his animal.

Albert Smith used to tell a good story of, as he called him, "a drawling swell" who had purchased a fine specimen of the St. Bernard dog. He told Smith that it had almost ruined him by breaking everything breakable in its house, carrying the dinner table about on its back, upsetting the dinner service on to the floor, &c.; but he did not like to sell the beast, so, as he quietly informed Smith, having a friend whom he disliked, he gave the dog to him, and it did ruin him.

Albert Smith could, as I have said, be very cynical. He took great delight in looking through the windows of any fashionable pastrycook's shop, and staring the eaters of buns and all kinds of pastry out of countenance. He used to declare he could upset a whole shopful of people by looking them hard in the face, especially the "cheap dining swells," as he used to call them. He used to say he was

much pestered for presents on his return from his travels to Mont Blanc, China, and other places, and the trouble grew so great that he at last made it a practice to purchase all the toys he required in the Lowther Arcade at a much cheaper rate than in China or anywhere else ; and the recipients, believing they had been bought in some far-off bazaar, were delighted with them.

Albert Smith issued a small, humorous paper, called *The China Times*, to advertise his lecture. It was said to have a large circulation in "Canton, Hammersmith, Amoy, Camberwell, Macao, Hackney, Hong Kong, Camden Town, Peking, Brixton, and all the midland counties." The price was "*Thank you.*" I do not know how many parts were published, but I remember one was numbered close upon three thousand. I expect the numbering of *The China Times* was very like the numbering of many other things in England, rather mythical; perhaps the first number issued was 2,793, or thereabouts. By mythical numbering, I mean the way hosts of tradesmen and business firms number their carts, vans, trucks, &c. Who ever saw a cart or conveyance of any kind belonging to any popular or well-known firm marked No. 1? That would be dreadful. Numbers must begin high up. If Jones has got carts with numbers on them as high as sixty or seventy, Smith numbers his eighty or ninety; so that if a very large firm has got, say, twenty conveyances, any numbers may be on them up to one hundred. It looks important to have No. 100 on a



cart, van, or truck—the public must think you have the other ninety-nine.

I was foolish enough once in my life to try and benefit man and womankind in general by bringing out a patent bedstead for invalids, and the man who made the labels was more than surprised I did not let him begin the numbering of the labels for the bedsteads at a thousand and forty, or some such ridiculous number. “They all do it,” the man said to me; “it makes the public believe the thing is selling by thousands.”

And, I suppose, for some such reason Albert Smith put a number of over two thousand on *The China Times* to begin with; but a good showman must be a good advertiser, and few lecturers ever knew how to advertise or lectured better than Albert Smith, who christened Mont Blanc the “monarch of mountains.” But his rather delicate constitution gave way, and one morning his cheery voice and intellectual entertainment closed for ever. His brother, Arthur, alas! a man of great ability as an *impresario*, and a clever man in many ways, died all too young. No two men ever died leaving behind more sad regrets than Albert and Arthur Smith.

It was, I think, Albert Smith who wrote a protest in pamphlet form against giving fees to waiters, and advocated the service money being charged in the bill. He meant well, no doubt, and his mistaken notion was adopted by a great many proprietors of hotels, restaurants, and dining-house keepers; but

I think the non-compulsory fee was and is the best. Waiters are apt to be much more civil and obliging with the expectation of a fee than when they know it is charged in the bill, and that most of their strange customers will not give them anything beyond.

A large number of gentlemen dine at the same waiters' tables every working day in the week, at their favourite dining place; and as a rule, although a fee for service is charged in the bills, many of them make it a rule to give the waiter two or three pence; and the carver is not above taking a fee, especially when he knows the cuts of the joint the gentlemen like best, and helps them accordingly. Then the cashier, whose business it is to hand the *menu* to you and see you comfortably seated, when he gives you any small change, does so in a rather reluctant manner, and if you are of a very liberal disposition you are apt to say to him, "Keep the halfpence"; so that in the end you pay from ten to twenty per cent. on your bill for service. The fact is, civility makes many people too good-natured; but any fee beyond a fair one to your waiter is an imposition.

In any case, there should be no charge for service in the bill; or if so, the master should distinctly inform his customers that his servants are well paid by him for their work, and that no money need be given them upon any consideration. But waiters are very badly paid—from ten shillings to a pound a week for wages—and they must prey upon the customers to make up a

fair week's payment ; so I venture to think that Albert Smith's raid upon waiters' fees was a mistake.

CHARLES ROSS.

In, I think, 1869 I was introduced to the late Mr. Charles Ross. He was at that time a very clever, but very nervous young man. He then held an appointment in one of the Civil Service departments of Somerset House ; and I suppose, like several other young men of about the same age as himself employed at the same place, had plenty of time between the hours of ten and four to do literary work ; at all events, Ross did write a good deal.

But, I think, about that time Robert Lowe was made Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the work of the several departments in Somerset House and other Government offices was overhauled and inspected, as regards the mode of working ; and the result was that a sweeping reform was introduced, and many of the brethren—who, as *Punch* once said, like the fountains in Trafalgar Square, played from ten till four—found that pens, ink, and paper were served to them in moderation, and their ways of working were very closely watched. The result was that several of those gentlemen who had been well paid for their work in Government offices, but had done a good deal of literary work in office hours, compounded for life interests they held under Government, and devoted the whole of their time to literature ; some to repent of the step they had taken, others to do very well as writers of

books, or as members of the Fourth Estate. There seems no doubt Ross was quite justified in devoting his time to literature altogether ; for there was a good demand for his comic writings. He was for many years editor of *Judy*, and wrote a mass of comic matter for several comic papers, and was, I think, the originator of that peculiar monstrosity, "Ally Sloper."

But, apart from his comic effusions, Ross had done some very fair literary work in his time. He edited two Christmas annuals for me, and I published two or three works of fiction for him. They showed he might have made a good name as novelist, had he chosen to have kept to that kind of writing, instead of covering reams of paper with ephemeral comic writing, to be read, laughed at, and forgotten in a day.

## CHAPTER XII.

### CHARLES JAMES MATHEWS.

Staunch playgoers who live quite up to the end of this century will not forget Charles Mathews, whose versatility on and off the stage was singularly lively and interesting. On the stage he was always the bright star of any scene or act, and off it, almost up to his last days, he was rare good company in any room or society. His admirers never passed him in the street without remembering enjoyable evenings at the theatre. I had almost said Charles Mathews was never dull on the stage in his life. But I am afraid I once saw him try to play a villain, and then he was almost dull. Am I right in saying that he played two melodramatic villains in his time, one in "The Chain of Events," and the other in the dramatic version of "Black Sheep"? But his wonderful personality in light comedy parts would often make poor dialogue bright, if not sparkling. That he remained too long on the stage was a serious fact; but he was never a saving man, and could never have known the value of money, as a provision for old age. I remember when he was lessee of the Lyceum Theatre, he owed some money to William Brough, who wanted it rather badly; but William was by no means a resolute

creditor, so he tried letters and messengers, but, as all were of no avail, he at last went to the genial comedian himself. When he came away he had not got the money, but declared that had he had any in his pocket, Master Charles would have borrowed it off him. During the life of his first wife, Madame Vestris, it was quite understood that it was she who made the money fly. But even after her death his chronic state of creditor upon creditor clung to him for a time. I never heard that he ever made bets on racing, or gambled in any extraordinary way; but the real secret of his almost continuous insolvency was that he was generally some way ahead of his income, and was consequently always in the hands of money lenders of the most expensive kind. And yet it was not often a creditor would go to extremes with him for his account. Many a creditor, like Brough, has gone to him with the full determination of extracting his account from the genial Charles, and not only did not get a farthing off the old score, but was bamboozled out of another hundred or more to be paid at a certain date, that time without fail; in fact, Mathews had such immense power over the most exacting creditors that many of them who had been many times overcome by his wonderfully fascinating manner, would never again apply personally for their own accounts upon any consideration. And so it came about that now and then a stern creditor placed his account into the unmerciful hands of his solicitor; and then, in case of non-payment, came writs,

judgments, bailiffs, and, sometimes, "contempt of court," and imprisonment for the debt or debts. But even the extreme penalty of imprisonment for debt did not distress him a great deal. I remember one evening being at the Lyceum Theatre soon after Mathews had been released from Lancaster Castle or prison, where some stern creditor had had him placed for non-compliance with an order of the court. However, he came up smiling, and opened the entertainment of the evening with a favourite farce, called, I think, "Before Breakfast," and the first lines he spoke were: "Here I am without a shilling, ready to begin the world again." It would have been a bad performance indeed, after the above lines, to have put the audience in a bad temper; and if the said stern creditor was in the theatre at the time, I have little doubt he almost repented locking up the favourite comedian.

It was in the above-mentioned farce that Mathews, I think, showed almost his greatest versatility as a comedian. He played a waiter, who had to speak some five or six different languages or dialects, and was remarkably expert in waiting upon the various customers of different nationalities, altering his face, manner of speech, gait, voice, dress, and manner, to make each believe he had a separate waiter. The four plays I best remember Mathews in were "Used Up," "Bachelor of Arts," "Game of Speculation," and "Patter *versus* Clatter."



About that time a new play, or an adaptation from the French, written by Slingsby Lawrence (G. H. Lewes), called "Sunshine through the Clouds," was played. Madame Vestris played the part of a motherly old lady in a most charmingly pathetic way; and the two young girls, perhaps her daughters in the play, were taken, I think, by Miss Hughes (the late Mrs. Gaston Murray), and Pattie Oliver.

Mr. Frank Matthews was also in the cast, and a Mr. Swan, a very funny comedian, who did not, however, I think, afterwards make any great way in his profession.

Lionel Brough, not under his own name, made his first appearance at the Lyceum, when Charles Mathews was lessee of that theatre, in a farce called, I think, "My Fellow Clerk."

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Matthews were also in the company; but there was no relationship between them and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Mathews. Madame Vestris was, as I have said, the first wife of Charles Mathews.

There was also in the company a brother of the famous scene painter, William Beverley, playing under the name of Robert Roxby, an actor of no mean ability. The Roxbys or Beverleys were a very old theatrical family at the old Queen's Theatre, or "Dust Hole," afterwards the Prince of Wales's, of Bancroft and Robertson fame.

Rather late in life Charles Mathews married his second wife, well known in later years as the much

esteemed "Mrs. Charley," who so well husbanded their resources that he was not a poor man. It did seem a pity, therefore, that he acted when his brightest days were gone.

I venture to print some verses which Mr. Mathews wrote for my magazine. He also wrote a rather dull (for him) article, called "Gags," in Sheridan's "Critic."

"MY FELLOW-CREATURES."

By Charles Mathews.

From *Tinsley's Magazine*.

I've lived sixty four years  
 In this valley of tears,  
 And seen all sorts of men, that's a fact ;  
 And I've made up my mind  
 As to poor human kind,  
 That we are all more or less cracked.  
 It's all very fine  
 For your good pompous divine,  
 To give out from his pulpit of oak,  
 That we are all fellow-creatures  
 Like minds, and like features—  
 O, lawk! I call that a good joke.  
 For in what way we resemble,  
 How Kean<sup>1</sup> was like Kemble,  
 Or Byron<sup>2</sup> was like Dr. Watts,  
 I can never conceive,  
 Nor do I believe  
 That teetotallers can be like sots.

---

<sup>1</sup> There was no resemblance between Edward Kean and any one of the Kembles. Kean was quick and soul-stirring when acting. The Kembles were slow and often unimpressive in speech, except, of course, Mrs. Siddons, who was one of the Kemble family.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Byron and Dr. Watts were hardly kin in poetry. At least, there is some difference between "Childe Harold" and "How doth the little busy bee."

Only take for comparison  
 Voltaire and Harrison,<sup>1</sup>  
 Hannibal, Swift, and Fitzball<sup>2</sup>;  
 Then say, if you dare,  
 In what way they compare  
 When they won't bear comparing at all.

Why, there's not been a man,  
 Since the world first began,  
 Who resembled another in fact.  
 And as far as I see,  
 They in nothing agree,  
 Except that they're more or less cracked.

'There's your friend Julius Cæsar,  
 Who, 'twixt you and me, sir,  
 Was not a bad chap at a fight.  
 Now just say if you can,  
 In what way such a man  
 Can be said to resemble John Bright.

Each is cracked in his way,  
 And tain't easy to say  
 If the one or the other be right.  
 But it would be a teaser  
 To say Julius Cæsar  
 Was just such a man as John Bright.

There was Cardinal Wolsey,  
 Who lived down at Moulsey ;  
 Was he, with his clerical mug,  
 Like Jack Sheppard the sinner,  
 Who hung out at Pinner,  
 And lived in a jolly stone jug?

---

<sup>1</sup> Harrison, a popular singer.

<sup>2</sup> Fitzball, a noted old melodramatist.

Would you venture to state  
 That old Frederick the Great  
 Was Pierce Egan himself to a dot?  
 Or that Lion-King Carter<sup>1</sup>  
 Was like Charles the Martyr;  
 Judge Nicholson<sup>2</sup> like Walter Scott?

You may argue for ever,  
 No matter how clever,  
 You cannot establish as fact,  
 That an eagle's a mouse,  
 Or a pill box a house,  
 You'll prove nothing but this—that you're cracked.

Now, take any two gabies,  
 And start them as babies,  
 And give them the same cup of pap,  
 And bring both up in Surrey,  
 Teach both Lindley Murray,  
 And buy them the same leather cap.

Dress up both little boys  
 In the same corduroys,  
 And whip both with the very same rod,  
 You'll find all of no use,  
 One will turn out a goose,  
 One a scholar, and t'other a fool.

Teach them two tens are twenty,  
 And *as in presenti*,  
 And put down *quae genus* before 'em,  
 One quickly will halloa  
*Mars, Bacchus, Apollo*,  
 Ere t'other can get out *virorum*.

<sup>1</sup> A noted lion tamer.

<sup>2</sup> The notorious mock Judge of the Coal-Hole.

You may work like a nigger,  
 When they get bigger,  
 They'll grow more unlike every day.  
 Though they've felt the same birch,  
 One will take to the church,  
 T'other pay his half-price to the play.

One will idolise Homer  
 And t'other Bob Romer,<sup>1</sup>  
 And when they are free from the school,  
 One will live up in attics  
 And love mathematics,  
 T'other dote on Paul Bedford<sup>2</sup> or Toole.

One man, born ferocious,  
 Another precocious,  
 One lamb-like, another defiant ;  
 One's born for a writer,  
 And one for a fighter,  
 One's a pigmy and t'other a giant.

