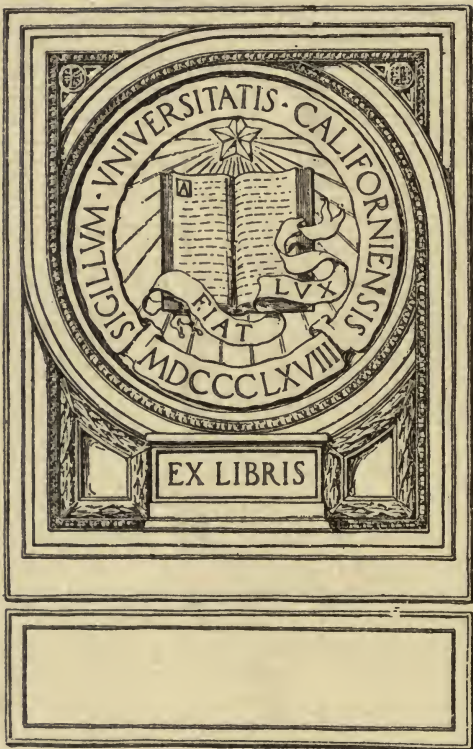


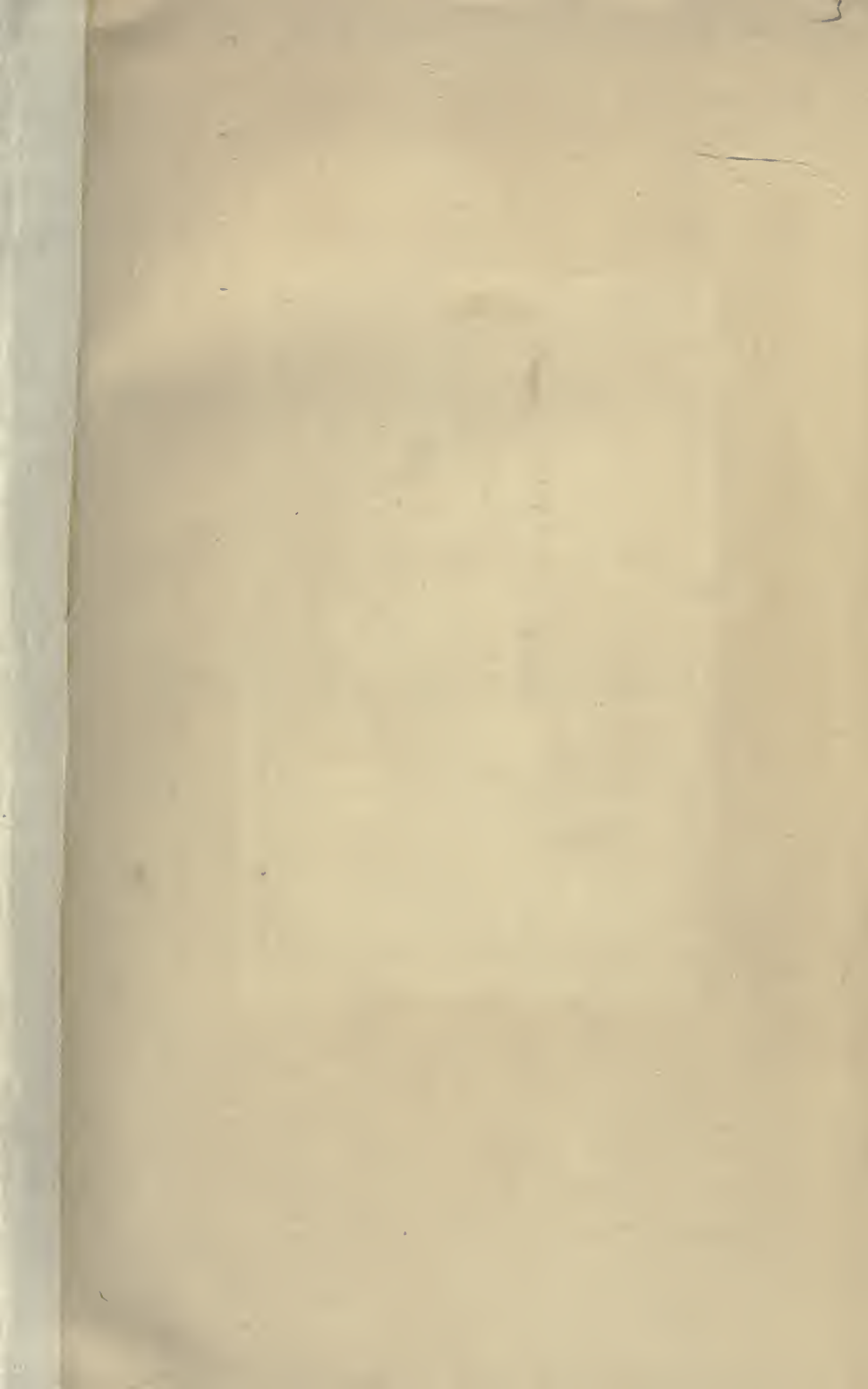
DAYS OF MY YEARS

SIR MELVILLE MACNAGHTEN

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DAYS OF MY YEARS





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LONDON: EDWARD ARNOLD.

DAYS OF MY YEARS

BY

SIR MELVILLE L. MACNAGHTEN, C.B.

LATE CHIEF OF THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT
SCOTLAND YARD

WITH PORTRAIT

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

LONDON
EDWARD ARNOLD

1914

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UNIV OF
CALIFORNIA

TO
MY DEAR FRIEND AND OLD COLLEAGUE
SIR EDWARD RICHARD HENRY
G.C.V.O., K.C.B., C.S.I.
THE BEST ALL ROUND POLICEMAN OF THE
TWENTIETH CENTURY
A MAN TO WHOM LONDON OWES MORE
THAN IT KNOWS

324476

P R E F A C E



“O mihi præteritos referat si Jupiter annos !”

THE days of my years are not yet threescore and ten, but they are within an easy decade of the allotted span of man's life. Taken all round, those sixty years have been so happy that I would, an I could, live almost every day of every year over again.

Sam Weller's knowledge of London life was said to have been extensive and peculiar. My experiences have also been of a varied nature, and certain days in many years have been not without incidents which may be found of some interest to a patient reader, and specially so if his, or her, tastes lie in the direction of police work in general and Metropolitan murders in particular.

Autobiographies are, for the most part, dull

stuff: I would attempt nothing of the kind, but only to set out certain episodes in a disjointed and fragmentary manner. I shall write principally for my own amusement, and until quite recently I resisted all baits thrown to me as to publishing anything in any shape or form. There is much to be said in favour of the old Scotch lady who remarked, with reference to history, that "she didn't hold with it, and would have none of it, it being, in her opinion, far better to let bygones be bygones!" But I trust that in these pages I may not be found to trespass in any way against the rules of good taste or good feeling. It shall be my endeavour to tread on no corned toes, and to set down naught in malice. I have had my likes and dislikes, but, so far as I know, no enemies in the world, and I hope this state of things may continue to the end of the chapter.

A contented mind is a continual feast, and one should always be prepared to accept the bitters of life along with the sweets. It was said once by an enterprising journalist that I only owned up to two disappointments, the first being that, although I played in several trial matches, I was turned out of the Eton Eleven before the

Harrow match, and the second that I became a detective officer six months after the so-called "Jack the Ripper" committed suicide, and "never had a go at that fascinating individual." But the readers—if any take the trouble to peruse the following pages—will be able to judge for themselves as to my "days," and how they have been spent. I never kept a diary, nor even possessed a notebook, so that, in what I write, I must trust to my memory, and to my memory alone. Therefore, I crave indulgence if any inaccuracies shall be found to have crept into some minutes of my "days."

MELVILLE L. MACNAGHTEN.

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DAYS OF MY YEARS



CHAPTER I.

BIRTHS AND BOYHOOD.

“ I remember
The fir trees dark and high ;
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky.
It was a childish ignorance,—
But now, 'tis little joy
To know I'm further off from heaven
Than when I was a boy ! ”

TOM HOOD.

I WAS born at Monkams House, Woodford, on 16th June 1853, the youngest of fifteen children (“ a tremendous family to provide for,” as Mr. Scrooge remarked when the ghost of Christmas stated that he had eighteen hundred brothers). “ The grand old gardener and his wife smile at the claims of long descent,” and, in these democratic days, the worthy couple would probably laugh aloud at any dissertation as to whether the Macnaghtens originally came from the north of

2 DAYS OF MY YEARS

Ireland or the west of Scotland — but, as a curious record of longevity, I may mention that my great-grandfather was born in 1679, and (as the late Mr. Samuel Carter Hall bears testimony) served at the battle of the Boyne, having in the previous year “commanded a regiment at the siege of 'Derry.” It is true that the “Colonel” was a boy of eight or nine years old, but his father was absent fighting with King William in England. The clansmen placed the lad at their head, and, under his “command,” marched to the defence of glorious and immortal Londonderry.

This young warrior had no family of his first marriage, but in 1759 (at the age of eighty) was again wedded. By his second marriage he had two sons. The old gentleman lived to be one hundred and two, and therefore saw his elder son come of age. The said elder son died without issue in 1832, while the second son, my grandfather, became a Judge in Madras, and subsequently Chief Justice of Bengal. He died in 1842, and left a family of seventeen children, of whom my father was one of the youngest. At my father's death on Christmas Eve 1888, no fewer than two hundred and nine years had passed from the date of his grandfather's birth, making a period of seventy years for each generation !

I believe it was the poet Cowper who looked back upon his schooldays as "a dreadful dream." Now Mr. Cowper we know to have been a man of moods, and it is probable that he was a hyper-sensitive child; but, making allowance for all that, I don't think that private schools, even some fifty-five years ago, were palaces of pleasure, or that memory dwells on them with delight. I went to school when I was just turned eight, and certain it is that (to make use of an Irishism) my first *night* away from home was the first *day* of my years into which misery entered. The novelty and the excitement of the afternoon acted as counter-irritants to the first parting with those one loved, and it was not till the sun went down on that August evening, and one went to bed, that the full realisation of sickening solitude, in the midst of some eight other tormenting little boys sleeping in the same room, was borne in on one. Most of us have gone through some such sorrowful experiences, and nothing in after life quite equals them.

The second school I went to was worse than the first, and such seminaries do not, I am thankful to think, nowadays exist. A school of one hundred and twenty boys, whose ages ranged between eight and sixteen, badly looked after, indifferently taught, no proper supervision of games,

and insufficient food—over these days let a veil be drawn.

The exeats were oases in the desert, and I remember full well that, arriving at home about two o'clock on the Saturday, I used to hurry over lunch, and almost invariably make my way to Madame Tussaud's (then situate at the Baker Street Bazaar) and revel in the Room of Horrors till hunger and tea-time called me home. The boy, seemingly, was to be father to the man—Crime and Criminals had a weird fascination for me at a very early age. I used always to take away the sixpenny catalogues and study them deeply, with the result that I really remember the details of the murders committed by J. Blomfield Rush, the Mannings, Courvoisier, Palmer, the Rugeley poisoner, and their contemporaries, better than those of many of the cases which came before me at the Yard in quite recent years. And what a gruesome Room of Horrors that old Madame Tussaud's exhibition boasted! Ill-lit by gas, one found oneself in an underground chamber, hemmed in between Jim Mullins on one side and Fieschi on the other, and had to squeeze between these beauties in order to properly study a half-length figure of bathing Marat, upon whose chest and throat red sealing-wax was profusely sprinkled.

At the age of thirteen I went to Eton, and it was really as if one had been translated to heaven from the other place. To Eton I owe very much of the happiness of my whole life, and not one hour of misery can I recall during the whole six years there spent. There are in this world no friends like old friends, and no old friends quite like old Eton friends. Alfred Lyttelton endorsed this sentiment when, last summer, a few weeks before his death, he wrote me : " Practically the only real friendships are at Eton and the University ; and I always feel the same with you, on the rare occasions when we meet, as I did forty years ago ! " We learnt a certain amount of classics and history, very little mathematics, and, maybe, not much else ; but, as once was cynically said, we gained a knowledge of the world and its wickedness at an early age and in a gentlemanly manner !

CHAPTER II.

ETON MEMORIES.

" Ille terrarum mihi præter omnes
Angulus ridet."

HORACE.

I DON'T know whether all old Etonians think of their school as often and as lovingly as I do ; but it is an undeniable fact that a boy, on going to Eton, becomes, intuitively and instinctively, imbued with the spirit of the place ; that the hours he spends at the old school are not only the happiest in his life, but that he is conscious of this fact at the time ; that, throughout life, he is proud of having been at Eton, and that, whenever and wherever he hears our grand old boating ballad sung, he chimes in with, " And nothing on earth shall sever the chain that is round us now " with a truthful intensity that comes straight from his heart.

Far be it from me to decry other public schools. I know what good men and true they, each and all, turn out ; but this I maintain, that other

public schoolboys do not have the same continuous love for their respective *almæ matres* ; they may, and often do, tolerate their seats of learning in the present, and get up a sort of quasi-enthusiasm in the past, but *our* steadfast feeling of love and devotion is not for them. To know Eton is to love her, and that love lasts as long as life itself. I remember, at an Eton dinner in Calcutta, being told by a middle-aged and un-sentimental—though most dashing and hard-riding—cavalry officer that he believed our love for the school was, in great measure, owing to the extreme natural beauty of the place. I think there is something more than this ; I think that there are good honest feelings of many centuries which the Genius Loci hands down from generation to generation, and that, on a boy's leaving, the said Genius Loci may be represented as coming to him as he lays himself down for the last time on his funny little turn-up bed, and saying to him something of the following sort as writ by Thackeray :—

“ Who misses or who wins the prize ;
Go strive and conquer if you can,
But if you fall, or if you rise,
Be each, pray God, a gentleman.”

And if we have tried to learn this “ saying lesson,” and if we hope to be able to repeat it by

heart, on our death-beds, to the Great Master, then I think we have good reason to throw up our hats on every succeeding 4th of June and cry aloud—

“ Floreat Etona. Esto perpetua.”

SCENE—*The South-Western Railway Station, Windsor. Time, 4.30 p.m. On a cold afternoon in late September.*—Discovered one big boy colleger, and one little boy oppidan, taking leave of their parents. Myself, the little oppidan, very proud of my new hat and Eton jacket, and looking (may I be forgiven!) somewhat askance at my dear old father's by-no-means-smart chimney pot; the dear old father taking me aside for two minutes, and giving me much the same advice as was given to Tom Brown on his entering Rugby—“ to try and avoid doing anything of which I should be ashamed to let my mother and sisters know”—than which, I venture to think, no better advice could be given to a boy on his entering a large public school. Kisses to both parents, a little shyly to the father, and most lovingly to the mother, and then the train moves out of the station, and we hurry down town. My brother leaves me in my room at my tutor's, and I watch him going back to college under a

particular lamp, beneath which I knew he must pass, and then turn aside to contemplate the magnificence of my own apartment, feeling a little homesick and anxious, albeit proud of my position as an Eton boy.

“My tutor” sends round a kind of circular order that the new boys are to have tea with him, and down we go. Dear, kind old tutor! how I learnt to love you afterwards; but, bless me! how awestruck I was that first evening by your loud, though somewhat indistinct and burbling, utterance, and by the extraordinary manner in which you parted your hair, the parting being constructed so as just to semicircle the right ear, and the “coesaries” so arranged that if each particular hair lay on the skull, and not one on the top of another, no special baldness was visible. I remember some one spilling a cup of tea, and being called a “vile child,” the which I subsequently learnt was a very frequent term of mild reproach, and had no particular reference to the age of the individual to whom it was addressed. I wasn’t sorry when tea was over, although many most pleasant evenings did I afterwards spend in that room. The tea-parties were always on Sundays, and the feast invariably consisted of cold chicken and tongue, and boiled eggs. I

was reminded of this fact, many years ago, by an old Eton boy, who, like so many others, has now joined the majority. He and I had been bidden to the banquet one evening, and finding no one in the room, I addressed him, standing with my back to the open door, and mimicking my tutor's tones as nearly as possible, "Harry, will you have cold fowl and tongue, or boiled eggs?" Either I was a shocking bad mime, or my tutor was the most forgiving of mortals, for he answered pleasantly behind me, "Curiously enough, Mac, I believe those are the very viands prepared for this evening's entertainment."

The curiosity would have been in the provision of any other fare!

I was always passionately fond of cricket, and never hesitated in my choice between dry-bobbing and wet-bobbing. My love for the game received a stimulus in my first summer half from the fact that we won the Lower Boy Cup. The match was a curious one, and we were victors by only one run, our last adversary being *run out* amidst a scene of excitement, such as, I thought at the time, the world had never before produced. Our opponents in the final were Mr. Brownings, captained by George Longman, who got in the

Eleven the year afterwards, played four years for Eton, and subsequently four years for Cambridge.

Our captain was "Joe" P; and, while his memory is with me, I must narrate a little slip which he made in trials for Middle Division. "Joe" was ever better in the playing-fields than in the pupil-room, and divinity was never his strong point. How well I remember the morning when, coming down the steps from Upper School, he said to me, "Easy paper, that divinity, wasn't it?" I replied, with habitual caution, that I hoped I had done pretty well, but that I hadn't been able to write much of a "short life of Pontius Pilate" (one of the questions set). "Well," said Joe, "I didn't know *much* of him either, but I thought I'd show the examiners that I knew whom they meant, so I put down, '*Pontius Pilate kept the bag*'!"

That summer half of 1867 was favourable to Eton cricket; we stemmed the tide of Harrovian victories, which, in a one innings wave, had swept over us for the past three years. And this, too, when I think Harrow was never stronger. But that was the second and most brilliant year of C. I. Thornton, the most wonderful boy hitter that any cricket-field ever saw. I remember the

first innings well. Eton won the toss, and sent to the wickets Higgins and Hay. Graham bowled a maiden to Higgins, and then it was Hay's turn to receive one of Money's dreaded slows. The first ball—to the consternation of the Light-Blue backers—bowled him clean, although he made up for it in his second innings by a first-class 42. However, 0—1—0 on the telegraph looked very bad, when C. R. Alexander, our captain (and we never had a better), with infinite judgment, sent in C. I. Thornton.

I can see his loose figure now coming down the pavilion steps, cool as an iceberg, firm as a rock. The very first ball received he cut straight into point's hands, who dropped it like a hot potato, and that let off probably lost Harrow the match. At any rate, Thornton scored 35 in the first innings and 47 in the second, and was ably backed up by Ottaway (his first year in the Eleven), Hay, Tritton, Alexander, and Walrond. We had the advantage in the first innings of some 50 runs, and eventually put Harrow in for, I think, 265, of which they scored 70 for the loss of one wicket. We were beaten the next year by seven wickets, but then came a long line of victories, which remained unbroken till 1873.

Perhaps no human being has ever given me

quite the same amount of pure delight as did "Buns" Thornton, by his mammoth hitting, in those days. There never was such a smiter! Other cricketers (Bonnor and Jessop, to wit) may have hit as hard, but they did not hit as often. In August 1871 I saw Thornton, while engaged in a Gentlemen *versus* Players match (for the benefit of John Lillywhite, I think) at the old Brighton Cricket Ground—a field of very vast extent—make 32 runs off seven balls!—two sixes and five fours! The eighth ball he was stumped. Charles Inglis Thornton is still as quick with his tongue as he used to be on his feet in the days when he could run down the pitch, and hit any bowler out of any ground in England. I could give many instances of his readiness, but one will suffice.

In comparatively recent years he was playing in a country match, and, towards the close of the day, one of the neat-handed Phyllises, who had served at lunch, came round, and, as is their custom, questioned each player as to the liquid refreshment—spirituous or otherwise—of which he had partaken during the day. "Bottle of ginger beer," was the answer returned in temperate Thornton's case. "Anything in it?" was the question flashed back to him. "Only a wasp," rejoined "Buns," which, when one comes to think

of it, is exactly the kind of ingredient one would expect to find in such a drink on such an occasion.

The cricket-field and the playhouse have given me more pleasure than anything else in life, and, so far as I can judge, their joys do not wither, nor stale, with advancing age. Think of the good plays (and some bad ones too !) which you and I have seen ; and what don't we owe to our friends Herbert Tree, George Alexander, Weedon Grossmith (the most artistic comic actor of this generation), Seymour Hicks, and a host of others past and present.

.
It has become the fashion, nowadays, to speak in slighting terms of Latin verse composition. I do not know what else could have taken its place which would have been so generally useful. I certainly remember some funny versifications during my time at Eton, but these were the exception rather than the rule. Quite half a division did good honest work with their verses ; the remainder, certainly, did not do much, but begged for whole " made " verses, or heads or tails of such. I remember dear old Alex, who was not a born poet, and who could never manufacture a single verse, being in great tribulation

about a speech he had to put into Proserpina's mouth soon after she had been spirited away to the nether world. He loafed hopelessly round the house, saying, "What in the world am I to make her say to Pluto?" P. Budd good-naturedly said, "Oh, here's an ending—'mi dire magister'—and take as a beginning, 'O Pluto.'" This was done, but, in another half-hour, Alex came back and vowed he could make no middle, rather reproaching his friend than otherwise for leaving him, so to speak, in mid-air! "Well," says Budd, "put in three Plutos in a sort of entreating way." The which was accordingly done, and the verse stood as follows:—

"O! Pluto! Pluto!! Pluto!!! mi dire magister."

Another fellow, I remember, at my tutor's, who had *never* done a verse for himself in his life, was, one evening, triumphantly hauled down by my tutor to his study, and asked whether verse No. 9 in the copy was really his own work. With the utmost possible sang-froid he read the particular verse, scanned it, hummed it to himself, and then said, "I do believe, sir, I was told that verse." This so emboldened my tutor that he said, "And, if I am not mistaken, this eleventh verse is not your handiwork." The same

pantomime over again, and the same uncertain confession at the end of it. This was repeated through five or six lines; at last, as if a discovery—immense as that of a new continent—had been made, my tutor asks, “Is any one verse here your own?” No hesitation now, but the poet’s answer comes cool, calm, and distinct, “I’m afraid not, sir.” “Then, I shall complain of you.” But no one liked complaining of his own pupils less than tutor; yet this was an extreme case, and he felt the law must take its course. Still, after prayers, he came up to the poet’s room, and, says he, “I shall not relent.” Yet a little while, and he returns and says the same words; again, as the poet was getting into bed, he was reminded in stentorian tones that all hope must be abandoned, and that there would be no relenting. Having made up his mind to the block, he acquiesced in such decision, but was rudely awakened half an hour later to be told that, “I have considered the case, and, in fact—in fact—I have relented!”

I remember how frequently in our poems “the serene moon shone in the sky,” and how often people kept running through “green woods and recesses of the groves,” and also “over the broad fields.” One fellow, I remember, made

Charles II. perform this latter feat after he had got down from his oak—

“Descendens quercu lata per arva ruit.”

Yet another of my tutor's fellows, who subsequently became Governor of the Bank of England, immortalised himself at Eton by making *miserabile dictu* the end of a pentameter verse! Well! Well! I have heard of a Secretary of State who was desirous that the *ipsissimi verbi* of his speech should be reported.

House theatricals were much in vogue at Eton in 1866-67; thereafter they were dropped in favour of school plays, which took place in the old mathematical school in the football halves of 1868-69. I believe no histrionic attempts were, or have been, made since that date. A certain, and small, section among the masters took a distaste for the drama, and it was decreed that there should be no more play-acting or subsequent cakes and ale at the Headmaster's house, where, I remember, the actors were most hospitably regaled after a very successful performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1868.

I think it a great pity that theatricals have been abolished; they did no harm, and some good,

and it seems a churlish act on the part of so classical an abode of the Muses as Eton to renounce the Thespian art, and to kick off from its feet the time-honoured sock and buskin.

The second half I was at Eton we had some much-appreciated house theatricals, consisting of *Cool as a Cucumber* and *Whitebait at Greenwich*, in which farces I played Mary Wiggins and Lucretia Buzzard. I remember an amusing incident in connection with these theatricals. My tutor had written a prologue, of which he was justly proud, but the difficulty was to get a speaker who should do ample justice to the same. Our star actor was reading for the Indian Civil Service, and could not undertake to study more than his own parts, Plumper and John Small; and it so happened that our second luminary had committed some indiscretion in the matter of football-playing in the passage, or something of the sort, and had been given a Georgic "pœna." Overtures were made to him by my tutor, and the honours of the prologue-speaking proffered, but the luminary averred that the writing of a Georgic was incompatible with the studying or recital of the prologue. Eventually he won his case; the Georgic was excused, and he recited the prologue with much success. It was in April, when a late and severe

flood had put an end to a little attempted early dry-bobbing ; many of the lines remain in my memory. I quote the following two—

“ In Upper Club the fish were *on the spot*
More than the bowlers—*they*, I fear, were *not*.”

When, in 1883, visiting Dr. Welldon, then headmaster of Dulwich, he recalled these theatricals to my recollection, and produced an old Thucydides, in which I had written him, in school hours, a promissory note for an admission-ticket to same, in return, I believe, for assistance in certain themes or verses.

I had the honour of acting with the late Charles Brookfield on the first occasion that he ever trod the boards. It was in January 1869, when he was about ten years old. The play was *The Critic*. Brookfield played the first Sentinel, a part which Sir George Alexander sustained at the Coronation performance in His Majesty's Theatre three years ago. Arthur Duke Coleridge played Puff in our South Kensington presentation, and, curiously enough, I noticed his death last year within a few days of that of Brookfield. Sir John Millais painted our scene of “Tilbury Fort—very fine indeed,”—the present vice-provost of Eton and his wife played Mr. and Mrs. Dangle, and Sir Frederick Pollock the Earl of Leicester.

Poor, dear Charles Brookfield! He often visited me at the Yard, and was very keen on all criminal matters, of which he knew more (and of the seamy side of life generally) than any layman I ever met, with the possible exception of my friends George R. Sims and Harry B. Irving; the knowledge of the latter, especially with regard to French criminals, is very remarkable. Brookfield was a good friend, and maybe not a very pleasant enemy—brilliantly witty, but a little bitter, perhaps, in some of the best things he said. As a raconteur he was unrivalled. His health for many years was wretched, but his pluck was undefeated, and no pleasanter pal ever entered a clubhouse.

Speeches in Upper School were an ordeal for any boy. An actor is born and not made, and most people feel "lumpy" and out of place in private theatricals, albeit disguised with decorative war-paint. But for the nervous youth, whom brains or superior age forced up into the sixth form, the case was far worse. I presume that our limbs are shaped, more or less, after the fashion of our forefathers'; but still I fancy that nowadays all men—let alone boys—would feel a little awkward in donning at 10 a.m. knee-breeches

and black silk stockings and buckled shoes, and when to these were superadded an evening coat and waistcoat, the *tout ensemble*, though gentlemanly, was not one which was calculated to give confidence to a nervous orator.

Then again, instead of speaking from a stage, one had a square level space of about six feet allotted, in which to fret and fume, with an audience rising, not only to the right, left, and in front of one, but also behind one. A lanky schoolboy of many cubits and no calves could not but feel embarrassed in such a position, and I do not wonder that many fellows selected Greek prose as a dainty dish to be set before our fair visitors on 4th June. It was the easiest way of getting over a difficulty, because little or no action was necessary, and you were, moreover, perfectly certain that the more you skipped, and the sooner you came to an end of your unintelligible oration, the more pleased your audience would be.

Speeches, save on the 4th June, were never very carefully worked up, but popular orators were always sure of a warm welcome from their fourth-form audience. George R. Murray and myself generally played together such dialogues as Falstaff and Prince Hal, Sir Anthony and Captain

Absolute, etc. etc. I remember, on one occasion, we had been very remiss in the matter of committing to memory our respective parts, and, at the rehearsal the day before, we were severely censured by the Headmaster in consequence. We therefore determined to "stay out" the next morning, and to spend such leisure hour in working up our duet. In those days it wasn't difficult to stay out. "In at chapel" or "not well" from a too tender-hearted matron was sufficient to allay all suspicion and burke further inquiry. On this particular occasion George had a pseudo-headache, and myself a quasi-toothache. The ruse answered well, and the speech was got through more or less creditably. At dinner, my tutor, addressing George with an air of sympathy, said: "And how's the toothache?" I shall never forget G. R. Murray's face as he ruefully answered, "Mine's not the toothache. Mac had the toothache. Mine was the headache." There seemed to have been almost a sense of pride in the possession of that once sore head!

.....

Many things at Eton were called by misnomers, in the construction of which the *lucus a non lucendo* principle came out very strong. Thus, when we stayed in we said we were "stay-

ing out ” ; when “ absence ” was called we had to be *present* ; a *third* of a year was called a *half*, etc. etc. For every fifty boys who “ stayed out,” I don’t believe that five had anything the matter with them. The particular morning’s lesson had not been prepared, or the day was cold, or dark, or dreary, or a thousand and one other equally good reasons presented themselves to the puerile mind. When we stayed out we always fagged lower boys to purchase “ luncheon cakes ” for us, wherewith we regaled the in-coming friend.

In face of what is so often asserted to the contrary, I maintain that *very* little drinking ever went on at Eton, and as for boozing in outside public-houses, that was a game absolutely unplayed. A few flash individuals used to patronise the Christopher and the White Hart, but the body of boys stuck to Tap, and I never knew any harm to result from a visit to that grandly conducted establishment. The best Welsh rarebit I have ever eaten, the best beer I have ever drunk, were both consumed in that little front room. And such a mine hostess as “ Emily ” was ! Though almost a dwarf, and quite a *bossue*, we all liked her, and I never heard of a boy daring to say a rude thing to her ; had he done

so, his action would have been resented by all his companions, and some condign punishment would have been inflicted. We paid our bills, too, to Emily with a regularity which, I'm afraid, was not accorded to other creditors.

About the most useful act of which I can boast is, that I was passively instrumental in bringing about the legalisation of Tap for fifth and sixth forms. Everybody went to Tap; all the masters knew we went there, and (as dear old Buckstone used to say, in one of his funniest farces, about squeezing girls' hands in omnibuses) had "done it themselves." It was the last remnant of the old shirking system, and why it was not knocked on the head along with up-town shirking ten years before, I do not know.

Still, to be nailed coming out of Tap was a grievous sin, and nailed I was, during the first week of my last football half, by one of the junior masters. He told me he should complain of me; I expostulated on the ground that it was most probable that I should be made sixth form at that evening school, and that a complaint would retard my promotion. I pointed out respectfully that he needn't have seen me had he looked the other way, and generally urged that the least said would be soonest mended. The pedagogue, how-

ever, was not to be pacified. I was made sixth form at that evening school, and heard nothing of the matter for five or six days ; then, after twelve o'clock school one day, I was called back by the Head, and told that a complaint had been lodged against me. Penitently I pointed out that I could see but little harm in the drinking of a glass of beer, and the Headmaster then most kindly demonstrated that it was not so much in a sin of commission as in one of omission that I had erred, in that I had not taken proper steps to see that the coast in front of Tap-door was clear. And so the matter ended, and, in another week, Tap was formally legalised for sixth and fifth forms, and I have never heard that any harm resulted from this very wise order. One of my last acts at Eton was in connection with Tap ; for G. R. Murray and I were asked, just before I left at election 1872, to assist E. O. H. Wilkinson, captain of the Eleven, and R. B. Bloxam, captain of the boats, in the framing of some new rules for that house of entertainment. I never remember to have seen those rules published. Poor, dear old " Peter Wilks ! " (for so we used to call Wilkinson). We had six very happy years together, and a more unselfish spirit than his never came into this world. He was one of the best wicket-

keepers we ever had, a fair bat, and a *very* good captain. He lost his life in the Transvaal, swimming across a river to help a wounded soldier. I never saw a boy or man with a stronger sense of duty, and his death was a fitting sequel to his life. As of Jemmy Bludso, the Yankee skipper, so it might be said of Peter Wilks—

“He seen his duty, a dead sure thing,
And he went for it, thar and then,
And Christ, I think, won't be *too* hard,
On a man that has died for men.”