We all have our breeds  
 And various seeds,  
 Just like animals, fishes, and flowers ;  
 You can't make a dog  
 From a sheep or a hog,  
 They've their classes distinct, and we've ours.

Who'd compare a bear's hug  
 To a bite from a pug ?  
 Who'd have felt the least pity for Daniel,  
 If 'stead of a cage,  
 With wild beast to engage,  
 He'd been put into a den with a spaniel ?

---

<sup>1</sup> A humorous comedian at the old Adelphi Theatre.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Bedford or Toole ; perhaps no other two comedians worked better together than they did at the old Adelphi Theatre.

You might just as well try  
To make elephants fly,  
Or convert pickled pork into venison,  
As compel a born coward  
To fight like a Howard,  
A beadle to rhyme like a Tennyson.

All our different races  
Have stamped on their faces  
The marks that distinguish them—rather !  
You may tell the born glutton,  
Who lives upon mutton,  
From the savage who eats his own father.

Why, just look at the Yankees,  
I'd not give two thankyes  
For all the fine things that they teach  
About men being equal ;  
They've found in the sequel,  
They can't carry out what they preach.

While the North stuck to figures,  
South larrup'd its niggers,  
And each called its mission divine,  
Till the wrong and the right  
Had a jolly good fight<sup>1</sup>  
All to try and change Nature's design.

After lots of hard thwacks  
The whites found the blacks  
Were considered as equal by no man.  
A black woolly pate  
Can't compare with hair straight,  
A snub-nose can't compare with a Roman.

---

<sup>1</sup> Yankees. An allusion to the war between North and South America.

Both Sambo's detractors  
 And best benefactors,  
 Who glory in setting him free,  
 While they crown him with roses,  
 Will still hold their noses,  
 And shrink from the same cup of tea.

Since to prove black is white  
 Is difficult quite,  
 As to prove London Bridge is at Brighton ;  
 The notion dismiss,  
 And depend upon this,  
 That a black man is not like a white 'un.

Now I'll tell you what too,  
 Take a boot and a shoe,  
 They are articles every one wears,  
 And compare them together,  
 Though both made of leather,  
 A cobbler will say they're not pairs.

So, though all made of clay,  
 We are not shaped the same way,  
 And our clays mixed in various gradations.  
 At the time of our birth  
 We are all sent on earth,  
 Ready made for our sundry vocations.

We all were created,  
 That's true, as it's stated ;  
 But we are not created for fellows.  
 One destined to play  
 On the organ all day,  
 Others destined to just play the bellows.

Were it otherwise, why  
 Shouldn't good Mrs. Fry<sup>1</sup>  
 Have been rival to Jonathan Wild,

---

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Fry, the prison matron.



Or Humanity Howard<sup>1</sup>  
Been whipped—the old coward—  
For grossly maltreating a child ?

Twist us which way you will,  
Nature will come out still—  
You may fight her decrees till you're sick.  
Nature *meant* Edmund Kean  
Should illumine the scene,  
Worrell always was *meant* for a "stick."

Thus will every man find  
His position assigned—  
He's to conquer the world or sell figs  
Be he Morland<sup>2</sup> or Titian,  
He works out his mission,  
Paints portraits, or only paints pigs.

One's born to be funny,  
And squander his money ;  
Another created to lend it.  
The greater the bore,  
Why, the greater his store :  
It's the pleasantest fellows who spend it.

It's some consolation  
To know compensation  
Is equally granted to all.  
What by some men is wanted,  
To others is granted—  
Brown's too short, and Thompson's too tall.

There's Commodore Rose,  
With gout in his toes,  
Eats three meals a day, and is ill ;

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<sup>1</sup> Humanity Howard, of prison life fame.

<sup>2</sup> Morland was almost a great painter, but spent much time painting pot-boilers, although they are now worth good sums of money.

While the poor starving peasant,  
 Who knocks down a pheasant<sup>1</sup>  
 In his life never swallowed a pill.  
 Then let's all be content  
 Just to follow our bent,  
 And not bother our heads about others.  
 Let Nature alone,  
 Envy no man his own,  
 And jog on together like brothers.  
 Now, to sum up the whole  
 Of this long rigmarole,  
 It is wise to give each man his station.  
 It's really absurd  
 To treat all as one herd,  
 And drive all by the same education.  
 Try and humour the bent  
 With which each man is sent,  
 Duly stamped at the hour of his birth,  
 And assist the poor creature  
 To better his nature,  
 And act well his part upon earth.  
 If Tom Hood had been put  
 In a regiment of foot,  
 He would never have let off a gun ;  
 For in spite of hard drilling,  
 I'd bet you a shilling,  
 He'd only have let off a pun.  
 Do you think that Molière,<sup>2</sup>  
 When he polished a chair,  
 And worked hard at a pillow and bolsterer,  
 Didn't sicken to do it ?  
 T'was bosh, and he knew it—  
 You couldn't make *him* an upholsterer.

<sup>1</sup> An allusion to poaching.

<sup>2</sup> Molière was the son of an upholsterer.

Then don't say we are all made  
Of one mould and one grade,  
And all equal, allow me to doubt it.  
We are born wide apart,  
Both in head and in heart,  
It's the truth, and so—that's all about it.

I have ventured to add a few notes of explanation to the foregoing lines that may perhaps interest the not over-learned reader.

#### GEORGE HONEY.

I knew George Honey, the comedian, for many years, I mean the father of the now living George Honey. I am afraid that the practice so common in this generation (perhaps more so than any time before) of sons acting under the exact names of their fathers, without any intimation that they are the second in the family line, will rather confuse dramatic historians half a century hence. Of course, sons have a perfect right to the names their fathers and mothers gave them. But when so many of them, as at the present time, have stepped so soon into their fathers' shoes, it does seem fair to think some sort of sign should be given to show that they are not the originals. There was never any confusion in regard to the two Keans, father and son, because Charles is a very different name from Edmund. The old and young Farrens of forty years ago were easily distinguished, because the then young William added "junior" to his name well up to the time father and son might have been confounded with each other. But I think I could easily mention a

dozen sons of as many clever fathers who do not clearly intimate that they are not the originals, and numbers of playgoers who see them, especially in the country, have no idea whether they are so or not. Even in London many playgoers are apt to confound living sons with dead fathers—I mean in name of course. Even if in all instances the sons were worthy of their fathers' names and reputations, they should, then, I think, be proud of their own talents, and make it very plain to their patrons and the public that they are the sons and not the fathers. I do not remember many sons being as clever as their fathers on the stage or in literature. When such an event has happened, George the second has had as much right to his reputation as George the first, but no right to let his living reputation be confounded with that of a dead man.

For instance, here are the names of four sons, all of whose fathers did excellent work on the stage, which brought them a good reputation in the history of the drama—George Honey, George Barrett, George Belmore, and David James. David James, junior, kept the "junior" to his name almost long enough not to seem to show he was the original.

I think the first time I made the acquaintance of George Honey was when he was playing with the Pyne and Harrison English Opera Company, and afterwards I saw him in various parts in comedy and farce. During the first run of "Caste" he was wonderfully well fitted as old "Eccles," and

kept well to Robertson's meaning of the part, but in time he played the character rather too low down, and somewhat offended more refined dramatic tastes. A great many play-goers were delighted with his rendering of his part in Mr. W. S. Gilbert's play, called "Engaged"; it may have been bad taste on my part, but I thought it was by no means one of Honey's best efforts on the stage. Honey was as a rule a very seemingly absent-minded man, and I am afraid not always very flush of money; but I remember, years ago, when his mother was living, that he made her an allowance of so much per week, and wherever he was, in or out of engagements, his mother's remittance at the agreed time was always sent. In fact, I remember one of his old friends told me that George would rather pawn his watch than not send the weekly sum to his mother. I met George one day at the corner of Catherine Street, and we got into conversation, and in his nervous, fidgety way, he was tearing a piece of paper he had in his hands to shreds. All at once he burst into a sort of hysterical laugh, and exclaimed out loud, "I'm d—— if I haven't torn up mother's Post Office Order." It so happened we were standing near a grating, and most of the fragments had gone down through the bars. At that time Honey was none too well off for money; however, he went back to the Post Office at Somerset House, and I think they put the matter right for him. Honey was a good fellow at heart, and a

good actor, and he played his part well enough in the dramatic world to be missed when he died. There is a medallion portrait of him on his tombstone in the lower part of the new ground at Highgate cemetery, which is almost a speaking likeness.

#### GEORGE COOK.

Dear old George Cook was a capital old actor in his time. If I remember rightly, he died by his own hand when well on in years. Cook was a favourite actor at Drury Lane, the Marylebone, and Olympic, in the middle of this century. He was a very genuine impersonator of old men in serious, comic, or even burlesque dramas. He was very droll in burlesque. At the Olympic in, I think, one of Robert Brough's burlesques, he played a very pompous old grandee, and in one scene his followers cheered him a good deal, but he said, "Yes, yes," or words of that kind, and added, "Let's have more seats and less cheers." There was another good joke in one of the Olympic burlesques. Robson, as King Alfred, was left in charge of the cooking of the cakes. Having let the fire go out, he turned to the audience and said in a most solemn manner, "There, the stove half black, and I'm (h)alf red the grate."

There was another capital old actor about the same time as George Cook. His name was Wray. He was an excellent player of old men's parts, and was, I think, for some years with Phelps, at Sadler's Wells. It is almost sad to know that

good young and old actors' salaries fifty years ago were in no way proportionate to the work they had to do. I am afraid the younger generation, if I may term them, of young and old actors would look rather glum were they offered no better salaries than those which such excellent actors as Mr. Cook, Mr. Wray, and others as good were paid for playing numerous parts in one season. Still, I think the salaries in the old days were fairer in proportion than in this popular favourite hunting age. Perhaps it is because managers are somewhat compelled to do as they do. At all events, I think it is hardly fair to find that in some of the productions three or four favourites are paid all they demand, and that the small parts are very badly paid for. But the unfortunate part of the matter is, that the play-going public is to blame—it lauds its favourites to the skies, and looks upon their hard-working helpers as of little worth. I know as a fact that a man who had made a fortune in South Africa, and settled down there, made up his mind he would hear Madame Patti sing before he died, so he made a voyage to England for that special purpose. Of course, such a fact proves that public favourites must be paid great prices for their work and popularity.

#### THEATRICAL BENEFITS.

I was on the committees of a rather large number of important theatrical benefits. In fact, for several years, I, with a number of friends, took a great deal of interest in these, as a rule,



very praiseworthy events. Charles Thompson, an important-looking amateur Claude Melnotte, was usually our secretary, and was a most useful man in the City, where he was well-known, for the disposal of a goodly number of tickets; and certainly our most favourite chairman was Mr. Jonas Levy, of Kingsgate Castle, and for many years deputy-chairman of the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway. With two such men as Thompson and Levy those important places on our committees were always safe, especially when we could make our executive committees not more than seven or nine for the smaller benefits, and not more than thirteen or fifteen on the most important occasions. But the last was a task not always easily accomplished. I am afraid we now and then resorted to some unparliamentary practices to gain our ends, for at the first general meetings we proposed each other as per agreement beforehand, and when we had got about the number we wanted, one of us would quickly intimate to our chairman that we had got an executive quite large enough for quick and good working purposes. I suppose I need not explain that a committee of nine gentlemen, with fair business qualities, can get through more business in a given time than eighteen, with in all probability a few talkative ones amongst them. At all events, our principle and knowledge of working and executive committees was not "the more the merrier," but often exactly the reverse.

We had, in fact, one lesson of a large committee that lasted some of us a long time. We were getting up a benefit at the Globe Theatre for a good old acting manager who was a bit down in the world, and some of us thought it would be a bright idea to allow all who would subscribe five pounds for tickets, or give that sum without claiming seats, to have their names on the executive committee. We soon received names and money to make about fifty gentlemen eligible for committee men. When we called our first meeting, the subscribers came up almost to a man, and certainly one-half of them wanted to air their opinions as to how the benefit should be worked, who the players were, who should be asked to play, etc. Some few of us declared it must be left to two or three gentlemen well versed in the subject, who were also well known to our London managers at the time. But getting a small and good working executive was out of the question. In fact, the useless talk in the way of suggestions, propositions, and ought-to-be-dones were so numerous that our chairman, on that occasion Mr. Andrew Halliday, got so disgusted with his position that he said he was quite willing to give his five pounds, if all the other subscribers would do the same, and not have a performance at all. But that proposition was lost, for there were a good many of them who wanted their money's worth, and as we found that working with a ponderous committee was out of the question, a

few of us met privately, and in time the benefit took place. Even on the day of the performance most of the subscribers wanted rosettes, and to be all over the theatre.

When selecting the executive committees for the Compton benefit and the Alhambra relief fund we had some trouble to keep the numbers down. In fact, when selecting for the Alhambra fund, the executive was elected before many of those present knew it had been done, and it was a very good working committee indeed. Lord Londesborough was our excellent chairman, and Wilson Barrett was equally good as vice-chairman. A large sum of money was subscribed and paid away, and when all honest claims were paid there was a good sum in hand to form the nucleus of another useful fund. The Compton benefit was a great success, but the excellent comedian, who was very ill when it took place, did not long survive the hosts of good wishes he had at the time.

#### INSIDE THE VICTORIA BETTING CLUB.

About some twenty years ago, non-members were admitted with members to the ground floor of that wonderful money exchange mart, the Victoria Sporting Club, in Wellington Street, Strand. Mr. Toole and several of my friends were members, and I now and then went there with them. Non-members are not quite barred now, for I went into the great betting sanctum three or four years ago with a friend, but I had to be signed for by two other members.

I was always very much interested in my visits to the Victoria Club. On almost any day the talks about money and the wagering often indicated that money was not prized very highly by the, as a rule, big, sturdy, healthy-looking bookmakers, for many of them wagered hundreds and thousands of pounds, and made less bones about doing so than a school boy would about parting with his last copper in a sweet-stuff shop. It may seem irreverent to mention that, "God bless you, old fellow," or "old boy," was said numerous times in my hearing in the Victoria Club, without a show or sign of irreverence in the utterance of the words. It was generally after some settlement between the men that the good wishes were uttered, and the man who paid was, as a rule, as earnest in his good wishes as the man who received. I would not have it believed that I think for a moment that a big betting club is a religious meeting place ; but I have been in more than one of them, and for hours together, and not heard a word that would make the most fastidious man wish he was not in such a place. I was in the Victoria Club on the Monday settling day after Gladiateur won the Derby. I have seen busy days of paying in and paying out at the counters of some of our largest banks, but I do not think I ever saw more money change hands than on that day at the Victoria Club, certainly not more bank notes. Several of the bookmakers had bundles of bank notes so large that they could scarcely get them in

and out of their pockets. It was wonderful to see a burly betting man count out large numbers of notes on his knees as quickly as a cashier at a bank. I do not think that at that time all our largest betting men had begun to have private secretaries, as many of them did soon afterwards, and I suppose have now. At all events, I remember Steele, the leviathan bookmaker, was there that day settling and receiving his own accounts; most of the betting men hardly seemed to refer to books or memoranda about them. But Steele, I well remember, had a long list in his hands of, I suppose, names and amounts of money to pay and receive, and it was almost wonderful how quickly and quietly he did his business. The drinks were generally brandy and soda and champagne, and there was no uproar or howling of the ring or enclosure kind at race meetings. In fact, on that day I heard scores of good hearty wishes given and received that would have done credit to a meeting for a professedly more noble purpose.

Steele, who it was said had in his early days hawked fish on a barrow in Sheffield, was at the time I am mentioning a rich man, and lived in a charming house at Hornsey. He had a splendid garden, and very good greenhouses, conservatories, and forcing houses, in which he grew pine apples and other fruits and flowers in and out of season. He was a regular attendant at the Hornsey Old Church with his wife and young family, and, in fact, a more liberal man in cases of need that were put

before him never lived in the parish of Hornsey. But conservative old Hornseyites shunned him as much as possible ; and I think he removed back to near Sheffield, where he had a large interest in some ironworks. I often travelled from and to Hornsey with Steele, and I only once heard him mention horse-racing, and then it was almost forced from him. A friend of mine asked him what he thought about a certain favourite horse for a great race, and I think his reply was as near as possible, "I don't know, perhaps he may win."

I remember one morning some discussion arose about some of our great railway shares, which were very low at that time—in fact, I think London and Brighton shares were then down to about thirty—and Steele said, "They must be better in time ; at all events," he added, "I've bought twenty-five thousand pounds worth, and settled them on my wife, and they will be held until they are of better value." Of what value they became and are is better known to those who hold Brighton stock than the subscriber.

I was nothing more than a passing acquaintance of Mr. Steele's, so that I am not holding any brief for or against him, and certainly he never showed any sign of boasting in my presence, nor am I prepared to say he and some others treated the Marquis of Hastings of that time well.

Our dear old family doctor attended Mrs. Steele on an interesting family matter—I believe he was sent for in a hurry in place of another doctor not



to be had at the moment—and he got on so well in the matter that when Mrs. Steele was well and safely through her trouble, Mr. Steele said, in the bluntest manner possible, “Well, doctor, what’s to pay?” The doctor replied, “I think I would rather leave the payment to you.” Steele sat down and wrote him a cheque for about four times the sum the doctor would have thought of charging, and when he handed it to him, the latter said, “That is far too much for my services, sir”; but Steele said, “Take it, doctor, take it, and say no more about it; much obliged, &c.”

I hope I shall be believed when I state that I never ventured twenty shillings on any horse race or gambling transaction in my life; in fact, a few shillings and half-crowns, and a few pence at cards, sum up as nearly as possible my gambling career. But I was once tempted by some friends to join them in a bet; in fact, it was to be no bet at all, because there was to be no risk in it. A horse stood at some extraordinary odds against it for a race, and my friend said he was sure to win, so a number of us agreed to put down, just for the time, ten shillings each, and as ours was a gigantic bet, I was asked to see my old friend Henry Ulph about it. I did so, and he read me a good lecture at once. “What did I want to bet for? he could live by betting, I could not.” However, I told him there were a half-dozen of us in the venture, and so he took three pounds from me, and then said, “It won’t win, and, in fact, I’ll give you decent odds the horse don’t run



at all," and it did not run. But Ulph would not take our money with no return, so he came to the table where we dined, and I think for three days running paid for two bottles of champagne each time, and drank our healths heartily. The fun we had over the matter was worth the money, and certainly the rebuke was worth three times the sum to me.

Mr. Ulph's career, from his first start in life, was, I believe, almost as full of adventure as Mr. Steele's. He was, it is said, a poor boy in Yarmouth; and is now, or was for many years, the best known and one of the most liberal men in Bloater Town. And it is not too much to say that a better man, or better husband and father, than Henry Ulph never lived—even though he is a great bookmaker. I remember I was going along the Strand one Derby race-day a good many years ago. I certainly thought all the members of "The Victoria" and half London were on Epsom Downs, when I met Ulph. I said, "Halloo, not gone to Epsom, Henry?" "No," said he, "I seldom go to races now. I've got four five-hundred-pound books on the race, and I hardly care which horse wins. I don't want one (which he named) to win, but I don't care much if it does." And yet foolish people will bet. There was a man who had got almost the certainty of a large sum, and doubtless not fifty pounds of his own money, at risk; and why? Because the public, one and the other, bet that all the horses in a race will win, when it is only possible for one of them to do so. The

bookmaker bets against all the horses, and if he loses on one horse, he wins on all the others, whether there are nine, nineteen, or twenty-nine runners. In fact, the bookmaker has all the chances but one in the lottery, and the whole of the racing public have that one between them. As a matter of fact, the bookmaker's tact and craft in making his books is so clever that it seems to me, even if there were several winners in a race, they would even then win money.

I should like to make just one comparison between, say, twelve tradesmen in any business street and twelve bookmakers in the Victoria Club. One or more of the tradesmen fails in his business, and even though he has been a good neighbour of the others for years, not one of them holds him out a helping hand, when it is quite possible that the united efforts of the eleven could place the unfortunate man back into a fair position, so that he might not only not fail again, but repay in time all honourable debts. Call it honour or whatever you may amongst betting men, they hardly ever let one of their well meaning but unfortunate friends be badly off in the world if they can help it. And when by chance one of them happens to have what they call a bad book, they make no fuss about helping him home with it. But I am treading on rather dangerous ground.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### WILLIAM BLACK.

I published William Black's first three-volume novel in March, 1868, entitled "Love or Marriage," but it proved much too psychological for ordinary readers; consequently it failed to be anything like a success. However, I felt sure that Black was a very clever young man; and although I had lost money by "Love or Marriage," I agreed to publish for him another novel that he had ready for the press.

The title, "In Silk Attire," was more taking, and the subject-matter more likely to please novel readers than that of the former book. I quickly got the new novel out, and it soon found many more readers than "Love or Marriage." There was no written agreement between us either about "Love or Marriage" or "In Silk Attire," and I certainly thought I was entitled to charge what I had lost by "Love or Marriage" out of the profit there was on "In Silk Attire," but I reckoned without my host.

Black objected strongly to my doing so; and as he was right in law, I ultimately let him have his way, but not before many angry letters had passed between us.

I had published both books without the slightest

risk to Black; and I considered then, and time has not altered my opinion, that I ought to have been repaid my loss on "Love or Marriage."

However, I seldom allowed old disputes to influence me in business matters; and as I still considered Black would make good headway as a novelist, I offered him a good sum of money to write a serial story for my magazine, and for the right to publish it in three-volume form afterwards.

We had an agreement this time, signed and sealed, and the novel was called "The Monarch of Mincing Lane." The title seemed to me a very good one; and Mrs. Riddell, with her wonderful knowledge of financial life in the City, could not have failed to have worked well up to it.

The novel, however, did no good to the magazine, and was not by any means a great success in the three-volume form; so Black elected to bring out his next novel, "Kilmeny," without his name on the title page.

It was published by Messrs. Sampson Low & Co. Black fancied he had enemies on the press, and one on the "Saturday Review" especially; so, as he felt sure his new book was a good one, he was content to drop for the time any reputation he had made by his first books, and start afresh.

The plan succeeded very well indeed. A friend of Black's reviewed the book in the "Saturday Review," the press was almost unanimous in saying that it was a delightful novel; the publishers advertised a fresh edition almost every week for several months;

and if there had been anything like a large number of copies in each edition, there would have been as many copies sold in three volumes of this novel as there were of "Lady Audley's Secret," "The Woman in White," "Adam Bede," and "Lothair," altogether.

However, the manœuvring by the author, of reviewers, and publishers was remarkably well done ; and when the novel was an assured success, Black was not long in letting the world know that he was the author of "Kilmeny."

I am almost afraid there will be more than a shade of a grievance in the following scribble, for since writing the above I have hunted up some of Mr. Black's old, and also rather modern, letters to me. In one from the "London Review" office, in perhaps 1868 or 9—no year is mentioned in it—Mr. Black says: "Dear Tinsley—If I can be of any use to you with regard to your magazine, in the way of sub-editing or reading proofs, I shall be glad to do so for a nominal sum," and after other flattering remarks, he repeats that if he could do anything in the way he suggested he would be most happy. I rather harp upon this matter, because I think that Mr. Black, when he wrote the letter, had in his mind the loss I had made by his first book.

Any loss or profit in my business at that time does not make the slightest difference to me now. I did not make a fortune, nor did Mr. Black try to help me. Of course, I need not have taken Mr. Black's second novel, and when I did so I am sure I could

have imposed upon him almost any agreement I pleased, at least in reason; but I believed in the man, and I thought he believed in me, and one, or both of us, were mistaken. In another letter on the subject, Mr. Black says: "Why you should indemnify yourself out of the profit of quite another book does not seem at all clear. There was nothing of the kind mentioned when you proposed to publish 'In Silk Attire.'" As a matter of fact, I did not, nor was I likely to propose to publish a second novel for an author when I had just lost some thirty or forty pounds on the first, unless I hoped to get my loss back. Indeed, I remember as well as if it only happened yesterday, when Mr. Black came into my office, and, to my surprise, asked me to dine with him at Simpson's in the Strand, and during the dinner the new novel was mentioned for the first time. However, I am harping on a subject that can hardly be of any interest to anyone, and of course, there being no agreement, it was my own fault. As soon as Mr. Black knew there was a profit on the second book, he was down upon me at once for his share, which, of course, I paid, but very reluctantly.

About the time I was publishing novels for Mr. Black, he wrote several rather chatty stories and articles for my magazine. And only a very few years ago, when I was looking for any copyright matter I might have, I came across Mr. Black's receipts for the stories and articles. But even though the receipts are not quite so definite as they might be,

it is plain enough I have some interest in the matter, if I am not the holder of the copyrights. So I wrote and told Mr. Black I thought of publishing the stories and essays in a small volume form, or I was willing for him to have my interest in them for a fair consideration. But Mr. Black again donned his fighting armour—perhaps not the same suit he looked so lovely in in his picture at the Royal Academy some years ago ; and he enlisted the same solicitor on his side who had worked so well against me in years gone by. I was threatened with an injunction if I ever attempted to re-issue the stories and essays. So of course I gave in — what else could I do with such a warrior against me? Discretion was in that case, I think, the better part of valour. In fact, Mr. Black got so enraged that he called his own writings trash. He said, "*I therefore entirely object to having such trash published now under my own name.*" Mr. Black was, at the time he wrote the articles for me, editor of the "London Review" ; and I dare almost aver that his writings were then as good as at any time in his life. He chose his own subjects to write about for my magazine, and hardly any of the articles were what may be strictly called time matter ; I paid Mr. Black as nearly as possible twenty shillings per page for each article—as good, if not a better price than has been paid hundreds of times for important matter in "The Quarterly," "The Edinburgh," or any one of our best reviews or magazines. I have heard many times



that ten pounds per sheet of sixteen pages has often been paid for, of course, not always the most important matter. But for very important matter of great research more money has been paid. Mr. Black has died since the above was written: I have therefore to some extent modified my remarks.

#### W. G. WILLS.

In 1867 I bought the manuscript of and published a three-volume novel by Mr. W. G. Wills, the well-known dramatist. Mr. Wills was at that time a struggling novelist, and was most anxious to become a dramatist. His anxiety was well rewarded in that direction. His sweetly pathetic play, "Charles the First," and others with good work in them, have secured him a good name as a dramatist. In fact, many of Mr. Wills's most undramatic plays contain much excellent writing and capital dramatic dialogues. The Lyceum version of "Faust" by Wills, with the invaluable aid of scenery and effects, and the acting of Mr. Irving, Miss Terry, and the company of artists, will long be remembered in the annals of the drama in England.

I think it is only fair to Mr. Wills to imagine that he had no dishonest motive in selling me an old story for a new one, for he said he had made the story much better by certain corrections. But I was bound to let the press know I had been deceived, and poor Wills was very roughly handled by some of the reviewers.

## MR. CLARK RUSSELL.

In 1874 I published a three-volume novel for Mr. Clark Russell, the now well-known novelist.

Mr. Russell was then a very young man, and was very confident of the success he has since attained; but, as will be seen by the following letter, he was not desirous of any friendly aid in the matter, but was willing to work his way upon the merits of his works :—

“DEAR SIR—I am afraid in my letter I did not make my meaning clear. Previous to my friend talking to you about me I had sent you the MS. of a novel. On learning from him that he had met and conversed with you at the Club, I at once feared that you might imagine I was desirous of winning your suffrage for my book through your friendship with him. This notion was intolerable to me, and I made what haste I could to put myself right with you. The whole affair was a mere matter of sensitiveness on my part. Literature is one of those things that no man can seek for help outside himself. For my part, I am willing that young ladies and gentlemen who are ambitious to print should turn to their friends to win the good opinion of publishers. I am satisfied with working for that good opinion by legitimate means, hence my annoyance that my friend had been praising me to you after I had sent you the MS. Pray forgive my indiscretion or weakness. Whether you like the book or not now under consideration, I shall hope to do work for you that will gratify us both. Your kind letter

disarms my fear, and I thank you for your friendly and considerate reception of my personal views.

“ Believe me, dear Sir,

“ Yours faithfully,

“ W. CLARK RUSSELL.”

I was very much struck with the manly tone of Mr. Russell's letter at the time, and do not see the slightest reason to think less of it now.

“ Good, honest, hard work ” was Mr. Russell's motto, and he has gained a name, fame, and, I hope, fortune.

He had the good sense to know that if he could not make his way in literature by his own good work, friends could not give him enduring help.

I have known scores of cases of sad disappointment to would-be authors, who never had a shadow of a chance of becoming writers of any note, but have struggled on against hope, and have been encouraged to do so by friends who ought to have known better.

It may not be generally known that Mr. Clark Russell is a son of that public favourite, Henry Russell, of “ Cheer, Boys, Cheer ” celebrity, and author of many other popular songs of the time in favour of emigration.