Etonians were always vehement and vigorous, though perhaps not equally intelligible, with regard to their political views. I should say that quite ninety-five per cent. of us were, in those days, Tories, and the five per cent. balance was looked upon as something very “cheap” and mean. Elections were always times of great excitement with us, but, for fear of a repetition of some fights which had taken place in the election of 1864, our enthusiasm was, by magisterial edict, pretty well confined to college. My tutor was a very advanced radical; being a man of means (like Lord St. Aldegonde in *Lothair*), he could “afford to be.” It was a favourite saying of his that “every boy was a Conservative until he

was twenty-five—after which age every wise man became a Liberal” ; a somewhat arbitrary drawing of the line ’twixt boyhood and man’s estate, and between wisdom and folly.

At the election of 1868, one, Richardson Gardner, represented the Conservative, and one, Roger Eykin, the Liberal, interests. On the great day of the election, while crowds were surging along Slough Road, a gigantic placard was seen to be hung out from the topmost pinnacle of the highest chimney on my tutor’s house, exhorting the populace in general to “vote straight and plump for Richardson Gardner.” Many of the multitude, knowing tutor’s advanced opinions, were astounded at seeing such a political weather-cock, so to speak, displayed from the housetop, and stood still to marvel, pointing out this new method of canvass to their friends. Presently quite a crowd had collected in front of the house ; some cheered and some hooted, and it was soon evident that there was every ingredient ready at hand for a first-class fight.

Tutor, who was correcting verses in his study overlooking the street, surprised at the noise, came hurriedly out. One look was sufficient, *vidit et obstupuit*. Then he pulled himself together, dashed into the house and upstairs, where

he found Palmer Budd, a fellow of infinite jest and some daring, "staying out," stutteringly demanded if he were the culprit, received an affirmative, inflicted a Georgic, and then sought for his footman (or "little man," as was the generic term for this class of domestic at my tutor's), and bade him reach down the obnoxious placard. To hear in this case was, unfortunately, not to obey. "Little man" visited the roof, reconnoitred the position, felt his own weakness, and, coming down, confessed to tutor that he "dursna do it"! Here was a dilemma: the crowd was thickening; the clamour increasing. My tutor accepted the position, and saw that there was but one course clear. Negotiations were opened with Palmer Budd: "Georgic forgiven if placard removed" were the terms accepted. Budd fulfilled his part of the contract, removed the board, and with it the surging crowd in front of tutor's door.

And while on the subject of my tutor's footman, it behoves me to say that almost all our "little men" had special characteristics and idiosyncrasies which would have delighted a Charles Dickens. I remember one very devout, but particularly bucolic party, who seemed, literally, to have put his hand to the plough and

turned back. He was ever slow in his responses at prayers, and, in one particular psalm, has left his mark, not only upon myself, but also on all my contemporaries. The verse to be repeated by the congregation was: "Before the morning watch, I say, before the morning watch." I'm afraid we all hurried over this rather in order that we might hear (as we always did hear) one solitary loud voice proclaim: "Hi say! be-fore the mornin' watch!"

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A taste for the drama will generally bring a boy or man to grief at some period of his life, and so it was with myself and some sixty others in the summer half of 1869. The grief was in the having to write out as a "pœna" a Greek play (herein lay the satire of the Headmaster) consisting of eleven hundred lines; and the *fons et origo mali* was an English play, entitled *The Orange Girl, or the Sea of Ice*, performed one half-holiday at the Windsor Theatre Royal. The way the trouble came about was this: A travelling company had played on two or three occasions to an audience mainly, if not entirely, consisting of Eton boys. The dramas began after absence at three o'clock, and ended before six o'clock absence, so that there was no shirking, nor any breaking, of the rules on the

part of those who witnessed these plays. Prices of admission were moderate, and the audience, I fear, on fine days, more than meagre ; it is true that the histrionic performances were none of the best ; but I presume that the actors in them wanted but little here below. In any case, after a fortnight's residence in Windsor, they were emboldened to hold out special attractions in the shape of *The Orange Girl, or the Sea of Ice*. The whole (oranges and ice) to be produced on a scale of unrivalled splendour. The day for the play-acting dawned wet, and a good, steady downpour continued. The moisture was, of course, in favour of *Thespis*, but the masters were not. At eleven o'clock school (so called because it began at about twenty-six minutes to twelve) a circular came round that no boy was to go to the Windsor Theatre in future.

As boys, we could not see the justice of this edict ; the play had been allowed before, it might just as well have been allowed again for the last time on a wet day. So we argued, very improperly and very incorrectly and very insubordinately, I admit ; but boys will be boys, and after three o'clock absence I should think at least two hundred of us trooped up to the theatre. But black care, in the shape of an inspector of

police, had preceded us, and from a coign of vantage on the "hundred steps" had peeped through the umbrageous chestnuts and seen us all enter the portals of the playhouse. When we were safely seated, the inspector returned to college, reported the birds as caged, and that the second drama might commence just as soon as the first drama was completed. Meanwhile, "regardless of our doom, we little victims played," or rather watched the play; we little knew what cruel fate awaited us, or that two of the assistant masters lay in ambush for our outcoming behind that very sharp turn in the High Street, which, on account of its acute angle and the consequent danger of being there nailed in shirking in old days, was somewhat flippantly termed "Damnation Corner."

The play is over, the green curtain has been dropped, and we leave the darkening theatre. Seniores Priores, and the three greatest swells present, sally forth in the van; the fatal corner with the bad name is reached, and all is over. Then came such a *sauve qui peut* as I never saw before or since. I raced up to the Queen's Stables, and after lying *perdu* for some time determined to try a descent by St. George's Chapel and the "hundred steps," hoping, with some presence of

mind, to induce those in authority whom I might meet to believe that I had been devoutly listening to a well-sung anthem.

In the cloisters of the said chapel, but on the farther side from which I was walking, I saw one of the masters, who asked if I had been to the theatre that afternoon. Far be it from me to say that honesty is not the best policy; but still, I do maintain that if I had made an evasive answer on this occasion, no possible proof as to my presence at the play could have been adduced, and my handwriting would not have been so puzzling to printers' devils throughout my life. However, I am thankful to say, I admitted at once that I had been to the theatre. Some sixty of us (out of which number I suppose ten were fairly nailed) were complained of. A full council sat on our case. I am told that certain masters advocated wholesale expulsion, but should be sorry to believe that this was actually the case. Anyhow, a very serious view of the matter was taken, and we each had to write out the aforementioned Greek play, and to show it up by instalments of a hundred lines at 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. on half-holidays, thus effectually debarring our playing in any game or match for ten days. That we were disobedient I allow, but I

humbly submit that the punishment exceeded the offence.

Unlike the gentleman who married Miss Kilmansegg, we were not much given to "pugilistical knocks" during the six years I was at Eton. The only real mill I can call to mind was one between a plucky baronet and a boy who rejoiced in the nickname of the "World," while his two great pals were known as the "Flesh" and the "Devil." I remember the names of all three, but have lost sight of them for many years. I have little doubt, however, but that they all turned out well, and have done good work in the world, but, as a triumvirate, they were certainly not popular at school. The World was a smart dresser, tall, strong, good-looking, and, I fear, somewhat of a bully. The baronet was shortish, thick-set, and clumsy to look at, albeit, like the redoubtable Benicia Boy, as immortalised by the pen of Puck on Pegasus—

"In his chest it might be guessed
He had unpleasant strength."

He was a good boxer, cool as a cucumber, and, of course, had the traditional pluck of all his family; what they fought each other for, I never could make out.

I believe the World threw a cherry-stone at the baronet, who resented such action, and flung a strawberry pottle—the equivalent to the bottle of claret his ancestor might have flung—into the mundane face. The World, incensed, demanded if the baronet would take a licking, and a fight was arranged to come off at Philippi the next day on a short “after four.” A large number of spectators, myself included, had assembled; and the pugilists had just put in an appearance when two masters were descried in the distance. There was a general stampede, and no fight came off that day. On the following afternoon, however, there was a tremendous mill between these two in a strawyard on the Slough Road, just beyond Upper Club. I am thankful to say that I did not attend the show. But I happened to see the World conducted back to his Dame’s, and the spectacle was gruesome. The punishment inflicted had been very considerable, and I do not think the World appeared in public for quite a fortnight. The bruising baronet was almost untouched. This was the only fight of any consequence that I remember, and I think it was a good thing that the fashion was dying out. Fighting in general, and the prize ring in particular, have (like duelling) had their day; in that day

they may, or may not, have done some good, but the dog is dead and had better be quietly buried, nothing in the shape of an attempted resurrection would be beneficial. By all means let every Briton acquire the art of self-defence, and be able to use his fists, *on occasion*; but I have the greatest possible dislike to seeing men go through the world with their fists doubled, ready at any moment to rain down blows on the wrangling cabman or the blasphemous bargee.

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I wonder why so many of us—at some period of our schoolboy life—used to try to smoke. I presume the act was committed in pure “cussedness,” and, of a truth, in nine cases out of ten it bore its own pallid punishment along with it. I was just fifteen when I first made the attempt. I had been up on short leave to say good-bye to a sister who was starting for India. She drove me to Paddington, and after a sorrowful parting I was left to my own sad thoughts. I suppose (like Salvation Yeo) I was of opinion that tobacco was a panacea for all evils, and so purchased two big black cigars for the sum of eightpence apiece. Then I got into a smoking carriage and lit up. Five minutes after, as the train was leaving the station, that awful feeling of green faintness came

over me. I chucked away the loathsome weed and sank back in a comatose state.

The carriage was full, and the windows were shut, so that, by the time the train had reached Windsor, a nicotian atmosphere pervaded the apartment, which could have been comfortably cut with a blunt pair of scissors. I had the mortification of feeling that, while I was impregnated with other people's tobacco, I could not say I had not smoked, so I strolled down to my tutor's, sick in soul as in body. I knew how my jacket smelt, and how even each particular hair was pervaded with the smell of smoke. As I was taking off my clothes, I heard my tutor coming along the passage, and feeling too seedy to contest the point of my absolute or comparative guilt that night, I jumped into bed, hastily blowing out the candle. There never were such wicks as were in those Eton candles for the retention of a spark, and my particular dip on this occasion was no exception to the rule. There the abominably tell-tale spark shone out in the surrounding blackness, "clear as a star when only one is shining in the sky." I don't know whether dear old tutor saw it or not: I discerned it very distinctly through my three-quarter closed eyes. "Mac," says my tutor, after a pause, during

which, I presume, his lungs were pretty well asphyxiated with tobacco smoke, "are you asleep?" No answer. "Are you asleep?" Heavy breathing now sufficiently audible. "Mac, *are* you asleep?" Then stertorous snoring, betokening slumber as heavy as that of the seven sleepers all rolled into one, boomed through the room; and I shall never forget tutor's Parthian shaft-like remark as he left me. "Well, Mac, as I see you are asleep—in fact, good-night."

The next evening tutor came and found me sitting on my bed, clothed, and in my right mind. He would never punish a boy if he could help it, and was always most specially kind to my unworthy self. Thus he addressed me: "Last night, when I came into your room, there was a vile smell of smoke; now I cannot bring myself to believe that you had been smoking; in fact, in fact" (and during this part of the speech he was, in effect, edging towards the door), "I'll not believe it, I'll not believe it," and, having conquered his own unworthy(?) suspicions, the good man dashed out of the room. It was a lesson to me, though, and I do not think I smoked much afterwards.

To one's tutor one owes everything at Eton,

if one leaves in any way a debtor to the school. The tutorial system is the very salt and breath of Etonian life, and the moral and social good effected by tutorial contact and influence can, I believe, be hardly overrated. I think, indeed I know, that all my tutor's fellows will agree with me now, as we did agree then, that tutor was one of the best and worthiest of men. He worked on through the world, sticking to "the trivial round, the common task" (which I have often thought since, to a man of his talents and tastes, must have been an awful grind!), and was ever ready to give advice and help to a peccant pupil. He was a living monument of Charles Kingsley's grand sentiment—

"Do the thing that's nearest,
Tho' it's dull at whiles,
Helping, when you meet them,
Lame dogs over stiles."

"Pop" was a great institution, and oh! the delight of hearing that one had been elected a member of that celebrated debating society. Pop was something like a club, and something like a *very* select House of Commons! I can't say, though, that I ever heard many speeches there worth listening to.

I hope debates are carried on with more debating power nowadays, but I confess, in my time, the speeches made were hardly such as would have compelled the spirit of Demosthenes to curl and writhe with envy. I sometimes think that we might have spent our time more profitably than in sitting in a stuffy, low room, arguing very gravely "whether Queen Elizabeth was justified in putting to death Mary, Queen of Scots."

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Eton shopkeepers must have had a good time of it, but I fear, as a class, they were improvident, for I never heard of any one of them retiring with a fortune. I am not here going to weary my readers with oft-told anecdotes and old-world stories of Spankey, and of Levi, and of Bryan—the great wall "sock" men; nor am I about to argue on the respective excellencies of Webbers and Barnes. I think, however, that old Brown has never been made enough of, and his tarts with cream, and hot buttered buns, must ever be remembered with a smacking lip. Brown was a great character, but his temper was acrid. Brown-baiting was, at one time, as favourite a pursuit with us as was bear-baiting with a former generation. I have seen old Brown pursue one of his tiny tormentors with his sandwich knife,

and a very fearsome weapon that was: the blade must have been nearly eighteen inches long, worn to a point like a cobbler's knife, and keen as a razor. "Brown-baitings" were at length forbidden by a magisterial edict. Brown's sandwiches used to be of two sorts. Those made with white, and those with brown, bread, and a very favourite and unfailing draw used to be to ask simply for "a sandwich," without specifying the colour of the article required. The snappish answer elicited was always the same, "If you don't say one or t'other, I don't give you neither." Poor, rum, old, cross-grained Brown! you could not exist, I believe, even in a future world, without that long, thin knife in your hand. Maybe you are now cutting sandwiches, brown or white, for Elysian customers, or filling sliced hot buns with butter for Charon's passengers on Stygian banks.

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Well, well! critics may carp, and radicals may rail, and I am free to confess that an Eton oppidan's teaching may not be a *paying* one, so far as pounds, shillings, and pence are concerned, in the matter of a scholarship or an exhibition, but are such the be-all and end-all of a father's hopes and wishes? I trow not. Hear the words of Charles

Kingsley, recorded in a letter to Mr. Alex. Scott :
“ In my eyes the question is not what to teach,
but how to educate ; how to train, not scholars,
but men : bold, energetic, methodic, liberal-
minded, magnanimous.”

CHAPTER III.

A START IN LIFE—BENGAL FORTY YEARS AGO.

“Why then! the world is mine oyster.”

Merry Wives of Windsor.

ALL good things come to an end, and I left Eton at election 1872. During the preceding holidays, when playing whist (our custom always of an eventide) with my dear old father, he suddenly said to me, “Well, my boy, time is getting on; what do you think of doing in life?” Now, whatever love of the drama I possessed was certainly not inherited, and only on two occasions do I remember my father taking me to a play; it was therefore with a certain amount of diffidence that I made the reply: “I think I should like to be an actor.” Dead silence ensued, during which my father laid down his cards, looked steadily at me over his spectacles, and thus at last he spoke: “It seems to me that you are perfectly mad, and you can do exactly as you like.” Not a very encouraging answer to an infant Roscius

who, in those days, knew no one connected with the stage.

It certainly had the desired effect, and, as soon as I left Eton, I went into an East India merchant's firm in Austin Friars and remained there a year. My friend, Mr. W. A. Coote, the popular and well-known secretary of the Vigilance Society, has left on record in his evidence given before the Police Commission, some three or four years ago, that "London at the present time is an open-air cathedral compared with what it was forty years ago." Certainly there were some strange haunts in those days, and yet I imagine that young men now enjoy themselves very much as they did then, and I think I worked and played with the best of them.

After twelve months, however, as there seemed no particular opening for me in business, I suggested to my father that I might go out to Bengal, and devote myself to some properties which he had there acquired many years before. At first he was averse to the proposal ("turned down the proposition cold," as the Americans say), as life in the jungle is one of much solitude, and he did not consider that I was fitted for it. However, I determined to give it a trial, and started off for Bombay in October 1873. Voyaging by the

Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamers then was not as it is now ; one shared a four-berth cabin with three strangers, and the luxuries of twentieth-century travelling were conspicuous by their absence—yet I have rarely enjoyed anything in after life more than those three weeks spent at sea. But with buoyant spirits and youth on one's side, everything always seems bright. It is only when one loses one's health that the world takes on a drab and dreary aspect. I look back on the whole of my twelve years spent in Bengal with very considerable pleasure. My neighbours were few and far between, and the life was lonely ; but Calcutta was only eighty miles away, and there is, or was in those days, no spot on earth so full of kindness and hospitality. India throughout is a splendid country for any poor man who is fond of *shikar*, and I had glorious health during my residence in Bengal.

Kishnaghur is not a good district for sport. If one wanted to renew one's cricket experiences, or to be initiated into the mysteries of racing, a visit to Calcutta was necessary ; and I had no good shooting or pig-sticking during my sojourn in the East. A few leopards, and an occasional pig came my way, while a " muggier " (short-nosed alligator) is always fair game, although, when

polished off, his body is often difficult of recovery. Europeans were few and far between, and when the arrival of a pig was reported and his habitat known, there was great jubilation among the sahibs living round, and a "stick" was at once arranged. As the country was a fair riding one, and beaters in those days were plentiful, we generally had a kill. Jackal-hunting, too, with kangaroo hounds (and other dogs of sorts!) is capital fun, and I have killed as many as seven before breakfast. A jackal would be sighted stealing away from a standing crop, some three hundred yards off. We galloped after him: the dogs followed the horses till the quarry came in their view, and then the question was whether they would catch the jack before he could reach the friendly jungle of the nearest village (generally about three-quarters of a mile away) and there find sanctuary.

The morning's bag was often varied, as wild cats, foxes, and civet-cats were occasionally annexed. Of leopard-shooting I was never wholly enamoured: there is a maximum of danger attaching to it, and a minimum of glory! Nevertheless one felt bound (*malgré lui!*) to go a-hunting when information was brought in that a *bagh* was doing damage in a neighbouring village.

Sometimes children were killed; calves and goats and dogs were frequently taken away.

Elephants, in our part of Bengal, were wholly unattainable, so that the *shikar* had to be carried out on foot. As the leopards were generally reported to be in long grass (as high as one's waist), they had to be walked up, and the odds were long in favour of the beast seeing you before you saw the beast; it is true that the shooting, being at short range, was not difficult, but in the event of an easy shot being missed, it was more than likely that a penalty would have to be paid, and a wound inflicted either by the teeth or the claws of a leopard is about as nasty a thing as I know. The breath of a leopard is as fetid as its claws and teeth are foul, and suppuration at once follows a bite or scratch. Very distinctly does one leopard "day" stand out in my memory. The hot weather was just coming in. A warm wind was beginning to tear up from the south, and those dreadful "brain-fever birds" were making the day hideous by obtruding upon a perspiring world their crescendo cries of "We feel it! we feel it!! we feel it!!!" as if, forsooth, the feathered fowls exclusively dreaded the advent of the sweltering heat. A horse had fallen and rolled on me the week before, and I was still only able

to hobble about the house when word was brought in by excited villagers that a leopard had been marked down in a patch of jungle about a mile away. A *tonjon* (a kind of open sedan chair) was got ready, and off we started for the scene of action. A crowd had already assembled, and the inevitable chattering apparently displeased the leopard, who bounded away from some thin scrub into thicker cover. I got a snap shot from the *tonjon* and hoped I had made a palpable hit, but nothing further transpired. The fact was shortly borne in on me that I had made a mess of it, and that if the shot had taken effect it was in no vulnerable part.

Now a wounded leopard, in the vicinity of a village, is the very devil, and, while cogitating what next steps could be taken, I hobbled round the edge of the acre of prickly cane brake. A village postman, who was carrying a light spear (his badge of office), suddenly stopped in front of me, and pointing into the jungle, said, "Look, Sahib, here he is." Now I had often heard that leopards had a rooted objection to being pointed at, and I was at once to have practical proof of the truth of this legend. In a moment there was a rush, a black-and-gold ball fell on the native, rolled him over, and was back again into the dense

darkness of the thicket before one realised what had happened. I picked up my *Aryan* brother, who was as plucky as possible. He had been badly bitten on the right shoulder, and severely clawed down the chest. Under escort he was sent to my house for first aid in the matter of carbolic appliances, etc. But how to get the leopard out of the jungle was still the crux.

At this point, however, a *deus ex machina* turned up in the shape of a little jungle coolie, who, armed with the oldest of muskets loaded with dust shot, was wandering about in search of ortolans for his master's table. This little hero begged for a bullet, which he rammed down the remarkably thin barrel of his weapon, and then, divesting himself of the solitary cloth he was wearing, he dived into the jungle and, *ventre à terre*, disappeared. After some fifteen minutes of anxious waiting a shot was heard, and then, after a pause, the hunter appeared, dragging after him the dead body of a large leopard. He had writhed his way into the brake even as a serpent, and after one of his twistings, found himself face to face with his adversary. He pushed the musket against the beast's body, pulled the trigger, and the result was before us.

The village postman was sent off to the nearest

dispensary, and though very badly mauled, all went well with him for a week. At the end of that time he became restive, and insisted on leaving the hospital and returning to his home. There the poor fellow tried to complete his cure by a course of filthy village remedies, and, within six weeks of his accident, died from acute blood-poisoning.

The word "ortolan" has entered into this day's proceedings. That noblest of birds (as regarded from a gastronomic point of view at a time when the oil crops are a-ripening in Lower Bengal) deserves more than casual mention. I have eaten ortolans in London and found them disappointing; I have eaten them in Italy and thought them good; but to consume these little round balls of yellow fat in mid-March in the Kishnaghur district is to feast in a manner never dreamed of by Vitellius!

As I have touched on the subject of Indian eating, so will I on that of Indian drinking. It was Colonel Newcome who said that "brandy-pawnee played the devil with our young men in India." Hard drinking still survived when I first went out to the East, and many a good man succumbed to it.

I do not believe in total abstinence when a man

is taking hard exercise in a feverish district, but moderation in all things, and very specially so in eating and drinking, is, of course, the golden rule to be observed.

My nearest neighbour in Bengal for some years was an ex-sailor. He had the reputation of drinking a "square" quart of Hollands gin every day. He was one of the strongest men I ever knew, and I never saw him really the worse for drink. One day he was told by a doctor that unless he reduced his daily allowance of grog he would destroy the coats of his stomach. "In that case," he replied, "he'll have to do his work in his waistcoat!" But the doctor was right. The waistcoat was found unequal to the task imposed, and the man died—not perhaps in the prime of life, but at a time when many years of health should have been in store for him. Another old fellow who drank not wisely, but too well, was entreated to take a little non-alcoholic liquid occasionally. His answer was: "Ten years ago I took a glass of cold water, and my stomach did not get over the surprise for a fortnight!"

Weeks succeeded weeks with considerable sameness, and only one or two "days" stand out with anything like prominence. An incident, however, occurred in May 1881 which changed my

whole life's work. During Lord Ripon's vice-royalty breathless benevolence stalked through the land and unsettled the minds of the cultivators of the soil. The *ryot* of Bengal is an excellent fellow, and in many relations of life most exemplary, but agitators were afoot, and many minds were poisoned and much bad blood raised as between landlord and tenant. In one night, throughout several districts in Lower Bengal, a printed document was dropped before the house of every cultivator, saying that it was the Lord Sahib's order that no more rent should be paid, and that if, after receipt of this notice, "a Mussulman went on paying, he would at once go to hell, or, in the case of a Hindoo, that the two sons of Siva would eat his head." Thus ran this blood-curdling and—so far as the *Aryan* brother was concerned—most unsettling document. Bitter fruit was soon born of it. On many estates the *ryots* refused to pay rent, and in some districts their attitude was so threatening that the *zemin-dars* (landlords) left the plains of Bengal and temporarily migrated to the more salubrious and peaceful hill-country round about Darjeeling. So far as our property was concerned all went well for two or three months. I think we were just, if not generous, landlords, and not unpopular

with the tenantry. From one of our largest villages it was reported to me that extensive cheating was going on in the annual measurements of the newly cultivated lands. It was therefore determined to remeasure the same ; but the *ryot* objected—having a guilty mind in the matter—and drove the measurers away. This was reported to me in due course, and also that a “holy man” had visited the village the night before, and had presided at a “Committee,” where wild words were spoken and much violence threatened.

Now, when anything of the kind happened, I always had made it a rule to make a personal and local investigation, so went straight off to the village ; but the cultivators on this occasion acted even as the wicked husbandmen of the parable, and assaulted me so badly that I was left senseless on the plain, and many of my servants were also badly beaten. I never realised the danger I was in until afterwards. But to cut a long story short, I was able to return to the village, with adequate police at my back, next morning, and to identify many of the ringleaders. Sir Ashley Eden, at that time Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, went very fully into the causes of the riot, and quartered punitive police on the village.

Some of the disturbers of the peace received heavy sentences.

Mr. James Monro was then the Inspector-General of Bengal Police ; it was over these proceedings that he and I first became acquainted, and a friendship was formed which has lasted a lifetime. In 1884 Mr. Monro was appointed to succeed Sir C. E. Howard Vincent as Assistant Commissioner of Metropolitan Police in charge of the Criminal Investigation Department. Four years later, on my return from India, he asked me if I was prepared to take up work as his Assistant Chief Constable at Scotland Yard. Flattering though the proposal was, I was not in a position to accept it at the moment, as family work and private interests claimed my whole attention, but, when the offer was again made a year later, I gladly answered in the affirmative, and the necessary formalities having been gone through, I started my work as a detective officer in Metropolitan Police.

CHAPTER IV.

LAYING THE GHOST OF JACK THE RIPPER.

“I'm not a butcher, I'm not a Yid,
Nor yet a foreign Skipper,
But I'm your own light-hearted friend,
Yours truly, Jack the Ripper.”

ANONYMOUS.

THE above queer verse was one of the first documents which I perused at Scotland Yard, for at that time the police post-bag bulged large with hundreds of anonymous communications on the subject of the East End tragedies. Although, as I shall endeavour to show in this chapter, the Whitechapel murderer, in all probability, put an end to himself soon after the Dorset Street affair in November 1888, certain facts, pointing to this conclusion, were not in possession of the police till some years after I became a detective officer.

At the time, then, of my joining the Force on 1st June 1889, police and public were still agog over the tragedies of the previous autumn, and were quite ready to believe that any fresh murders,

not at once elucidated, were by the same maniac's hand. Indeed, I remember three cases—two in 1889, and one early in 1891, which the Press ascribed to the so-called Jack the Ripper, to whom, at one time or another, some fourteen murders were attributed—some before, and some after, his veritable reign of terror in 1888.

I will deal with the terrible sobriquet of "Jack the Ripper" later on. Suffice it at present to say that the Whitechapel murderer committed five murders, and—to give the devil his due—no more. Only two or three years ago I saw a book of police reminiscences (not by a Metropolitan officer), in which the author stated that he knew more of the "Ripper murders" than any man living, and then went on to say that during the whole of August 1888 he was on the tiptoe of expectation. That writer had indeed a prophetic soul, looking to the fact that the first murder of the Whitechapel miscreant was on 31st August of that year of grace. No one who was living in London that autumn will forget the terror created by these murders. Even now I can recall the foggy evenings, and hear again the raucous cries of the newspaper boys: "Another horrible murder, murder, mutilation, Whitechapel." Such was the burden of their ghastly

song ; and, when the double murder of 30th September took place, the exasperation of the public at the non-discovery of the perpetrator knew no bounds, and no servant-maid deemed her life safe if she ventured out to post a letter after ten o'clock at night. And yet this panic was quite unreasonable. The victims, without exception, belonged to the lowest dregs of female humanity, who avoid the police and exercise every ingenuity in order to remain in the darkest corners of the most deserted alleys.

I remember being down in Whitechapel one night in September 1889, in connection with what was known as the Pinchin Street murder, and being in a doss-house, entered the large common room where the inmates were allowed to do their cooking. The code of immorality in the East End is, or was, unabashed in its depths of degradation. A woman was content to live with a man so long as he was in work, it being an understood thing that, if he lost his job, she would support him by the only means open to her. On this occasion the unemployed man was toasting bloaters, and, when his lady returned, asked her " if she had had any luck." She replied with an adjective negative, and went on to say in effect that she had thought her lucky star was in the ascendant when she had

inveigled a "bloke" down a dark alley, but that suddenly a detective, with indiarubber soles to his shoes, had sprung up from behind a waggon, and the bloke had taken fright and flight. With additional adjectives the lady expressed her determination to go out again after supper, and when her man reminded her of the dangers of the streets if "he" (meaning the murderer) was out and about, the poor woman replied (with no adjectives this time), "Well, let him come—the sooner the better for such as I." A sordid picture, my masters, but what infinite pathos is therein portrayed!

The attention of Londoners was first called to the horrors of life (and death) in the East End by the murder of one, Emma Smith, who was found horribly outraged in Osborne Street in the early morning of 3rd April 1888. She died in the London hospital, and there is no doubt that her death was caused by some young hooligans who escaped arrest. On 7th August the body of Martha Tabram was discovered lying on the stairs of a house in George Yard. Her death was due to a number of wounds in the chest and abdomen, and it was alleged that a bayonet had been the weapon used upon her. The evening before she had been seen in the company of two soldiers and a female

friend. Her throat was not cut, and nothing in the shape of mutilation was attempted. I think I am right in saying that the soldiers were detained, but that the available witnesses failed to identify them.

The first real "Whitechapel murder," as before stated, took place on 31st August, when Mary Ann Nichols was found in Bucks Row with her throat cut and her body slightly mutilated. This was succeeded nine days afterwards by the murder of Annie Chapman in the back yard of a house in Hanbury Street; the throat was cut in a precisely similar manner, but the mutilations were of a much more savage character. On 27th September a letter was received at a well-known News Agency, addressed to the "Boss." It was written in red ink, and purported to give the details of the murders which had been committed. It was signed, "Jack the Ripper." This document was sent to Scotland Yard, and (in my opinion most unwisely) was reproduced, and copies of same affixed to various police stations, thus giving it an official imprimatur. In this ghastly production I have always thought I could discern the stained forefinger of the journalist—indeed, a year later, I had shrewd suspicions as to the actual author! But whoever did pen the

gruesome stuff, it is certain to my mind that it was not the mad miscreant who had committed the murders. The name "Jack the Ripper," however, had got abroad in the land and had "caught on"; it riveted the attention of the classes as well as the masses. It is small exaggeration to say that little else besides these murders was talked of, leading articles appeared in nearly all of the principal papers, and feeling against the police in general, and the detective department in particular, ran very high.

When public excitement then was at white heat, two murders—unquestionably by the same hand—took place on the night of 30th September. A woman, Elizabeth Stride, was found in Berners Street, with her throat cut, but no attempt at mutilation. In this case there can be little doubt but that the murderer was disturbed at his demoniacal work by some Jews who at that hour drove up to an anarchist club in the street. But the lust for blood was unsatisfied. The madman started off in search of another victim, whom he found in Catherine Eddowes. This woman's body, very badly mutilated, was found in a dark corner of Mitre Square. On this occasion it is probable that the police officer on duty in the vicinity saw the murderer with his victim a few

minutes before, but no satisfactory description was forthcoming. During this night an apron, on which bloody hands had been wiped, was found in Goulburn Street (situated, if my memory is correct, about half-way between Berners Street and Mitre Square). Hard by was a writing in chalk on the wall, to the effect that "the Jews are the men who will not be blamed for nothing." The apron gave no clue, and the chalk writing was obliterated by the order of a high police official, who was seemingly afraid that a riot against the Jews might be the outcome of this strange "writing on the wall." This was the only clue ever left behind by the murderer.