I heard Henry Russell tell rather a good story about his mother and father some years ago. It seems that when Russell was at the height of his popularity, he rented the Lyceum Theatre for a season and, to show his mother and father what a favourite he was with the public, prevailed upon

them to occupy a private box to see his performance. During the evening in question, Russell was on his mettle. He had a good house, and the performance went off remarkably well. When he met his father after the theatre had closed, he asked him what he thought of his singing of "To the West—to the West, to the Land of the Free," and other songs, when, much to his surprise, his father replied, "What 'Land of the Free'? I didn't listen to your singing; I was counting the people in the gallery."

"Oh," said Russell, "there were £7 10s. in the gallery."

"Well," said the old gentleman, "if you can get £7 10s. in the gallery, why —— —— don't you allow us more to live upon?"

#### FREDERICK GREENWOOD.

'I had some very pleasant dealings years ago with Mr. Frederick Greenwood, the first editor and part proprietor for several years of *The Pall Mall Gazette*. A harder worker or a more conscientious editor perhaps never lived. Greenwood introduced Thomas Wright, the journeyman engineer, to me, a man of exceptional ability, who had contributed articles to *The Pall Mall Gazette* and the "Cornhill Magazine." I published three or four books for Wright. The first, called "Some Habits and Customs of the Working Classes," contained some very graphic sketches of the people the title indicates. Mr. Frederick Greenwood was, I think, in great part author of the sketches that appeared

in *The Pall Mall Gazette* under the title of "A Night in the Workhouse." Mr. James Greenwood, his clever brother, was no doubt the "Amateur Casual" who went through the trying ordeal of a night in the workhouse ; but I think Mr. Frederick worked up the papers from his brother's notes and verbal descriptions.

Mr. Frederick Greenwood and I once settled a very heavy lawsuit in less than ten minutes which had been in the hands of a host of lawyers and barristers for several months. I was defendant. I had bought a manuscript from a well-known author on the understanding that it was perfectly right in every way ; but it proved not to be so, and I refused to pay for it. The person who sold it to me pressed me very hard, but I gained my point ; and when the matter was at last left in the hands of Mr. Greenwood, I explained to him that I bought what I thought was good moral literature, whereas it was not ; besides, there were passages—indeed, whole pages—in the work not fit for publication. I fought my case on the same lines any tradesman would have done in regard to goods sold and delivered. My book was not nearly up to sample, and I held I had as much right to justice as any other tradesman ; and I gained my point, in spite of great opposition from even authors of good standing. I am glad to say the above is the only case of the kind I ever felt justified in contesting during my career as a publisher for over thirty years.

## JUSTIN MCCARTHY.

I remember hearing about the then young Justin McCarthy as a clever journalist, when he was editor of *The Northern Daily News*, from my Liverpool friends in about 1862-3, but I did not become acquainted with him until some few years later, when we published his, I think, first work of fiction, called "Paul Massie." Mr. McCarthy was then editing *The Morning Star*, and, if he cared to do so, he could boast that he made a fair sum of money out of his first venture in fiction; of course, there is nothing wonderful in such a fact, but there are and have been plenty of noted authors who were not quite so fortunate. Mr. McCarthy's next novel after "Paul Massie" was his "Waterdale Neighbours," which is not a strong book, but in many ways the most charming story he ever wrote.

For some reason, and I think because he was somewhat fettered in his line of politics, Mr. McCarthy was not happy in the editorial chair of *The Star*, but whilst he occupied it he did some excellent work for the paper, and with what were called Starlight Readings in the evening edition, that journal was for a time quite one of the most readable newspapers then published.

But at that time penny daily newspapers had not become an actual solid fact. *The Telegraph* and *The Standard* were well on the road to success, but no important news of any kind was quite believed unless it was printed in *The Times* and some others of the old-established dailies.

There is little doubt, however, that had the then proprietors kept *The Morning and Evening Star* going some few years longer, it would have been alive and a great property now; for, from the moment *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Standard* had convinced newspaper readers that their home and foreign news was as good and authentic as such matter in the old high-priced dailies, the time for penny dailies had come; consequently, with a little more fighting, *The Star* should have been well in the swim; and it needed no better man than Justin McCarthy to have piloted it very close upon the heels of *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Standard*. However, such an event was not to be. The curious part of the matter was, that when the proprietors stopped *The Star* they kept the office and all the machinery and other plant intact for some few years, seemingly with the intention of one or more of the proprietors making a fresh start with the paper.

Amongst other important names mentioned as having then an interest in *The Star* were Samuel Morley, John Bright, and perhaps Henry Labouchere; at all events, if Mr. Labouchere had no interest in *The Star*, he had for some years a good deal of interest in *The Daily News*.

I have a not over pleasing remembrance of the day Mr. McCarthy left *The Star*, from the fact that I tried to make a speech, and failed dismally. There were only Mr. Hepworth Dixon of "The Athenæum" and myself present who were in no



way concerned in the production of *The Star*, but I think all Mr. McCarthy's colleagues and all the heads of the departments were there almost to a man. They had each of them signed a handsome illuminated scroll, which Mr. Dymond, who was sub-editor or general manager, I forget which, handed to Justin McCarthy, at the same time making a very feeling and telling speech. When he had finished, he turned to me, and in some way persuaded me that I ought to say a few words. I did so, and mumbled them very badly; even then I should not have been so much vexed, but Hepworth Dixon's cynical eye was upon me, and I would have given almost anything for him not to have seen me fool enough to try to make a speech, while, worse than all, he followed with an excellent one for such an occasion. And I well remember that he told Mr. McCarthy that *The Star*, under his editorship, had been one of the most readable newspapers of its time.

Soon after Mr. McCarthy left the editorial chair of *The Star*, Mr. John Morley, as I have mentioned before, took the post, but I do not think he remained there very long. When McCarthy left *The Star*, he sailed for America, where he stayed some months. During the time he was there, I now and then wrote to him, and he to me, and almost by accident not long ago I found a copy of one of my letters, in which I say: "I had a long talk with John Morley the other day. All his friends seem to blame him for taking the editorship

of *The Morning Star*; however, I do not think he is much fettered." And perhaps he was not so much fettered, or perhaps not quite so sensitive at first, as Mr. McCarthy was. It will be remembered that, for some time in the latter part of the life of *The Star*, Edmund Yates used to have a gossiping article in the paper every Monday, signed "The Flaneur," which article seldom reached *The Star* office until late on Sunday night. I remember Mr. McCarthy lived some distance from the office, but he never would let a line of Yates's matter go into the paper without seeing it himself, and any of us who knew Master Edmund's devil-may-care fondness for personalities and even libel can well understand such a careful editor as Justin McCarthy being very cautious about his work.

I published Justin McCarthy's first four novels, and other volumes of a more serious nature. But even though he made a very good start as a writer of fiction, he soon drifted into more serious literature, and may I say a still more serious political world, for which it has always seemed to me he was never quite fitted, for he had a very refined and gentle nature, which gave no indication of fighting political windmills. In fact, if I dare venture an opinion about what sort of a career Mr. McCarthy might have had as a public man, I quite believe that, had he elected to stand his ground as a thoroughly independent member of the House of Commons, he would have held office in more than one Ministry, and even then never lost sight of his interest in the country he loves so well.

## THE SUPPOSED MYSTERY OF PUBLISHING.

Many people, and especially those who want to publish their first works, seem to think there is a deal of mystery about book-publishing. There is not—at least, there need be no mystery in the matter.

The building of a book, if the term may be used, is very much like the building of a house. A large house takes a great deal of material to make it, and a large book does the same ; and the materials used may be very expensive or moderate in cost, according to the taste or means of the builder of the book or of the house.

There is no mystery in the matter. It is the want of common thought that breeds the mystery in the thoughtless minds of the uninitiated, or the suspicious minds of those who have been told that there is no end of mystery and swindling in the publishing trade ; when, as a matter of fact, a publisher's account is less open to adulteration (pardon the term) than any other account I know of. Take any item in the account, and the proof whether it is correct or not is as easily found out as possible. The first item in the account is, as a rule, the printing—that is, the setting up of the type and working the sheets off. Publishers, as a rule, are not their own printers, so that the account for the printing and corrections is rendered by the printers, and is, or should be, open to the author's inspection. Then there is the paper account. The paper is purchased from a paper merchant, and the

account is sent in, and is also open to the author's inspection. The same is also the case with the binding, and advertisers' accounts.

There can be no "cooking" or alteration of the accounts without the author knowing why the alterations have been made. It would be easy to mention scores of trades in which the materials can be, and often are, adulterated when they come into the retailer's hands.

Now, it is impossible to adulterate printing, paper, binding, or advertising. The above-mentioned materials must be shown to the author in the form they are bought and paid for; and it does not require any very great knowledge of books to see whether the printing, paper, and binding of a book are fairly well done, or done according to agreement or sample sent in to work by.

I have shown and told hundreds of authors the same as I have written here, but in the majority of cases I have seen by their manner and looks that they still thought there was some mystery behind not revealed to them, simply because their books have not sold according to their outrageous expectations.

The numbers that some unknown authors have been sure have been sold of their books would gladden the hearts of many of our best known and most popular writers. Friends are a good deal to blame for the silly beliefs and expectations of unknown authors. They often promise to buy scores of copies themselves, and to induce their friends also

to do the same ; but in many cases no purchases are made either by friends or acquaintances.

Authors' ideas of the number of their books a publisher should print remind me of a fair sample of the way over-ambitious authors would act if left to themselves. I leave out names, but the author in my mind was an eminent Divine, and his publishers of good repute. The Divine had got, he thought, a great inspiration, and had written it for pamphlet form. The publishers did not think a great deal of the idea, still they would be glad to publish it. No number less than ten thousand copies would suit the author to begin with ; and as he was to bear all the expense, the publishers took all his wise instructions, and the pamphlet was published ; but they only printed one thousand copies, and did not sell half of the edition. When the account was rendered, the author was of course pleased to find his instructions had not been obeyed, and a large sum of money thus saved.

I published a long poem some years ago for a member of the staff of one of our most influential newspapers, and I did not sell a dozen out of an edition of several hundred copies, in spite of all the influence brought to bear in the way of good press notices and literary talk about the book.

How and upon what grounds, and in what peculiar ways, authors have succeeded would make volumes of interesting reading, if those who have worked hard for name and fame had given the history and adventures of their first books.

In my time I have known but very few authors who made both name and money by their first books—perhaps I should only say they did not make money ; because, after all, there is mostly some sort of a beginning of a reputation in every clever writer's work, even though it may only contain very small sparks of the fire that is to follow. Young beginners in authorship have always been, and I suppose always will be, discontented because the results of the sales of their first works have not brought them in a large sum of money.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### SHIRLEY BROOKS.

I had some very pleasant conversations and dealings with Mr. Shirley Brooks before and when he was editor of *Punch*. I might have published one of his best fictions, but I found he could do quite as well, or better, with his old publishers than I could do for him ; the fact was, Mr. Brooks, knowing some of the prices I was paying for fiction, had a just right to think he ought to be high up in the list of highest payments. But his very cheery and often almost excellent fiction was in no such demand as the works of Miss Braddon, Mrs. Henry Wood, Ouida, Lawrence, and some others for whom I was publishing. The above-mentioned authors and others of the same kind could in no way interfere with the market value of Thackeray or Dickens, and later on, George Eliot. When a new book by any one of that noble trio of writers came into the market, all other authors stood beneath them.

But if the greater giants were not disturbed in their reign, there were good men and true who had to stand aside when, if I may so term it, the Braddon era of fiction set in, and Shirley Brooks, as a writer of fiction, was one of them ; so also was Frank Smedley, and Albert Smith. Mr. Brooks's fictions



were by far the most finished works of the three. He was in no way as amusing as Frank Smedley or Albert Smith, but they had finished their careers as writers when Shirley Brooks had a good deal of good work left in his pen, but his good works were not quite the fashion, and in no way a craze ; nor, strange to say, were his dramatic writings. And so, when he took the editorial chair of *Punch*, he gave most of his time to the work he was proud of and loved. I think I am right in saying that Mr. Shirley Brooks was one of the original founders of *The Era* newspaper, and for many years after that now most important theatrical paper came solely into the hands of the father of the living Mr. Edward Ledger, he was a constant contributor.

When I started "Tinsley's Magazine," Mr. Shirley Brooks contributed the following smart verses to the first number :—

THE RECLUSE OF THE IRON TOWER.

H.M.S. R.—S., Spithead,

July 17th, 1867.

From a stern iron turret, which kind Blacksmith Burritt

Would laud for its work, though he hates its design,  
Scribbling here because mensis velociter currit,

Receive, my dear ——y, contribution of mine.

I promised some verses, and know that your c-rs-s

Descend pretty freely on copy that's late ;

So be thankful for small, as for magnified mercies,

The lines shall be few, and the printers shan't wait.

This is not a station for calm meditation,

I've crawled through a hole like the Pyramid door  
And have climbed by a rope to a high elevation,

And write on a gun with a horrible roar.

Her powder is in her, but hard at their dinner  
 Are gunners who've left her to darkness and me,  
 So I am safe till the captain, whose name it is Skinner,  
 Shall spring to his place at his Captain's decree.

Thirty-five pounds of powder (no cannon talks louder)  
 Repose in grim silence just under the lock,  
 And I feel that my verse should be stronger and prouder,  
 For resting on strength that could shatter a rock.

My heart is inditing, but one thought alighting,  
 Impedes the bold metre's poetical flow,  
 If the blessed old gun should go off while I'm writing,  
 You'll treat my executors handsome I know.

I suspect we are neighbours, and Editors' labours  
 Desert Magazine for the sake of Review,  
 You are sailing out yonder no doubt, and by jabers!  
 My friend, Dr. Brady, is one of the crew.

Certain hints (and folks pen 'em with some little venom),  
 Warn the Upper Ten (us) against drinking too free;  
 So a health to you two in pure water and Wenham,  
 Just shaded to amber by one *goutte d'esprit*.

I'll spare the inflection, the old benediction,  
 "Prosperity's breezes," and "filling your sail,"  
 Sails are read of alone in unsailable fiction,  
 May your fires be all hot and your steam never fail.

"Happy thought" brought to aid ye this same Doctor Brady,  
 Perhaps you've the quotation *nil tetigit quod*,  
 And you're sure, my old friend, and your book, by our Lady  
 Will do if half equal to "Kissing the Rod."

At the door step of T——y, whatever bad sins lie,  
 We never yet heard there ever was one;  
 I'm short of a rhyme, which annoys me immensely,  
 You can't say he don't know how things should be done.

May white loaves and fat fishes fill his and your dishes,  
 May your new Magazine be as fresh as your books ;  
 Good fellows all give you their hearty good wishes,  
 None more, my dear T——, than your friend

SHIRLEY BROOKS.

When Mr. Brooks wrote the above verses he was at the great naval review at Spithead in 1867. Elihu Burritt was a clever literary man who had once been a working blacksmith, and was, like Sala's brother, Zephaniah, a peace-loving man. The delight of a good deal of his life was to roam about England, and print very readable volumes of his tours. I am afraid not many of the well intentioned wishes about "Tinsley's Magazine" did come to pass. However (I don't know exactly how at this date) I kept my literary child alive for over a quarter of a century.

RICHARD JEFFERIES.

Mr. Besant, in his eulogy of Richard Jefferies—or rather, perhaps, the book should be called Mr. Jefferies' eulogy of himself, for it is mostly a compilation from his own work—gives me some very hard knocks for trying to bring Mr. Jefferies forward as a novelist.

He would be a clever publisher indeed who could be sure of scoring a success out of every volume he published ; and what a gift it would be to any theatrical manager to be sure of making money out of any production !

Mr. Besant intimates that I ought never to have

published Mr. Jefferies' "Scarlet Shawl," "Restless Human Hearts," and "World's End."

I know now I ought not to have done so ; but I do not regret it, even though I lost a good sum of money by the books ; for, however Mr. Besant may argue to the contrary, I think I gave Mr. Jefferies as much encouragement in his literary career as any other publisher.

Mr. Jefferies was an author who disappointed me very much indeed by not making almost a great name as a novelist.

He had a wonderful knowledge of English country life, its scenes, people, and ways, and a skill in portraying them, not surpassed by many authors at any time during this century—such a knowledge as has made many of our best-known writers of fiction.

The rural scenery and people in "Adam Bede" and "The Mill on the Floss" are splendid examples of how intensely interesting country life can be made in novels. I am not wondering why Mr. Jefferies did not write such an excellent work of fiction as "Adam Bede," or any one of George Eliot's works. I published three novels by Mr. Jefferies, and there was good work in all of them. "The Scarlet Shawl" was a small one-volume book, but there was some fair work in it. "Restless Human Hearts" contained many well-written, interesting scenes. No doubt, had "World's End" been published before "The Scarlet Shawl" and "Restless Human Hearts," Mr. Jefferies would have made some way at once as a writer of fiction.

## PUBLISHERS AND EDITORS.

I suppose it is not unreasonable to hope that a fairly good and exhaustive history of the newspaper and serial press of England will be written at some future time ; at all events, it seems astonishing that at the present time, and almost the end of the nineteenth century, it has no complete history in book form which it more than deserves. " Hunt's History of the Fourth Estate " was, perhaps, the best work of its kind, but it covers very little ground. " Andrew's Journalism " was a poor, thin, and useless book, and gained no favour for its historical value. I seem to forget how much of Alfred Witty's " My Friends in Bohemia " is of Fourth Estate value, but I remember it as a very bright and readable book. I published the first two volumes of James Grant's " History of the Newspaper Press in 18—," but it is a poor book, and much too full of prejudice and foolish matters to be at all good history. There are, of course, numerous other bits and slips of history about, but they are not history, even though useful facts. And it seems to me that when a good history of the press is written, it cannot be complete without more than passing mention of the many hard-working men, who have almost, as a rule, had much to do with success in journalism and serialism. This is not I am sure an assertion that will meet with universal approval in the minds of those who believe that talent and genius want no godfathers and godmothers to help them—at least during their early years in the world

of letters. Who knows what the early history of *The Times* might have been, or whether it would have had any history at all, but for Mr. John Walter? *The Times* is, and always has been, a marvellous force in journalism, and every number of it should have been stamped with John Walter's name on it, even years after the death of its great founder. But I am, I hope, making no pretence at a history of "The Fourth Estate"; if I were, I could give the names of a goodly number of men who have, if not founded great newspapers, been the makers of them when founded. There is no more astonishing fact in the history of newspapers than the marvellous energy and enterprise of the Mr. Johnson who clung to *The Standard* for years before he saw even a glimpse in the turn of the tide of the paper. Those who look only at the outside of the office of *The Daily Telegraph* have no notion of the building and the wonderful work done in it; and yet Mr. Joseph Levy and his son, now Sir Edward Lawson, took the management of *The Daily Telegraph* in hand when it was hardly a fact in London journalism.

Douglas Jerrold tried several ventures in journals and serials, but was content at last to let Edward Lloyd show him how to make a great success; and *Lloyd's* is now as much a monument to Mr. Edward Lloyd as to his able editors, from Jerrold to Catling.

I am content to refer to two other founders of works in our literature. Who knows how much good business work the Longman family did for the

“Edinburgh Review” in its early days? If there is any dispute about the aid of the Longmans to the “Edinburgh,” there will be little about John Murray’s very jealous care of the “Quarterly Review.” Even though he had brilliant editors and contributors, very little matter appeared in the “Quarterly” without a Murray stamp upon it. And how long would “Blackwood’s Magazine” have been one of the best in the land of magazines but for the business-minded Blackwoods of old? Those two excellent magazines in their time, “Fraser’s” and “Bentley’s,” owed a good deal to their managers’ sound discretion in literary matters and business qualities. And, strange as it may seem to some readers, not one of the men whose names I have mentioned were in any way brilliant literary men. Some of them could and doubtless did some literary work, but if one of them ever wrote a fairly successful book I never heard of it. I had almost said that I do not remember a publisher since Samuel Richardson who has ever written a really notable book, but I just remember that William Longman wrote a history of one of our kings in two handsome volumes, but I do not think it became a classic. I also remember that Robert, if not William, Chambers was rather a prolific author; but those noted brothers founded and made their great business and their always interesting magazine by being a good deal more noted business men than authors.

During my many years as a publisher I had some experience of practical and learned



men; but the most learned with their pens were, as a rule, the most unpractical in their minds, especially when they desired to start newspapers or serials. I can, perhaps, make my meaning clearer if I give the outline of an experience I had with a really clever, indeed brilliant, scholar and literary man, who founded and tried to carry on a new venture, "The Shilling Magazine." "The Cornhill Magazine" was then some few years old, and though it started very well in circulation, with Thackeray as editor, the sale of the first number was the largest it ever had—in fact, the sales took a downward course from the first number; still it was perhaps a fair property for some years. But from the first "The Cornhill" had some rather formidable rivals against it, and there was for some years quite a rage for shilling magazines, not so much on the part of the public, as of those who would start them.

The proprietor of "The Shilling Magazine," to which I have referred, was Mr. Samuel Lucas, who, in about 1864, was one of Mr. Delane's most trusted reviewers for *The Times*; he was then, or had been just before, editor of "Once a Week," which, even though at that time one of the most brilliant little serials ever published, was by no means a great commercial success. I suppose there is no doubt "Once a Week" was started to run against "Household Words" or "All the Year Round," because Charles Dickens and Messrs. Bradbury and Evans had fallen out on a matter in which Dickens was doubtless to blame.

— The gallant attempt of the founders, and the failure of "Once a Week" as a serial, is one of the curiosities of English journalism. Not only did it open its columns to most of the best serial and other brilliant writers, but almost the whole staff of *Punch* lent their excellent aid with pictures, prose, and verse ; but it never had a tithe of the sale it deserved, and after the founders had held on to their expensive child for a goodly number of years, they put it into other hands, where it was no more successful, and I do not think died a very glorious death. Strange to say, Mr. Samuel Lucas's experience on "Once a Week" in no way frightened him from trying to found a successful magazine of his own, and altogether on his own account ; but he paid dearly for the venture, most of the contributions costing him five or six times more than their actual value. Moreover, some peculiar phases of poor Mr. Lucas's mind, which had for some time been visible, began to show themselves in a more serious form. He grew so reckless about the cost that after we had published the first number we asked him to find another publisher, and he did so. In fact, the experiences of the first and second number of "The Shilling Magazine" were a curiosity in serial ventures, but it would be dry reading even to give an outline of them. I can explain them in no better way than by saying that every copy of "The Shilling Magazine" that was sold cost Mr. Lucas just over four shillings to produce, and each copy brought him in as nearly as possible sevenpence ; indeed, it cost him

rather over than under that sum. In mentioning the sum total, I do not of course mean the number printed. Even had the copies printed been sold, Mr. Lucas would have been a loser. However, even though we ceased to publish "The Shilling Magazine" for Mr. Lucas, we were the same friends as ever, until we lost sight of him, and I am afraid he drifted into a melancholy state of health.

There was no clearer proof that the mind of the once bright, indeed brilliant, literary scholar was somewhat unhinged, than his foolish replies to adverse criticisms of his magazine, and his printing the letters in the second number of his venture. At least, the time had been when he would have rather thanked "The Spectator" than quarrelled with it for giving an honest opinion.

I am sorry to say I do not remember how or where Mr. Lucas ended his days. I was often in his charming home in Cork Street, where works of art and books abounded.

We published two handsome volumes of essays on books, by Mr. Lucas, reprinted from *The Times*, called "Mornings of the Recess." The meaning of the title was that *The Times* in those days seldom found room for literary notices when Parliament was sitting.

Soon after I lost sight of Mr. Lucas my brother died, and some few months later I made my first venture with "Tinsleys' Magazine," which I carried on for over a quarter of a century. About the time I started it there was a rage amongst publishers for shilling magazines, and I was one of the

foolish sheep who rushed through the gap into the next field, and did not find the food so plentiful as it was in the field I had left. A poor simile, I admit, but, as Touchstone says, "mine own"; however, having got into the new pasture, foolish pride would not allow me to go back. And yet there were more magazines in the wretched field than there were blades of grass to support them. But on I went in my wild career; for was I not the owner of a magazine, and with my own name on the title page, a man of some importance? I can solemnly swear I never thought so for any length of time. I might have done, had I made, instead of lost, over three thousand pounds on the first twelve numbers. There was nothing to be overjoyed or over proud about in that fact. But I should have only lost one-half of the above-mentioned sum had Mr. Edmund Yates, who started with me as half proprietor, been able to pay his share of the loss. But about that time he got into serious monetary difficulties, and from first to last the venture was all my own. I am bound to admit that during the few months Yates edited "Tinsleys' Magazine" he worked fairly well to make it a success; and he would have done better from a commercial point of view had he not lent himself so much to old comrades and literary friends, who wrote as much as they pleased, and charged a good deal too much for what they did. However, I was about with my eyes open, and it must be understood that I do not want to blame a man, certainly not maliciously, who is not alive to answer for himself.

Just before I started "Tinsleys' Magazine" the copyright of "London Society" was offered me by a large firm of stationers, who had advanced Messrs. Hogg and Sons a rather large sum of money upon it. In fact, I was in an office in the City to agree to purchase it, and it would have been mine within the next five minutes, but James Hogg rushed into the office almost breathless, and said he had found the money they had agreed to let him have it for. I think I can say with all truth that I told Mr. Hogg I was pleased the magazine was to remain in his family; and I hope I may also say that even had I have signed the agreement and paid the deposit, I should have given way under the circumstances.

Of course the purchase of "London Society," and especially at the price I was to pay for it, would have been no venture at all, for it was then a good property, and, as I have mentioned, "Tinsleys' Magazine" was a distinctly risky venture. After Mr. Yates left my magazine I practically conducted it myself, with the aid of William Croft, an excellent printers' reader. The greatest difficulty I had with the many authors I was publishing for was to please all those who would, if possible, have made me take matter for it; but there was only so much space to be filled, for serial stories, which as a rule at that time ran about a year, filled the biggest portion of it.

William Croft was, as Hamlet says of Horatio :

"E'en as just a man,  
As e'er my conversation coped withal."

In fact, he was at times so just and particular in my account books, which he kept for over twenty years, that his accuracy often cost me what I, but not he, called money spent foolishly. I paid him so much per hour for all the time he spent in my office. He came and went, as a rule, when he pleased, and when by chance there were a few shillings or a few pence wrong in the cash ledger, he would sometimes take hours to find the cause. Of course, had I had a partner or anyone but myself interested in the business, the mistake might have been different. Croft's seat and table were in my office, and when I saw a pile of account books before him I knew what was the matter, and even though I was his paymaster he never would obey me when I said, "Pass the foolish sum over; call it loss, and don't worry about it." But no, that little matter was fought out by him to the bitter end; in fact, I am sure if I had said at any such times, "I won't pay for any such useless labour," dear old Croft would have worked out the useless problem at his own cost. Croft seldom showed the slightest sense of humour. In fact, I do not ever remember hearing him have a good hearty laugh. But he came to me one day very much amazed. He had been down to one of the London docks to take charge of and see taken to some place in London the body of Lord Dalling, who had died somewhere abroad. The coffin containing the body was sent over in a merchant ship in a square wooden case, so much resembling other cases on

board that, as there was no special mark upon it, it was some time before the remains of the great diplomatist could be found. As a matter of fact, the box was smuggled on board in that form of cargo so that the sailors should have no superstition about having a dead body on board. Croft had read and passed for press all the proofs of Lord Dalling's "Life of Lord Palmerston," and he rendered Dean Hook good service with the press proofs of several of his volumes of "The Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury." I ought to have mentioned at first that Croft came to me from Messrs. Clowes, the printers, where he had risen from a printers' boy to a valued reader, but he found the closeness of a printers' reader's closet was ruining his health. As a proof of his value as a printers' reader, Croft was Mr. Whitaker's right hand man for some years in correcting and passing the proofs of his celebrated almanac, and he also edited May's, now James Willing's, "Press Guide," for some years; in fact, he was one of those useful men for authors who leave no stone unturned to make their matter as correct and complete as possible, and yet, I think, never in his life ventured to write a line of original matter.

After Mr. Croft left my office I engaged young Edmund Downey, the now clever author and publisher in York Street, to do much the same work Croft had done for me with my magazine, but I soon found he was bent on becoming an author, and so perhaps I gave him his first insight into literary London life.



I cannot quite remember whether the line is in one of Tom Robertson's or Byron's plays, but I remember the play was at the Globe Theatre, and in it there is the father of a venturesome ne'er-do-well son who had always a capital idea in his head to make a fortune when he wanted to draw more money from his father.

One of his most brilliant ventures was to start a new shilling magazine, for which he says "there is a great want." The line would of course go for nothing now, but at the time it got more than one hearty laugh, and a rather loud "Hear, Hear," from the subscriber, when the father intimated that he thought there were too many about already. I am afraid my words are rather of the solo kind, but just for some sort of a comparison may I say "He jests at scars who never felt a wound," for little Johnny Clark looked straight at me when he or someone in the scene spoke the line.