After this double murder the town had rest, forty days, and public excitement, to some extent, calmed down. But worse remained behind! On the morning of 9th November, Mary Jeanette Kelly, a comparatively young woman of some twenty-five years of age, and said to have been possessed of considerable personal attractions, was found murdered in a room in Miller's Court, Dorset Street. This was the last of the series, and it was by far the most horrible. The mutilations were of a positively fiendish description, almost indescribable in their savagery, and the doctors who were called in to examine the

remains, averred that the operator must have been at least two hours over his hellish job. A fire was burning low in the room, but neither candles nor gas were there. The madman made a bonfire of some old newspapers, and of his victim's clothes, and, by this dim, irreligious light, a scene was enacted which nothing seen by Dante in his visit to the infernal regions could have surpassed. It will have been noticed that the fury of the murderer, as evinced in his methods of mutilation, increased on every occasion, and his appetite appears to have become sharpened by indulgence. There can be no doubt that in the room at Miller's Court the madman found ample scope for the opportunities he had all along been seeking, and the probability is that, after his awful glut on this occasion, his brain gave way altogether and he committed suicide; otherwise the murders would not have ceased. The man, of course, was a sexual maniac, but such madness takes Protean forms, as will be shown later on in other cases. Sexual murders are the most difficult of all for police to bring home to the perpetrators, for "motives" there are none; only a lust for blood, and in many cases a hatred of woman as woman. Not infrequently the maniac possesses a diseased body, and this was probably so in the

case of the Whitechapel murderer. Many residents in the East End (and some in the West!) came under suspicion of police, but though several persons were detained, no one was ever charged with these offences.

Only last autumn I was very much interested in a book entitled *The Lodger*, which set forth in vivid colours what the Whitechapel murderer's life might have been while dwelling in London lodgings. The talented authoress portrayed him as a religious enthusiast, gone crazy over the belief that he was predestined to slaughter a certain number of unfortunate women, and that he had been confined in a criminal lunatic asylum and had escaped therefrom. I do not think that there was anything of religious mania about the real Simon Pure, nor do I believe that he had ever been detained in an asylum, nor lived in lodgings. I incline to the belief that the individual who held up London in terror resided with his own people; that he absented himself from home at certain times, and that he committed suicide on or about the 10th of November 1888, after he had knocked out a Commissioner of Police and very nearly settled the hash of one of Her Majesty's principal Secretaries of State.

CHAPTER V.

EARLY DAYS AT THE YARD.

“ You shall comprehend all vagrom men.”

Much Ado about Nothing.

AT the Yard I was fortunate in my first introduction, which was to the Chief Constable of the Department. He had “risen from the ranks,” and no man ever had a deeper insight into crime and its trackings. He had been the trusted confidant of successive Secretaries of State, and I have rarely come across anyone in any position of life who had a more “right judgment in all things.” I only had the privilege of working under him for three months; indeed, within six months of my joining he died, worn out with thirty-seven years of anxious work. Whatever success attended my labours at the Yard I ascribe to his early teaching. His first remark to me was, “Well, my boy, you are coming into a funny place. They’ll blame you if you do your duty, and they’ll blame you if you don’t.” And, indeed,

it was not long before I was made to realise that sufferance was the badge of a Metropolitan police officer just as much as it ever was of Shylock's tribe.

Yet I most gratefully admit that the Press and the public (not always sympathetic with the department over which I had the honour to preside for more than ten years) never unkindly nor unfairly criticised my work. At certain times pressmen did hamper one, but in nine cases out of ten they have been of the greatest use to me, and on occasions rendered yeoman service in the successful investigation of crime. The old idea used to be that detectives best served the interests of justice by keeping journalists at a distance, with the natural result that pressmen, being under the necessity of reporting something, used to string together unreliable stories, and to set about investigations themselves in a manner very maddening and handicapping to the detective officers who had the handling of the case. It seemed well, therefore, in many cases, to give fully and frankly such information as could be used without hesitation, and at the same time with profit to the public and to the police. For instance, when the Yard is in possession of a good description of a man wanted for murder, or any

other very serious offence, the sooner such description finds its way into the newspapers the better, for the Press, with its enormous circulation, can in these days reach hundreds of thousands of persons in a very few hours.

The Superintendent of the Criminal Investigation Department at this time was a fine old policeman of a type now obsolete. His educational attainments were sadly to seek, but his knowledge of the thieving fraternity was unrivalled, and he possessed a very remarkable memory for their names and faces. His physical strength was enormous, and he could eject a welsher in each hand from any ring on any racecourse over which Metropolitan Police had control. Rough as his methods were, the criminal classes trusted and respected him, and few officers before or after his time could get more "information received" out of them.

His reports were laboured, and his spelling indifferent, as the following reminiscence will show. He was one day putting some words of wisdom at the bottom of a young sergeant's report, and, after he had written the word "very" with two *r*'s, he didn't quite like the look of it, and said to the officer standing by, "How do you spell 'very'—with one *r* or with two *r*'s? Nothing to

laugh at." A solemn answer was returned to the effect that one was generally deemed sufficient. "That's all right then," replied the Superintendent; "if I make a blot over the second r all that is necessary will have been done!"

At bottom "old Jack" had a very kindly disposition, and when he deemed it necessary to verbally castigate an offending subordinate he always took care to do so with closed doors. When the delinquent entered his room, the Superintendent's formula was always the same: "Shut that door! Now I don't want to be offensive to you in any way, but you're an adjective fool," and having got so far, he used to let himself go, and indulge in violent diatribe for at least ten minutes.

Yet one or two more reminiscences of good old Jack, before I part with him in print, for we shall never look upon his like again. A colleague of his, who was walking with him at the time, told me this story. As they were strolling down Whitehall they met a pensioned pal, one who had retired from the Criminal Investigation Department, and had set up as a private inquiry agent. The said pensioner was a man of portly mien and pompous manner, and thus he addressed them: "This is my daughter Bessie's birthday,

and, on so auspicious an occasion, I must ask you gentlemen to drink her health." This hospitable proposal met with support, and they all three adjourned to a neighbouring house of call. As "old Jack" raised his glass, he said (because I suppose he thought it incumbent upon him to say *something*!) : "What age may your daughter be?" The giver of the drink replied, with some pomposity, "My daughter is twenty-one years of age." Old Jack gulped down his liquor, and put his emptied glass on the table, with the remark, "And a jolly good old twenty-one at that!"

When the old man retired from the service he was not wholly pleased at giving up the work of his life, for he had few tastes save criminal ones. One of his whilom officers, meeting him in the street one day, said, "Well, sir, how do you like being free from the trammels of office?" "I never had no trammels," snapped back Jack, "and I don't know that I rightly understand what the word means!"

The Superintendents of Metropolitan Police were, and are, as fine a body of men as can be found in any society in any quarter of the globe. Through them is the Force worked. Among them, past and present, I am proud to reckon a host of personal friends, and, should necessity arise, I know

no class who could be more useful in tight corners. Napoleon used to say that every French soldier carried a marshal's baton in his knapsack, and similarly, every young constable, when he joins the Force, has a chance of rising to the rank of superintendent. It is evident, then, that in a force of twenty thousand individuals it requires a pretty good man to get through his horses and win the blue ribbon of the finest police that the world has ever seen.

My first appearance at the Yard was a Saturday, 1st June, and I had not long to wait for a murder mystery. Reaching office on the Monday morning, I found that two telegrams had just been received—the first from Battersea, stating that the left thigh of a woman had been found on the foreshore of the Thames, near the Albert Bridge, and the second from Horsleydown, reporting the finding of a piece of the pelvis. Both of these portions were sewn up in what looked like bits of an old ulster coat. This pointed to murder most foul, and I spent the rest of the day on the river in company with the officer who had been entrusted with the charge of the case. Within the next week many other remains were found—some in the river, some in Battersea Park, and the rest on foreshores as far remote as Limehouse and

Fulham. The head of the woman never came to light, and the case, in very many respects, seemed on all fours with those of the Rainham mystery in 1887, and the Whitehall mystery in 1888. In both of these cases, portions of a woman's body, skilfully disarticulated, were found in various places, for the most part adjacent to the river, but in neither case did the head turn up, nor were the bodies identified.

In the 1889 case, which was commonly called the "Thames mystery," a scar on the wrist led to the identification of the remains as being those of one, Elizabeth Jackson, an unfortunate, who had resided a few weeks before at a common lodging-house in Turks Row, Chelsea, and who had been in possession of an ulster similar to that in which most of the remains had been wrapped up. A working stone-mason, who, some weeks before, had been living with Jackson, was traced to Devonshire and there detained, but he fully satisfied the police as to his whereabouts at the time of the murder, and was discharged. Now this murder was of a very peculiar character. The woman, who seems to have been one of the dregs of humanity, must have been done to death somewhere on enclosed premises, and the process of disarticulation must have occupied many hours,

and, when this was completed, the murderer must have taken several journeys before he could have disposed of all his ghastly burdens. One of the last portions of the body which turned up was enveloped in a curious piece of white cloth, such as is used by certain students engaged on a particular kind of work. But nothing ever came of police inquiries in this, or any other direction, and the Thames mystery has remained an "undiscovered" murder in the fullest sense of the word.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HAMPSTEAD MURDER.

“*Spretæ injuria formæ.*”—VIRGIL.

DURING my first fifteen months at the Yard I was too busy in learning my job, and in getting to know my officers, to think much about taking leave. But I did get away for a month in late September 1890, and returned to town on 22nd October. The very next night, at 4 a.m., the police bell in my bedroom clanged forth, and I rushed downstairs, knowing full well that something out of the common was on the carpet. I found an officer at the door with a telegram to the effect that a woman had been found murdered in a newly made street at Hampstead, and that, about a mile from where the body lay, a dead baby had been discovered in a perambulator.

It was useless attempting to work in the dark, but daylight found me on my way to Hampstead, where (with the Superintendent of the division, and the detective-inspector, who had, of course,

taken charge of the inquiries) I visited the mortuary and inspected the corpse, at that time unidentified. Before we had been there many minutes we heard that a Mrs. Hogg had been missing from her home since the previous afternoon, and that her sister-in-law and a "friend" were awaiting admission with a view to identification. As soon as these two women entered, the sister-in-law (regardless of grammar), said, "Good God, it's her!" but she was at once dragged away by her friend, who, in very excited tones, cried out, "Don't touch it—don't touch it!" That "friend" was a Mrs. Percy, who was arrested a few hours later, and subsequently tried and hanged for the murder of Mrs. Hogg. It was a very dramatic scene, and the last occasion, I imagine, in which "the ordeal by touch" was unwittingly brought into force.

The rain was pelting down as the detective-inspector and myself left the mortuary. Before I had gone many yards I was confronted by a fresh-looking young woman who craved speech with me. Together we sought the seclusion of a dripping alley. She then told me that she was Mrs. Hogg's niece, and that she had the gravest suspicions of Mrs. Percy, who, she believed, was in some way connected with her aunt's death.

Two young patrols were at once told off to keep Mrs. Pearcy under observation.

The Superintendent, the detective-inspector, and myself then made for the murdered woman's house to have a look round and interview the family. We found the bereaved husband very miserable and uncommunicative, but his aged mother was, under the circumstances, extremely cheery and chatty. While the detective officer had a run through the house, the Superintendent and I engaged the old lady in conversation. Our manners and our discourse (especially those of the Superintendent, who addressed our hostess as "Mother") appeared to please mightily, and at 11 a.m. by the clock, glasses and a bottle of port wine were produced. Now, when you are not certain as to whom you may be next charging with murder, it is rather embarrassing to have hospitality proffered, and yet a police officer can never afford to be discourteous, and thereby dry up any sources of information which may at any time be forthcoming in the right direction. Therefore the old lady was blandly told that I had made it a rule in India never to drink until the sun had set, and the Superintendent, with a sigh of relief, remarked that he too was exactly of my way of thinking. And so the bottle remained uncorked

and the fine old fruity untasted. Many a time, in the subsequent years in which we worked together, has the Superintendent (and we never had a better one in the Metropolitan Police) reminded me of that scene in the dingy little Hampstead parlour.

In due course we left the house, but had hardly reached the local police station when the two young patrols turned up with Mrs. Pearcy. The story that they had to tell was a grim one. I have rarely seen a woman of stronger physique than Mrs. Pearcy, and her nerves were as ironcast as her body. She had, most unconcernedly, conducted the officers to her house, and, while they were searching it from garret to basement, she sat herself down at the piano and strummed away at popular tunes. Upon the officers entering the kitchen, it was very apparent to them that the floor has been recently washed down. But there were tell-tale splotches of blood on the walls and even on the ceiling. Upon a further search being made, a bloodstained poker and knife were found in a cupboard. When the musical hostess was asked for an explanation as to the bloodstains, she chanted a reply, "Killing mice, killing mice, killing mice," and went on with her piano-playing. A button belonging to Mrs.

Hogg was found outside the kitchen door. Mrs. Percy was tried, found guilty, and executed in December of that year. The story was one of lust and blood. This strange woman had formed a violent attachment to Mr. Hogg, and (not unnaturally) a corresponding feeling of jealous hatred towards his wife, whom she inveigled to her house by an invitation to tea. Mrs. Hogg arrived with her baby in a perambulator, and, on entering the kitchen, was attacked in a most frenzied manner with a poker, and, when felled to the ground, her throat was cut with brutal savagery. "Hell holds no fury like a woman scorned!" As the shades of evening began to fall, the corpse was placed in the perambulator, on the top of the baby, and wheeled out into the darkness by Mrs. Percy. The night was pitchy black, and the pram was accidentally run up against a heap of stones in a new thoroughfare. This dislodged the body of the unfortunate Mrs. Hogg, and then the murderess continued her impious journey with the smothered baby, whose little body was left in the pram in a lonely spot on the confines of Hampstead Heath.

With the exception of Mrs. Dyer, the notorious baby-farmer, who was executed in 1896, I cannot at the moment call to mind the case of any other murderess who suffered the extreme penalty of

the law during the time that I was at the Yard. Yes! on second thoughts, I certainly recollect one other case, that of Louise Masset, a governess, who murdered her illegitimate child at Dalston Railway Station, and was hung at the end of 1899.

CHAPTER VII.

BOMBS AND THEIR MAKERS.

“ Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor.”—*Macbeth*.

“ It’s a B.O.M.B. bomb!
It’s a B.O.M.B. bomb!
They said it’s very hard on Scotland Yard,
It’s a B.O.M.B. bomb ! ”

THE above jingle was the chorus of a comic song, very popular in the London music halls some twenty years ago ; and certain it is that about the years 1893-94, Scotland Yard was much worried by bombs and rumours of bombs. The trouble came to us from across the Channel. The notorious Ravachol, and his followers, had started a dynamite campaign in Paris and its suburbs, and frequent explosions had taken place in public buildings and in cafés, in which lives had been lost and considerable damage done to property.

There is nothing quite so infectious as an outbreak of crime, and the contagion soon spread to England. In London two Italians were

sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for being in possession of a bomb which had been constructed with the idea of destroying the Stock Exchange. The names of these desperadoes were, I think, Polti and Ferrara. At Walsall, too, some time before, a kind of bomb factory was discovered, and the principals engaged were tried and sent to penal servitude by the late Lord Brampton. Some very inflammatory pamphlets were published, and there was a nasty feeling abroad in the land. One or two sharp prosecutions, however, had a very salutary effect.

I have always held the belief that anarchism has never tapped root in this country. It is foreign to the nature of the British. Although we are inundated with the scum of other countries, and various parts of London swarm with Nihilists from Russia, Advanced Socialists from Germany, and Communists from France (to say nothing of a large contingent of knifing Neapolitans), yet all these gentry are perfectly well aware that, if they begin throwing bombs about in the London streets, the British workman (honest fellow, though occasional grumbler, that he is!) would be the first person to hoof them out of the country with an uncompromising and hobnailed boot, and that then the gates of their very last city of

refuge would be banged, bolted, and barred against them. It is this that has given, and that continues to give, to England a very great immunity from the crimes which so often terrorise the dwellers on the Continent. A little frothy speech, in our London parks, does very little harm, as a rule, and blows off an infinity of steam. It is only when there is a probability that the said froth may become flecked with blood that the authorities need adopt repressive measures.

We did, however, get one rude awakening in London, when, in 1894, a young tailor named Bourdin endeavoured to blow up the Greenwich Observatory. He was a crack-brained enthusiast—how he came into possession of the bomb was never satisfactorily explained. There was at the time an unpleasant feeling abroad that the terrible form of an *agent provocateur* had overshadowed the misguided youth. But, be that as it may, no one was ever more effectually “hoist with his own petard.” When Bourdin was about fifty yards from the Observatory the bomb exploded, shattering his right hand to bits, and several pieces of iron penetrated his body. He staggered round and tried to walk down the hill, but sank to the ground after a few steps. He was picked up in a pitiable condition, and died before he

reached the hospital. So violent was the explosion that one of his fingers was found lying under the Observatory wall—so have I seen a bail fly off at cricket in the direction of long leg !

As I have already said, the real article was mercifully rare over here ; but the joker was out and about, and alarms and excursions were everywhere rife. Seldom did a week go by without the finding of a bomb being reported, and, though it subsequently transpired that there was nothing in it, a sufficiency of worry and anxiety was caused to police ; and the authorities at the Home Office, who inspect explosives, had no sinecures.

At this time the Chief Inspector of Explosives was Sir Vivian Majendie, one of the most delightful personalities I ever came across, and a very loyal friend. He loved work and he loved play, and all kinds of sport delighted him. No day was too hot for him at Lord's, no night was too long for him at the National Sporting Club. He it was who, supping one Sunday night with a favourite niece, began talking about the Sayers and Heenan fight when he entered her house at 7.45, and when he left at 10.40 the same subject was still on the anvil of his discussion.

We had many cases together, but one day stands out in my memory very clear and distinct. Late

one evening I received information that a bomb had been found under the seat of an omnibus on its arrival at Victoria, and that it had been conveyed to the police station at Gerald Row by the conductor, whose story, given in perfectly good faith, was as follows : That for the last three days a gentleman, speaking with an Irish-American accent, had travelled by his bus, that his description was of the usual type, tall and spare, with a neat goatee beard, slouch hat, and loose-fitting suit of tweed, that he had always carried with him a mysterious parcel wrapped in brown paper, and that, on the evening in question, he had offered the conductor a shilling if he would take it to the cloak-room at Victoria and bring him back the receipt. The conductor (whose mind carried back to the cloak-room explosion at the same station in, I think, 1883) declined the job and the proffered bob, and went on to state that, when he next looked inside the bus, the mysterious stranger had disappeared. Under the seat, however, he found the paper parcel, which was heavy, and, suspecting it to be a bomb, he at once conveyed it to the police station. The inspector on duty there told me that he had submerged the parcel in a tub of water, and that it had "hissed at him." As, however, during my visit, there

were no further signs of sibilation, it was deemed well to leave the cylinder where it was.

The next morning it was taken out of the water and carefully conveyed to the Home Office by an experienced officer. There it remained, in an apartment by itself, for twenty-four hours. Nobody much liked the look of it. Eventually knowing heads and skilled hands gathered round and gingerly inserted a gimlet in the side of the cylinder. On the withdrawal of the gimlet a dark, sticky substance appeared on the point, but the usual test of a lighted match had no effect, and none of the experts present recognised an old friend. It was thought, however, that it might be some new kind of explosive, of which there were legions in those days. Again was the gimlet inserted, and again withdrawn. This time a little more of the contents of the vessel adhered to it, and upon it being tasted, something like a seed gritted against the teeth of the chief expert. This gave a clue. A comedian in the company whispered hoarsely, "In the name of the prophet—figs!" And so they were! A tin case of that excellent dried fruit, neatly soldered up. But the worst of police work is that you can never be certain whether people are in merry jest or mad earnest, and one had therefore to accept *omne*

ignotum pro horribili, and to be prepared for all eventualities.

London has always been very fortunate in that it has escaped the attacks of lunatics during the very many state ceremonials which have taken place of late years. On such occasions even a false alarm may cause a scare which might bring about the deaths of thousands. The arrangements for all public functions give an infinity of anxiety to police, and when they have been absolutely perfected, one maniac, who sets no store by his own life, could easily upset the whole apple cart. In anarchist circles our information was always so good that, had a plot been in the hatching, I think the Yard would have got wind of it within twenty-four hours; but what neither the King's horsemen nor all the Metropolitan Police can guard against is the individual initiative of some crank, who, with a very elementary knowledge of chemistry, could fashion a dangerous bomb out of an empty sardine box and some nitro-glycerine. If such a lunatic be willing to throw his own life away, he may very easily kill any individual against whom he may happen to have some fancied grievance.

I think it was at the opening of the Imperial Institute by Queen Victoria, about May or June

1893, that an alarming telegram, from a perfectly well-meaning and respectable individual, reached the Yard just half an hour before the procession was to leave Buckingham Palace. It was dispatched from one of the suburbs and was to the following effect :—

“ For God’s sake stop procession. Heard plot to assassinate Her Majesty in Underground train last night.”

As all the chiefs of the Force were out and about on the route this wire was brought to me. It was not a very pleasant document for a Chief Constable to have to deal with ; but, of course, there was only one course open, and that was to put it away in one’s pocket and risk the chances. This was done, rather to the wonderment of the officer who had brought it in, and who seemingly expected that the whole procession would be countermanded at the last moment. The late Sir C. E. Howard Vincent once said to the writer that the officers of the C.I.D. were always living over a volcano, and certain it is that a vast amount of wear and tear of the nerves is always going on. If, on this occasion, after the procession had started, a stone or squib had been thrown, the sender of the telegram would assuredly have come

forward and complained that, if proper respect had been paid to his communication, Her Majesty would not have been subjected to any risk or annoyance. He would have had a certain number of backers who would have made a noise in the newspapers, and clamoured for the summary execution of the official who had allowed the procession to go forward. In the afternoon of that day a Scotland Yard officer was sent to interview the sender of the telegram. His explanation was, that while travelling by the Underground the evening before, he had found himself in a third-class compartment with some "anarchists disguised as English workmen," and had heard one say to another, "If the sun shines to-morrow there will be haymaking," or words to that effect. He construed this simple phrase as boding no good to Her Majesty, and the more he turned about on his sleepless couch, the worse mischief it seemed to foretell. The morning found him pale and haggard. His fears got the better of his judgment, and he sent his telegram.

But the worst time that the chiefs of the Yard ever had was at the time of the death of our lamented King Edward VII. Never had so many crowned heads been gathered together in London

before ; never had such elaborate arrangements been necessary, and never had there been less time for perfecting their plans. Not only did eight foreign monarchs visit the Metropolis, but many of them brought members of their own secret police in their train, the which, I need hardly say, was a very embarrassing addition to the work.

I remember one of them entering my room hurriedly on the morning of his arrival, and excitedly exclaiming, "Kapinoff, Kapinoff! Where is Kapinoff?" Now I had never heard tell of this gentleman before, but I wasn't going to give my show away by a confession of ignorance, so answered his thrust by the question: "Which Kapinoff do you mean?" just as though I had five or six separate and distinct Kapinoffs up my sleeve. This staggered my questioner, and he gasped out, "A noted student sworn to assassinate ——." The only possible reply was sufficiently obvious, and he was besought not to bother about that particular Kapinoff, of whose desperate threats Scotland Yard thought but little. For the following four days my visitor called repeatedly and inquired after his pet Kapinoff; he always received the same reply. At his departure we scoured London to see

whether the dreaded student was over here, but, in police parlance, our inquiries met with a "negative result," and from those days to these Kapinoff has been a name and nothing more.

CHAPTER VIII.

SUN YAT SEN.

“They went for that heathen Chinee.”—BRET HARTE.

NOT being a student of Mongolian politics, I am unable to say whether Mr. Sun Yat Sen still occupies the proud position in China that he did two or three years ago. Times did indeed alter in his case, and when he and I forgathered in October 1896, few individuals had ever been in a tighter place or more awkwardly situated. Great reformers generally incur a considerable amount of odium, and the writings and speeches of this gentleman had raised much celestial ire. The ruling powers desired to put a stop to the revolutionary doctrines of Sun Yat Sen and his followers, and would not, of course, have scrupled to remove one or two heads in so doing.

England, however, has always been the land of the brave and the free, and has not infrequently sheltered political refugees of all creeds, colours, and countries. In London city, then, Mr. Sun

Yat Sen deemed himself safe, for hither did he resort after a flight from his native land. But to relate in sequence the events of a certain Sunday. The Criminal Investigation Department at Scotland Yard is what might be termed a "nunquam dormis" shop, with an ever-open door. To its chiefs Saturday evening is very much like Monday morning. Therefore, if any report has to be privately written, or any particular officers quietly interviewed, it becomes necessary to give up one or two hours on the Sabbath to such purposes. As a rule, then, one was to be found at one's desk between 11.30 and 1 on the day of rest.

On this well-remembered occasion a doctor of high repute called at the Criminal Investigation Department about noon and brought with him one of the strangest letters ever penned. It was written from the Chinese Embassy, and found in a mews at the back of Portland Place. On the envelope was a request that the finder, whoever he might be, should take the missive at once to the above-mentioned doctor's address, and that the matter was one of vital importance. An obliging ostler did as requested by the unknown writer, and the letter was handed over to the friendly physician. The purport was as follows:

That, while aimlessly wandering through the unfamiliar streets of the Metropolis, Sun Yat Sen had come across two compatriots who struck up an acquaintance, and pointed out to him objects of interest as they walked along. No sooner, however, were they opposite to the Chinese Embassy—a building quite unknown to their victim—than they hustled him within its portals, and, having secured him beyond all possibility of escape, went on to inform him that he was now (as, in effect, he was) on Chinese territory, and that they could do with him whatever they listed.

Broad hints were given that the first operation to be performed would in all probability be one of decapitation. With these most unpleasant tidings ringing in his ears, the great reformer was locked up in an attic chamber. Here, after a few days, he found opportunity to write a letter and throw it out of his grim casement, when a favourable breeze deposited it at the feet of the amicable ostler. Scotland Yard promised to give such assistance as was in its power ; but the situation was one of unprecedented delicacy, and diplomatic difficulties arose on every side. The Foreign Office had, of course, to be approached through the Home Office, and for many days negotiations went on with no practical result.

Eventually, after a week or so, we were requested to send a detective officer up to the Embassy to receive into safe custody the languishing prisoner. On his return he visited the Yard, and seemed none the worse for his confinement, although he must have had a very anxious duress. All kinds of rumours had reached us as to how he was to have been drugged and conveyed in a carriage to the docks as for immediate shipment to China. The prisoner, however, certainly lived to turn the tables on his quondam enemies.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STRANGE STORY OF ADOLPH BECK.

“Methinks you are my glass, and not my brother.”
Comedy of Errors.

NEVER was there a more ill-starred individual than Adolph Beck, and his case was indeed a “tragedy of errors”! It was bad enough to undergo seven years’ penal servitude for a crime of which he was absolutely innocent. It was far worse to be apprehended a second time, and again to stand in the dock at the Old Bailey, to again hear a verdict of “guilty” returned, and to realise the awful fact that he would again be sent back, for a longer term, to a convict prison, from the horrors of which he had only been released some two years, and the memories of which must have been to him as an awful nightmare. No wonder that his wild cries of agony so impressed the learned judge that he put him back for sentence to the next Sessions.

During that interval of three weeks an incident

occurred as sensational as anything ever before known in the history of crime. It was God's own mercy (and nothing else) which, at this time, delivered the man Smith, *alias* Thomas, into the hands of the police. I knew Beck only after his troubles were at an end and he had been discharged from Bow Street. Notwithstanding his awful experiences, he always struck me as being a light-hearted lover of pleasure, and, mercifully for him, I do not think that the horrors of his wrongful imprisonment had weighed on him quite as heavily as they would have on most other men. He had the mercurial disposition of many of our continental friends. He was always touchingly and (as I thought) unnecessarily grateful for the assistance rendered to him at the time of Smith's arrest and his own release. When we met for the last time, one Sunday evening in Hyde Park, he bent over my hand and called me his "preserver"! I would have given a good deal (and so would many others) to have "preserved" him from his first sentence; but luck was dead against him at the time of his arrest and subsequent trial.

And yet, as the most able Commission, appointed later on to inquire into the whole matter, reported, "the action of police throughout was dictated by nothing but a sense of duty, and was

perfectly correct." It is indeed most satisfactory, after a lapse of so many years, to lay to one's soul the flattering unction that no member of Metropolitan Police was in any way to blame for the deplorable miscarriage of justice which took place.

The facts of the case were rather complicated, but they cannot fail to be of interest even after so many years. To begin at the beginning, we have to travel back to 1877. In that year a man, calling himself John Smith, was convicted at the Old Bailey for frauds on women of loose character, whereby he had obtained from them articles of jewellery or money. He was sentenced to five years' penal servitude. The Criminal Investigation Department was not formed till the following year, and no police papers in this case were available for reference. Also the police officers who had had Smith in custody had all retired or been pensioned long before 1895 when the unfortunate Beck first appeared upon the scene.

Very early in that year police began to receive complaints from women, mostly of loose character, that they had been defrauded by a man who gave himself out to be Lord Willoughby de Winton, and who professed to be attracted by their looks, and was desirous of engaging them as his

“housekeeper” at his place in St. John’s Wood. He would then, on some pretext, borrow money or some article of jewellery, with which he decamped. The description given by these women of their thieving visitor varied considerably, but the cheques which he made over to some of them all appeared to be in the same handwriting.

The usual haunts frequented by such swindlers were visited by officers, but nothing in the shape of an arrest was made until December 1895, when one of the women defrauded met Mr. Beck in Victoria Street and gave him into custody of a uniform constable on duty for having stolen some property from her lodgings a few weeks before. Mr. Beck was taken to the police station and charged. He was subsequently put up with twelve or fourteen other persons and unhesitatingly identified by (I think) fifteen out of seventeen of those who had been defrauded and had been called in to see him. One woman, I remember, stoutly maintained that a mistake was being made, and that the man in custody was not the thief, at any rate, in her case. I will refer again to this witness later on.

Beck was tried at the Old Bailey in the spring of 1896, and sentenced to seven years’ penal servitude, from which he was released on licence

about the end of 1901. But the doomed victim was not to enjoy a long immunity from bondage. Early in 1904 women complained at Scotland Yard that they had been defrauded after the fashion employed by the criminal of 1895. During the period that elapsed between Beck's conviction in 1896 and the end of 1903, no complaints of similar frauds had been brought under the notice of police. The description of the fresh swindler, as given by the defrauded women, tallied with that of Beck. This being so, opportunity was given that the first woman who had complained should see Beck. She was posted in a street down which he daily passed, and ten minutes later, as he came along, she identified him and gave him into custody. The same dreadful drama was then acted over again *da capo*. While at the police station (and prior to his appearance in court) Beck was placed among some fifteen men who were as nearly of the same age, build, and appearance as it was possible to obtain, and was, without any hesitation, identified by the four other women who had made complaints in the matter. He was, in due course, committed to take his trial at the Central Criminal Court, appeared at the Old Bailey, and was again found guilty. As has already been stated, the judge postponed sentence

till the next Sessions, and most fortunate it was that he did so.