Edmund Yates more than once twitted me for taking the editorship of my magazine out of his hands, and said he would have made it a success in time, and even George Sala had more than an idea that he could have made it a great property. Yates, when *The World* newspaper had begun to give him some money to, if I may use the term, play with, started a very good shilling magazine, but soon found it a far too expensive child for him to name or be bothered with, so before he had lost a great deal of money by it he sold it. But perhaps, had he named it "Yates's Magazine," he would

have very much hesitated before he sold a publication with his name to it for other people to trade upon, perhaps not in the most honest way possible.

I am decidedly of opinion that the bad using of a fair name on a literary work should be easily righted in a court of law. At all events, an injustice of the kind more than distressed my feelings for many a month.

I have mentioned that my magazine had, as it were, died in my own arms. But a few months after, when I was in business difficulties, a much too enterprising but not good-natured young gentleman, who wanted some kind of a literary name to work upon, approached my trustee, and offered him a rather large sum of money to be allowed to revive "Tinsleys' Magazine," and even though he knew it was dead, he bought it. If the magazine had not borne my name the injustice would have not been so very great, but bearing my name as it did, and I having given it decent burial, I thought for anyone to dig it up and bandy it about the world was infamous, and I am sure neither law nor justice. I felt the injustice the more because, during the over a quarter of a century I had the magazine under my own personal control, there never appeared a word or line that was not fair and generally interesting literary matter, while I could have had almost a hundred wretched articles, crammed with detestable matter, puffing all sorts of quack medicine and stuffs.

However, the poor old magazine was no sooner

in new hands than its pages were used for the wretched matter I had always had a horror of. I should not have known it, but I received a letter, addressed "Tinsley Brothers," marked "private," in which it was intimated that by calling at an office mentioned the cheque as agreed could be had for the insertion of the quack puff-stuff article. Out of curiosity, I went and looked at the place whence the wretched article had emanated. I turned away with a sorrowful heart, for those who had paid for the article were actually giving copies of the magazine away, to induce readers to read their wretched puffing article, which was a good deal worse than not fair literature. Even that cruel wrong does not affect or trouble me now. I have mentioned the matter merely to show that it is almost dangerous to give a magazine or literary work your own name without being fairly sure it will get into as good, if not better, hands than your own.

In a history of English serials some most interesting matter could be found about men who have lent excellent aid in art and letters to the success of newspapers and serials, and have then tried to establish newspapers and serials on their own account.

Mr. H. W. Lucy for some few years made *The World* newspaper very much read, but very much dreaded in the political world for his always smart but not always discreet matter called "Under the Clock." As a matter of fact, Mr. Lucy was

often more severe than he himself wished ; but Yates's instructions to him were "Give them more fustian, Lucy." But even though Mr. Lucy was a power on *The World*, he was very little so when he tried a paper of *The World* kind on his own account, for it soon failed. And am I right in saying that Mr. Lucy went back, or rather up again, to his place on *The World* ?

It was notorious that George Sala at his best, and even when not quite so, was one of the best contributors to serial literature for almost all his lifetime, but when he started a serial with his own name to it, it seemed to have no more charm for gathering readers than if he had put no name to it at all.

The mistake Mr. Harry Furniss made was, perhaps, not so much leaving *Punch* as trying to start a humorous, satirical paper on his own account. He seemed to have forgotten that he was only one of the cogs in a powerful wheel, and unless he could make such a wheel himself, success was impossible.

It may seem a bold thing to say that, even if Sir John Tenniel had tried such a venture as Mr. Furniss, it is quite a question whether he would have fared much better than Mr. Furniss did, for *Mr. Punch* stands on a very solid rock, and time, money, and excellent talent, if not genius, has been riveted on to it with almost sacred golden bolts. But I have scribbled all too much in these rough notes about a subject that I think I know a good deal better than I can describe.

Those not versed in the production of illustrated

magazines or serials of any kind will hardly realise the fact that the cost of drawing woodblocks and engravings for pictures for magazines and serials was often as much as three pounds the square inch, so that the pictures for fairly well illustrated periodicals of the kind was a very great charge upon them.

But, hey presto ! what a change modern magazines are, now stuffed with pictures because they can be purchased at a *few pence* per square inch, so fast has the art of the process of reproduction rushed along ! Yes, readers, pence for pictures instead of pounds is almost the rule. Those of you who know the gravers' splendid art may look a long time for it in modern publications of any kind. In fact, it may well be termed the Cheap Picture Age, with hand-worked art a good way in the background.

## CHAPTER XV.

### A SAD ENDING TO A MERRY PARTY.

The following letter from Henry Irving brings to my mind a memorable evening, with the saddest ending to one of a jovial party I can remember :—

“ 15, Grafton Street, Bond Street,  
March 4th, 1875.

“ MY DEAR TINSLEY,

“ Don't forget Sunday, 21st, 6 (six) o'clock, at  
The 'Pall Mall.'

All 'Knights.'

Ever yours,

“ HY. IRVING.”

The dinner was given by Mr. Irving to his brother members of the Knights' Club, held at Simpson's Divan in the Strand.

We were very grand when in our old Club-room, when some twenty or more of us were seated at our big-round table. We hob-nobbed and “Sirred” each other, and conformed to rules almost majestic; in fact, some of the old members were always indignant if any rule was broken. I remember I was once late at a Saturday dinner, and the Chairman put it to the company whether I might dine with my brother Knights that day or not. In fact, Irving was a *Knights* already in those days.

I forget how many of us there were at the dinner in question, I think about forty or fifty ; but I remember we all knew each other, so that no trouble was taken to name seats, and we assorted ourselves as we thought best. The dinner was good and well served, and everything went merrily along until the cloth was removed and some speeches were made, when by an unlucky chance allusion was made to the coming of Salvini, the celebrated Italian tragedian, who was then being extensively advertised to play an engagement at Drury Lane Theatre.

The mention of Salvini's name seemed to irritate Mr. Bateman, Mr. Irving's manager, in no small degree, and he scouted the idea of any other tragedian coming near his theatre, or in any way rivalling his *protégé*, Henry Irving.

Charles Dickens said he thought Mr. Bateman's remarks rather out of place, and that it was not right to pre-judge the great Italian actor without having seen him.

In reply, Mr. Bateman said he would take Mr. Irving to Italy, and plant the standard of the British drama in the heart of that country. He then rose, and in some heat left the room, and it was some time before David James and a few others could convince him that the mention of Salvini was not meant in any way as a slight upon him or Mr. Irving.

Nor was there, indeed, anything approaching to insult or bad feeling intended by any one of our



company towards "dear old Governor Bateman," as we used to call him.

Calm being restored, and everyone being again on the best of terms with himself and neighbours, it was thought the evening would end happily.

Old Time, however, had flown on apace; and there being no extension of the license for the time of closing, the manager of the Pall Mall entered the room, and quietly informed our host that the time for closing had arrived, and he must beg of us to break up our party and leave.

Mr. Bateman again got rather heated, and intimated that no time had been given for closing, and that he should leave the house when he pleased, and take the responsibility of so doing.

This, of course, was of no avail. The manager knew his business, and we all left—our dear old friend Bateman still being very much excited—though not, let me say, from any alcoholic cause.

Strange to relate, some busy reporter heard something about our dinner party, and it was stated in one or more of the daily papers that we had been turned out of the place by the police—a report which was entirely without foundation in every respect. No policeman either interfered with or spoke to any of our party.

By a most curious coincidence, in a casual conversation which I had some years afterwards with Superintendent Cutbush, then of Scotland Yard, I happened to mention this same dinner at the Pall Mall Restaurant, and the incidents connected

with it ; when, much to my surprise, he told me he was a sergeant of the police in the Pall Mall district at the time, and actually stood in the entrance when we all left, and had some trouble afterwards in convincing his superior officer that the stupid report which appeared in the newspapers was untrue.

Some of our company adjourned to the Westminster Club—while the rest, myself among the number, returned home. I did not see any of the party the next day, but heard afterwards that those who went to the Westminster Club enjoyed themselves there for a short time, and then made their way homewards.

And now comes the sad ending to the merry meeting. Dear old Governor Bateman was amongst those who went to the Club, and after he had returned home, he went to bed, and, I believe, never spoke afterwards. He was found to be in a fit of a most dangerous kind, and died on the Monday evening following our dinner, deeply regretted by his loving wife and family, and a host of friends. Not one of us who heard of his death but was more than grieved at the untimely loss of our old friend.

The death of Mr. Bateman was no doubt the beginning of the management of the Lyceum Theatre by Henry Irving. Mrs. Bateman and Henry Irving worked together in the management for some time, but it was not long before it became evident that the theatre would soon be under the sole control of the latter.

What would have happened had Mr. Bateman lived until now no one can well imagine. In a speech at the dinner at the Pall Mall, Mr. Irving declared that the bond of friendship between him and his manager would never be severed by his (Irving's) wish. And there is no doubt that Mr. Bateman would have given him full liberty to work out his splendid ideas of producing and acting plays. Historians of the stage will certainly record with admiration the masterly work accomplished at the Lyceum Theatre, that temple of the drama under Henry Irving's management.

I venture to print the following letter from Bram Stoker, received some years later, as will be seen from the date on it :—

“Royal Lyceum Theatre, Strand,  
“8th May, 1882.

“My Dear Sir,

“Mr. Irving desires me to forward to you, with his very kind regards, the enclosed box for Tuesday, and to say how glad he is that you are coming. He hopes that you will, in the future, come much oftener than you have done of late, as you are always *most* welcome, and it is a genuine pleasure to him to see you at the Lyceum.

“I am, dear Sir,

“Faithfully yours,

“BRAM STOKER.”

I need hardly mention that Mr. Bateman was the father of Miss Bateman—Mrs. Crowe—who many years ago almost electrified numerous audiences at

the Adelphi Theatre by her powerful rendering of Leah in the play of the same name, and is still the best known English exponent of the part.

Two other daughters of my old friend have also worked themselves into capital positions as actresses—Virginia (Mrs. Edward Compton) and Isabella Bateman.

A rather funny story is told of Mr. Bateman. It appears that when his daughter was playing Leah at the Adelphi he would often take a seat in the pit. One night, being much interested in her acting, he forgot to take off his hat. Some one behind requested him to do so; but the moment his hat was off the pitee said, "Put it on again, master, please." The fact was, Mr. Bateman had at that time a very bushy head of hair, which, when his head was bare, filled more space than when covered with a hat.

#### A GHOST STORY TOLD BY HENRY IRVING.

It needs no great knowledge of life to discover that any person with a thoroughly superstitious mind is a curious individual to convince of his or her folly with regard to belief in ghosts. You may be very serious with them, or you may treat their beliefs lightly; but the one treatment is no more likely to be effective than the other, and they remain of the same opinion still. And it is a strange fact that a stupid practical joke will often strengthen the superstitious mind. Everyone knows the foolish old joke, when you meet a friend alone, of pretending to shake hands with someone with him, when

there is no one near. The laugh is harmless when your friend knows the foolish old joke ; but if it is played upon a weak-minded person, who is as it were ghost-haunted and has a belief that a ghost may be conjured up at any moment, it is sometimes serious.

I suppose I need hardly tell the reader that Sir Henry Irving is a master hand at telling creepy, and, in fact, tragic stories ; at least, those who have heard him recite "Eugene Aram" and "The Uncle" have had some evidence of that fact. I remember one night, some years ago, young Henry Montague had come over from America for a few days on some important private business, and we had a midnight supper at the Westminster Club. I forget the names of all those who were there ; but I remember H. J. Byron, David James, Tom Thorne, J. L. Toole, George Loveday, Mr. Pawle, Henry Irving, and, of course, Montague, who was the guest of the evening. Here let me say that I never heard Irving try to sing, although I have seen it printed somewhere that he used to do so.

But as a story teller he was a master in the craft. On the night in question, at the Westminster Club, he told and acted the story of a man who was ghost-haunted indeed, for he declared the ghost was always by his side, or seated in the next chair to him, and his own friends were most careful not to even refer to the spectre. But one day one of his friends called upon him with a stranger, who happened to be a great practical joker. Not knowing the ghost-haunted man's weakness, he said,

“How are you, sir?” and then turning to empty space said, “A friend of yours I suppose, sir?” The friend at once checked him, but the joke had so told upon the haunted mind that no laugh or denial was able to efface his impression that there was a ghost. I have spoilt the story in telling it, but the reader may take it from me that Irving’s rendering of it was very dramatic.

#### THE “HAMLET” AND “MERCHANT OF VENICE”

##### BANQUETS AT THE LYCEUM THEATRE.

Not long before Mr. Bateman’s melancholy death, he, with Mr. Irving, gave a midnight banquet to celebrate the hundredth performance of their first production of “Hamlet.” The “feast of reason and flow of soul” was held in the saloon of the theatre, after the fall of the curtain, and was a very interesting and mirthful affair; perhaps there were not many more than a hundred persons present. However, at this date I forget the number, but anyone who knows much about banquets knows well enough that a dinner or entertainment of the kind at which the guests number one hundred is, as a rule, more enjoyable than when they are three times that number, at least I have always found them so; especially when, as was the case of the “Hamlet” banquet, every one present knew and was on speaking terms with his neighbour. At such gatherings all friends are closer together, and the conversations, the indispensable drinkings and hob-nobbings seem more enjoyable, and those

who have not the quickest hearing know more about what is going on than they can possibly hear at monster banquets. On the above-mentioned occasion I was seated very close to Mr. Compton, when he, in his inimitably droll manner, informed the company that as a matter of fact they had met to celebrate the more than one hundred nights' run of the old farce, called "A Fish out of Water." "Hamlet" was only being played as the after piece. In those days the good old custom of playing a farce soon after seven o'clock in the evening as a first piece was the rule, and not, as now, the exception. At that time Mr. Compton had played the above-mentioned farce a good many times over one hundred consecutive nights, and I think it was still going on.

Mr. Compton had, doubtless, played the same farce almost times out of number during the many years he was a member of the Haymarket Theatre company; but, perhaps, the most persistent run or runs of a farce I remember was "A Kiss in the Dark" at the same theatre. I think that I remember it being on the bills very often for years as the first or last piece. Another run of a play of the same class was "Boots at The Swan," at the Olympic. Mr. Robson's "Jacob Earwig" was a rich treat in comic acting; in fact, all the players in it were capital. But I am straying again.

The banquet Mr. Irving gave on the stage of the Lyceum Theatre to about three hundred guests after the fall of the curtain on the hundredth performance of "The Merchant of Venice" was a very



imposing affair, but, to my thinking, not so memorable as the "Hamlet" banquet,—I mean, upon the principle that the best and most sociable meetings of notable people are when all that is said and done can be seen and heard, the company being limited, and the space not too large. At the banquet in question Mr. Irving acted as a sort of Master of the Ceremonies until most of the guests were seated, for there were very few reserved seats. He posted himself at the entrance to the stage, and bade us take seats where we should best like to be, and to be sure and make ourselves comfortable. And strange to say, the whole of the three hundred guests were seated in much less time than it often takes where all the seats are numbered, for at large banquets there are always some guests who would rather not have the seats allotted to them, and will resort to the reprehensible practice of occupying those assigned to other guests.

The preparations for the banquet were almost magical, for, within an hour from the time the very charming and learned advocate and her scrubbed little clerk had hurried back to Belmont to put on mock airs and graces for the seeming loss of their love tokens, the stage was cleared of scenery, a spacious tent was lowered to form a dining hall, the tables were set, and loaded with a splendid variety of Gunter's best eatables and choice wines. A magnum of fine champagne to each three guests was an imposing sight on the tables, and would have made dear old George Cruikshank wince

again, however much he might have liked that enticing beverage in his young days. There was an ample supply of excellent cigars, and some very good speeches. I stayed until about four o'clock in the morning, and then left with my old friend, Mr. W. S. Johnson, for his house in Regent's Park, and after a gossip there for a time, made my way to King's Cross to catch the first train for home. On my way I purchased a copy of the Sunday morning edition of *Lloyd's Newspaper*, and found that it contained a list of the guests and reports of most of the speeches that I had heard spoken less than three hours before on the Lyceum stage; in fact, the voices of the speakers and the thunders of applause for our host had not seemingly died away from my ears before, some two miles from the theatre, I was reading about all I had seen and heard on that very notable occasion.

#### MR. W. S. JOHNSON.

My old friend, Mr. W. S. Johnson, was for many years proprietor of "The Nassau Steam Press," and one of the first printers of theatrical books, programmes, and especially of large posters; I think it would be easy to find old play books and bills printed by him seventy years ago. Johnson was always a very enterprising man. But his best speculation in life was when he and Mr. Wilson purchased the "London Journal." Mr. Wilson was one of the sons of Mrs. Wilson of Favorite Omnibus fame. But the partnership did not last very long, for Johnson

knew too well the value of the property not to get it into his own hands if possible; so at the end of the agreed time of the said partnership, Johnson offered Wilson the return of the money he had originally paid, with, of course, his share of the profits. But Wilson was shrewd enough to see that, being part proprietor, he had a forward interest in the property, and was also shrewd enough to offer to take Johnson's share at a better price than he offered him. But, as a matter of fact, Wilson did not want the "Journal," and so after some bartering Johnson got the paper into his own hands, much more on Wilson's terms than his own. The fact was, the "London Journal" was at that time, and for years afterwards, an excellent property, and often brought in from ten to twelve thousand pounds a year profit; and for those times such a profit on a penny journal was very great. Plenty of old serial readers remember that the authors who made the "London Journal" known far and wide were J. F. Smith, the author of "Stanfield Hall"; Pierce Egan, the author of "The Flower of the Flock"; and Miss Robinson, the author of "Whitefriars." Those and some other clever writers of the same style of literature made the fortune of the "London Journal," as many clever writers of a somewhat quieter kind of matter made the "Family Herald" a great property. It is a strange fact in literature—hardly one of the most successful stories in the "London Journal" when printed into book form

had a great sale, or were at all a good property in that form, and yet the numbers of the journal containing them were reprinted hundreds of times. I reprinted two or three of the most noted of the stories, and lost money by all of them.

There were few men better known in theatrical London than Mr. W. S. Johnson was from about 1840 to 1885 or '90; in fact, Johnson was for many years a sort of banker to several important London theatrical managers, and many a time but for him there would have been little or no treasury. But even though Johnson was very shrewd at times in such advances, I know he lost a good many thousand pounds in theatrical speculations, as he also did in buying and selling pictures. I remember he had for a long time an excellent copy of a great picture by one of the old masters, and actually insured it for seven or eight thousand pounds; and yet the original picture was no further off than *The Louvre*. But much to Johnson's credit, he was a firm supporter of Keely Halswell, and paid him from time to time large sums of money. The largest sum was for his large picture, called "Waiting for the Blessing," quite as well if not better known as "The Red Umbrella Picture." I think Johnson paid him about eight hundred pounds for it. I had my suspicions that Halswell often knocked off some pot-boiling wood blocks for the "London Journal"; but, of course, he did not put his name on them.

When the Court of Napoleon was broken up,

Johnson bought from there some valuable furniture, and a splendid pair of black horses; which, but for being better bred than ordinary funeral horses, looked of that kind, and I am afraid we named them Johnson's funeral team; he was certainly subjected to a good deal of chaff about them. One day Johnson arrived at my house with his children in his splendid carriage drawn by the swish-tail blacks, and soon after an old friend of ours, a market gardener, near Enfield, drove past in his dogcart. I said to Johnson, "There goes Bill——. I wonder he did not call, as he could see you are here." However, not much was thought of the incident of his passing; but soon afterwards a policeman arrived at my gate, and took his stand there. He made one or two attempts to speak to Johnson's coachman; but that was useless, for the man was French, and knew very little English. It seemed a question whether the constable was waiting for me—or Johnson! However, I went out to him, and told him he need not wait about. But all I could get from him was, "All right, sir, it's my duty." Nor would he move until Johnson drove away with his family, and then he made a rush towards the police station. Some few days after, Mr. Market Gardener was dining with Johnson and me, and he gently asked me if the policeman did his duty at my house the other day. And then the secret was out—it was one of Mr. Market Gardener's little jokes. He had told the policeman that the Emperor Napoleon was at the house where the carriage was standing,

and it was his duty to see that His Majesty should be guarded ; and I have little doubt there is a memorandum at the station of an event that never happened, for the Emperor was dead at the time.

Johnson was a very good friend to Madame Celeste, whose right name, I feel almost sure, was Smith. The clever lady lost a good deal of her money with Ben Webster at the Adelphi Theatre. In her late years she lived in or near Paris. Perhaps she was never badly off, but had she not lost by Webster she would have been a fairly well-to-do woman. However, Johnson was a good friend, and gave advice to her in many ways.

I forget the date, but of course it was some years ago, I called to see Johnson in St. Martin's Lane, and I found him in his office, with wine and biscuits, with two very homely-dressed old ladies. One was Madame Celeste, and the other Madame Taglioni. Anyone might easily have thought they were two dear old country ladies, and many who had seen them in their best days on the stage would have sworn they were not the two notable women they were ; in fact, I think the famous dancer was the more homely-looking of the two.

## CHAPTER XVI.

TOOLE—COVENTRY STREET PICTURE SHOP—

DOLLY AND POLLY, GAIETY THEATRE.

Toole, in his "Reminiscences," does not, I think, tell enough of the many hundreds of good-natured practical jokes he has played upon his own friends and many strangers during his public career as an actor.

I have many times been afraid that he would not pull off successfully a little harmless trick when the victim has been a perfect stranger to us. Not that there was ever any fear of Toole's countenance betraying him. An undertaker's face at an expensive funeral was never more serious than his when he was playing a practical joke upon anyone.

I have many a time gone to the other side of the street when I have known him bent on putting to a passer-by the most absurd query possible, perplexing the questioned person in a way ludicrous in the extreme. After fogging the man or boy, he would walk on, saying, "Ah, I thought I was wrong," or "You don't understand me."

Lionel Brough, a friend, and I were one evening completely sold—not as pictures—by Toole at a picture shop in Coventry Street, Haymarket.

We were on our way to the Criterion to dine, when Toole told the cabman to pull up at the picture



shop in question, informing us that he wanted to speak to the owner of the shop about a pair of oil paintings he was anxious to purchase for about fifty pounds.

I certainly thought Toole meant business in the matter, and so I feel sure did Brough and our friend.

By a strange coincidence the picture-dealer also sold new-laid eggs ; and Toole, after a good deal of talk about the pictures, said, " I will consider about them, and let you know." Then, with a countenance as stolid as a rock, he asked for one new-laid egg.

The man wrapped it in a piece of tissue paper, handed it to Toole in the most business-like manner possible, and took the money for it.

I made my exit from the shop as quickly as possible, and so did Brough.

Toole for his part left the shop without betraying the slightest sign of having sold us in the stupid way he had.

This was an instance when a serious quarrel might have arisen, had not Toole played to perfection the part of meaning business with the owner of the shop.

During one of Toole's earliest engagements at the Gaiety Theatre he settled a desperate quarrel between two of the principal ladies of the company in what I thought was a capital way.

Each of the ladies in question was fearfully jealous of the applause that the other gained for her singing and dancing ; in fact, they accused each

other of copying each other's business. So Toole called Dolly into his dressing-room one night, and told her that Polly was very sorry about the quarrel, in fact, had hinted to him — Toole — that if Dolly would apologise to her, the quarrel would be at an end. Dolly said at once she would not apologise to Polly, but that she would, of course, make it up with her if she would acknowledge herself in the wrong.

Later in the evening Toole took Polly into his room with him, and told her that Dolly was most anxious to put an end to the quarrel, and would she (Polly) meet Dolly in Toole's room after the performance was over, have a glass of champagne, and settle the dispute there and then?

Both ladies repaired to the scene of reconciliation, each with the idea that the other had made the first advance towards ending the quarrel.

The champagne was opened, the glasses filled, and Dolly and Polly fell into each other's arms in the full belief that each had gained a complete victory; neither of them was aware of the good-natured joke which had been played upon them for a long time afterwards, when it was too late to renew the quarrel.

Mr. Hatton—Mr. Toole's Boswell, or collaborator in his "Reminiscences"—mentions that Mr. Toole's witty speeches would make a good and amusing book. I am of opinion that a selection of his letters to his numerous friends would make more than one volume of wonderfully amusing matter.

Toole is what is called in Free Masonry a Past Master in the Art of Amusement, and Irving is without doubt the English tragedian of his time.

And yet, get Irving and Toole together off the stage, as I have seen them many a time, and who shall decide which is the better comedian of the two?

I remember, some years ago, being with Toole, Irving, Lionel Brough, and a friend. We were driving to my house in the Green Lanes. On our way up the Anerley Arms Hill, leading to Crouch End, we came upon a greengrocer in sad trouble.

The belly band of the harness of his horse had broken, and the vegetables and fruit were falling from his cart and rolling in all directions down the steep hill.

The horse would not stand still, and of course the man could not gather up his stock.

We all got out of our conveyance to help him, Toole, Irving, and Brough being most anxious to lend their aid.

Some of us helped to get his horse and cart all right; and, during the time we were doing so, the lecture which Irving read the owner, and Toole's corroboration of all Irving said, was extremely droll.

Irving assured the man that he ought to have known the accident would happen, and that he should have been more careful; and Toole putting in a word at the slightest opportunity—both of them as grave as judges at the time—they so bewildered the poor greengrocer that he could hardly be civil

in the very few answers he gave them ; in fact, when they, together with Brough, began to help gather up the fruit and vegetables, he quite lost his temper, when he found they were humbugging him, and at last declared he would much rather sort his fruit and vegetables himself, and reload his cart in his own way.

It would have been a funny mixture to sell, had the baskets been filled in the way Irving, Toole, and Brough wanted to fill them.

Many a jolly time have I spent with Toole, both in London and the country. His knowledge of London streets and byways is wonderful, especially of the East End.

Some years ago, Toole, Brough, and I, accompanied by a well-known detective, spent the greater part of a day walking about the very lowest slums in the neighbourhood of Whitechapel, Spitalfields, and Ratcliff Highway.

Our companion, the detective, was well-known in many of the lowest courts and alleys, and many of the men and women nodded to him in the most familiar way. Some of them had "done time," as he called it, and others were friends of others "doing time."

There seemed to be no lane, road, or alley the detective did not know ; but Toole had more knowledge of old landmarks, interesting old houses, and streets than he had. Altogether we spent a most interesting day, although it was in the East of London.

One of the jolliest days I spent with Toole and some friends of ours was a trip to Gravesend and Gad's Hill.

Toole invited David James, Tom Thorne, Lionel Brough, Arthur Cecil, Henry Montague, myself, and four or five other friends to spend the day with him.

We were all to meet at Charing Cross Railway Station, at about nine o'clock in the morning.

A saloon carriage had been bespoken for our company, and nearly all of us were up to time, Montague being the exception; but he came on later in the day.

Toole is punctuality itself in business and pleasure—at least, I have always found him so. No matter how late in bed, next morning—or I might say the same morning—engagements were always kept with me, and I think he acted on the same principle with everyone else.

I was not the first at the station—indeed, I think I was one of the last of our company to arrive. I quickly made my way to the ticket office; but was interrupted at the barrier by Toole himself, who merely said, "Here's your ticket, sir. Pass along, and don't make a noise."

Toole was the first at the station, and would insist upon paying for all our return tickets.

Our train was out of the station a little after nine o'clock, so we had a long day before us.

We had a very merry time of it going down in the train. Toole was not still a minute—nor, indeed, were any of us.

Arthur Cecil gave a very humorous imitation of Palgrave Simpson's funny ways and mannerisms ; and David James did a marvellous imitation of a prize fight he had seen—going through the fight just as if it had been the real thing.

It happened that Henry Montague had gone to the said fight with James, and the journey to the scene of action being rather a long one, Montague had dozed off to sleep. One of the roughs evidently thought Montague was too comfortable, so he hit him very hard on the top of his head with his bony fist, and caused him to wake up with a frightened stare.

David James at once said, "Don't do that—he's a friend of mine."

"Friend be ——! Let him keep awake," replied the rough.

Anyone who knew Montague—the clean, smart, clever young actor—can easily imagine his horror at the rough's treatment of him.

When we arrived at the New Ship Hotel, Gravesend, we found a splendid early luncheon prepared for us, and I think we all did ample justice to it.

As soon as we had finished, a couple of carriages were ready to take us out to Gad's Hill. We made several calls on the way, and the drive was very enjoyable.

Some of our company had a look over the home of the author of the "Pickwick Papers," while others of us strolled over to The Falstaff, of which Mr. Yates, in the following letter, gives a curious

fact for Dickens collectors, and also corrects a blunder I had made in print.

“January 19, 1889.

“My dear T.,—You mean the Leather Bottle at Cobham, close by, famed in ‘Pickwick.’ The tavern opposite Dickens’s house was called The Falstaff, and was kept by a man named Trood, from whom C. D. is supposed to have adopted the name ‘Edwin Drood.’

“E. Y.”

On our way back we again made calls at various memorable places, amongst them the Leather Bottle.