During the time that Beck had been in custody for these last (alleged) offences no similar complaints had been made to the police. But a week or so after the judge had postponed sentence, a man calling himself William Thomas was given into custody for an offence similar to that for which Beck had been tried. This William Thomas had been arrested while attempting to pawn some rings obtained a few minutes before from two professional ladies who had also received from Thomas a letter of assignation. This document was obtained and found to be in the same handwriting that had figured in the charges made against Beck in 1896. No question could arise in this case as to Thomas's identity, seeing that he had been caught in the act of attempting to dispose of the property within half an hour of having obtained it. Indeed, if I remember rightly, he was never lost sight of from the moment he left the women's house until he was given into custody at the pawnbroker's shop where he attempted to pledge the rings. Thomas was duly brought up at the police court, and then the same four women who had already sworn that Beck was the man who robbed them now asserted their convic-

tion that they had been in error in so saying, and were now satisfied that Thomas was the real delinquent. This man was also identified by an old landlord as the convicted John Smith of 1877, and was eventually sentenced to three years' penal servitude. Beck was at once released, and a sum of £5000 paid over to him as compensation, and he received "free pardons" for offences which he had never committed!

An intelligent police officer will learn in every case something new, and the object-lesson in this lamentable business was unquestionably the extreme unreliability of personal identification. All these women witnesses honestly believed that they had picked out the right man. And yet, as a matter of fact, Beck and Thomas were not a bit alike. They were about the same height, and had about the same amount of grey hair on their heads, and they both struck me as having rather a peculiar droop in the eyelids. But Beck gave one the impression of being a much younger man, and he was altogether slighter in build.

One of the best witnesses that we had in the concluding trial was the lady who, as I before mentioned, was the only one who asserted in 1896 that a mistake had been made, and the wrong man arrested. She rendered great assistance, and

I was duly grateful to her. I felt that she, of all the actresses in the drama, could settle the question at once, so I went down to see her myself on the Sunday afternoon following Thomas's arrest.

The house was not the kind where one generally would call on the Sabbath. I had some little difficulty in obtaining my interview, and when I had gained admittance to her presence I fear she was disappointed on learning my errand. But I flung down a sheaf of photographs in front of her, and she at once picked up one of Thomas, and said, "That's the scoundrel who robbed me nine years ago, and don't you forget it, Mr. Policeman!" After the ice was thus broken we got on capitally together, and I persuaded her to come up to Bow Street the next day and give evidence, although she was in wretched health at the time.

CHAPTER X.

MOTIVELESS MURDERS.

“Vice is a monster of so frightful mien.”—POPE.

MOTIVELESS murders, are, from a detective's point of view, of very exceptional interest, and the two most remarkable of these, within the last generation, were unquestionably those known as “The Lambeth Poisoning Case” in 1892, for which the notorious Neil Cream suffered the extreme penalty of the law, and the Camden Town murder in 1907, for which no one was ever made amenable. Both of these murders were committed by sexual maniacs,—by men who killed for the joy of killing,—but their types were wholly different.

As I have said before, when writing of the Whitechapel murders, such madness takes Protean forms. Very few people, except barristers, doctors, and police officers, realise that such a thing as sexual mania exists, and, in a murder case similar to the two mentioned above, it is a

most difficult task for prosecuting counsel to make a jury fully understand that it supplies and accounts for the complete absence of any other motive for the crime. Students of history, however, are aware that an excessive indulgence in vice leads, in certain cases, to a craving for blood. Nero was probably a sexual maniac. Many Eastern potentates in all ages, who loved to see slaves slaughtered or wild beasts tearing each other to pieces, have been similarly affected. The disease is not as rare as many people imagine. As you walk in the London streets you may, and do, not infrequently jostle against a potential murderer of the so-called Jack the Ripper type. The subject is not a pleasant one, but to those who study the depths of human nature it is intensely interesting.

The mysteries of the Lambeth poisoning case required a deal of unravelling. The officer who conducted the inquiries was one of the very best that we ever had at the Yard. The facts of the case were put together some years ago by my old friend Mr. George R. Sims in his succinct and picturesque style, and I feel I cannot do better than reproduce his story almost verbatim. This I do with his kind permission :—

“ On the night of 11th April 1892, or, rather, in

the early hours of 12th April, a constable whose beat lay through Stamford Street, Blackfriars, saw a man being let out of one of the houses by a young woman .

It was then about two in the morning.

There was a street lamp opposite the door, and in the light of this the constable had a good view of the man's side face.

The man appeared to be about forty ; he had a heavy moustache, he had on a dark overcoat and a high silk hat, and he wore glasses.

The man walked away from the house, and turned to the right, in the direction of Lambeth Palace Road.

Three-quarters of an hour later this constable was again in Stamford Street.

Standing at the door of the house which he had seen the man with the glasses leave was a four-wheeled cab. A woman, evidently in great pain, was being carried to the cab by a policeman.

The constable went into the house, and in a bedroom found another young woman lying face downwards, screaming and writhing in terrible agony. He carried her to the cab, and the two constables drove with the sufferers to St. Thomas's Hospital.

In the cab one of the girls, Alice Marsh, died.

Emma Shrivell, the other girl, was able to speak. In answer to the questioning of the constables, she said that a gentleman had been to the house, and had had supper with them. He had sent the servant out for some bottled beer and some tinned salmon. Afterwards he had given each of them three 'long pills,' which they had taken.

The constable who had been in Stamford Street when this visitor left, asked, 'Was that the man with the glasses that I saw you let out at two o'clock?' The reply was 'Yes.'

Shrivell lingered in terrible suffering for six hours after her arrival at the hospital.

The first idea, when the girls were brought in, and Shrivell spoke of the tinned salmon she had eaten, was that they were cases of ptomaine poisoning. But it was speedily ascertained that both deaths had been caused by the administration of strychnine.

At this time all that the police had to go upon was that the man who had given the girls the 'long pills' was known to them as 'Fred,' that he said he was a doctor, and that he had a heavy moustache and wore glasses.

From that moment the task of the detectives was to find out if a man answering this description was known to any other unfortunate woman in

the neighbourhood; some of whom might be able to supply fuller particulars concerning him. Inquiries in this direction were at once made, but at first without success.

But the constable who had seen 'Fred' leave Stamford Street, and had been instructed to keep a close look out for him, had met a man very like him. It was not considered expedient to arrest this man merely because he looked like the one who had come out of the house, but observation was kept upon him.

A difficulty had, however, arisen. A man living in the house in which the two girls had lodged had seen the visitor 'Fred,' who came to supper and had had bottled beer and tinned salmon sent for.

This man was placed in a position where he could see the suspect pass by. The suspect was known as Dr. Neil, and lived in rooms in Lambeth Palace Road.

The man looked at Neil and shook his head. 'That's not the fellow,' he said. 'I'm certain it isn't.'

For the moment the trail was crossed. The police came to the conclusion that they had been following the wrong man.

But in the meantime a number of young women

had been quietly warned to be careful of a man wearing glasses, who might offer them what were called 'long pills,' but which were really capsules. They were on no account to swallow the things, but were to keep in touch with the man and communicate with the police.

Among the girls asked if she had ever seen a man named 'Fred,' who wore glasses, had a heavy moustache, and called himself a doctor, there was one who instantly exclaimed, 'Yes, I have.' She had seen a man like that with a girl named Matilda Clover, who died in October 1891, of delirium tremens. 'But I always believed,' said the young woman, 'that Tilly Clover was poisoned.' The girl then told the detective how one evening she had seen this man go into a house in Lambeth Road with Clover, and the next day she heard that Clover was dead.

That was the first time that Matilda Clover had ever been spoken of by anyone in connection with a suggestion of poisoning.

But there was an astounding document pigeon-holed at Scotland Yard, but not in the Criminal Investigation Department. On 30th November 1891, Dr. Broadbent, the eminent physician, forwarded to the authorities a letter which he had received, charging him with having

administered poison to a girl named Matilda Clover. The writer of the letter demanded £3000 to hush the matter up.

The letter, which was signed 'Malony,' mentioned strychnine as the cause of Matilda Clover's death.

Now Matilda Clover, according to the certificate of a doctor who had been personally attending her, died of 'delirium tremens and syncope.' There had been no inquest, and she had been buried by the parish.

On searching at Somerset House the police found the death certificate, and singularly enough the certificate immediately preceding it in the book was that of another girl who was afterwards discovered to have been poisoned by 'the man with the glasses'—a girl named Donworth.

Now for the first time there was in the possession of the police the fact that a man named 'Fred,' who wore glasses, had visited Matilda Clover on the night of her death, and also the fact that a few hours later a doctor was hurriedly sent for to attend her 'in a fit.' Just as a tragedy had followed the visit of the man with the glasses in the case of Marsh and Shrivell, so had a tragedy followed his visit to Matilda Clover.

The doctor had given a certificate of death

from 'alcoholism.' But there was someone who, although there had been no inquest and no publicity, knew shortly after Matilda Clover's death from 'alcoholism' that she had been poisoned by strychnine. That someone had sent a blackmailing letter to Dr. Broadbent.

An order for the exhumation of the body of Matilda Clover was at once issued. Fourteen coffins had to be taken out of the ground above her. Although so many months had elapsed the action of the strychnine had preserved the organs of the body perfectly, and the experts had no difficulty in finding strychnine.

In the meantime inquiries at the house in which Clover had died elicited the fact that the man with the glasses had offered the girl supper in her own apartment, and had sent the servant out for 'two bottles of beer and a tin of salmon.'

But the blackmailing letter to Dr. Broadbent, in which knowledge of the poisoning of Matilda Clover was shown, had still to be traced to the suspected 'Dr. Neil.'

This man, who said that he was a traveller for an American drug store, was now—it was another extraordinary feature of an extraordinary case—found to be on intimate terms with an ex-detective, to whom he had made some remarkable

statements. He had accused a young medical student, who had been his fellow-lodger in Lambeth Palace Road, of having poisoned Clover, Marsh, Shrivell, and a girl named Loo Harvey.

The ex-detective, who had made Neil's acquaintance quite accidentally, was naturally astonished at such statements. He made a note of them, and duly communicated with the authorities.

But there was, so far, no proof that Neil was himself the poisoner. His statement was that he had 'discovered' the guilt of his fellow-lodger. The man who lodged in the same house as Marsh and Shrivell had declared, it must be remembered, that Neil was not her visitor on the fatal night.

It was at this time, in piecing the facts together, that the police referred to certain blackmailing letters which had been sent to the head of the firm of W. H. Smith & Son. A girl named Ellen Donworth had been found on the night of 13th October 1891 dying in terrible agony in the Waterloo Road. The inquest showed she had swallowed a large dose of strychnine. The writer of the letter to Mr. Smith signed himself 'Bayne,' and demanded a huge sum of money to be silent, as he knew that Mr. Smith had poisoned Ellen Donworth.

The coroner who investigated the cases of Shrivell and Marsh had also received an extraordinary letter offering information as to the 'poisoner.'

Several letters of this kind were now in the hands of the police, but they were not all in the same handwriting.

This was a point which had to be cleared up.

A detective of the Criminal Investigation Department now succeeded in becoming friendly with Neil. As a matter of fact, Neil had actually gone to him to complain that he was being followed. The detective at once offered to find out if this was the case, and became his constant visitor, and by a clever ruse obtained from Neil at his lodgings a specimen of his handwriting. He also discovered that the handwriting of the young lady to whom Neil was engaged was the same as that of the letters sent to the coroner. The paper which Neil used in his lodgings was found by his friend the detective to be of American manufacture. The watermark upon it was 'Fairford Superfine.'

Knowing that, after the death of Clover, a blackmailing letter had been sent to Dr. Broadbent, it was suggested by one of the chief officers in charge of the case that probably the father of

the young medical student, accused by Neil in conversation with his friend the ex-detective, had received a similar communication with regard to Marsh and Shrivell.

The father of the young man was a doctor at Barnstaple. On being visited he said that he had received a letter charging his son with poisoning certain women, and demanding money for silence ; but, looking upon it as the work of some medical student who had a grudge against his son, he had not taken any action upon it.

He produced the letter. It was signed ' W. H. Murray.' The paper bore the American watermark of ' Fairford Superfine.' Between the murders of Clover and Donworth and the murders of Marsh and Shrivell, it was known that Neil had visited America.

The case for the police was now complete, and Thomas Neil Cream, known as Dr. Neil, was arrested.

On being searched there was found to be in one of his pockets a memorandum of the dates of the deaths of all the women, with their initials against the date.

One of the most important witnesses against the accused man was a girl named Loo Harvey, to whom, on the Embankment, he had given one of

the capsules, urging her to take it, as it would at once cure her of pains from which she was suffering.

The girl pretended to take the capsule, and the poisoner left her, telling her that she would soon feel the benefit of what he had given her.

One of the dramatic moments at the police-court proceedings was when Loo Harvey, whom Neil believed to be dead, stepped forward and identified him as 'Fred,' who had tried to make her swallow one of his 'long pills.'

On 20th October 1892, the anniversary of the death of his unhappy victim, Matilda Clover, Thomas Neil Cream was sentenced to death at the Old Bailey. In consequence of certain affidavits put forward by him after his sentence, a respite of seven days was granted, but on 15th November he was duly executed within the walls of Newgate.

Neil Cream, the wholesale poisoner of women, was a maniac of a particularly diabolical kind, the kind for whom the gallows and not the asylum is the best place.

In America he committed at least three murders. For the third he was sentenced to death, but the sentence was commuted to ten years' penal servitude, a clemency on the part of the American

authorities for which at least half a dozen English women paid with their lives.

He killed for the joy of killing, and the dying agonies of the women were excitements which his demoniacal form of insanity craved for.

The gratification of a mad lust of cruelty was the one object of his murders—at least on this side of the Atlantic. He had absolutely nothing else to gain by them. The blackmailing letters that he sent to well-known people after each crime were acts of sheer insanity. In one he demanded £300,000. He was a mad monster of a peculiar type. The nearest approach we have had to him since his execution was George Chapman, who, curiously enough, also poisoned a girl named Marsh. Some of Neil Cream's crimes on the other side of the Atlantic, like some of Chapman's on this side, may have had a pecuniary motive underlying them, but by both miscreants a number of women were deliberately poisoned solely for the gratification of a monstrous instinct.

I have not dealt so much with the story of the numerous crimes of Neil Cream as with the manner in which they were brought home to him. The task of bringing him to justice was far more difficult than may appear at first sight. It is a

fact that the advisers of the Crown, in spite of the evidence in their possession, were doubtful, almost to the last, if they would be able to obtain a verdict.

The evidence in the case of Matilda Clover was not of the strongest from the judicial point of view, and there was a doubt at one time if the evidence in the cases of Marsh and Shrivell might be held to be legally admissible. There was no absolute proof to give to a jury that Neil Cream poisoned Clover, and it was for the murder of Clover 'and other persons' that Cream was tried at the Old Bailey.

He was not arrested for murder, but on a charge of endeavouring to extract money by threats from the doctor whose son he had accused of the crimes in the letter with the 'Fairford Superfine' watermark on the paper.

On the night that Cream came back to Holloway, after listening to his counsel's magnificent speech for his defence, he was so elated that he sang and danced in his cell, and on more than one occasion, so confident was he that the case against him would break down that he threatened the governor of the gaol with terrible pains and penalties for daring to compel him to appear at the

Old Bailey in the clothes in which he had been arrested.

It has been widely published that on the scaffold Neil Cream exclaimed, 'I am Jack the the——' just as the bolt was drawn.

Apart from the fact that no man in the last stage of furious madness, as the perpetrator of the Stamford Street horror must have been, could have lived to embark on a totally different series of atrocities, there is a perfect alibi.

During the whole period covered by the Ripper's crimes Neil Cream was in prison on the other side of the Atlantic.

He arrived in London after his release on 1st October 1891, and he murdered his first victim, Ellen Donworth, on the 13th of the same month.

But for the fact that the student of criminal history is constantly faced with the stupidity of the criminal, there would be nothing more remarkable in this case than the fatuity of the man who, having murdered solely for his personal gratifications, and taken every precaution, as he thought, to avoid discovery, immediately wrote blackmailing letters in which he showed guilty knowledge of secret murder.

After the case was over Mr. Justice Hawkins

complimented the police on the patience, tact, and ability they had shown in unravelling the mystery of the Lambeth poisonings. The running to earth of Neil Cream was a piece of detective work of which Scotland Yard has every reason to be proud."

I have very little to add to the above, in which, so far as my memory goes, all the facts given are absolutely accurate. At the conclusion of the case Mr. Justice Hawkins, as he was in those days, came to see me at the Yard, and we discussed the reasons to account for Neil Cream having written these rubbishy and compromising letters. The learned judge had no particular views on the matter, so I gave him mine, with which he was good enough to agree generally.

I always held that Neil Cream, who was a hopelessly depraved individual, and, *inter alia*, a "morphia fiend," had frightful fits of depression after his gratification of mad lust for cruelty, and that, as a kind of salve to his conscience, he then sat down and wrote to *someone*, detailing the facts that a murder had been committed, and laying the guilt at that someone's door. He always wrote to persons whose names, at the particular time, were prominently before the

public. For instance, when he wrote to Dr. Broadbent, that eminent physician was attending a case of typhoid fever at Marlborough House, and his name was written large on the bulletins issued several times a day. When he wrote to the late Right Honourable W. H. Smith, that gentleman was on his deathbed. In effect, Neil Cream felt he must impart his guilty secrets to somebody. Very much in the same way did the gentleman who discovered that King Midas had donkey's ears go down to the river and relieve his mind by whispering his secret to the reeds and rushes !

The Camden Town murder was a desperately sordid affair, but one of most engrossing interest to a police officer. Sir Herbert Tree avers that, at this time, I wrote him, apologising for not having answered a note of his, or something of the sort, and, in palliating my remissness, declared that I had, "for the last three weeks, been steeped to the lips in Dimmock's blood." *Se non è vero, è ben trovato.*

In September 1907, Phillis, or Emily Dimmock, a nymph of the Euston pavement, had lodgings in a small street in Camden Town. One day, about the middle of the month, she was devoting the afternoon to domestic washing. According to the landlady's account she was very much *en*

déshabillé, as fitted the occasion, and it was particularly remarked that she had some Hinde's patent curlers in her hair. In the evening, about 8.30, she slipped on an old ulster, and, signifying her landlady that she was going out to keep an appointment, left the house. Her return was unnoticed.

About three o'clock in the afternoon of the next day her landlady tried the door of her room, and, finding it locked, became anxious and called in the police. The door was broken open, and Phillis Dimmock was found lying on her bed with her throat cut from ear to ear. *The Hinde's curlers were still in her hair*, and there were no signs apparent that she had dressed "to go out," as was her custom, in the usual way. She had evidently been murdered while sleeping, and the razor (or some very sharp knife) had been drawn along the pillow on which her head rested, and had cut the pillow-case and counterpane, from which it was pretty plain that the deed had been done in the dark.

On getting down to the scene of the tragedy the local inspector of the detective staff met me with the remark, "This is no ordinary case of murder, sir," and, after a very cursory examination, I was entirely in accord with his opinion,

in that the crime was one of sexual mania, and not perpetrated for robbery or revenge. The murderer had probably stripped (a very usual procedure in these cases) before he cut the woman's throat, so that it was not to be expected that we should—if an arrest were made—find any traces of blood on his clothes. He had then washed his hands and dried them on an old skirt of his victim's, which was thrown over a chair near the washstand. Near the window, the blind of which had been slightly drawn aside as if to let in the early morning light, was an album containing old picture cards. This album was lying open as if it had been recently looked through.

There was nothing else of particular interest found in the room at the first search, save and except some charred pieces of a letter which had been thrown into the grate. The decipherable words on these fragments seemed to point to some kind of assignation, and to request a meeting at the "bar" of some public-house in (something) "Town" on a "Wednesday," and on the reverse side the words "excuse" and "good" (bye) were to be seen. But the most remarkable thing about these burnt bits of letter was the character of the handwriting on them. This was unusually good and almost classical, the *e*'s being fashioned like Greek

epsilons. Now whether or no these pieces of semi-burnt paper were to have any real bearing on the case remained to be proved, but it was obviously essential that we should endeavour to discover the writer.

No further clue was forthcoming for a fortnight, but at the end of that time, as one of the officers was again going through every article of furniture in the room, a postcard slipped out of an old newspaper which had been folded up at the bottom of a drawer. It was addressed to Mrs. Shaw (a name sometimes assumed, I think, by Dimmock), and ran as follows: "Phillis darling,—If it pleases you meet me at 8.15 at the [here came a humorous drawing of a rising sun].—Yours to a cinder, Alice." This became known as the "rising sun postcard," and experts proved that the writing on it was identical with that on the charred fragments.

The very unusual course was then taken of giving photographs of this postcard to press agencies for reproduction in the newspapers. The desired effect was soon obtained, and the handwriting was identified as being that of a young artist on glass. This man was arrested and it was proved that he had been with the murdered woman on the evening in question up to about ten o'clock.

He was duly committed to the Central Criminal Court, and, after a trial which lasted six days, a verdict of "not guilty" was returned; whereupon a section of the British public thought fit to regard the suspect as a popular hero.

It was somewhat disquieting that, when the case came into court, many of the witnesses for the prosecution complained most bitterly to the judge that attempts had been made to intimidate them from giving their evidence, and certainly a great deal of what Charles Dickens would have called "edifying brow-beating" was allowed to go on at the trial itself.

CHAPTER XI.

MISSING CHILDREN—AND WORSE.

“It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.”

IT was only when ill-health and advancing years joined hands and appeared on the stage together that little police troubles seemed to loom up large, and the grasshoppers of the Yard became veritable burdens to me. I had such splendid health during my first twenty years in the Criminal Investigation Department that I think I could have counted up my bad nights on the fingers of one hand.

Nevertheless, there was always the shadow of a great fear over me in one class of case, and that was lest evil should overtake “missing” children. Of course, in nine hundred and ninety cases out of a thousand the little wanderers are found and restored, safe and sound, to their parents. So soon as a child is reported missing at a police station, the officer on duty wires to all surrounding stations, and—on occasions—to all stations in

the Metropolitan Police District, giving a very full description of the dress and appearance of the lost lamb. These descriptions are read out to all reliefs, and not infrequently copied into the notebooks of the constables. Oftentimes the waif turns up many miles from home, and is then taken to the nearest police station, where he, or she, is regaled with tea and bread and butter till such time as the parents can be summoned.

Experiences such as the following must be common to most of us, policemen and laymen alike, to see, as I have seen, one of the finest specimens of the "A" Division, a true son of Anak, some six and a half feet high, walking along Birdcage Walk with a little lost child of three years old toddling by his side. On the occasion to which I am specially referring the gigantic officer had taken off his glove and made it a connecting link between his hand and that of the infant, who was smiling up in his face. These be incidents which make the Metropolitan Police popular with all classes, and do much to supply the moral backbone which is so absolutely lacking in most foreign forces. I cannot imagine an episode of this kind occurring in New York, or Paris, or Berlin. We London policemen have always tried to remember that we are the servants, and not the masters, of the

public, and hence the undoubted popularity of the "man in blue."

There are, however, homicidal maniacs—and worse—abroad in this great city, and, at rare intervals, some hapless infant falls into their hands. Such a case was that of little Mary Bailes, whose tragic death occurred on one of the last days in May 1909. She was living in the north of London, and was seen *within fifty yards of her parents' house*, returning home from school about twenty minutes to six. She never reached her destination. At 8.30 the next morning her little body was found, done up in a brown-paper parcel, in a lavatory near the well-known Elephant and Castle public-house. Her throat was cut, and she had probably been dead about twelve hours: her body bore no marks of assault. This was, in all probability, the work of a homicidal maniac.

Police were working in the dark from the outset, and never saw a ray of daylight in the case at all. Here was a child of about eight years of age, stopped in the busy street by *someone*, taken *somewhere* to enclosed premises of *some* sort, done to death, and then wrapped up in a parcel and conveyed right across London, for the distance from the child's home to the Elephant

and Castle was some four and a half miles as the crow flies.

Never did the Criminal Investigation Department work harder, or with greater determination, than in this case. It was felt that the honour of the London detectives was at stake, and every officer engaged in the inquiries exerted himself to the uttermost. But we were hopelessly baffled, and not the slightest clue was ever vouchsafed to us.

One of the earliest, and one of the strangest, cases which ever came before me was the murder of a girl about twelve years of age. The victim's name was Amelia Jeffs, and the locality was West Ham.

About the 29th of January 1890, at eight o'clock in the evening, a Mr. Jeffs reported to the police at West Ham station that his daughter had gone out some two hours before to execute some small errand and had not returned, and that he and her mother were very anxious about her. The usual steps were taken, but day succeeded day, and no tidings of the missing child were forthcoming. At this time a severe frost prevailed, and work on buildings came to a standstill. Somewhere in the vicinity a row of houses had just been erected in what was, I think, called

the Portway, but none of them was sufficiently advanced for habitation. On the 13th of February, about fifteen days after the disappearance of Amelia Jeffs, a workman had occasion to go to the top storey of one of these houses, and, on opening a large fixed cupboard let into the wall under one of the front windows, was horrified to find the body of a fully dressed child, which had evidently been lying there for some days. Police were at once informed, and in due course the corpse was identified as that of the ill-starred Amelia Jeffs.

In company of several local officers I was on the scene as soon as possible, and if ever a case repaid local and personal investigation this was one. The body looked as if it had been "laid out" by loving hands, as for decent burial, the little hands were crossed on the bosom, the frock carefully pulled down, and the hat, which must have fallen off in the house, was placed *at*, but not *on*, the head. A medical inspection showed that the child had been brutally outraged and then strangled to death by her own comforter, which was still hanging loose around the neck. From the surroundings the crime was easy of reconstruction. Somebody had inveigled the victim into the empty house, the door of which had, probably

by accident, been left open, and the assault must have taken place as the last flight of stairs was being mounted. The screams of the girl must have alarmed the brutal assailant, who, in order to stifle them, pulled tight the ends of the scarf. When he released his hold the child was dead. Horrified at his deed, and hoping perhaps to find there was still life in the body, the murderer carried it to the top landing, and, in the back room, supported it against the wall: the marks of the heels of the little boots were plainly discernible in the thick dust always to be found in newly built houses. Subsequently the corpse was carried into the front room and placed, as already described, in the cupboard under the window.

No one was ever made amenable for this awful crime. But the difference between the cases of Mary Bailes and Amelia Jeffs was that, whereas in the former no clue of any kind was discovered, in the latter very grave suspicions attached to a certain individual. Legal proofs were wanting, and, there being no sufficient evidence to justify an arrest, it must be classified as an "undiscovered" crime.

CHAPTER XII.

BLACKMAILERS AND BLACKMAILEES.

“Suspicion always haunts the guilty mind.”—*King Henry VI.*

A JOURNALIST friend of mine once cynically remarked that everyone in London was either a blackmailer or a blackmailee, the which is, of course, absurd. But, at the same time, the amount of blackmail levied in the Metropolis is stupendous, and is the unsuspected cause of many a suicide and voluntary banishment from the country. Many gangs of blackmailers have reduced their damnable profession to a fine art, and when once they have tasted blood and got their claws into a victim, they will never leave him till they have sucked him as dry as a squeezed lemon, or till death releases him from a life not worth living.

Have you ever realised what it must feel like to be blackmailed? and to know, for a certainty, that you are going to be blackmailed again? To start up at every ring or knock at the door in

terror lest a feared and hated form is once again going to force his (or her) way into your presence. As I have before said, many a man has committed suicide rather than submit to it ; he goes out shooting alone in a wood and never returns alive. Gun accidents do happen, and a verdict of accidental death is, of course, returned. But the agony of mind which the victim suffers first—that is the torment, that is the horror !

Of course where there is smoke there must have been fire, of a sort, and very few of those who are persistently blackmailed have not had one or two holes in their coats, or are (to quote Sir Arthur Pinero in that masterpiece, *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*) a “little dusty about the hems” of their frocks. But that is no reason why they should be bled and bullied out of existence. If any of these persecuted beings would visit my able successor at the Yard, or any other discreet and learned person in the Criminal Investigation Department, they would be given advice, “free, gratis, and for nothing,” and, in certain cases, would be referred to reliable ex-detective officers, who would find a way for them out of their troubles.

Sometimes it is absolutely essential that “information” should be sworn and that prosecutions

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should take place. This is not pleasant for the petitioner. But the lesser of two evils must be boldly faced ; and my experience goes to show that, in nine cases out of ten, if the nettle be firmly grasped and the blackmailer be made clearly to understand that business is undoubtedly meant, he will at once realise that the game is up, and will seek fresh fields and victims new !

There are, and always have been, certain desperate ruffians about who seem to think that they can terrorise wealthy people (who are absolutely innocent of the shadow of a suspicion of any wrong-doing) into giving them large sums of money by sending letters containing blood-curdling threats as to blowing up their houses or introducing cyanide of potassium into their morning rolls.

I remember a case of this kind some twenty-three years ago. The proposed victims were widowed ladies extremely well off, one of whom at least was a confirmed invalid. She it was who received the first letter sent ; although terribly alarmed at the threats, she at once communicated with her son (who, curiously enough, had been at the same house with me at Eton), and he lost no time in forwarding the missive to me at the Yard. It was not a difficult case to get to the

bottom of, and how the blackmailer could have expected to reap a golden harvest from such crude operations I could never understand. He got very short shrift from the late Mr. Justice Hawkins, who sent him away for twenty years' penal servitude. He has, since his release, had further terms of imprisonment, and, take him all round, was one of the most desperate characters I ever came across. For the credit of England I am glad to say he was a foreigner. An adept at chantage, his earlier efforts in crime were much more successful than his later ones. His "housekeeper" was as bad as himself, and in the old days through her very many were blackmailed. But depraved and reckless as are the men and women who take to this life, they have never caused so much misery and devastation as have blackmailing boys.

These imps of iniquity were very much in evidence twenty years ago, and they not infrequently allied themselves with a solicitor who advised and abetted them in their unspeakable practices. Their manner of living was well known to the police; but the difficulty always was to get anyone courageous enough to come forward and undertake a prosecution. However, in the early spring of 1897, fortune befriended the police, who flushed a regular covey of these wretches.

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The way the sport came about was this: A gentleman, rather unwillingly, complained at Scotland Yard that, while taking an evening stroll on the Embankment, he had been robbed of his fur coat by two young men. The circumstances of the case, as detailed by the loser, were of a very piscatorial nature, but the Criminal Investigation Department knew a good thing when they saw it, and went for it "bald headed." The coat was found at a well-known pawnbroker's shop, and not only was the pawner arrested, but what then transpired led to the mopping up of some eight or nine of his pals, who were all collected in the same net.

Other prosecutors were induced to come forward, and Mr. Justice Hawkins (who always seemed to be seated on the bench when cases of this kind were to be tried) gave some very heavy sentences, and his example was followed by other judges, with the result that the neighbourhood of Piccadilly was freer from these pests than it had been for very many years. The severity of some of the sentences would rather surprise the more humanitarian public of these latter days. One misguided youth, with several previous convictions at his back, received a "lifer"; another twenty years, and so forth.

The methods of some of these youthful demons may be gathered from the facts of the following case, which took place, I think, in 1894. In a provincial town by the sea dwelt an elderly valetudinarian. It was ever his custom to take the air in the evening in a bath-chair. One night, as he was being wheeled along, he heard the sounds of sobbing, and, looking round, saw a youth of about sixteen years of age, who was evidently in great tribulation. Upon inquiring the cause, the invalid was informed that the half of a return ticket had been lost, and that unless the loser could get back to town that night he would in all probability lose his business situation. This touching tale had the desired effect. The boy was taken back to the old gentleman's house, and was given some supper and a piece of gold for his return fare. Shortly afterwards he left for the railway station, full of thanks. Even young men should be instructed to fight shy of strangers, and this old man was soon to discover that he had not been entertaining an angel un-awares !