When we reached Gravesend, it was unanimously agreed to go into the theatre. Some of our company had before that time acted there for very small salaries. Indeed, the stage-door keeper, knowing them, made no difficulty about our going on the stage. Those of our company who had not acted there, determining not to be outdone, performed a short drama on their own account to canvas-covered decorations and empty seats.

After the performance—which, at least by me, is indescribable—we wandered back to the New Ship, where a splendid fish dinner was ready for us. I think I am right in saying that we had fish served up to us in nearly a score of different ways; and lamb and asparagus followed.

The doings at that dinner table would have been worthy of a lot of mischievous schoolboys. We dined in one of the large rooms looking on to the river—not a private room—so there were people



at other tables in it. All left except a venerable-looking lady and gentleman, who looked on in amazement at the pranks being played at our table.

At first the old gentleman seemed a good deal disgusted, and told the waiter that we were not behaving well, and that the noise was unbearable. But the waiter whispered to him that it was Mr. Toole's party, and it soon dawned upon the old gentleman that he recognised Mr. Toole, Mr. Brough, Mr. James, Mr. Thorne and others of our jolly company. He accordingly proceeded to point out to his good wife the various gentlemen he recognised, and I think he was right in most cases—at least, more correct than a man was one day when I was at a railway station with Toole. This man called a friend who was with him a fool, positively declaring it was not Mr. Toole with me, but Mr. Harry Paulton. However, I am afraid the old couple in the dining room must have thought that actors never even had quiet moments, the fun, noise, and laughter were so furious. Indeed, the dinner was one uproarious farce from beginning to end. Eating to any extent was almost out of the question. Arthur Cecil was very quiet, and it was hard to get his attention off his plate; but whenever he could be induced to look away, the food was gone in a moment.

Montague was a mark for James and Thorne. He had no peace at all over his dinner—in fact, I question whether he had anything at all to eat; for no sooner had his food been placed before him, than either David or Tom passed it along to some one else.

Lal Brough was obliged to leave earlier than most of us, as he intended to go to town by boat. Toole arranged that Lal should take a small present home with him, so he got the waiter to give him (Lal) a parcel, with the landlord's compliments. Lal soon found out that the paper contained the white ends of asparagus and other refuse from our table, and declined the parcel with thanks.

When we last saw Lal before he left for town, he was standing on his head on the near side paddle-box of the steamer when the boat left Gravesend Pier.

After dinner, the rest of us strolled to the railway station, and on our way each bought a bag of shrimps.

The journey to London with those shrimps was a thing to be remembered. One of our company—who was rather particular about his dress—was selected to walk through the High Street of the town with a large bag of them hanging to one of the back buttons of his coat, and did not discover the joke until he was seated in the saloon carriage.

By the time we arrived at Charing Cross the carriage was very "shrimpy" indeed; and as we thought some complaint might be brought against us, most of us got away from it as soon as possible; but of course, being a saloon carriage, it attracted some porters and a superintendent. But a few shillings put the matter right, as we thought.

A very severe letter, however, was sent to Toole the next day, written on the company's paper, claiming heavy damages.

It subsequently transpired that one of our company had sent the letter by way of a joke.

"Wig and Gown," a play of Albery's, was at the time being played at the Globe Theatre, Cecil enacting the judge; and when he got up into the stage rostrum that night he found his desk smothered with shrimps, so that every time he moved any of his papers, the shrimps fell down amongst the jury and counsel. But Cecil had his revenge, for he picked up a lot of them, and when Toole was dressing to leave the theatre at night, he found a quantity of the shrimps in his boots.

Perhaps Toole's engagement at the Globe Theatre was one of the best and most profitable he ever had in London.

It was made in a somewhat curious and very quick way.

Toole wanted better terms at the Gaiety Theatre than he was getting. He had got the new play, "Wig and Gown," by James Albery, author of "Two Roses," and he was also shortly leaving for his American tour, so that there was a double attraction in him for the next two or three months.

John Hollingshead would, no doubt, have met Toole, as regards terms, in every way possible; but Lionel Lawson, the then proprietor of the Gaiety Theatre, objected to the latter.

Loveday, Toole's acting manager, was in America at that time, so Toole asked me to go and see Henry Montague at the Globe Theatre, and ask him if he would take him (Toole) and the new play on certain terms.

Montague was then just at his wits' end to know what to do. He had tried several pieces, but none of them had paid expenses. "Heart's Delight," adapted by Andrew Halliday from Dickens's "Dombey and Son," was then being played, and was no good, from a monetary point of view. So Montague at once accepted the proposal I made for Toole, and the agreement was signed and settled in a day or two.

"Wig and Gown" was soon produced; and, as I have said, was a very profitable and very pleasant engagement for all concerned.

The present mentioned in the following letter was, or rather is, a very handsome and useful ornament, and the sight of it often brings back many pleasant memories of days gone by, even though they are gone never to return. The help Mr. Toole mentions was quite a labour of love; but, even if the work had been a matter of business between us, the gift more than repaid me.

"Washington Hotel,

"Liverpool,

"July 11th, 1874.

"My Dear Tinsley,

"Accept the enclosed trifle as a little parting gift. As Michael Garver says, 'It's not the value of the gift, but the motive that prompts it.' Many thanks for the pleasant way in which you helped me in the Globe matter. I am off on Thursday morning, and shall often think of you when on *la* ocean. With kindest regards to your wife, family, and yourself,

hoping we may all meet as jolly and happy as we can all wish on my return,

“ Believe me, old boy,

“ Yours very sincerely,

“ J. L. TOOLE.”

“ Don't forget to send me any papers or notices to Wallack's Theatre, New York.”

Another most enjoyable holiday I spent with Toole and some friends was at Birmingham. I was Toole's guest, and we stayed at the Old Hen and Chickens Hotel.

Toole was there for the week, playing at the Prince of Wales's Theatre. The house had been remodelled and newly decorated from plans by William Ward, a very clever architect of Birmingham; and James Rogers, the genial lessee, had prevailed upon Toole to take his company there for the first week of the newly-revived theatre.

It was a capital engagement, both for Toole and Rogers. The Birmingham theatre-goers applauded the newly-decorated house, the lessee, the architect, and Mr. Toole and his clever company of comedians. Plenty of money came into the theatre every night in the week, and very merry days and nights we had.

Toole's greatest trouble was that he could not be in several places at once. I am sure he had more than a score of invitations during the week to dine with many of the best families in Birmingham and the neighbourhood, with strict injunctions to take his friends with him in almost every instance.

I was most anxious to see some of the great and wonderful workshops of the town ; so, during the time Toole was at rehearsals and attending to his business and correspondence, William Ward each day kindly showed me over one or more of the busy hives of ingenuity, industry, and wealth.

Toole is very fond of doing acts of kindness ; and, above all, of surprising his friends in the best possible way.

As a mark of kindness to Rogers for the excellent way he (Toole) and his company had been treated before and behind the curtain, Toole made up his mind to spring a little surprise upon him and William Ward, the architect.

Ward was to be in the secret as regards the present to Rogers until the time of presentation at a midnight supper at the Old Hen and Chickens Hotel, where, as I have said, Toole and I were staying.

Ward was going to show me over Elkington's, the well-known silver and silver-plated goods factory in Birmingham, on the morning preceding the supper, so Toole asked us to select a handsome claret jug for him to present to Rogers, and to have an inscription engraved upon it, which Toole had already written out.

On another piece of paper which Toole secretly handed me was written, "Get a jug for Ward as well," and on the paper was also the inscription for it. When we were in the show-room of the finished goods department at Elkington's marvellous workshop, we proceeded to select a jug for Rogers.

Ward knew nothing of the price Toole had told me to go to, and was sweet upon a very pretty jug, to cost fifteen guineas ; in fact, he was quite sure it would please both Toole and Rogers very much ; so I said, "Very well. You like that one very much, don't you?" Ward replied, "Yes," and added, "Rogers will be delighted."

However, I looked out another jug, to cost twenty-five guineas, and asked the man to send both of them to Mr. Toole to look at as soon as possible.

The fact was, my instructions from Toole were to order a jug for Rogers to cost about twenty-five guineas, so I concluded that the one Ward had chosen would do nicely in his case.

Before leaving Elkington's I made an excuse to see the salesman again, gave him the inscriptions for both the jugs, and asked him to have them engraved, and sent to our hotel before ten o'clock that evening.

At night about fifteen or twenty of us sat down to supper. Toole was in the chair, of course, and in the merriest of moods. The eating part of the business being over, Toole made, as usual, a capital speech, complimenting Rogers on the excellent improvements he had made in the theatre, and also said many other kind things about his dear old friend, the genial James Rogers ; and then, producing from under his end of the table the twenty-five guinea claret jug (much to the surprise of Ward, who evidently thought he was in all the



secret), he asked Rogers to accept the little present as a memento of starting his almost new theatre.

Rogers having replied in a speech full of excellent feeling, Toole was soon on his legs again, and said he must not forget his young friend Ward, who had made the architectural improvements in the theatre as much a labour of love as of business ; and, as a token of Toole's esteem, would the young architect also accept a small memento ? He then produced the fifteen guinea claret jug which Ward had so unwittingly chosen for himself.

Ward's face was a picture for the moment. But he soon saw how he had been so well sold, and was delighted at the harmless deception.

The next morning after the presentation Toole accompanied me to Stratford-on-Avon, and we spent a most enjoyable time.

It was a quiet day in the town, so we had no difficulty in looking over Shakespeare's house, the Church, New Place, and most of the other places of interest.

Perhaps Toole was too well known to get about the town as fast as he would have liked to have done ; still we got on very well, considering the well-known comedian could hardly walk twenty yards in the town without being stopped for a friendly greeting by someone.

Altogether my visit to Shakespeare's birth-place was an intellectual treat, for Toole—if I may use the term—knew the town inside out, and everybody seemed to know him.

## THE CAUSE OF THE GERMAN WAR.

“The Cause of the German War” (so called) was a wretched coloured print, which Toole purchased from a small second-hand furniture dealer in one of the Midland towns, and sent to my office. He humbugged the man from whom he bought it to take it a very long distance by train, because he (Toole) said that he would not trust a member of his company with it. Of course, Toole paid the foolish man his expenses—the picture, frame and glass were certainly not worth more than half a crown.

It was some few days before the *sell* at my office was quite exploded, most of those to whom Toole sent orders to *view the picture* being sure there was a joke of Toole's in the matter, but they hardly expected to find such a work of *no* art. I hardly dare try to describe it, but I remember the scene was a room in which a number of military-looking gentlemen seemed to have been in conference, and two or three of them had risen to leave. One imperious looking gentleman was in the act of handing to another if possible more imperious looking gentleman a very large document. The receiver of the said document was in the act of taking it, with one outstretched hand, and on the shoulder of his other arm he distinctly seemed to be carrying away a large picture from off the side wall of the room. The effect was really funny, but of course it was due to bad perspective on the part of the artist who drew the picture; but the puzzle was why

such a wretched production was, or could have had printed on it, "The Cause of the German War."

I suppose the portraits of the gentlemen in the picture were supposed to be emperors, ambassadors, or men of some importance; but if I remember rightly, they might have been of French, German, or any other nationality. The following is Toole's letter on the subject:

"Dear Bill,—Very sorry indeed to have missed you, hoped to have had good chat; finished Bradford Saturday, and go to Leicester to-night. I have bought the picture for you to look at, 'The Cause of the German War.' Will you let any friends see it? It's a beautiful thing, I think you'll agree with me. Look at the colour of the general's trousers, and the picture frame resting on his shoulder. I am going to present it to Beef Steak Club. David James will call for it; but you can keep it on view for a few days. I think it's worth half a crown to see it. Love to all.

"Yours truly,

"J. L. T."

"Business capital at Bradford and Harrogate."

I received many interesting letters from Mr. Toole when he was on tour in America and Canada. I venture to print two of them here, because they show that the genial English comedian made many friends far away from his own home, haunts, and friends.

“ New York, September 29, 1874.

“ My dear Tinsley,—

“ How are you? Jolly, I hope. I enjoyed your long letter from Hastings very much indeed—thanks for same; write me another when you can spare time. I've really not had time to write you fully; have so much to tell you, feel I can't do it under a week. Should like to have two days' chat with you right off. All is going first-rate with me; I have made a splendid mark here. The weather has been horribly hot, beyond anything I ever experienced; very hard work acting through it. I have played a better engagement than has been played for years in the summer season. 'Off the Line' is very big, but also 'Uncle Dick' and 'Dearer than Life.' I have played up to near £400 English money per night, and £200 and upwards; lowest house I've played to is £139, and this to boiling weather. The jealousy of some natives who have not done so well has been pretty strong indeed; but, no matter, Bill, I'm going to do the trick—you know me. Hope you are all well at home. Love to you all at home, Lal, and everybody. I start on my tour next week. Write me to Wallack's. Letters will reach me.

“ Yours sincerely,

“ J. L. TOOLE.”

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“ Quebec, June 23, 1875.

“ My dear Tinsley,—

“ I received your jolly long letter, but it had been waiting for me in New York, as you didn't address

it to me at my box. But, no matter, I got it, and was right glad to see your fist again. Thanks for all news. I have been going ahead—have had grand time in Canada, splendid business, and treated like a king. As we shall soon meet (D.V.), it is no use telling you the ten thousand things I shall have to tell you over that quiet bit of dinner we will have together. This is a beautiful place. Am now leaving for Niagara Falls, where I mean taking two weeks' rest before sailing. I have been entertained, lunched, dined, supped, etc., etc., grandly, by all the best people in Canada; but then, they are English—so are you and I, thank God! We are all jolly and well. I've had splendid offers for California and lots of other places, but I keep my promise in returning home after the twelve months. I have had a lot of work, travelling and acting longer than any of the other stars. I have had all sorts of offers from London—five or six theatres. The Haymarket offered me very strong terms for the best months in the year, and other theatres; but I have fixed the Gaiety, good arrangements. I will tell you all when we meet. I commence in provinces first, then HOME, London in November. I wonder if I shall hear Bill Tinsley's laugh on my first night. I THINK SO—DON'T YOU? How is Lal? Jolly, I hope. He has never written me—too bad; but then, he has had so much travel, so much study, and so many rehearsals, etc. 'That's the sort of man he is.' This, by the bye, is quite a catchword here—was when I came over,

and I have used it, of course, a great deal in one of my pieces ; but I shall leave it to Lal. Regards to him. Love to you all from us all. Wife, Frank, Florry, and Johnny Johnstone all well.

“ Yours sincerely,

“ J. L. TOOLE.”

“ P.S.—We shall sail, I think, about middle of July, and rest in Wales, I think, before commencing in Manchester.”\*

*\* CONTINUED IN VOLUME TWO.*

END OF VOLUME ONE.

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