About 9.30 the next morning, as the invalid was sitting down to his solitary breakfast, there was a loud ringing of the front-door bell; this was followed by a hurrying of feet in the hall, the

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dining-room door was thrown open, and on the threshold stood a man of about twenty-five years of age, and of as ill-favoured a countenance as Hogarth ever depicted. He appeared to be in an ungovernable passion, and hissed out that it had come to his knowledge that his young brother had been ruined at that house the night before, that England could no longer be a home for him, and that he must at once emigrate to Australia. To this end a loan of five hundred pounds was demanded—an open cheque for this amount, payable to bearer, to be given at once.

The old man was living alone, and had no friend at hand to whom he could turn for counsel or advice. He did exactly what he ought not to have done. He sat down and wrote out a cheque for five hundred pounds. With this the blackmailer decamped, leaving the blackmailee petrified with fear, but in the hope that he had now seen the last of his terrifying visitor. But he was soon to be made to realise the class of ruffians amongst whom he had fallen.

Just a week afterwards, and precisely at the same hour in the morning, another loud ringing of the bell announced the return of his tormentor. On this occasion he insisted on a cheque for one hundred and fifty pounds being given to himself

“for the trouble he had been put to in getting his ruined brother out of the country.”

Again was a cheque—for the amount demanded—made out, signed, and handed over.

This time, however, on being relieved of the accursed presence, the old man pulled himself together and began to consider matters. He realised that there might be no end to the claims so ruthlessly made upon him. He wrote to his solicitor, and laid the whole case before him. The solicitor, being a man of the world, and possessed of common sense, at once ran up to town and placed the matter in the hands of the Yard, where it was soon discovered that the two “brothers” were not unknown. Warrants were obtained and arrests followed. The elder brother was sentenced to twenty years’, the younger to seven years’, penal servitude.

Upon the question of long or short sentences, touched upon in this chapter, I have no very decided views. Every case, it seems to me, should be dealt with on its own merits. Experience goes to show that it is about an even chance as to whether a convict leaves prison a better or a worse man than he was when he entered it. But there is this point to be considered, and it is one which (as I think) does not receive sufficient

attention. If A steals your purse or breaks my head, and if he is known to have indulged in similar pleasantries these many years past, surely it is only right that you and I, His Majesty's liege subjects, should be protected from these varying annoyances ; and this can only be done by keeping A in durance vile.

Short sentences have been very much in vogue for the last ten years. I do not quarrel with them, but they are simply not "understanded" of the criminal classes, as the following story will show. An old "lag," on being arrested red-handed for a bad burglary, remarked to the detective : " It's a fair cop, guv'nor ; I suppose I'll get about ten years' 'stretch' for this job ? " The officer referred to, bearing in mind the good old adage that a detective should keep his eyes and his ears open, but his mouth shut, expressed no opinion as to the length of punishment likely to be meted out.

In due course the prisoner appeared at the Sessions, when the learned Chairman explained to him in heated language that this was one of the very worst cases that he had ever tried, that society must be protected from the depredations of such a villain as he now saw in the dock before him, and that anything like a merciful sentence

would be altogether out of place. The prisoner began to think that his calculation of ten years had been wholly erroneous, and that fifteen would be nearer the mark, when the Chairman suddenly dried up and gave him six months' hard labour ! Whereupon the astonished criminal leant over the side of the dock, and in a loud stage whisper to his old friend the detective, remarked : " Hi say, is the old beggar boozed ? or don't 'e know 'is job ? "

The Chairman referred to had a strong sense of humour, and oftentimes told this story against himself ; and were he alive to-day I'm sure he would not mind seeing it in print.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MUSWELL HILL AND STEPNEY MURDERS.

“For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak.”
Hamlet.

NEVER were two more savage murders committed than those at Muswell Hill and Stepney, in the spring of 1896. In each case burglary (or house-breaking) was the inciting cause. In each case the murderers provided types more akin to Zola's “human beast” than any criminals of recent years. Both Seaman, who murdered an elderly Jew and his maid-servant at Stepney, and Fowler, who, with Millsom, did to death poor old Mr. Smith at Muswell Hill, were about as ferocious specimens of the *genus homo* as could be imagined. Millsom was of a different and better educated class. He eventually turned Queen's evidence, and was stigmatised by his old confederate as “that dirty dog, my pal.” The Muswell Hill case has always excited keen interest by reason of the sensational part played in it by a child's lantern,

which, after several weeks, brought the two murderers to the gallows.

Mr. Smith, who, though some eighty years of age, was still hale and hearty, lived by himself in a fairly large house with a garden abutting on to the Highgate Woods. Like most solitary dwellers, he was perhaps a little eccentric, but fond of gardening, and an inoffensive, if somewhat taciturn, neighbour. Also, like most solitary dwellers, he was credited with being a miser and having large stores of gold in his house. What he did really keep by him was never known, but probably something less than one hundred pounds. At any rate, these two accomplished burglars, Millsom and Fowler, had "marked him for their own."

One evening, after hiding about in the bushes for some hours, they broke into the house. They prised open a small window with their "jemmies" as soon as the lights in the upper part of the house had been extinguished, and it was surmised that the old gentleman had gone to bed. The noise made on entering the house must have aroused Mr. Smith, who, absolutely fearless, at once came downstairs, and, on entering the kitchen, found himself face to face with the two burglars. Seemingly he was at once attacked and literally

cut to pieces by the "jemmies" of his assailants.

It was a ghastly sight which met the eyes of the first tradesman who called the next morning. Police were at once summoned and a thorough search made. The murderers had evidently made their escape by way of the Highgate Woods. Here the scent broke off, and no trace of them could be found. If I remember rightly, some ordinary housebreaking tools had been left behind, together with a child's bull's-eye lantern, which was afterwards to play so prominent a part in bringing the criminals to justice.

The brutal murder of the harmless old gentleman horrified all London. Scotland Yard became very busy, but it looked for some time as if all police efforts were to be fruitless. The criminal haunts of known burglars were looked up, and the usual sources of information tapped.

No light was vouchsafed to us, and after two or three weeks it seemed as if the Muswell Hill murder was going to climb on the shelf of undiscovered crimes alongside Jack the Ripper and the Café Royal case of eighteen months before. But the inquiries were in the hands of one of those "dogged-does-it" officers, who never know when they are beaten, and who plod along

on their cases just as steadily after three weeks as they do after three days. Happy is the chief of the Criminal Investigation Department who has many such on his staff. In all cases of this kind it is well to encourage the officer in charge by getting him to run round to one's house in the evening. One can then learn, over a cigar, what has been doing and what it is proposed to do. Even if nothing comes of it, the officer goes away in good heart and cheered for his morrow's work.

Four or five weeks must have passed before the inspector came round to me, one Sunday night, with the pleasing intelligence that he had got what looked like two clues, the one really big and hopeful, the other of a minute description. He told me he was going to start on the more important one the first thing the next morning. To my disappointment, at noon I had a wire from him to the effect that number one clue had hopelessly broken down, and that he would now embark on number two. That was the discovery of the association of the toy bull's-eye lantern with Millsom's nephew, owing to the wick being made out of a piece of tartan stuff which Mrs. Millsom was working into a frock for her little daughter. We now knew for whom we were looking, as Millsom and Fowler had been seen

together before disappearing from their usual haunts about the time of the murder. But it took many days to trace them. Eventually it was reported that they were travelling, with a kind of cheap-jack or conjurer, in the west of England. Fowler was said to be the "strong man" of the show, and Millsom, I think, was playing "general utility."

To cut a long story short, after many encouragements and many disappointments—such as are always incidental to and inseparable from detective work—our suspects were traced to Bath, and there arrested in bed one night. They were armed with revolvers and would no doubt have made a desperate resistance, but the arrangements for their capture had been well thought out, and the officers, both metropolitan and local, were too quick for them. There was great excitement at Paddington the next evening when they were brought up from Bath.

In the dock at the Central Criminal Court, Fowler made a rush at Millsom, having heard that he had turned Queen's evidence, and if the warders had not been on the alert and immediately thrown themselves upon him, another murder might have been laid to his charge, for he was a man of Herculean build.

Seaman's story was a plain, unvarnished tale of butchery, and the murder was one of no particular interest. Indeed, had not the papers started a rumour that a second man had been seen escaping from the house where the tragedy occurred, there would have been no necessity for a local visit of a superior officer. The case in its inception was one of housebreaking as opposed to burglary—that is to say, that the offence took place during the day (*i.e.* between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m.). The door was forced and the house entered by Seaman, who, upon encountering the occupier, immediately knocked him down and cut his throat. A stream of blood found its way under the door and into the street. This was noticed by passers-by, who at once called the police, and the house was surrounded. In the meantime Seaman had heard someone moving about in the upper storey, and mindful of the fact that dead women tell no tales, he at once rushed upstairs, and the unfortunate maid shared her master's fate. Nemesis, however, was hot-foot on the trail. Before the double murderer had commenced to search for property, police had entered the house. Seaman broke through the roof and climbed on to the tiles, and the scene then was not unlike that of Bill Sykes's last

moments. Finding that an officer was coming up on to the roof after him, he jumped off, and, falling some forty feet, broke both his thighs. He was condemned at the same Sessions as were Fowler and Millsom, and all three were executed together.

There is a grim story connected with this hanging. It will be remembered that in the dock at the Old Bailey Fowler had made a desperate attempt to assault Millsom. On the day of execution, then, when the fatal shed was reached, Seaman found himself placed under the beam between the two Muswell Hill murderers, and, just before the drop fell, he was heard to remark, "This is the first time as ever I was an adjective peacemaker."

Such is life and death to some people born into this world. But, indeed, Seaman and Fowler were nineteenth-century types of that Barnardine of whom Shakespeare wrote in a *Measure for Measure*: "A man that apprehends death no more dreadfully but as a drunken sleep ; careless, reckless, and fearless of what's past, present, or to come : insensible of mortality and desperately mortal."

CHAPTER XIV.

FINGER-PRINTS IN GENERAL AND THE DEPTFORD MURDER CASE IN PARTICULAR.

“Lives of great men all remind us
We may make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Finger-prints on the tracks of crime.”

(After) LONGFELLOW.

IF I remember aright, this paraphrase formed the peroration of a speech (made by the Chairman at one of the annual dinners of the Criminal Investigation Department) in which the health of the present Chief Commissioner of Police was proposed. It is to him, and to him alone, that society is indebted for a revolution in the detection of criminals, due to the introduction of his system of classifying finger-prints. Of course the value of digital impressions was recognised hundreds, if not thousands, of years ago. Some say that the Chinese, and others that the Assyrians, first utilised them. Be that as it may, it is certain that in the time of the Great Mogul, documents

were stamped by means of thumb-prints. Coming down to much later times—somewhere about the “mid sixties”—Sir William Herschell, a member of the Bengal Civil Service, reintroduced the idea into India. The late Sir Francis Galton entirely recognised the possibilities of finger-prints, and was engaged on them just at the time when the present Prime Minister—then Secretary of State for the Home Department—appointed a small committee to inquire and report as to the best means available for identifying habitual criminals. This was in October 1893.

A few years previously M. Bertillon's anthropometrical system had been introduced in France, and, not without reason, had been considerably boomed. By this method had an anarchist (who perished by the explosion of his own bomb at the Madeleine in Paris) been identified. It was an advance on anything that had gone before; and—if the measurements were taken with unerring accuracy—the results shown were highly satisfactory. The principle of this system consisted in taking records of all prisoners, *including certain measurements, which depended mainly on the length of bony structures in the body.* The particulars thus obtained were entered on cards so classified that each could be picked out by

means of the measurements, independently altogether of the name of the individual. It followed that, by taking measurements of all persons arrested, it became possible to ascertain their identity if they had already been included in the records under any name whatever.

It was felt that the English police were behindhand in the matter of identifying criminals. Generally speaking, the practice of our police forces had depended on personal recognition of offenders by constables or warders. It was by such personal recognition that identity had to be proved in criminal courts, with a view to previous convictions, and it was by the same means (aided by photography of a not very scientific sort), and by registers of distinctive marks, that identity was first discovered.

Mr. Asquith's Committee visited Paris and very carefully studied the Bertillon system. They also paid many visits to Sir Francis Galton. The finger-print idea appealed to them very strongly, but Sir Francis's classification was found to be very much too complicated for police purposes. Finally, then, the Committee submitted a report recommending that the more valuable portion of the existing English system should be supplemented by another, based upon

a combination of the methods of M. Bertillon and Sir Francis Galton. This was approved, and, for seven long years, police muddled along in a not very successful manner.

Great difficulties were experienced in obtaining absolutely accurate measurements in the prisons. Governors and warders did their best and so did police, but results shown were pitifully small. All this time, however, the present Commissioner of Metropolitan Police was working away at "finger-prints" in Bengal, and eventually evolved a system of classification as perfect as it was simple. It could readily be "understanded of" any police officer, and when Sir Edward (then Mr.) Henry arrived at the Yard in 1901 it took him only a few months to reorganise the identification arrangements, and to place them on the very satisfactory footing upon which they rest to-day.

From the very first the supreme worth of his system was recognised even by the most conservative of constables. The working of it, from that time to the present, has been a clear and unbroken record of success. The identification of an habitual criminal nowadays is as quick as it is clever.

I remember, as the first Derby Day drew

nigh, after our "finger-prints" were in full swing, it was feared that we should not be able to fully utilise them on that occasion, inasmuch as offenders were taken in up till six or seven in the evening, and were dealt with summarily by the Petty Sessional Court at nine-thirty the next morning. Scotland Yard, however, determined not to be beaten in the matter; experts were sent to Epsom and then and there took the finger-prints of fifty-four men who were arrested for various offences on the racecourse on Derby Day. These impressions were taken up to the finger-print department that night. Two officers, who had been kept on reserve duty for that purpose, examined them, with the result that twenty-nine of these men were found to be old offenders. Their records and photographs were taken down to Epsom early the following morning by a chief inspector. When the "arrests" appeared before the justices at half-past nine, they were confronted with a record of their previous convictions, with the result that they received sentences twice as long as would otherwise have been awarded.

The first prisoner on this occasion gave his name as Green of Gloucester, and assured the interrogating magistrate that he had never been

in trouble before, and that a racecourse was, up to this time, an unknown world to him. But up jumped the Chief Inspector, in answer to a question as to whether "anything was known," and begged their worships to look at the papers and photograph, which proved the innocent to be Benjamin Brown of Birmingham, with some ten convictions to his discredit. "Bless the finger-prints," said Benjamin, with an oath; "I knew they'd do me in!"

But what gave our finger-print system a really sensational lift was a supreme piece of good luck which befell me during my inquiries into the murders of a Mr. and Mrs. Farrow at Deptford in March 1905. In the High Street there was a small shop, calling itself an "oil and colour stores." It belonged to a Mr. Chapman, who employed an elderly couple of the name of Farrow to look after the business for him. They resided on the premises. It was rumoured in the neighbourhood that these old people had saved money and were hoarding it up. It turned out in this case, as in most others, that Dame Rumour was a lying jade. I do not think that they had more than six or seven pounds in the house.

It subsequently transpired that on the

morning of the murder, at about 7.15, a little girl, while playing in the street, saw the shop door slowly open and the figure of an old man—undoubtedly Mr. Farrow—appeared on the threshold. Blood was streaming down his head and face. After a few seconds he reclosed the door and was never afterwards seen alive. The child only mentioned this grim fact to her parents two or three days afterwards, and apparently it had made very little impression on her. As a matter of fact, there are a good many slaughter-houses in Deptford and its vicinity, and the sight of blood is not so abhorrent to those who dwell in the East, as to those who dwell in the West, End of London.

An hour later a milkman called, and going round to the back of the house looked in at the window, and was horrified to see Mr. Farrow lying dead on his face by the side of the fireplace, and an overturned chair just behind him. Police were called in and the Yard was at once informed. In these days of rapid locomotion it did not take long to get down to the scene of the tragedy, and by 9.30 we were on the spot.

Mr. and Mrs. Farrow had their bedroom on the second floor. Upon entering that apartment, the poor old lady was found lying on her bed

with her head battered in. She was groaning out her life. An ambulance had been obtained and she was removed as soon as possible. She never spoke, and, if I remember rightly, died before reaching the hospital.

Under the husband's bed was a small cash-box, the tray of which was lying a few feet away. Near it, and under the bed, a sixpenny piece had rolled, showing that the murderers had left in a hurry. Now a japanned surface is a very good medium for the retention of a finger-print, and specially so, of course, if the papillary ridges are damp from perspiration, caused by excitement or any other cause. I am given to understand that nervous tension during operations generally causes burglars to have clammy hands. In our case the cash-box showed nothing like an impression, but on one side of the tray there was a blurred mark which had all the characteristics of a digital imprint.

On inquiry being made as to whether anyone had touched this tray, a young detective-sergeant came forward in some trepidation and confessed that he had moved it a little way under the bed, as he feared it might be disturbed by the feet of one of the ambulance-bearers when they entered the room. He was assured that no harm had been done, but was told to go up to the Yard in the

course of the day and have his finger-prints taken. The cash-box and the tray were then most carefully wrapped up in paper and carted away to the finger-print department at Scotland Yard.

The crime was very easy of reconstruction. The housebreakers had forced an entry on the ground floor. Their breaking in must have been heard by Mr. Farrow, who, partly dressed, came downstairs, where he was at once attacked and left for dead by the intruders. The unfortunate wife must have heard the scuffle, but her screams were soon to be smothered. The ruffians rushed upstairs and beat her with their "jemmies" as she lay in bed. The cash-box had evidently been found under the husband's pillow; the murderers emptied it and hurriedly decamped.

From the door of the kitchen, which led into the back of the shop, right up to the front door, was a very distinct and continuous trail of blood, which, on the first day of the inquiry, was a puzzling feature. But in view of what the little girl in the street reported she had seen, there can be no doubt that the poor old man partly recovered consciousness after the departure of his assailants, and had then, in a dazed condition, made his way to the front door, opened it, looked hopelessly and helplessly out, and then returned to the

kitchen, where he tried to sit down in a chair, but overbalanced and fell dead by his own fireside.

Two masks made out of old black stockings were found in the kitchen, and gave proof that at least two men must have been engaged in the crime. The facts as to the masks and the wife's life having been taken pointed to the probability of the murderers being local men who feared recognition. Nothing but cash had been stolen, and the case was evidently one which would give trouble. In a day or two the experts in the finger-print department reported that the impression on the tray of the cash-box had "enlarged" (by photography) remarkably well, and that there would not be the least difficulty about recognising the finger that made it, should that finger at any time fall within the clutches of the police.

In the meantime the finger-prints of the young detective-sergeant had been taken, and showed no characteristics in keeping with the cash-box imprint; and the same course of procedure with regard to the hands of the murdered Farrows led to a similar result. Local inquiries were being pushed in every possible direction, and, after three or four days, information reached us that two young brothers, of a very pronounced "hooligan" type, were suspected housebreakers,

and might very easily have been engaged in such a crime as had been committed. Their name was Stratton. They were dwellers in Deptford, but birds of passage, and the same address seldom found them for two weeks together. The French adage, *Cherchez la femme*, is a very good one, and it was through a woman who had been ill-treated by the elder brother that we first got on the right scent.

The murder had taken place, I think, on a Monday morning, and by the Friday evening little bits of information had reached us, which (although not crushingly conclusive from a legal point of view), when pieced together, made us feel quite satisfied that when we could lay our hands on the Stratton brothers we should have the guilty parties in custody. The address of the elder brother had been ascertained, but the younger had not been seen about his old haunts for many days. It was deemed advisable to arrest them, if possible, together. As they were constant in their attendance at football matches, and an important cup tie was billed for the Saturday afternoon at the Crystal Palace, it was hoped that a joint capture might be then effected. Football, however, had no fascination for them at this time. They never turned up

at the match, and, to add to our disquietude, the elder brother slipped away from his lodging and temporarily disappeared. Anything in the shape of "shadowing" or strict observation had been purposely forbidden lest the birds should be startled before the fowler's net was ready for them.

On the Sunday morning, then, police were in somewhat of a quandary. Orders were issued that either of the brothers was to be arrested, wherever found, and to be charged with "wilful murder." That Sabbath was a busy day; but, late in the evening, one of the brothers was arrested in a public-house and the other was "taken in" the next morning. This enabled them to be brought up together at the Tower Bridge Police Court at noon, and very noisy and disorderly they were in the dock. The counsel for the Director of Public Prosecutions did not think much of the evidence available, but promised to get the prisoners remanded for a week. This was done in due course, and the brothers were then "finger-printed" at the police court before being taken away to the remand prison.

I had returned to office in the forenoon, and shall never forget the dramatic entry made into my room by the expert an hour or two later.

“ Good God, sir,” he exclaimed, with pardonable excitement, “ I have found that the mark on the cash-box tray is in exact correspondence with the print of the right thumb of the elder prisoner.” After this all went well with the prosecution. Attempts to disparage the finger-print system were made at the trial at the Old Bailey, but they egregiously failed, and the brothers Stratton suffered the extreme penalty of the law.

Before saying “ good-bye ” to finger-prints, I should like to tell two more short stories, illustrating again their immutability and deadly accuracy. Some eight or ten years ago, an old “ lag,” who had not been recognised by any officer at the police court, was remanded for a week. He had every reason to fear the result of “ finger-printing,” and fully realised that a black past would thereby be revealed at his next appearance before the magistrate. On his way to the remand prison in Black Maria he excoriated (with a pluck and perseverance worthy a better cause) the papillary ridges of his thumbs and fingers by means of a metal tag attached to his bootlace. On arriving at Brixton Prison his hands were found to be in a terrible state, and one in which an application of prepared ink, for taking the prints, might very well have induced

blood-poisoning. The governor of the prison duly reported to Scotland Yard. One of the experts went down, and, inspecting the prisoner's lacerated hands with a magnifying-glass, was able to make out what eventually proved to be the distinguishing ridges on every digit. But, in order to be on the safe side, the man was remanded from week to week until the wounds had healed, and the impressions then taken revealed his notorious identity.

And now for my "lastly." One morning at daybreak, about three and a half years ago, a police constable, while patrolling a street in Clerkenwell, observed a solitary finger, with a yellow metal ring on same, impaled on one of the spikes on the top of a gate. It was obvious that somebody, on felony intent, had tried to climb this gate, which was some ten feet high and led into a warehouse yard. He had evidently got on the top, and, in his attempt to reach the ground on the inner side, had placed his feet on the centre cross bar, while still grasping the spikes with his right hand. In this position he must have slipped, and the metal ring which he was wearing on his little finger had caught on one of the metal spikes. He was thus suspended until the weight of his body tore the finger away.

This very ghastly "piece of conviction" was brought to the Yard. A laborious search was made amongst the finger-print slips, with the result that it was identified as that of the right little finger of a man who had more than one conviction recorded against him, but who had not come under the notice of police for some time past.

Three weeks later a detective-sergeant of the Lambeth division arrested two men as suspected pickpockets, hustling among the crowds who were waiting for tramcars near the Elephant and Castle public-house. At the police station one of the men arrested, pointing to a heavily bandaged hand, asked, "How could I pick pockets with a hand like this? I cut it very badly at Clapham last week." The officer had a good memory, and had heard of the Clerkenwell constable's "find." "I don't think," he dryly remarked; "but I do believe that you've lost a finger, and that the Yard people are keeping it for you." Subsequently the prisoner was charged under the Prevention of Crimes Act, and sentenced to twelve months' hard labour. The ways of transgressors are hard.

CHAPTER XV.

ASSASSINATIONS.

“One to destroy is murder by the law,
And gibbets keep the lifted hand in awe.”

YOUNG.

ASSASSINATIONS (which may, I think, be differentiated from common murders) are, happily, rare in this country. When they do take place they are generally found to be the work of half-crazy individuals, and are as purposeless as they are deplorable. Towards the end of 1897 the whole of London was shocked one night to hear that the handsome and debonair William Terriss had lost his life by the knife of an assassin as he was entering the stage door of the Adelphi Theatre.

The madman, whose name, I think, was Prince, was at once arrested and eventually sent to Broadmoor. Many rumours—some of a not very charitable nature—were bruited abroad as the reason for the murderous act; all such, so far as I know, were absolutely devoid of any

foundation. Professional jealousy (if this could be said of a man who had, I believe, rarely played a part more distinguished than that of a "Salaminian Sailor" or a banner-bearer), acting upon an ill-conditioned mind, was the sole cause that deprived poor William Terriss of life. And what a fine actor he was in certain kinds of parts! Those who saw him play Henry II. to Sir Henry Irving's Becket, or Squire Thornhill in that gem of a play, *Olivia*, are never likely to forget such artistic impersonations. Perhaps too much Adelphi melodrama did not tend to improve his methods; but, if the public insisted on his playing the part of a dashing naval lieutenant, or a gallant young subaltern, who should gainsay them? In whatever work he undertook Terriss was a striking personality.

In connection with his death there was a story which well illustrates Charles Brookfield's readiness (I had almost written eagerness!) to take offence at pressmen and their writings. The day after the assassination a halfpenny paper published a sensational account of the occurrence, and of the emotional scenes which took place in the theatre. These were given in highly coloured detail, which Brookfield resented, and he wrote a somewhat intemperate letter to

the editor on the matter. He received in reply a very civil acknowledgment, regretting that anything published in their columns should have given offence, but adding that, in the opinion of the editor, the account given by the reporter was a true one, and in no way contravened the limits of good taste. This further enraged Brookfield, who dashed off the following answer:—

“SIR,—God who, in His infinite mercy, has deprived the negro of the sense of smell, would seem similarly to have deprived the journalist of all sense of decency.—Your obedient servant,

“CHARLES H. E. BROOKFIELD.”

And now I come to what was the saddest day I ever spent in the Metropolitan Police. At eleven o'clock one night, in July 1909, I had just got into bed when I received a telephone message from the Walton Street Police Station to the effect that Sir Curzon Wyllie had been assassinated at the Imperial Institute, and that his murderer, a native of India, was in custody. The message was sent by the inspector on duty, who, of course, had no knowledge of the very intimate and affectionate relations which had existed between Wyllie and myself for six-and-thirty

years. It was in November 1873 that we first met in Bombay and journeyed across India together.

When I got down to Walton Street, I found that the assassin had already been conveyed there, and was in the charge-room. He was exactly the kind of man whom I had expected to see. A conceited young native, one of the least desirable products of that education with which the British raj has so liberally endowed India. He desired one thing, and one thing only— notoriety; and now he stood in the charge-room, devilish and complacent, for he knew he had gained it! What was it to him that in so doing he had wrecked a home and had taken one of the purest and most unselfish lives that an English gentleman ever lived—a life devoted to the welfare of the masses of India. On Dhingra—for that was the name of the assassin—we found a proclamation in triplicate, saying that he was going to die that India might live, and a lot more nonsense to the same effect. His pistol was lying on the inspector's table. I have often wondered whether the same thought which occurred to me presented itself to any of the other police officers assembled. If Dhingra could have been then and there disposed of, and “ gone down into the (quick lime) pit quickly,” it would have been a very

salutary lesson to all of his co-conspirators, for men of his kidney are perfectly content to go to the scaffold if they are allowed first to make a speech, or publish a proclamation from the dock. This fact was readily understood by the Lord Chief Justice who tried the case.

Just as the dawn was breaking I walked home. Never was there a more lovely summer's morning, but the knowledge that the light of an heroic soul had gone out made the whole world seem dark to me.

*"Multis ille bonis flebilis occidit
Nulli flebilior quam mihi!"*

CHAPTER XVI.

A LION TWICE BEARDED IN HIS DEN.

“*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes.*”—HORACE.

IT does not fall to the lot of every police officer to have been victimised alike by the common burglar and the more vulgar area sneak. These two experiences have been mine. They were by no means unmixed evils. “One touch of nature makes the whole world kin,” and when infuriated losers of property, by burglary, or other means, turned up at Scotland Yard, it was a sensible satisfaction to them to find that the gentleman whom they interviewed had a fellow feeling; in the words of the poet “he himself was not exempt, truly he himself had suffered,”—and many of those who came to objurgate remained to sympathise.

The public are, not unnaturally, very loose in their definitions of crime. Everything is accounted a burglary. It is a very common occurrence to hear people say, “We’ve had the

devil of a time lately in our street—two burglaries in one month.” Upon inquiries being made, it generally turns out that an individual has called on some pretext to see the masters of the two houses, and, upon the servant going away to apprise them, has levanted with an overcoat or an umbrella. This would be deemed larceny by trick (or something like it), which class of offence does not show up so badly as burglary in criminal returns, although the practical results may be equally and sufficiently annoying.

I have often wondered why more area sneaks do not exist, and why criminal business in this direction is not extended. It is all so simple. At about 2.30, or 3 o'clock in the afternoon, servants have mostly gone upstairs, and I am afraid that it is the exception rather than the rule that area gates are locked. What more easy than to descend the steps and knock softly at the kitchen door? If the summons is responded to the area sneak's question is already prepared, "Any empty bottles for sale, miss?" He is, in most cases, indignantly ordered off the premises, and goes up the steps unscathed, and there the matter ends. But, if no response is made to his knock, he enters at his own sweet will, and probably finds such silver as the family has used for

lunch set out on the pantry table. This he annexes and puts away in his "bottles" bag. If the house be a small corner one, such as has been in the occupation of the writer for many years past, the pantry can probably be seen into from the street, so that the thief is able to appraise his prospective gains, and to make a calculation as to whether it is a "good enough job."

In the particular case I refer to "fear added wings" to the depredator, so soon as he regained the street, and he commenced to run, dropping, as he did so, one of the silver spoons from his bag. This was observed by a postman, who, however, took no notice of the matter at the time, but reported it at the police station afterwards. The silver appropriated was at once taken to Hoxton and thrown into one of the melting-pots always on the boil there.

The local detectives were not long in finding out who had done the job, but evidence against him was not forthcoming, as the postman failed to identify. The officers, however, were determined to get a bit of their own back, and, after a little scientific shadowing, the suspect was found frequenting areas for an unlawful purpose, and was put away, if I remember rightly, for three months.

My second misadventure, that of the burglary, took place about eighteen months afterwards, and, had it not been for the admirable vigilance of the uniform officers in the neighbourhood, might have been fraught with most unpleasant consequences.

Early in May 1895 a high wind and much dust caused the servant to shut the window of the smoking-room early in the day, but she forgot to fasten the catch. This was noticed, in the afternoon, by two young Westminster burglars out on the prowl; and, the access to the window in question being particularly easy, they determined to pay me an unofficial visit that night, feeling pretty confident that the fastening of the window would remain in the same unlatched condition. That was the last day of the Easter holidays. My Eton boy should have returned to school in the evening, but he had developed a rash, which, late in the afternoon, was pronounced to be measles. This was more than depressing, seeing that he had, through a bad attack of scarlet fever, been absent for a whole term the previous year. I must apologise for giving these trivial domestic details, but they are necessary in the light of what subsequently transpired.

We all of us went to bed that night in rather

low spirits. My son's bedroom was on the ground floor, next to the dining-room, from which a passage led into the smoking-room. At about half-past two we were awakened by a diversity of noises of a very distressing nature. The maternal instinct led my wife to believe that the boy was delirious. She beat me in a race downstairs by one short flight. When I reached the bottom my wife said, "Someone is in the smoking-room; he whispered down the passage, 'Lidy, lidy, don't be afride, it's only me.'"

Although in great fear lest the burglar should tread on my naked feet (always a most sensitive portion of my anatomy) I rushed into the smoking-room, and saw a short, thick-set man dodging round the eight-foot-long billiard-table. I soon caught and collared him (mercifully without having my toes trodden on) and then put my hand into his breast-pocket, expecting to find a "jemmy" (or "stick," as the thieving fraternity call this stock-in-trade article), but nothing was there, and the man was evidently unarmed. "Don't hit me, guv'nor," he said, "and I'll go quiet."

During all this time the pandemonium of noise, which had first aroused us, was being continued. Someone had got their finger on the electric bell at the front door, and was pressing it

ceaselessly ; someone had seized the knocker and was making play with it for all he was worth ; a cockatoo was screaming on the landing, and an old dachshund, tied up in the kitchen, was barking as only an old dachshund can bark ! Amidst the din of battle I called out that I had got my man, and that my wife must now open the door. This was accordingly done, when two unusually tall policemen stepped across the threshold, with an uncommonly under-sized member of the criminal classes wedged between them.

What had happened was as follows : The prospective marauders had left their lair in Great Peter Street, Westminster, about 1 a.m., and strolled down to their objective in Pimlico. There they rested a while and watched the retreating form of the constable on the beat, and, when he was well out of sight, commenced operations. The more hardened criminal of the two climbed the area railings, got on to the window-sill, lifted the sash, crept into the house, and closed the window after him. His pal was to remain on guard outside, and it had been arranged that, in a few moments, a signal should be given if all were right, and that then the man inside might set to work. Fortunately, however, a "man in blue" was crossing the long, unlovely street some

hundred yards higher up, and, seeing a stationary loafer, rightly conjectured that he could be up to no good at that hour of the night. He therefore descended upon him and demanded his business. "Waiting to see my girl," was the watchman's reply. "Well, you don't wait any longer," says the constable; "now be off." The temporarily disappointed ill-doer slouched away and turned down the first side street. The officer, however, had liked neither his manner nor his movements, and, thinking that he might return, hid himself behind the double pillars of the portico. His suspicions were well founded. In another five minutes his man returned, and, when three or four yards from the door, was pounced upon.

At this psychological moment the burglar inside, being weary of waiting for the long-deferred signal, struck a silent match. The constable grasped the situation; while retaining his hold of the watchman, he blew his whistle, which very speedily brought another police officer to his assistance, and "then the band played" in the matter of the electric bell and the door-knocker, while the cockatoo and the dog supplied the vocal accompaniments. I wasn't sorry to hand over my prisoner, and, in due course, went down to Gerald Road Police Station and charged the men.

It was about four o'clock when I got back to bed.

The next morning to Westminster Police Court, and there (as Pepys would say) bound over to appear against the prisoners (who were old offenders) at the next Sessions at the Central Criminal Court. Prosecutors certainly don't meet with much encouragement in this country! I suppose the law's delays are inevitable, but I had to kick my heels about at the Old Bailey for two days before the case came on, and, as things were and are conducted, I suppose I was lucky in not having to wait longer. The learned recorder, then Sir Charles Hall, tried the case, and the prisoners were sentenced, respectively, to eighteen and fifteen months' hard labour.

My particular friend received the longer imprisonment, and has since followed it up by getting several terms of penal servitude for similar offences. Still, I have kindly recollections of him because he didn't tread on my feet when he had the opportunity of so doing. I looked at his boots afterwards and shuddered! He was a violent young fellow and a sturdy one, who, on previous occasions, had always shown fight. On being asked by one of the detectives why he had made no resistance in my case, he

replied, "The Chief Constable were several sizes too big for me." I have watched this criminal's career for the last eighteen years and fear he is incorrigible—hopeless as a citizen and a menace to society.

It is often alleged that, in a majority of cases, servants are in league with the wrong-doers who break into their master's premises. Experience leads me to believe that this very rarely happens. But, in my particular instance, there certainly was a concatenation of circumstances which, to a suspicious mind, might well have proved confirmation strong as proof of holy writ (but I *know* that there was nothing of the sort); firstly, the window was left unfastened, and secondly, on going down to the basement, after the burglars had been arrested, I found the key of the safe (built in under the kitchen stairs) had been left on the table in the pantry, the door of which was wide open. It was the servant's duty to have taken the key up to her bedroom. These were corroborative coincidences and nothing more.

CHAPTER XVII.

RAILWAY TRAGEDIES.

"The quivering carriages rock and reel,
Hurrah! for the rush of the grinding steel,
The thundering crank and the mighty wheel."

Puck on Pegasus.

WHAT a deafening accompaniment the above three lines would make to a madman's murder on a train! The only railway case of sensational importance which gave us "days" of anxiety was one perpetrated by a homicidal maniac—but more of that anon.

Happily these tragedies are not, I hope and believe, likely to be as frequent in the future as they have been in the past. From a police point of view they were always troublesome cases to deal with, and, most naturally, raised considerable perturbation in the minds of the travelling public. In the old-fashioned railway compartments (too many of which are in existence at the present time) passengers were helplessly, and hopelessly, isolated. The introduction of corridor

trains has given a very real sense of security, and, when travelling in them, the chances of a murderous attack are almost nil. Let us take the three most important of these cases in chronological order :—

- (1) The murder of Mr. Briggs between Fenchurch Street and Hackney in 1864.
- (2) The murder of Mr. Gold on the Brighton line in 1881.
- (3) The murder of Miss Camp between Putney and Wandsworth on the L. & S.W. Railway in 1897.

I am old enough to remember well the interest which we boys, at a private school, took in the murder of Mr. Briggs, and in the capture and trial of Franz Müller, and often have I seen the counterfeit presentment of the latter in the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussaud's. When I first went to the Yard, I heard a good many facts about this case from my predecessor in the post of Chief Constable of the Criminal Investigation Department (who has already been affectionately mentioned in a former chapter). He was a detective-sergeant at the time when the murder took place. There is nothing new under the sun, and the race across the Atlantic, which terminated in Müller's capture at New York, was the very counterpart of what

took place in the Crippen case just six-and-forty years later !

Mr. Briggs was an elderly gentleman who occupied a very good position in a City bank, and who resided at Hackney. On the night of the murder he had been detained in town, and the evening was advanced when he got into a train at Fenchurch Street on his homeward journey. He never reached Hackney alive. When the train stopped at one of the intermediate stations, a passenger, who was about to enter the (then empty) compartment in which the ill-fated Mr. Briggs had travelled, noticed that the cushions were wet with what appeared to be blood, and that a walking-stick and a hat were lying on the floor. He at once called the attention of the stationmaster to the matter.

A careful search was made along the line, and somewhere in the vicinity of Victoria Park the body of a well-dressed elderly gentleman was found. Although his head had been literally battered in by some blunt weapon, such as a "jemmy," or life-preserver, he still breathed. He remained unconscious till his death, which took place a few hours later. Some letters in his pocket established his identity, and the bank authorities were at once communicated with. A

gold watch and chain, which he was known to have worn the previous day, were missing. The walking-stick found had belonged to the deceased gentleman, but the hat was not his. It was a fair inference then, that in the hurry of escaping from the train the murderer had left behind his own hat and gone off with that of his victim. Inside the crown of the hat found was stamped the name of a well-known maker in Marylebone.

This was something to start with, and, from this time forward, Fortune favoured the police to the end of the chapter. Clues cropped up all round. A cabman came forward and gave information that, till quite recently, he had had a lodger, a German named Franz Müller, and that he had bought for him at this very shop the identical hat, which he recognised. The gold chain had already been "circulated" by police, and found in possession of a pawnbroker or jeweller in Cheapside. This man (whose name was Death !) said he had received the chain from a foreigner and had given him another in exchange for it.

The cabman made a further statement to the effect that Müller had given his little daughter a cardboard box which had stamped on it: Death, Cheapside. No better evidence could be forthcoming on which to procure a warrant. Müller's

movements were being traced. It was found that he had taken a passage on board a sailing vessel which, bound for New York, had started from the London docks.

Two detectives, in whose company went the jeweller and the cabman for the purpose of identification, at once travelled to Liverpool and steamed in pursuit. As was only to be expected, the steamer arrived in New York many days before the sailing vessel was sighted. No time was lost in boarding her on arrival: Müller was at once identified by the two witnesses and charged on the warrant. In the prisoner's box the murdered man's watch was found. Moreover, at the very time of his arrest, he was found wearing Mr. Briggs's hat; the crown of the same had been cut down and the top sewn on again in a particularly workmanlike manner. As the old Chief Constable told me, there was a very dramatic moment at the trial when the fact was elicited that Müller at one time had been a *tailor*! The evidence before had indeed been of an overwhelming nature, yet this seemed to satisfy the jury more than anything else which had previously transpired.

The murder of Mr. Gold, whose body was found in the Balcombe tunnel on the Brighton

line, took place in 1881. I was in Bengal at the time, but, even in the Far East, the case caused considerable sensation. I well remember the grim riddle as to why it was expedient to purchase L.B. & S.C. Railway stock ; the answer being because " gold " had been found in one of the Company's tunnels !

When I joined the Yard, seven or eight years later, I found that one of the then chief inspectors was the officer who had been deputed to make the various inquiries in London in connection with the case ; and he it was, I think, who actually arrested Lefroy at his lodgings in a London suburb. He often told me the salient facts, which afforded an object-lesson to police officers as to the advisability of safe-holding a suspect after they once had laid their hands on him.

Mr. Gold was a retired business man who had largely invested in house property in London, the rents of which he used personally to collect. For this purpose he frequently came up to town for the day. He lived at Preston Park, just outside Brighton. Late one afternoon some travellers by the London and Brighton express thought they heard the discharge of firearms in a neighbouring compartment as the train was entering the Merstham tunnel, just beyond South

Croydon ; and it subsequently transpired that, as the express was passing Horley, some men saw a struggle taking place between two passengers in a first-class carriage.

When the train slowed down at Preston Park, a man of disarranged attire and dilapidated appearance alighted from a first-class compartment. He gave his name as Lefroy, and told the railway officials a wildly improbable story, to the effect that when he left London his carriage was shared by two other passengers. All went well till South Croydon was passed, then he remembered hearing a pistol-shot, and immediately afterwards received a blow on the head which rendered him senseless. When he came to he was alone in the carriage. Some foreign coins were strewed about the floor, and (what must have seemed most extraordinary) the end of a gold watch-chain was seen to be hanging out of Lefroy's boot. He gave, as his residence, an address at Croydon, and thither the police accompanied him. On arrival he asked and obtained permission to change his clothes. He was allowed to enter the house alone—and, not unnaturally, left it by the back door. After waiting for a considerable time the officers entered the house, only to find that the bird was flown, nor was

he caged again till three or four weeks had passed.

Meanwhile the body of the murdered man was found on the line in the Balcombe tunnel. A hue and cry was raised after Lefroy. No photograph of the missing man was forthcoming ; but a gentleman who had often met him in London came forward with a sketch portrait which he had made from memory. This was photographed and published in one of the morning papers. A copy can still be seen at Scotland Yard ; it represents what appears to be a palpable caricature of one of the most typical degenerates that it is possible to imagine. It must, nevertheless, have been a very striking likeness, and through its insertion in the papers Lefroy was captured. He had been lodging for some three weeks at a very quiet street in the south, or east, of London. During that period he had never once left the house. This excited the suspicions of his landlady, who, on seeing the portrait, thought she recognised it, and at once communicated with the Yard.

Percy Lefroy Mapleton—for that was, I believe, his real name—had a curious history. He said he was an actor, but I think had never got nearer the stage than the writing of some lines for the opening scenes in a provincial pantomime.

“The profession,” however, is quite accustomed to being maligned. How often in police courts do young women give their avocation as “actress,” when in reality they are something very, very different!

The “four minutes’ murder,” as some of the newspapers called it at the time, was that by which Miss Camp met her death on the L. & S.W. Railway, in the spring of 1897. It was so called because the train took exactly four minutes in running between Putney and Wandsworth. At the former station the unfortunate woman was seen in a compartment reading a magazine, at the latter station her murderer probably alighted, having, in that short space of time, battered in his victim’s head and pushed the body under the seat.

Miss Camp was a barmaid at Waterloo Station. She had many friends, and was universally liked and respected. So far as could be ascertained she had absolutely no enemy in the world. She had, on this particular day, been visiting relatives at Hounslow, and left to return to town at about eight o’clock in the evening. The body was discovered by a carriage cleaner an hour and a half after the train had reached Waterloo, and even

then, if I remember rightly, there was some delay in informing police, and, in consequence, many valuable hours were lost. It was a very favourite saying of my predecessor at the Yard, that "if you don't catch a murderer in the first twenty-four hours, you don't get him at all!" This statement is a bit too arbitrary, but, for all that, it contains a good deal of truth. At the commencement of a murder investigation every minute is of golden importance.

As soon as news reached us, inquiries were at once made up and down the line. The murdered woman had entered an empty compartment at Hounslow. At Putney—where she was noticed reading a paper—it was said that a man was seated opposite to her, but no description of him was at any time forthcoming, nor could it be ascertained at what station he had entered the train.

Within some fifty yards of the Wandsworth Station (on the right-hand side as you come up from Putney) is the Alma public-house, the dome-like roof of which can be seen from the line. Here it was that the first possible clue was obtained. About the time of the arrival of the train at Wandsworth a man entered the bar of the house and called for twopennyworth of rum.

He was a wild, weird-looking individual, with a very thick black moustache. It was noticed that the collar of his overcoat was wet with some thick, glutinous matter. His entrance and general appearance excited some interest amongst the tavern folk, but, of course, at that time they knew nothing as to a murder having been committed. After a few minutes the mysterious stranger drank up his rum and left. His heavy moustache, and that alone, seems to have impressed those who saw him, and the importance of this will be seen later on in the story.

The next morning a pestle, with blood and hair adhering to it, was found at the side of the line, about one hundred yards from where the train would have pulled up at the Wandsworth Station platform. It was undoubtedly the weapon with which the murder had been committed. It was also evident that the murderer had intended to throw it into the river Wandle, but that it must have struck a telegraph post, or wire, and bounded back on to the railway embankment.

Police had now got the weapon; they also had knowledge of the fact that a mysterious individual had been in the Alma public-house the night before, very soon after the murder had been committed, but where was he to be found?

and, if found, how could he be connected with the crime? These were problems for the Yard to solve.

Two or three days later the police at Blackheath found a man wandering about in pitiable plight. He was much travel-stained; he had evidently been sleeping out for some nights, and possessed no overcoat. He appeared half-witted, and though unshaved for many days had very little hair on his face. He said he had been down at Redhill the week before, and this was verified by inquiry. His home, he stated, was on the River Thames, some forty miles from London.

The investigations were entrusted to the same chief inspector who had so successfully conducted the Muswell Hill case the year before. At his request a junior inspector was sent down to the address given by the wanderer, and, after making the necessary inquiries, returned to the Yard on a Sunday morning, when I met both officers. The information locally obtained showed that this man was of weak intellect, but what impressed both inspectors more than anything else, and went far to convince them that the suspect could not have been the man who drank rum at the Alma public-house on the night of the murder, was the fact that his neighbours one and all asserted that he

never had grown a moustache and never could grow one.

Upon this I drew a bow at a venture, and suggested that, on the occasion in question, the man might have been wearing a false moustache. This idea seemed to my hard-headed and matter-of-fact officers to be fantastic and somewhat far-fetched, and they told me so, for there is nothing like free and unrestrained converse with your detectives if you are to get anything out of them or they are to get anything out of you. However, only a few days afterwards, the wanderer (who was being looked after by police) volunteered the information that he had bought a false moustache in Redhill and had thrown it away somewhere in the Edgware Road a day or so before he came under the notice of police in the vicinity of Blackheath.

He was put up for identification by the people who had seen him in the Alma, but they all failed to pick him out, and roundly asserted that their rum-drinking acquaintance had a large, dark moustache. In this country, of course, it was impossible to furnish him with a second hirsute appendage for his upper lip, though no doubt in France one would have been promptly provided.

The inquest on the body of Miss Camp was held by the coroner for the south-western district—a gentleman who died many years ago, but who was renowned for his pertinacity and the zeal with which he prosecuted the inquiries in his court. Again and again did he adjourn, and his questions to the wanderer were many and apposite. But the identification had entirely failed, and it could never be proved that he was on the spot, though he must have been perilously near it. Some months after the man was adjudged insane and confined in a lunatic asylum, and, as far as I know, he died there.

The murder of Miss Camp was wholly without motive, and was no doubt perpetrated by some homicidal maniac. Such men, I believe, have no recollection of their guilty acts, which pass out of their minds as soon as they have been committed.

As, according to Shylock, there be water rats as well as land rats, so are there murders on steamers as well as in trains. Fortunately these are rare, and, when they do take place, the motive for the crime is generally obvious, and very little doubt exists as to the guilty parties. A case, however, occurred three or four years ago which presented some curious features.

The good ship *China*, of the P. & O. Company's fleet, was on a homeward voyage somewhere between Colombo and Aden. After a rather stormy night one of the stewardesses was discovered dead in her cabin with her head battered in. Hard by was a heavy "spanner," with which the murder had evidently been committed. The spanner might have been used by almost anyone on board the steamer, and, therefore, presented nothing in the shape of a clue. The dead woman was alleged to have been (what they call in Sussex) "tall-tempered," and, on occasion, to have had words with more than one of the lascars.

No evidence of any kind was forthcoming, although suspicion attached to one of the bath attendants. The captain did not see his way to taking action. He wisely possessed his soul in patience, and contented himself with reporting all the facts to his Board of Directors—who at once communicated with Scotland Yard.

So soon as the steamer touched at an English port she was boarded by an officer of the Criminal Investigation Department, who took statements from everyone in the least likely to be able to throw any light on the subject, and then embodied them in a full report. Nothing was disclosed which was evidence against the bath attendant, or

would, in any ordinary case, have justified his being charged. Still, the whole facts, when collated, made it appear most probable that he was the guilty party. Now an undiscovered murder on board a P. & O. vessel would be a very serious matter. It would cause a panic among present and future passengers.

A conference was held at the Yard, at which legal authorities were present, and there was a consensus of opinion among these gentlemen (which was supported by the officer who had made the inquiries and taken the statements) that a charge, if made, could not be sustained. The matter, however, was deemed of sufficient importance to justify a risk being taken. The suspected native was arrested. He at once said that his ears had been boxed by the murdered woman, and that this had rankled in his breast : in effect he confessed to the crime, and added, with some touching naïveté, " As King George is to be crowned this year, perhaps he won't order me to be hanged ! "

CHAPTER XVIII.

SIDELIGHTS ON THE CRIPPEN CASE.

“And how the sprites of injured men
Shriek upward from the sod.”

TOM HOOD.

So far as my experience goes, no case has ever fascinated the British public, and, indeed, engaged the attention of the whole world, in quite the same way that the case of Dr. Crippen did; and yet, from a detective point of view, it had no particular interest. Unquestionably, however, in its developments there were very many dramatic touches such as the man in the street loves to imbibe with his coffee at breakfast, and to inhale with his after-dinner cigar. Since Mr. H. M. Stanley discovered the missing missionary with the remark, “Dr. Livingstone, I presume,” no meeting has ever been equal to that of Chief Inspector Walter Dew with the murderous doctor on the deck of s.s. *Montrose*. “Dr. Crippen, I believe,” is as historically interesting

a salutation as the one I have just quoted out of Central Africa.

The sordid story of the doctor's loves and his wife's disappearance on the last day of January 1910 is so fresh in the minds of the public that it need not be recapitulated, but some sidelights on the case may be deemed of interest. Police knew nothing of the existence of such a man, or of such women as Belle Elmore and Miss Le Neve, till the beginning of July of that year, when a music-hall artiste and her husband—well known and highly respected in the profession—called one afternoon at Scotland Yard and asked to see an old acquaintance, the Superintendent of the Criminal Investigation Department.

That post was then filled by one of the best officers I ever had the pleasure of working with—a man whose friendship and advice I always valued very highly. He was one of those individuals who knew everybody, and whom everybody liked, and any officer possessing such knowledge and such popularity cannot fail to be of very great use in the Metropolitan Police.

The story told to the Yard, as it had been given to its narrators by Dr. Crippen, was one which was bound to excite very great suspicion. The Superintendent at once took down the facts

and personally reported them. The papers were then marked up, "Have the doctor seen and shaken up by a Chief Inspector." The said doctor was accordingly interviewed the next day, and at once frankly admitted that he had lied in the story which he had given out to the world as to his wife's departure for, and death in, America some months before. He asserted that he knew no more of her present whereabouts than did his interrogator, and that, in what he had falsely said, he had been prompted solely by a husband's desire to preserve the good name of an erring wife.

His revised version was, in effect, as follows: That his domestic life had been, for some months prior to his wife's disappearance, most unhappy; that she had, for a long time past, been carrying on with a man whose Christian name only was known to him, and whom (I think he alleged) he had never even seen. That, at the end of January, after an unusually stormy scene, he left his house for business at the customary hour, and upon returning to Hilldrop Crescent, found that his wife had deserted the home. He added that he had no manner of doubt but that she had gone off with her lover.

The story was inconclusive and unsatisfactory,

but not easy of off-hand disapproval. The weak point of it was that a woman, admittedly fond of jewellery and smart frocks, should have taken so hurried and unprepared a departure as to leave all her possessions behind her, some of which, we had been informed from music-hall visitors, had been worn on public occasions in the month of February by a lady friend of the suspected doctor.

The officer was very far from being convinced, and at once proceeded to go over the house. The doctor rendered every assistance, and the two traversed the premises from basement to garret. Close by the dining-room, opening out through a little passage, was a small wood and coal cellar. There was nothing remarkable about it. Some coals and some faggots covered the floor. Like a good detective officer, the Chief Inspector carried a suitable stick, with which he tapped about on the floors, but could find nothing to arouse his suspicions. A light was demanded, and at once brought in by the doctor. A look round the garden led to a negative result. The officer formed an opinion that, if there had been foul play, the body had not been deposited within the precincts of the little house in Hilldrop Crescent.

The Chief Inspector returned to the Yard and reported the result of the interview. Now nothing could have been better, from his point of view, than Dr. Crippen's demeanour and action on this occasion, and if his nerves had remained unshaken, and he had had the courage to take a long lease of the house which held his guilty secret, he might still be alive and carrying on his duties as a second-class aurist. But when the officer left, his fortitude failed. He determined to cut and run, and not only to beat a hasty retreat himself, but to take with him a young woman, to whom he was, unquestionably, very warmly attached. If he had gone away alone he might have baffled the police, for he was a man of the world and knew his way about it—but, as soon as he determined to take his lady friend with him, the rope was already dangling round his neck, and it very perceptibly tightened when he dressed her up as a boy. All young women are not Vesta Tilleys, and the human form divine in male and female is very different. But the cleverest criminals not infrequently give themselves away, and so it was in the doctor's case.

When the officer entrusted with the inquiries paid a visit to the surgery on the Monday morning, he was informed that the doctor had not

arrived, and, on going to the house in Hilldrop Crescent, found that the bird had flown. But in England you cannot arrest on suspicion, and you cannot say that a murder has been committed unless, and until, a body can be found. If, then, a crime had been perpetrated, where could the ghastly proof of it be found? Where had the dead body been deposited?

Constables were at once sent up to the garden, and digging went on with considerable energy. The house was again thoroughly searched, and floors sounded in all directions, but for forty-eight hours nothing came to light. On the afternoon of the following Wednesday, as the Chief Inspector was again tapping about in the coal and wood cellar, he thought he touched a loose brick. The débris of the coal and faggots was cleared away, and a brick, with some difficulty, removed—other bricks were then found to be disconnected. Pickaxes were requisitioned, and two vigorous young constables commenced a work of excavation. After delving down to the depth of some eighteen inches, they came upon something very unpleasant, and the Chief Inspector sent a telephone message to the Yard to say so. Being still engaged in the office, it did not take long to get a car, and the Superintendent and I

were soon on our way to the theatre of operations. Before leaving I put a handful of cigars into my pocket ; I thought they might be needed by the officers—and they were !

On arriving, a very cursory examination satisfied us that the services of a medical expert, rather than those of a detective officer, were required, and, leaving the digging work in an inchoate state, a message was sent to my old friend and adviser in all these matters, Professor Pepper, asking him to look in at Hilldrop Crescent in the morning. As this was our first visit to the house the Superintendent and myself had a good look round before leaving. It was very evident that the late occupier had left in a hurry ; but what struck me more than anything else were the proofs that he had been in the habit of doing himself remarkably well. On the sideboard in the dining-room were five or six bottles, one of whisky, one of claret, one of sherry, and two smaller ones of green and yellow Chartreuse. From the doctor's chair at the head of the dining-room table to the cellar where the remains had been found was a distance of only some fifteen or twenty feet. How, for five long months, good digestion could have waited upon appetite in such circumstances has always been a marvel to me !

Dr. Pepper investigated and duly reported that the remains were undoubtedly human, but he was not in a position at that time to say whether they were male or female, and rather doubted whether he would ever be able to so determine. This was not wholly encouraging ; but we had to catch our hare before we need bother our heads about the subsequent culinary operations, and to that end we set to work at once.

The exact nature of the charge which might at a later stage be preferred against the fugitive was a matter for future consideration. Inquiries were made in every possible direction, but it soon became evident that we were up against a very tough proposition, and that Dr. Crippen and his partner in flight had completely vanished, and—like the witches in *Macbeth*—had left no rack behind. I have known many busy times at the Yard, but nothing to exceed the rush and worry of the following fortnight.

Bills in French, as well as in English, were drafted out, giving likenesses, descriptions, and handwritings of the much-wanted couple, and were dispatched to every quarter of the globe. Meanwhile, the public favoured us with more correspondence than at any former time in the history of the Yard, with the possible exception

of the period of Jack the Ripper's reign of terror. Somebody had seen the fugitives in almost every town in the United Kingdom, and didn't hesitate to write and say so. They were quite positive as to the identity of the individuals, but had never taken the trouble to "locate" them. Therefore no definite inquiries were possible. All that could be done was to send the missives to the local constabularies for "such steps as might seem to them advisable."

The Secretary of State for the Home Department sanctioned the offer of a reward of two hundred and fifty pounds, and we then began to get quite busy with "foreign intelligence." Most capitals and many provincial towns in Europe reported that the couple had been seen within their walls on recent dates. Every letter or wire received required careful reading, and the work literally went on by night as well as by day. One became obsessed with Crippen and the hope of his capture. I remember walking through St. James's Park, *en route* to the office, and the following jingle coming into my head. I record it with apologies to my friend Mr. Fred Terry:—

"We sought him here, we sought him there,
Detectives sought him everywhere.
Is he in heaven, or hell, maybe,
The dem'd elusive Dr. C."

After a week or ten days of this kind of strain, as I was dressing for dinner one night the officer in charge of the case rang me up from the Yard to say he had just received, through Liverpool, a curious message, and would like me to see it as soon as possible. This was the marconigram which was to be the key to unlock the whole mystery of the flight and disappearance. I asked the Chief Inspector to come down to my house, and he shortly arrived with the message from the sea. A perusal of the same made it clear that the captain of the *Montrose* was in earnest; but had he been mistaken in the view he took of his passengers?

At this particular time we had what looked like two good clues in hand, one in Spain and one in Switzerland. But if the contents of the marconigram were genuine, it was imperative that action should be taken at once, and the parties arrested, if possible, before they landed in Canada. A hurried conversation took place between the officer and myself, from which I elicited that he had already looked out trains to, and steamers from, Liverpool; and that, if he caught the midnight express and was on board a certain boat by 6.30 the next morning, he would, in all human probability, reach the joint

destination before the fugitives arrived there. It was a serious step to take to send off the Chief Inspector (who alone held in his hands all the clues of the case, and knew the ramifications of each particular thread, besides being the only officer who had seen and held converse with the wanted man) on a journey of three thousand miles—a journey which might well turn out to be a wildgoose chase. But a decision had to be arrived at ; the probabilities of failure or success were weighed up, and, as a result, half a sheet of notepaper was minuted, to the effect that the officer was to leave for Canada at once for the purpose of arresting Dr. Crippen. Wishing the Chief Inspector good luck and God-speed, we shook hands and parted. That night could not fail to be one of anxiety ; but the die was cast, the Rubicon was crossed. If the *coup* happened to come off, well and good, but, if otherwise, why, then, the case would have been hopelessly messed up, and I didn't care to dwell on the eventualities of its future.

On reaching office early the next morning I assumed an air of nonchalance which I was very far from feeling, and said to my Superintendent, "Well, what do you think of last night's decision?" He evidently thought very little, and

frankly told me so, and that he and the remaining occupants of the Chief Inspector's room had been talking the matter over and had come to the conclusion that the probabilities were all against the very sanguine view that I had taken as to the correctness of the news conveyed in the marconigram.

This was not pleasant hearing, and, on further discussing the matter with others, I found that the only man who entirely endorsed my view and consequent action was the dedicatee of these memoirs. Yet had Fate another rod in pickle for me! On wiring to Antwerp for further particulars as to the father and son who had booked their passage on board the *Montrose*, we received descriptions of these individuals which in no wise corresponded with those of Dr. Crippen and Miss Le Neve. Again we wired for further inquiries to be made, and also sent over photographs of the wanted couple. Then, after a delay of three or four days, we had a reply to the effect that the likenesses had been fully identified as the pair who had stayed at an inn some two miles out of Antwerp, and who had, beyond all question, taken the passages by s.s. *Montrose*. *O, giorno felice!*

All further anxiety in the case—from a police

point of view—was at an end. A scar on a portion of the remains found in the cellar gave complete evidence that the body buried was that of Mrs. Crippen. What took place at the trial is matter of history. But how were the skull and the bones of the murdered woman disposed of? That has always seemed to me the most puzzling feature in the whole case, and the real truth will never be known. But it was ascertained that, about a week after the murder, Dr. Crippen went over to Dieppe by the night boat. Did he drop a dirty clothes bag (or something of the sort) over the side of the vessel? I think I should have done so had I been in his position.

CHAPTER XIX.

HALF A DAY WITH BLOODHOUNDS—WHITECHAPEL AND SEVENOAKS—CONSTABLES COURAGEOUS.

“Mastiff, greyhound, mongrel grim,
Hound or spaniel, brach or lym.”

King Lear.

DURING the last twenty-five years much nonsense has been talked and more nonsense has been written about the employment of bloodhounds by Metropolitan Police. I cannot call to mind a single case in which they would have been of the slightest use in the detection of crime, even if kennels had been established at the Yard and properly trained hounds had been at once available. At the time of the Whitechapel murders the idea was first mooted.

I cannot conceive a more impossible locality in which to expect hounds to work! or how any sane individual could ever have dreamt of success in this direction. Certain it is, however, that the notion did find some favour with a highly placed police official, and that he himself arranged to

be hunted by bloodhounds in Hyde Park. The thing appeared in the papers and just ridicule was incurred. It was incurred, too, at a time when the "man in blue" stood none too high in the public estimation. "Bloody Sunday" in Trafalgar Square and one or two other unfortunate incidents had upset the Londoner's peace of mind, and he had begun to think there was a dragooning spirit abroad in the town, and that police were on the way to becoming the masters, rather than the servants, of the ratepayers.

Another case, just twenty years after, which brought up the question of bloodhounds, was that of the murder of Mrs. Luard in a wood, some eight miles from Sevenoaks, in late August 1908. This was, of course, outside the Metropolitan Police area, and within the jurisdiction of the Kent County Constabulary ; but forty-eight hours after the murder had been committed the Yard was asked to take up the inquiries, so that the facts of the tragedy are fairly familiar, although at the actual time of the occurrence I was holiday-making in St. Petersburg.

A General Luard and his wife had lived in this neighbourhood for many years. Their house was situated on the confines of a large wood, and the nearest way to the golf-house lay through it.

On the fatal day the General and his wife went out after lunch. It was his intention to go to the golf-house to get some clubs, and it was arranged that she should accompany him as far as a summer-house in the wood. There he left her about three o'clock. She was never again seen alive. Two shots were heard about 3.15, but no particular attention seems to have been paid to them. The General was seen by two or three people walking towards the golf-house, which was about three-quarters of a mile distant from the summer-house. There he obtained his clubs, and was picked up, I think (or perhaps only seen), by some friends in a motor-car. At any rate, he went home by a different road. He reached his house about 4.30. His wife had not then returned, which must have seemed strange to him, seeing that a lady was expected to tea; no fears as to any mishap, however, were entertained, and, after offering apologies to his visitor for his wife's non-appearance, the General said good-bye to her, and then, at about 5.30, strolled off in the direction of the summer-house in the wood, where he had left his wife two and a half hours before. On arriving at his destination he found his wife lying dead. She had evidently succumbed to two bullet wounds in the head.

Now this was just a conceivable case in which, had all the circumstances been preternaturally favourable, the use of bloodhounds might have led to good results. What was required was that someone, with a bloodhound at heel, should have discovered the body, and that man and dog should have arrived on the scene before the murderer, or murderers, had had time to go any appreciable distance away from the wood. This, of course, could not be expected to occur outside the lines of most improbable events, which always obtain in Adelphi melodrama. But now mark what did take place, and what would take place again in similar circumstances, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred.

The General, horrified at his awful discovery, at once raised an alarm, and a crowd collected as rapidly as crowds always do collect, even in a place which a few minutes before is seemingly deserted. Many feet were busily engaged in tramping backwards and forwards and obliterating any possible clues which the murderer, or murderers, might have left behind. There is a cry for the village constable, but he, honest man, is probably three or four miles away, engaged on the trivial round of his long country beat, and when he turns up (as I believe he did in this case

about seven o'clock) what can be expected of him but to send a message to his superior officers at the nearest station. Before the said officers could arrive on the scene darkness had covered the land, and nothing could be done, as far as an investigation of the spot where the body was found, until the next morning. It always is so when a murder takes place in a quiet country place, and no one is in the least to blame for it. I believe that bloodhounds were brought to the scene a few days later! For all useful purposes they might just as well have been Shetland ponies!

But the general idea of the working of bloodhounds is, I believe, in great measure derived from that delightful book of our childhood, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The hounds, however, kept for the purposes of hunting down and rounding up runaway slaves, were, I think, not bloodhounds at all, but Cuban mastiffs, a very savage breed of dogs with no very delicate sense of smell, but sufficiently good to track down a negro in a solitary swamp or cane-brake.

In this country the constabulary forces are sufficiently effective to be able to dispense with canine assistance. Moreover, if a felon were at any time to be badly mauled by a so-called police dog there would be a great public outcry, for the

British ratepayer has a very tender heart, even where the criminal classes are concerned. Indeed, in the matter of arrests, constables are always enjoined to deal with their assailants in as humane a manner as possible, and, if attacked, only to strike at the less vulnerable parts of the anatomy, such as the arms and the legs.

An object-lesson in this respect occurred in the vicinity of Blackheath some twenty years ago. A uniform sergeant, while patrolling his district (at daybreak one spring morning), saw two men come through a hedge near a country house. It was evident that they were evil-doers, and, being young and active, the officer soon overtook them and demanded a surrender. For all answer one of the men drew a long knife and came at him in front, while his pal, armed with a heavy hedge stake, made a flanking movement. The sergeant was in a tight place. He realised the truth of the old adage that

“Thrice armed is he who has his quarrel just,
But four times he who gets his blow in first.”

He behaved (as Metropolitan Police officers always do behave in such circumstances) with the greatest gallantry. He drew his truncheon, and as the first burglar, knife in hand, came at him, he gave him a blow on the head which stretched him

senseless. Attention was then paid to the stakeholder, who thought discretion was the better part of valour, and at once surrendered. I well remember reading the sergeant's report, in which he expressed regret that his truncheon had come into collision with his opponent's head. He stated that he had aimed at his arm, but that his own foot had "slipped" and—hence the trouble. The "slip" probably saved a brave man's life and brought two dangerous criminals to justice.

Another story comes to my mind as of a constable courageous whose life was miraculously saved by means of the fact that he was wearing a summer tunic in place of a winter coat. The officer was on duty outside the German Embassy in Carlton House Terrace. It was in the middle of June 1897, and a burst of sunshine had recently warned the authorities that the time had arrived for donning the tunic and temporarily laying aside the thicker coat.

On this first day, then, of the change of habiliments, a German crank, who quite erroneously believed himself to be suffering some injustice at the hands of his Emperor, determined to get vicarious satisfaction out of one of the Imperial representatives. He happened to turn up at the

Embassy just as one of the attachés was coming out, and at once fired two shots, both of which took effect, but in no vital part. The constable rushed forward, whereupon the would-be murderer turned round and fired point-blank at him when he was only a few feet away ! Now notebooks are carried by police in the winter in the tail pocket of their heavy coats, but, in the summer, in the left-hand breast pocket of the tunic. The pistol was a small one, but the aim was good. The bullet struck the constable just over the heart, but was intercepted by the notebook, the outside cover of which was pierced through. The bullet, having spent its force, slipped down into the pocket, where it was subsequently found. The officer closed with his assailant before he could get in another shot.

I visited the attaché an hour or two afterwards. His wounds had been dressed and he was as cheery as possible and loud in his praises of the constable's courage. I remember well his concluding remark. "I like your policeman," he said ; " he was so jolly." It was the great Garibaldi who, on the occasion of his stay in England, remarked, "Quand je parle de la police metropolitaine, j'ôte mon chapeau !"

CHAPTER XX.

“DAYS” (AND NIGHTS) IN LONDON AND PARIS.

“ . . . When night
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
Of Belial.”

MILTON.

MANY years ago, when Whitechapel boasted worse slums than it does at present, when the murderous old Ratcliff Highway had not as yet changed its name to Cable Street, and when Shaftesbury Avenue and Charing Cross Road had not cut up, and through, one of the worst quarters of the Metropolis, it was the fashion for the young bloods of the day to make expeditions to the criminal quarters of the town under the guardianship of officers of the Criminal Investigation Department. I could never understand wherein the pleasure of these visits consisted. Certain spots were pointed out as the scenes of certain crimes, and if the visitors were possessed of vivid imagination they could repeople them with grim actors. But
✦ there was never anything picturesque about the

night side of criminal haunts in London ; and herein it differs very materially from Paris. I have spent many nights in the worst parts of London, but—unless criminal investigations were afoot—the interest was in the officers who accompanied me rather than in the sights which I saw or the scenes through which I passed. To know one's officers and their capabilities is half the battle in detective work. To gain this necessary knowledge one must get to know them personally and locally.

During my first years of police work I was frequently down in the East End o' nights. On one occasion a well-known Member of Parliament begged to be allowed to accompany me. We had (as I knew we should have) rather a dreary and disappointing time of it. One or two lodging-houses had been visited, and nothing is more depressing than that peculiarly abominable and acrid smell which pervades them. I am thankful to think it is absolutely unlike anything else which has ever assailed my nostrils in any quarter of the globe. To finish up the evening with some miserable pretence at hilarity, I suggested a visit to the Prussian Eagle (I think that was the name of the house of entertainment in Wellclose Square, but it has long ceased to

exist), where dancing was carried on by German ladies, and sailors of all nationalities, and where the sight of a drawn knife or two was not infrequent. On entering, we naturally desired to make ourselves popular, and to that end stood "rum shrub to the ladies all round." In consequence we were quite a success, and so the evening ended.

I never happened to meet my companion again till two years ago, when, at a public dinner, I thought I recognised a face, but could not put a name to it. Moreover, when I had made inquiries and heard the gentleman's name it conveyed nothing to my mind, seeing that my fellow-roysterer had been raised to the peerage during the long interval which had passed since we forgathered. After a few minutes, however, I was able to piece my puzzle together, and finding myself near him later on in the evening, I shook hands and said, "Do you remember the night when you and I stood rum shrub to the ladies in the Prussian Eagle in Wellclose Square, Whitechapel, in 1889?" "Bon Dieu," he exclaimed in English, "it's Macnaghten! I have been looking at you for the last two hours, wondering who you were and where we had met."

Some rather rough boxing, before some very

rough crowds, used to be conducted down Shoreditch way. How the competitions did not end fatally has always been a marvel to me. Stone floors are not resilient, and I do not think that the "uprights" round the ring were ever padded. Yet accidents, at any rate of a serious nature, were few and far between. It was, by the irony of fate, reserved for the National Sporting Club (where everything was, at all times, conducted on the fairest and most humane lines) to be the scene of several fatalities some years ago. I could wish nowadays that more young men boxed and fewer young men looked on, and this remark applies *a fortiori* to football, and, in a lesser degree, to cricket; but as for the casualties (whether in hunting, football, or boxing), we must accept them in the spirit of the Australian poet, Adam Lindsey Gordon:—

"Never a game was worth a rap
For a rational man to play,
Into which no accident, no mishap,
Could possibly find a way.

There's danger even where fish are caught
For those who a wetting fear,
For what's worth having must aye be bought,
And sport's like life, and life's like sport,
It ain't 'all skittles and beer.'"

The old Roman cry of "Panem et circenses!" is too much abroad in the land, and is not making

for the physical or moral good of young England.

The best boxing contest I ever saw was that between Dick Burge and Kid Lavigne (a French Canadian), which took place at the National Sporting Club in Covent Garden in the early summer of 1896. Burge (at his proper weight, which was 10 st. 4 lb.) was a very exceptionally good man. He had been a noted sprinter and a very good football player, which accounted for the excellence of his "foot-work"; moreover, he had plenty of pluck and science, and possessed an unrivalled knowledge of ring tactics.

I suppose he was about thirty years of age when this contest took place, and he was, as he found to his cost, up against a much younger man. There is much truth in the old adage that "youth will be served," and doubly so when the older combatant has had to "waste" unduly and get down to an unnatural weight. The men were matched, I think, to enter the ring at 9 st. 12 lb., which was just 8 lb. below Burge's normal and proper condition. In Kid Lavigne he was meeting a veritable pocket Hercules and a two-handed fighter if ever there was one. Physical force won the day, and the contest was very properly stopped somewhere about the sixteenth

round, as Burge was, in the opinion of the wise and humane referee, too exhausted to be allowed to continue.

It has been my privilege to have had as friends many of the best amateur boxers of two generations ago. The sport seems to have agreed with them. Only yesterday I met one of them who, at seventy years of age, looks as fit and well as most men do at fifty. He it was who slaughtered the "Kangaroo" in the Haymarket in the very early seventies.

Everyone who was acquainted with the night side of the West End of London at that time had knowledge of the Kangaroo. He was a gigantic negro and could box a bit; his character was of the very worst. In these days the police would have dealt with him under a most salutary law, which came into operation some fifteen years ago. One night the Kangaroo was unwise enough to take on my friend. Perhaps he did not realise that his antagonist had been amateur heavy-weight champion a year or two before, and was about the best gentleman "fighter" (as distinct from "boxer") that the world has ever seen. The contest was one-sided. Whether it was the effect of the punishment

administered I know not, but the Kangaroo died two months afterwards—*Nil nisi bonum*—but never was there a better riddance of worse rubbish!

Another old friend and referee, who has done more for latter-day boxing than any man living, had a strange and not wholly unsatisfactory experience in the East End about this time. He had kindly consented to act as referee in some boxing entertainment which a sporting publican had arranged. At its conclusion he was leaving the house, when a sudden rush was made, and his large “stop” watch was gone. He forced his way back and confronted the manager in no friendly mood. “Look here, Bill,” he said, “I came down to your place in the interests of sport and to encourage fair boxing. As a reward I lose my watch.” “What! *your* watch gone, Mr. A.,” cries mine host; “that must have been quite a mistake.” Not at all mollified my friend went home. About a fortnight later, on Christmas Day, he received a registered parcel, and on opening the same, found his old “stop” watch, together with a *gold* bow attached thereto! There is honour of a sort among thieves! It is the bow of the watch which is always broken when these articles are pinched, and it generally

falls to the ground, disregarded alike by thief and loser.

But if there was little to be seen a generation ago, there is very much less to be seen nowadays. Many of the worst slums in Whitechapel have been pulled down, and on the sites model dwelling-houses have been erected. Electric light has flooded a good many of the streets, and with its advent much that makes for crime has been washed away.

The sunny and the shady aspects of Paris are equally attractive. Between 1890-93 I was over there on three occasions—twice privately and once as a member of the Committee appointed to inquire as to the best means of identifying criminals. During these years M. Goron was chief of the Sûreté. He was always kindness itself and ever ready to give very exceptional opportunities of seeing all phases of life in the “gay” city. He was wont to place the services of a certain “brigadier” at my disposal.

I had first come across this officer in 1889, when he was over in London, and asked for our assistance in making certain inquiries in what was called “L'affaire Gouffé,” a very interesting case in which a man of that name, who was a

process server, has been murdered by one, Eyraud, and his mistress, Gabrielle Bompard. There was a touch of the *crime passionnelle* about the case which always appeals to the French public, and "la belle Gabrielle" (there was nothing really very "beautiful" about the lady, whose photograph I still possess!) was quite the rage in Paris for some months. Her lover, Eyraud, had immediately after the murder left France, and for many months baffled pursuit. He was eventually captured in Havana and was in due course guillotined, while his "beautiful" accomplice received a sentence of transportation for life. The man Gouffé was strangled with the girdle of a dressing-gown, purchased, I think, in the Euston Road, and the box, in which the body was subsequently deposited and thrown into the river, had also been bought somewhere in London.

But although my recollections as to the details of that case are hazy, my regrets in connection with it are sufficiently definite, seeing that I at this time missed the chance of seeing a crime "reconstructed" as such things are done in France and nowhere else. It was believed that Gouffé had been sitting in a chair in front of a large curtain which divided two rooms, and that

Gabrielle had seated herself on his knee ; that she had coyly placed her girdle round the unfortunate man's neck, and that then Eyraud, putting his hand through the curtain, had drawn the ligature tight and throttled him. The wretched couple had to witness a reproduction of this scene—certainly a strong situation and one with great dramatic possibilities.

My brigadier was an excellent cicerone. After we had visited some places of interest at night, he would come round in the morning with a written report of our sight-seeing, so that I might keep it by me for future reference. One of his most pungent paragraphs remains in my memory : “ Curious Cabaret—outside benches may be seen where *drinkards drunk* the whole day long.” I rather think that this had reference to an inn called the Château Rouge—not far from Nôtre Dame.

Another resort was at the sign of Père Lunette, which, if my memory serves me right, was a very warm corner in those days. Among the many attractions there to be seen was a lightning artist who would do portrait sketches for a franc apiece. The man possessed talent, had unquestionably seen better days, and, under different conditions, might have done really well.

But absinthe will rot the body and kill the soul of any man who becomes its slave. Some specimens of this artist's work are to be seen to-day in the room of a very high official at the Home Office !

But what strikes one more than anything else in going the rounds of Paris, visiting its thieves' dens, etc., is the apparent fear that the French police have of their criminal classes. There was one particular place which the Committee visited in 1893 where we were only allowed to go if accompanied by five detective officers, all armed with revolvers. Three of them entered the house with us, two remained in the street with their pistols pointed up at the windows. The inmates certainly were a wild lot, semi-nude and ferocious of aspect. A few francs, however, procured many bottles of red wine, and songs were then sung about the guillotine and the nice workmanship of M. de Paris (the public executioner)—at least so I was told, for not one word of the concert could I comprehend.

Now nothing of this sort could be seen or done in London. If you were introduced to an old "lag," and pressed a shilling upon him, he would growl out that you were "getting at" him ; he would probably curse you, and he would

certainly at once expend your bob in buying as much gin as the coin would procure. But he would not drink your health, neither would he lift up his voice to chant to you the praises of an execution. He has a certain delicacy about talking, let alone singing, of anything of the kind.

Similarly, if you entered one of the worst houses where thieves resort, you would not need the tramp of armed men to assure safety. One local Criminal Investigation Department officer would be sufficient, and if, during your visit, he happened to espy a "wanted" man sitting in the corner of a cellar, he would combine business with the pleasure of your company, and ask "Jim" to "come along," for some offence which he would specify, and, in nine cases out of ten, "Jim" would come like a lamb. There is no doubt that behind the Metropolitan Police officer there is a very strong moral force, due perhaps to the fact that, for the most part, the citizens of London are extremely law-abiding, and ready at all times to assist the powers that be.

As it is with the fallen men of the two nationalities, so it is with the women. The types are widely different. The English woman, once on

the downward path, slides along it with awful rapidity: frequently she takes to drink, loses self-respect, and with it, in many cases, all claim to womanhood. How different are these things in France. Your *cocotte* slips, and goes on slipping, but she does not take to drink, nor does she—to anything like the same extent—lose her self-respect. Many of this class work by day, but continue to amuse themselves by night. They save money, and when Jeannot has found the right Jeannot she marries him, and they live happily ever after! Is this wholly due to the difference between the national temperaments? or has the red wine of France a less deleterious effect than the abominable spirits obtainable in too many public-houses in London? As Paul Demetrius used to say in the *Red Lamp*, “I wonder!”

P.S.—As, ten minutes ago, I put down my pen, and took up a morning paper, I read therein, with much regret, of the death of M. Alphonse Bertillon, the great criminologist and pioneer of identification by anthropometrical methods which have so long obtained in France. The introduction of same into England was not so satisfactory, for reasons which I have already explained in a former chapter on finger-prints. M. Bertillon was always

most friendly and never tired of talking of the successes of his system, of which he was justly proud. As I had had the pleasure of making his acquaintance during former visits to Paris, it was my privilege to be able to introduce my colleagues on the Identification of Criminals Committee to him. He at once obtained a *détenu* from the "Dépôt" hard by and showed us how the measurements were taken. Then, putting a caliper (as I think the instrument is called) into my hand, he asked me, as an old friend, to give a practical illustration. I was never famed for manual dexterity, and, with every desire to please, certainly mismanaged the caliper, which I roked about in dangerous proximity to the measured man's eye. M. Bertillon scented trouble: he was not a good English scholar, but he rose to the occasion. "Attention!" he almost shrieked in French, and then added in English, long drawn out, "Do, not, make, him, ill." But the *détenu* on whom the operation was being performed was a typical Frenchman and the pink of politeness; he at once assured me that no harm whatever had been done to his optics.

M. Bertillon's police work was always, perhaps, rather of a theoretical, than of a practical, nature. One night, however, I remember he accompanied

the members of the Committee, under the guidance of a chief inspector of the Sûreté, to some rough neighbourhood. At 2 a.m. we sought refreshment at a café near the Pont Neuf, and nothing would content M. Bertillon but the ordering of "grog," which, I imagine, he thought was a delicate compliment to his English friends. This compound, into the admixture of which rum largely entered, was potent and not particularly pleasant. It did not seemingly affect English heads, but, on calling at M. Bertillon's office at 9 a.m. the next morning, by appointment, we found him seated at his desk, but very far from being the cheery companion of a few hours before. ("Oh, what a difference in the morning!") He was nursing his head between his hands and loudly lamenting that he had ever brought himself to consume "les sacrés grogs." He did not even subscribe to the sentiment expressed, on a somewhat similar symposium, by a foreign consul: "It is all very well for de once, but I tell you that too moch of a jolly good thing is enof!"

I have often been asked whether the criminal police of Paris are not a much cleverer set of fellows than their insular neighbours of the Criminal Investigation Department, and whether

mysteries which baffle Scotland Yard would not be unravelled at the offices on the banks of the Seine. I have always had shrewd suspicions that my interrogator has generally answered the question in his own mind before his mouth forms it, and that the response is prejudicial to the police of his own country. I believe that this is due, in some measure, to the fact that the fascinating romances of Gaboriau always depict the French detective as a marvel of sagacity, whereas our own equally brilliant writer, on similar subjects, almost invariably portrays the gentleman from Scotland Yard as being of very mediocre intelligence, thereby making him an incomparable foil for that undefeated sportsman, Mr. Sherlock Holmes.

I knew the Service de la Sûreté pretty well, some twenty years ago, and very efficient it was. At no time, however, do I honestly consider that it was superior to our detective force. Certainly, taking man for man, we never had anything to fear from a comparison of the officers. We pay our men better, and we get a more educated and, therefore, superior article.

Both forces consist of carefully picked men who enjoy the confidence and respect of their superiors ; but the conditions under which they work are

widely different. To put the whole thing in a nutshell : in France every man is deemed guilty till he proves himself innocent ; in England every man is innocent until he is legally proved to be guilty—a very *autre chose*. As a well-known London detective once put it : “ When I am absolutely assured of the guilt of my man then the difficulties of the case begin to crop up.” In France any individual on whom suspicion, however attenuated, falls is brought before a *juge d’instruction*, and is detained just as long as that functionary thinks fit. He is (or used to be some years ago) brought up again and again at the sweet will of his captors and ruthlessly cross-examined. To begin with, the respectability of his forbears is not infrequently aspersed. He may be told that his father was a pig, his mother a sow, and so on till his brain becomes befogged, he breaks down, and, if guilty, gives himself away.

In England, as soon as an officer has made up his mind to arrest an individual, he is debarred from putting any question to him, and a large percentage of judges still hold to the old rule that, if an arrested man is about to speak, it is absolutely essential that the officers present should warn him that whatever he says will be taken down and may be used in evidence against him. The

case must rest entirely on evidence and not at all on suspicion. So soon as a man is arrested he is at once taken before a magistrate, and if sufficient evidence is not forthcoming he is discharged.

Another method which was wont to be employed by the French police is one which would not for a moment be tolerated on this side of the Channel. I refer to the requisitioning of the services of M. le Mouton. The employment of Master Sheep was on this wise. We will suppose that a noted Apache has been arrested: it is suspected that he has committed many murders, burglaries, etc., but there is no sufficient evidence, and the attendances before the *juge d'instruction* have been infructuous. Into the *détenu's* cell is introduced a budding criminal (who may have been arrested for snatching a purse, stealing a handkerchief, or some other trifling offence). This young man has previously been taught his lesson. Dominoes and wine are provided, and the pair of rascals drink and play together. After a bit Master Sheep begins to brag of what mighty deeds he has done in the matter of infringements of the sixth and eighth commandments. The old war-horse scents the battle! The blood of the Apache boils within him! Perish the thought

that he should ever be deemed a criminal article in any way inferior to the *canaille* in front of him! He blurts out that he (*lui qui vous parle*) was the man who slaughtered the banker and robbed the archbishop. Master Sheep treasures up these sayings in his heart, and when the time arrives they are accepted as evidence—*voilà tout!* I am inclined to think that the liberty of the subject is better preserved over here, and that we do some things, at any rate, better in this country.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE MURDER OF THE STROLLING PLAYER OFF BATTERSEA PARK ROAD.

“The slayer, who shall himself be slain.”—MACAULAY.

WHO slew the would-be slayer? or, in police parlance, who “did in” the man who went to “do in” somebody else? This is a question which agitated the minds of hundreds of criminal investigators, professional and amateur, in the month of July 1910, and has hitherto remained unanswered. Police were completely baffled. The bottom was knocked out of every workable theory suggested, but no elucidation of the mystery discovered.

The *dramatis personæ* who appeared on the stage were Thomas Anderson, who may be described as a strolling player, his two sons, aged respectively nineteen and sixteen, and a lady who, at the time of the tragedy, was occupying a flat on the first floor of a block of buildings in a street off the Battersea Park Road. This lady had

had some stage experience, and, at the time when the murder took place, was a teacher of elocution somewhere in the vicinity of Gower Street. Between the man Anderson and herself a very close intimacy had existed for eight or ten years. At intervals they spent week-ends together. They both earned their own living, and contented themselves with one helping the other when any financial trouble loomed up on either side. It was what might be termed a respectable, but not a platonic, attachment. Both of the lads knew the lady well, although they seem to have been kept in the dark as to the real relations between herself and their father.

It appeared, so far as police could judge, that the lady's influence with the boys was for good. She was well educated, interested herself in their studies, and was a help and assistance to them in many ways. About eighteen months or two years before the date above mentioned, Anderson met with a motor accident: some injury to his head resulted therefrom. Always a man of morbid and moody disposition, he never seems to have regained his mental balance. He lost all sense of proportion. The diary which he regularly kept for some months before his death found its way into the hands of police, and some of the entries

therein were of a very wild and weird description. Green-eyed jealousy seemed to have possessed his soul, but as to whether there were any real grounds for his suspicions was never clearly shown.

The setting of the sun on Saturday, 16th July, put an end to a long day's work in the Criminal Investigation Department. The late Dr. Crippen's whereabouts were still undiscovered ; and further, an old woman at Slough had been brutally done to death, and the case, being evidently one presenting difficulties, had been handed over to the Yard. Eventually it "panned out" all right, but at the time it was adding to our anxieties.

On this evening Anderson's elder son had arranged to have supper with his father's friend at her flat. She was lending him some books, and had marked certain passages which she wished to explain to him—at least I think this was so, at any rate, there was nothing to lay this supper-party open to any suspicion of impropriety. The lady was some twenty years older than the lad, had known him for many years, and was interested in his educational progress. The flat on the ground floor, which was immediately below, had been unoccupied for several weeks ; certain repairs were being carried on, and it was in the hands of painters and other

workmen. The doors of the flat had been left unlocked, so that anyone could gain admittance. On the outside of the building at the back, overlooking a little strip of garden, was an emergency staircase, by which exit could be made by the dwellers in any of the four sets of flats. The house was about the fourth in the street, counting from the Battersea Park Road, which was at right angles to it. At the back of each house there was a similar garden, with dividing walls of about five feet high. Shrubs were thickly planted and gave great facilities for anything in the shape of climbing operations.

At about 9.30, shortly after supper was finished, young Anderson heard what sounded to him like two reports of a pistol, one following very closely upon the other. On opening the window and looking out at the back, he distinctly saw, in the gathering darkness, a man climb over the dividing wall and disappear into the next garden. He informed his hostess, but, strangely enough, they paid no further attention to the incident. But the shots had been heard by passers-by, who summoned police, and the empty flat on the ground floor was entered. On the mantelpiece in the dining-room a pair of heavy boots and a small handbag had been placed. No

signs of disorder were anywhere visible in the flat, but, on opening the door at the back, which led into the garden, a man's body was found lying across the steps ; on his feet were carpet slippers and in his coat-tail pocket was a murderous life-preserver.

The officers then visited the first-floor flat, where the lady and young Anderson were still sitting. Having informed them of what had been found below, and having heard young Anderson's story, they asked him to accompany them to the police station, so that his statement might be properly taken down. Before leaving the premises, however, he was requested to look at the body. He altogether failed to identify. This, however, might be accounted for by the fact that it was now quite dark, and that a police lantern is not a very convincing illuminator. The face, too, had been terribly disfigured by two bullet wounds. An hour later, at the station, the lad was shown a pocket-book, which he recognised. Then the identity was assured and the plot thickened with a vengeance.

The word *murder* looks ugly in print ; it sounds ugly in speech, and no word is so rapidly caught up and passed along in the streets of a large city. In a very short space of time the

dwellers in Battersea knew that a tragedy had occurred in their midst, and then information of sorts began to reach the police.

A baker reported that, as he was passing along Battersea Park Road, about 9.30, he saw a man scrambling over the wall on his right hand, who, as he alighted in the road, nearly fell upon him. The climber was quite as much upset as the baker at the rencontre, but he pulled himself together and ran off in the direction of the bridge. A chauffeur, too, had seen a man running down the road, but had not paid much attention to him. The descriptions, such as were given, doubtless referred to the same individual, but they were not of a nature to be of any real assistance to police. An examination of the garden proved young Anderson's story to be perfectly correct, inasmuch as footprints were visible under the wall, over which he had seen a man escaping directly after the two shots had been fired.

The next day was Sunday, and, after the customary hour at the Yard, the rest of the morning was spent at the scene of the murder. Heavy rain had fallen the day before, and the garden soil was soft and moist. The footsteps *to* and *from* the flat, extending over the four gardens, as far as the Battersea Park Road, were

plainly discernible. The task of taking plaster casts was easy. The imprints obtained were small and pointed.

The elder son had returned to the flat to comfort and be comforted by his hostess of the previous night. The lady was in a highly hysterical state ; she said she knew nothing, and no information of any kind, at this time or afterwards, could be extracted from her. The younger son's movements on the Saturday had been inquired into. He had been at a cricket match in the north-west of London—somewhere near Willesden—and had returned to his lodgings and gone to bed at the usual hour. About a month before this police had received information that a gang of German burglars were at work on the south side of the river, that they carried firearms, and, if attacked, would not hesitate to shoot. It was suggested, in some quarters, that Anderson might have met his death at their hands. This theory was preposterous. Burglars don't start business at 9.30 on a summer's night, nor do they crack cribs which contain nothing.

A visit to the mortuary showed that the dead man had received injuries in the face other than bullet wounds. There was one ghastly laceration which had evidently been caused by the nails

of his antagonist. This seemed to indicate that a fierce struggle had taken place before the revolver was brought into play, and that the shots were only fired after the man who escaped had thought he was getting the worst of the death-grapple. The suddenness of the onslaught, too, was apparent from the fact that the dead man had not had time to draw the life-preserver from his coat-tail pocket.

It has already been said that Anderson's diary contained some queer entries. Much of what he wrote was unintelligible, some of it undecipherable; within its pages the names of four men were inscribed, and there was also a suggestion that he had, on a previous occasion, determined to watch the flat. It was obviously necessary that police should find out who these individuals were, and what they had been doing on the Saturday night. After patient inquiries, which lasted over many weeks, all four men were cleared up; one, I think, was in America, a second in Canada, and the remaining two had not been in London for some time, so that, if any hostile feeling had ever been entertained against them, it was of no recent date.

Anderson enters an empty flat, carrying slippers and a lethal weapon. Whom did he expect to

meet that night? Was it the mysterious individual who killed him? And why in the world did that individual take the trouble to climb over four garden walls, when he could just as well have walked in at the front door in the same way that Anderson did?

At the risk of being thought flippant, I cannot help concluding this "day" with a paraphrase on the last verse of Colonel John Taylor's well-known poem, "Who got the Whisky Skin?"—

"I've searched from Dan even to Beer
Sheba, to make this mystery clear;
But I only end where I did begin,
'Who did him in?'"

CHAPTER XXII.

DIURNAL ODDMENTS.

WHEN you are conscious of the fact that you have murdered your wife, and when a coroner's jury has recorded a verdict to this effect, the situation cannot fail to be unpleasant. But, when you happen to have been in jail at the time of the murder, and some two hundred miles away from the scene thereof, and the coroner still sums up dead against you, and the jury whole-heartedly agrees in returning a verdict of "wilful murder," then the position does indeed become hopelessly embarrassing! Yet this was what actually did take place in the Three Colts Street murder case, in Limehouse, about the beginning of August 1891. Whether it was the dull season of the year, or the unromantic nature of the surroundings, I know not, but the case never made a very strong impression on the public mind.

The circumstances, however, are fairly fresh in my memory; although all the officers who

were engaged in the inquiry have long since died or left the service. A Mr. and Mrs. A. lived down in Limehouse ; he was (what Rogue Riderhood, in *Our Mutual Friend*, would have described as) a “ waterside character ” ; and she, maybe, was not much better than she should have been—at any rate, she had a penchant for drinks, and never heeded if some one other than her husband paid for them.

Their life was not a very happy one. The husband used, from time to time, to ship as a stoker on tramp vessels, and sign on for similar jobs when money ran short, or the tide of domestic strife rose unusually high. Both these contingencies became frequent, and so, therefore, did Mr. A.’s absences. If the husband did not sleep at home nobody knew whether he was on the high seas or in a neighbouring dram shop.

In fact, his occasional disappearance was regarded very much as was that of the footman, Jenkins Gruffanuff, when he was turned into a door-knocker by the good fairy Blackstick in *The Rose and the Ring*—of which incident Thackeray writes : “ As for his wife she did not miss him, and, as he was always guzzling beer at the public-house, and notoriously quarrelling with his wife, and in debt to the tradesmen, it was supposed he had

gone away from all these evils and emigrated to Australia or America.”

Now in the early summer of this year appeared on the stage a *tertium quid*, in the shape of a young soldier who was destined to play an important part in this domestic drama. He was a man of tempestuous temperament, who ended his life in a lunatic asylum, but as to that more anon. At this time he fell in love with Mrs. A. They were frequently in each other's company. Many drinks were proffered on one side and accepted on the other. It is probable that an elopement was proposed ; but the lady, seemingly, thought it was well to put up with the ills she had, rather than fly to others which she knew not of, and so refused the offer, if one was ever made.

Thus life went on in Limehouse, until, at the beginning of August, a tragedy occurred. Mrs. A. and her soldier had been drinking together at a public-house in Three Colts Street. They had the particular bar, which they patronised, to themselves. The potman had been called away for a minute or two. As he was returning to his appointed place he heard the sounds of falling bodies, and hurrying round saw both Mrs. A. and the soldier stretched out on the floor and apparently dead. In his subsequent statement

he stoutly maintained that he heard the street door swing to, and further that he distinctly saw the shadow of a man hurrying past the window.

Police were called, and, on the arrival of a doctor, an examination of the bodies was made. Mrs. A. had been stabbed to the heart. Beneath the body of the soldier an open clasp-knife was found. His injury seemed to be a somewhat superficial wound in the chest, which, however, had apparently rendered him unconscious, and would necessitate medical treatment for the next few days. He was removed to a hospital and a statement taken from him in due course. In this he alleged that he had suddenly heard the bar door swing open, and, on looking round, saw the man A. rushing towards him with a knife in his hand ; he felt a heavy blow in the chest, and remembered no more. This story, in some of its details, was corroborated by the evidence of the potman, and it was generally accepted that the husband had been prowling about the neighbourhood, and had, in a moment of frenzied jealousy, "downed" the soldier and murdered his wife. There were, however, some very suspicious circumstances in the case which did not seem quite so straightforward to the police as to the public.

Local visits were necessary, and were paid on more than one occasion.

The first thing, however, was to find A., who was now "circulated" in the *Police Gazette* and other papers as being wanted for the murder of his wife. He had not been seen in any of his old haunts for several days, and (if he were the guilty man) he had evidently kept out of the way some days before—as well as after—the murder.

Meanwhile the soldier's wound healed rapidly. This fact was notified to police by the hospital authorities, and also that the patient had become very restless and anxious to be up and away. Casual observation had therefore to be kept on him. At the adjourned inquest he was well enough to give his evidence, which, coupled with that of the potman, had such weight with the jury that they returned a verdict of "wilful murder" against A. The notices, however, in the *Police Gazette* were now to bear good fruit. The full description of the man wanted appeared to the Cardiff police to tally with that of an individual who had been sentenced to some weeks' imprisonment in that town for some offence (the nature of which I disremember), and who was still in jail. They lost no time in communicating their suspicions to Scotland Yard, with the result

that the boot was now adjusted to the other leg : the soldier was arrested and charged with the murder. He was remanded, if I remember right, two or three times, and then discharged from the police court, as the evidence forthcoming was not deemed sufficient to justify a committal to the Old Bailey. A year or so afterwards I heard that he had gone off his head and was confined in a lunatic asylum. A.'s experience, I should imagine, was absolutely unique, and, in all human probability, will remain so.

Another " oddment " which occurs to me was the strange death of Dora Piernick at a lodging-house in Whitfield Street on 29th December 1903. I remember the exact date very well, and for the following reason. It was in the beginning of this year that I had the honour to be appointed Assistant Commissioner in charge of the Criminal Investigation Department, and the public will readily understand how keen I was that the first twelve months of my command should be unsmirched by anything like an undiscovered murder.

Fortune had favoured us throughout the year. The two best officers in the Department, Detective-Inspector Luck and Detective-Sergeant Chance, had been well to the front on every occasion. Coups had come off, and nothing particular had

gone wrong. Only that very day I had been shaking hands with myself and thinking that the record of the dying year would "pan out" remarkably well. But a bolt from the blue was in preparation. I had hardly finished dinner when I received a telephone message from Tottenham Court Road, to the effect that a Polish lady of the town, well known in the neighbourhood, had been found in bed with her throat cut, and, although she had apparently tried to staunch the wound by the application of a bandage (which looked as if she had attempted suicide and then thought better of it), yet that the other surrounding circumstances were full of suspicion.

Within half an hour I had met the officers at the scene of the tragedy. The dead woman had occupied the front room on the ground floor. In the apartment in the basement, immediately below, lived an old man whose occupation and mode of life I forget : he was in very poor circumstances. All that he could say was that he had slept peacefully till about five that morning, when he awoke and heard gurgling groans from the room above. These lasted for about half an hour, and then all was still. So far as he knew no living soul had left the house. But, in effect, he paid so little attention to what he had heard that he

went about his day's work without even informing the landlord.

Mistress Piernick was not habitually an early riser ; but, when no movement was heard in her apartment all day, the landlord, who was a foreigner, became apprehensive of evil. He tried the door and found it locked. He then summoned police and requested them to break in. The room was found to be in some confusion. The shade of a lamp had been broken and some of the splinters of glass were stained with blood. It was evident that the woman had lain on the floor, and, after her throat had been cut, had got back again into bed, and then endeavoured to stop the bleeding by pressing a towel over the ghastly wound. The key of the bedroom door had disappeared. Could the woman have thrown it out of the window ?

A search in the street and in the area had no result. No weapon of any kind could be found, and the medical authorities were of opinion that the wounds could not have been inflicted by pieces of glass such as were found. Was it a case of homicide or suicide ? The murder, if any, was motiveless, and possibly carried out by a sexual maniac. Indeed, in the Camden Town case, nearly four years later, the murderer locked the

door behind him and took away the key in similar fashion. Piernick's movements on the previous night were traced. At 11.30 she had been seen holding converse with a young man about twenty-two years of age, dark and clean shaved. She went with him in the direction of Whitfield Street, but returned alone an hour later, and met at the corner of Tottenham Court Road a female friend, whom she invited to pass the night with her, saying, as an inducement, that she "had made up a fire fit for a king." The friend declined the invitation, and no one could be found who subsequently saw Piernick alive.

At the coroner's court the medical evidence was all in favour of suicide, both by reason of the direction of the wound, and also from the fact that the woman must have been an hour bleeding to death, and during that time was in full possession of her vocal powers. Eventually the jury returned an "open verdict."

An ingenious, but to my mind far-fetched, theory was started, to the effect that Piernick had cut her throat with one of the landlord's table knives, and that when the said landlord entered the room and saw the dead body he had been seized with fear lest he might be accused of the crime; that he then locked the door on the

outside, and, having possessed himself of the knife and key, dropped them both into the canal. Possible, but not probable, I think! In any case the "open verdict" relieved police of the burden of another undiscovered murder being laid on their shoulders.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FOREIGN DESPERADOES—SIDNEY STREET AND TOTTENHAM.

“Quid diem festum juvenes habemus.”

“THERE’S a still small voice a-singing comic songs beneath my waistcoat, and all is peace and joy.” Many years have passed since I have had the delight of reading *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and I may be wrong in thinking that the above quotation emanated from Sampson Brass when that rascally attorney was about to perpetrate some extra special piece of villainy. But, be that as it may, I have always found that the refrains of old comic songs have come back to me at special times, and have obtrudingly identified themselves with certain episodes of my life—generally those of a tragic nature. The Sidney Street fracas on 3rd January 1911 was no laughing matter, and it looked, at one time, as if it might end in the sacrifice of a good many valuable lives. Yet this was the doggerel which ran in my head throughout that

morning: "I say, what a day we are having, my boys!" which was the chorus of a song that Jolly John Nash used to sing at "Evans' 'cave of harmony'" in Covent Garden (where now stands the National Sporting Club) in the early months of 1873. (Other days! other songs! "Slap bang, here we are again!" is definitely associated in my mind with a Venetian tragedy—but that is another story.)

The prelude to Sidney Street was the murderous shooting which took place at Houndsditch, in the middle of the previous December, when several gallant constables of the City Police were killed and wounded—to be strictly accurate, I think three were killed and two wounded. The facts incidental to that prelude were only brought to my notice some three weeks after the Sidney Street affair. The story told to me is, I believe, quite correct, and, in any case, I do not think it is likely to be contradicted, seeing that all the prominent actors in it, bar one, have passed away.

"Four knaves went to rob a house" was an old formula used to introduce a card-trick, and certain it is that never did four worse knaves determine to break into a jeweller's shop than that infamous quartette who had, some days

before, taken the adjoining house, and who seriously set to work at their job on that stormy night in mid-December. There was the chief, Gardstein, a handsome specimen of a handsome race (who was to learn, before many hours had passed, that those who live by the pistol shall perish by the pistol), Fritz and Jacobs, whose acquaintance Metropolitan Police were to make three weeks later in Sidney Street, and the fourth (whose real name need not here be mentioned) may be denominated as Mr. Nemo.

To the last named was entrusted the use of the crowbar for the purpose of making a hole through the wall, in a room on the first floor. Being a lusty fellow, he was plying his weapon with effect, when some of the neighbours heard sounds which seemed to them to be suspicious. They at once acquainted some City Police officers, who knocked at the door and demanded admittance. Fritz (or possibly Jacobs) opened it, and was challenged as to what kind of work was being carried on in the house. He endeavoured to slam the door in the face of his questioners, but found that a substantial constabulary boot had crossed the threshold and effectually prevented him from carrying out his purpose. He called to his chief; Gardstein at once rushed

out from a room on the ground floor and emptied his revolver into the ranks of the police.

It is believed that he was responsible for the whole of the casualties which occurred. But Nemesis was on his track. Nemo, before commencing his wall-breaking operations, had placed his pistol on an occasional table behind him. On hearing the revolver shots he seemingly lost his head. To drop the crowbar and pick up the shooter was the work of a moment. He rushed out on to the landing and blazed away into the brown of humanity gathered round the door. Although all of his bullets did not take effect, one found a billet in his leader's back, and Gardstein sank down on the threshold among the dead and dying constables. What happened next it is impossible to say; but we know that Fritz and Jacobs propped up their dying chief, and, between them, bore him away to the former's lodgings. Having deposited him there, they left him in charge of a female friend, and then made active search for Nemo, with the intention of "putting him through it." They believed, quite erroneously, that his shooting at Gardstein was "an accident done on purpose."

Meanwhile, Nemo fled for his life, and, crossing the Channel, lived for many months in the suburbs

of Paris, and for all I know he may be there still: no evidence could ever have been adduced against him. Gardstein died the next day. But why have I, in all this account, made no mention of the picturesque personality of Peter the Painter, whose portrait appeared in so many papers about this time? Simply because I do not believe that he had anything to do with the case, nor do I think that he was in England at the time of the tragedy. He had, however, lived with Fritz some weeks before, and was undoubtedly a pal of the party. But, in my opinion, he chiefly owed his notoriety to the aid of "apt and artful alliteration." In other words, his name was attractive and looked well in print.

Well, more than a fortnight passed, and no information of any real value was received. The City Police did all that was possible to avenge their murdered comrades. The Metropolitan Force in general, and the "H" (or Whitechapel) Division in particular, tapped all available sources, and at once communicated any intelligence obtained to their brethren of the red and white armlets. It is needless to say that, for many years past, the most cordial relations have existed between the great London forces. At the Yard we were, at all times, delighted to see any City

officer, and to give him free access to any documents in our possession. It is only by such co-ordination that the police work of London town can properly be carried on.

It is a long lane that has no turning! and, in police work, one never knows what a few hours may bring forth. On the afternoon of Monday, the 2nd of January, City Police received information, which they deemed to be reliable, that two of the men "wanted" were living in a back room on the second floor of No. 100 Sidney Street (a long thoroughfare running between the Mile End Road and the Commercial Road), and that they had not been seen to leave the premises for some days. This address being within the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Police, the Superintendent at Lemon Street was at once consulted by his City confrères.

Arrangements were made, and, late that night, a mixed detachment of City and Metropolitan officers set out for Sidney Street. Looking to the desperate character of the men whose arrest was sought, it was deemed right to attempt first to induce the other inhabitants to move out of the house, which was one of a recently built set of four-storeyed tenements, situated on the east side of the street. At about 2 a.m. the work

was started, and, after considerable difficulty had been experienced with some of the lodgers, the house was cleared of its indwellers, save, of course, those who were occupying the dreaded back room on the second floor. The house was now surrounded by an augmented force, and the officers in charge fully satisfied themselves that no loophole of escape was possible. It was thought best not to "rush" the room, but to arouse the inmates by throwing a stone up at one of the windows; the idea presumably being that, when the men looked out, they should be informed that they were caught, even as rats in traps, and that anything in the shape of resistance would be wholly futile.

About 7.30, then, soon after daylight, the stone was thrown; a speedy answer was returned—but it was not of the nature anticipated. As the pebble rattled against the pane of glass a storm of bullets swept out into the street from the second-floor window. The officers gave leg-bail and sought cover. On scrambling over the roof of a large shed just opposite, Detective-Sergeant Leeson, who had been prominently engaged in the night's proceedings, was shot through the chest. His divisional detective-inspector was at his side, and dragged him across

the roof and out of the bullet-swept zone of danger. All this, and more, had happened while policemen of all grades in the west of London were peacefully sleeping; nor did the slumberers dream of what an awakening was in store for them on the morning of that extraordinary 3rd of January.

The day dawned damp and raw, and a drizzling rain was falling as I came downstairs to answer a call on the telephone. It was from the Superintendent of the Whitechapel Division, an officer who had been in charge there for many years, and in whom we all had implicit confidence. He gave me the sad news that an old and valued sergeant of the Criminal Investigation Department had been very dangerously wounded, and, after outlining the march of events, informed me that he had just obtained the sanction of the Home Office to requisition the services of a detachment of the first battalion of the Scots Guards, quartered in the Tower, and that the Assistant Commissioner of Police, who looked after the administrative work of the Force, was already on his way to the scene of action. The inclement conditions of the weather were such as to invite a hearty breakfast. But I do not think that many police officers had time to indulge in

that luxury. A taxicab took me down post-haste.

As I approached Hawkins Street I realised what a really nasty job we were up against. Strong cordons of police encircling, at a distance of some three hundred yards, the besieged house, kept back thousands of would-be spectators. Long before Sidney Street was reached reports of the firing were audible. The crack, crack of the guardsmen's rifles was answered by the vicious zip, zip of the automatic pistols, while the old-fashioned revolvers in the hands of the police barked away continuously.

I pass on into Sidney Street and encounter two or three officers of the C.I.D. Down there I glean an excited account of what has taken place, and very urgent appeals are made to be allowed to "rush" the house and avenge their comrade, of whose death in the London hospital a rumour (happily without foundation) has reached them.

The situation had to be considered all round, and the first thing to be done was to find the Superintendent in charge and my other colleagues. But the crowds were great, and, as we were running round more or less in a circle, it was difficult to see how a meeting was to be brought

about. At the north and south ends of Sidney Street, within some seventy yards of the beleaguered house, four or five guardsmen were lying prone on advertisement boards with rifles which spoke in answer to the puffs of smoke from the Mauser pistols issuing from the window on the second floor of No. 100 in the street. On the roof of a brewery, higher up on the other side of the thoroughfare, more guardsmen were posted. It appeared to a layman like myself that the danger up and down and in and around the street must be very considerable by reason of the extreme probability of ricocheting bullets.

Eventually my colleague and the Superintendent are met, and we have a few minutes for an exchange of views. Firstly, the geography of the house, which later on it may be necessary to carry by assault, is explained. The street door opens on to a narrow passage, some twelve feet in length, leading direct to a straight and steep flight of about thirteen stairs, which then turn at a right angle. It is obvious, therefore, that if one of the desperadoes takes up his position at the top of the first flight, by extending his hand round and in a downward direction he can sweep the doors and the passage with his pistol, and cause a maximum of damage to the attackers,

with a minimum of danger to himself. One or two bodies falling between the door and the staircase would so effectually block the narrow passage as to make it probable that many valuable lives would be lost if a frontal attack were made. The prospects of success of a rear attack are said to be worse. The amount of ammunition in the hands of the defenders of the house appears inexhaustible, or else they are firing with a reckless prodigality which is quite unintelligible.

Volunteers are not lacking for the forlorn hope, not a man on the spot—be he uniform constable or detective-sergeant—but is burning “to have a go at the villains”; but, as was afterwards most wisely said, there must be other ways of dealing with these men than by choking them to death with British blood. It is therefore decided that, so far as an immediate attack goes, no steps shall be taken. Meanwhile, the firing into the house from all sides is to be continued, in the hope that some bullet may eventually find a billet.

City Police are posted all round the back of the house; Metropolitan officers occupy the low range of houses immediately opposite, and the Scots Guards are up and down the street and in the brewery. It is useless, at all times, to anticipate evils, but I cannot help realising that

something desperate will have to be done before darkness sets in, as the surrounding crowds will assuredly thicken, and if the cordon of police is not found sufficiently strong, and the eager spectators force their way into Sidney Street, there must be unspeakable disaster. However, sufficient unto the hour, and we will hope to muddle through somehow.

A little later I find myself in the brewery yard, and talking to my Whitechapel detective-inspector. Two days have now elapsed since Leon Beron was found murdered on Clapham Common, and up to last night no clue had reached the Yard. I now learn that my companion is satisfied as to the identity of the murderer, and has no doubt that he will be able to lay his hand on him within a few days. This is really good news, and so interested am I in it that I forget our *locus standi* is uncomfortably near the danger-zone, and that, although we are some hundred and fifty yards from the bullet-belching window, some shots have just struck the wall in very close proximity. The inspector thinks that we had better be shifting our ground, and so do I!

We work our way back again to the south end of Sidney Street, there to find a "Derby dog," in the shape of a fox terrier, running up and down

in front of the doomed house, and imparting, in the opinion of the bystanders, a comic element to an otherwise grim situation. About this time a strong contingent from the Home Office arrives on the scene, and a further discussion takes place. There is not the least confusion, or losing of heads, and the whole situation is calmly accepted by everybody in a most reasonable spirit. Our strength is, for the present, to stand still. I am doing this, a few feet down a by-street, in company with one of my oldest friends among the Yard superintendents, when he exclaims, "I'm shot!" and shows me a hole in his overcoat just above his knee. We enter the nearest house, and a bullet (which has been spent, of course, and on the ricochet) falls down out of his pocket. A very nasty bruise is the result, and causes considerable pain and discomfort for several weeks.

However, we are all shortly to be cheered by a most unexpected development. About one o'clock thick smoke is observed rising from the roof, such as one is accustomed to see when a chimney is on fire. We think also that there are signs of an outbreak of fire in the front second-floor rooms, out of which and into which the greater part of the firing has been going on. The smoke is eagerly watched. In about ten minutes it seems to die

down, and our spirits sink with it. But in another quarter of an hour there is a blessed recrudescence of smoke. Not only is it now rising fast and furious from the chimneys, but it can be plainly seen belching out from the first and second floors. There is little doubt but that the whole building will soon be in a blaze, and what the Fire Brigade folk call "well alight"!

What has caused the fire? Some are of opinion that the desperadoes themselves have done it. Personally I incline to the belief that one of the many hundreds of bullets pumped into the house pierced a gaspipe. But, after all, it matters little how it came about. It is sufficient that the house is burning—let it burn! A fire-engine comes up, but the police do not permit it to approach within one hundred and fifty yards of the burning premises. Shots are still being exchanged, and the lives of our gallant firemen are far too valuable to be sacrificed on the funeral pyre of alien miscreants.

The question now is, whether these men will elect to perish in the flames, or to bolt from the house (which has literally been made too hot to hold them) like ferreted rabbits. Plenty of shot-guns have been brought up from shops in White-chapel Road, and are in the hands of police.

Gradually we all advance towards the building, and every preparation is made to frustrate any attempt to escape which may be made under cover of the growing conflagration. For some time past the besieged men have been firing entirely from the ground floor, showing that the upper rooms have become untenable by reason of the great heat.

Soon after two o'clock the whole house appears to be one mass of flames. No human being could exist in such conditions.

It is now decided that no further danger need be apprehended either for firemen or police. The word is given, a well-known and burly chief inspector from the Yard rushes forward and kicks down the charred door. The firemen, like hounds hitherto held in leash, dash up and commence their operations with characteristic courage; for them, however, danger still lurks within the smoking walls, for the roof and floors are giving way.

After a few minutes the firemen report that they can find no bodies, and a rumour is started that the murderers must have made their escape at the back of the house, but as to this I never had any apprehensions. The rear had been guarded by some City Police officers, under command of a certain sergeant. Him had I inter-

viewed and conferred with earlier in the day, and from the man's appearance and manner I felt quite certain that no fugitive would have escaped his vigilance. One of the local firemen (whom I visited in the London hospital the following Sunday) received injuries which proved fatal, and three or four others were badly hurt by falling débris. At three o'clock it is definitely stated that the charred remains of two bodies have been discovered. It is time for us all to be getting back to work, which in these "days" falls much into arrears. On our way back we stop at the hospital and get a fairly reassuring account of poor Leeson, the detective-sergeant who was shot through the chest in the early morning. And so on to the Yard, where a poached egg and a whisky and soda are very grateful; as a species of grace before meat the refrain of the old comic song keeps running in my head: "I say, what a day we are having, my boys! I say, what a day we are having!"

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A word as to the nationality of these murderous thieves may be of interest. I believe that they were all Lithuanians, or, to be more strictly accurate, Letts. The Lithuanians are scattered over several western provinces of Russia, and the

north-eastern parts of Poland and Prussia on the Baltic. The Letts, a branch of the same stem as the Lithuanians, occupy a portion of the Courland Peninsula. Some ten years ago, it is said that robber bands of these latter roamed about the countryside, pillaging and burning castles and houses. Punitive expeditions were sent out against them, and any prisoners made were at once executed. As they stood a fair chance of being exterminated, they migrated from their own country, and England—always hospitable—unfortunately received a fair share of them. Seeing, then, that such reckless freebooters are nurtured in the bosoms of our chief cities, it is a matter of congratulation that Sidney Street incidents are not of more frequent occurrence.

Much irritating nonsense was written to, and published in, the newspapers in connection with this affair. One clergyman, I remember, who had worked for many years in the East End, wrote very angrily, to the effect that Metropolitan Police must be becoming wholly degenerate when they could quietly contemplate the deaths of two fellow-creatures. This is simply silly. The two men were wild beasts seeking to destroy, and it is the part, office, and duty of police to turn the tables on all such dangers to humanity.

I remember one hot weather in Bengal we suffered from an epidemic of mad dogs. Some I shot, some were clubbed to death by my servants : surely it mattered not how the end came so long as they were finished off somehow.

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But the Sidney Street affray was not the first occasion on which Metropolitan Police had crossed swords with these desperadoes from Lithuania. They had had a taste of their quality at Tottenham, a suburb in north London, just two years before. That affair was, in many ways, quite as sensational as Sidney Street, but it all happened so hurriedly, that, by the time the first telegrams from the local police stations had reached the Yard, the end had come. No superior officers were at any time present, and what we knew was only from hearsay. But, curiously enough, only two days before, in company of the Superintendent of the Division, I had gone over almost exactly the same ground as that traversed by the murderers in their wild attempt to escape from justice.

But to begin my story. These two ruffians had been employed at a factory in Cheshunt Road, Tottenham, some few weeks previously. They were well acquainted, therefore, with the rules and regulations of the establishment, and

knew that the men's wages were brought down every Saturday morning, in a motor-car, by the cashier. He was always unaccompanied save by the chauffeur. The would-be thieves laid their plans well. They turned up at the factory gates about 9.30 and waited. In a few minutes the motor-car arrived, and as the cashier, carrying the bag of money, stepped from it, shots were fired. The chauffeur was slightly wounded, and in the confusion the wallet containing the money (about one hundred pounds in all) was snatched away.

The robbers then made off, but the assault had been witnessed by a carman and some of the employees at the factory. A chase began. Very soon the ill-starred police constable Tyler and another officer joined in the pursuit. At this stage the Tottenham marshes were clearly the objective of the criminals. Long before these were reached, however, it became evident that the hounds were gaining on the hares. Both these were armed with pistols, but one, presumably, was the better shot of the two, because, when they stopped and turned round to shoot, one only fired, the other contenting himself with loading the empty revolver and handing it back to his fellow.

Constable Tyler was in the van of the pursuers,

and, as he gallantly rushed forward, he received a bullet in the brain and was killed on the spot. A small boy who was following met a similar fate, and about the same time another policeman was shot in the leg. The chase continued ; police officers from neighbouring stations joined in ; some of them had brought revolvers, and a running fire was kept up right down to, and along the bank of, the River Lea. Here some sportsmen, in quest of duck, had the novel experience of being asked to turn their shot-guns on to human beings, but they were some way off, and, not unnaturally, were slow in understanding what was required of them.

Somewhere in, or near, the Chingford Road stood a tramcar. This was, without ceremony, commandeered by the desperadoes, who so threatened the driver and conductor with their revolvers that they compelled them to drive on. A small cart was now requisitioned by the police, but, as it approached the car, a shot from one of the fugitives killed the pony. Later on, however, as good luck would have it, another tramcar was met, coming the opposite way but on different lines. This was stopped ; the situation having been hurriedly explained, the car was reversed, police climbed into it, and then, in the suburbs of

London, was witnessed the astounding sight of a tramcar, full of armed men, chasing another, from which shots were being rapidly fired.

Eventually a motor-car dashed to the front and got in the way of the first tram. The murderers jumped down and into an empty milk-cart which was standing by the side of the road. They dashed off in the direction of Woodford, discharging their revolvers indiscriminately at everyone they passed. A few hundred yards farther on, however, they realised that the game was up so far as anything in the shape of a vehicular escape was possible, and, dismounting from the cart, they took to the fields and made their way across country. Some solid palings around newly built cottages arrested their progress, and one of the fugitives, desperate to the end, turned his weapon against himself. The bullet entered his head, and he died in hospital some ten days later.

The second man succeeded in scaling the fence. He made for some neighbouring cottages, shooting, as he ran, a working man who was standing by. Epping Forest was now not far off, and, if reached, might afford cover for some time. But the pursuers are too near, and the pursued is too weary. He dashes into a cottage and up a narrow flight of stairs leading to a tiny bedroom. Police

enter the house, and a sergeant of the Criminal Investigation Department and a uniform constable attempt to rush the door. It withstands their efforts: they discharge their revolvers through it, and, when eventually forced, the dead body of the second murderer is found. Such a morning of sensational surprises might have been expected in Russia, but hardly within the generally pacific area of Metropolitan Police. There were something like twenty-two casualties during this "day"!

CHAPTER XXIV.

TWO DINNERS TO END THE "DAYS"

"Nunc est bibendum."—HORACE.

I HAVE had many dinners—and always pleasant ones, with the officers of the Criminal Investigation Department. Some have been of a public, and some of a private, nature. Two evenings stand out in special prominence. One was in November 1891, on the occasion of the approaching return to India of Mr. James Monro, who had resigned the Chief Commissionership of Metropolitan Police the year before. Mr. Monro had previously been the Assistant Commissioner in charge of the Criminal Investigation Department, and I doubt whether any of the gentlemen who filled this position before or after his time ever gained more completely the affection and confidence of their officers. In him and in his judgment they believed, and knew that he would be a strong rock of defence to them in times of storm and stress.

I have no intention of ripping up healed sores, or of detailing the reasons which induced Mr. Monro to resign a post for which, alike by nature and by training, he was admirably fitted. Suffice it to say that, after his retirement, he determined to revisit Bengal, to take up at his own charges some medical missionary work. I knew that he would like to see his leading detectives once again, and I knew that the leading detectives would love to have an evening with their old and revered chief.

So the dinner was arranged. Space being limited, only the nine senior officers at the Yard could be invited; but a more representative lot could at no time have been got together. "There were giants in those days," and, without in the least belittling the forces which have been since, and which are at the present day in being, I doubt whether such a varied galaxy of detective talent was at any other period to be found at the Yard. Four out of the nine who were present have since joined the majority. The remaining five still draw their pensions. Long may they continue to do so! Many of them, after retirement, have filled most important positions, and always with credit to themselves and with benefit to the public.

John Shore and James Butcher, the two superintendents (for in those days the Criminal Investigation Department boasted no more), both passed away many years ago. The former was a typical west-country man, who had served three years in the Bristol Police before coming to London. A regular "old thieves' man," he had made racecourse wrong 'uns a speciality, and his presence at a meeting was a guarantee that all things there would be done decently and in order. He it was who—alone of the then senior officers—came unscathed out of the exposure and subsequent prosecutions which followed the Turf frauds in 1877.

In outward appearance he was remarkable by the wearing of a broad-brimmed kind of shovel hat of an ecclesiastical shape. I do not know that it denoted any special religious convictions, but, at any rate, the wearer thereof was an honest man, than which God made no nobler work.

James Butcher was a man of strong analytical temperament, and no officer could make a more convincing report. He brought, in 1882, Dr. Lampson, the aconitine poisoner, to justice; and made many "outside" inquiries for the Home Office, notably those in which he proved the so-called Edlingham burglars had been wrongfully

convicted. A man of quick judgment and hasty temper, he was not infrequently possessed of a grievance, and it used to be said of him by his brother officers that "Jimmy Butcher was never happy unless he was miserable." He died the death of a patient hero, after a most distressing and suffering illness, and it was my privilege to be with him almost to the end.

Jack Littlechild who, in his younger days, had great success in running to earth long firm swindlers, was for many years the popular head of what, in those days, was called the Irish Branch at the Yard. He retired more than twenty-one years ago, and, after a most successful time as a private inquiry agent, his appearance is still refreshingly youthful, and his figure that of a light comedian.

Donald Swanson, a very capable officer with a synthetical turn of mind, who subsequently held the post of Superintendent at the Department for seven years. To him was entrusted in 1888 the general supervision of the inquiries made into the Whitechapel murders.

Fred Abberline must have left us in February 1892. He knew the East End of London as few men have since known it. He is still hale and hearty and as successful in his gardening opera-

tions in Bournemouth as he was in turning the crooks out of the rooms at Monte Carlo when he was given a free hand by the authorities at Monaco some sixteen or eighteen years ago.

“ Billy ” Peel, from County Armagh (or was it Cavan ?), whose services for so many years in Hoxton were invaluable, and who lived so few months to enjoy his well-earned pension. Like so many Irishmen, he was a universal favourite.

John Tunbridge and Henry Moore (two of the smartest officers I ever had the honour of being associated with), who worked successfully and harmoniously together in so many sensational cases, and who, on retirement from the Metropolitan Police did such good work—the one as Commissioner of New Zealand Police for six or seven years, and the other as Superintendent of the Great Eastern Railway Company’s Police. Tunbridge had the unravelling of the Neil Cream case, and also (in company with Inspector Frederick Fox) of the Herne Hill bakery case, in which, on purely circumstantial evidence and practically on his own statement, a man named Stephen Gorrie was convicted of the murder of an old watchman, called, I think, Furlonger, *alias* the “ Nabob,” in April 1890.

Fred Jarvis comes last on the dinner list—a

man of the world and of cosmopolitan character, who knew his New York quite as well as his London, and who, retiring as a Chief Inspector, died at Brighton three or four years ago.

Good men all of them, and straight runners too.

Quod omnium optimum.

The second dinner, equally pleasant, was of a public nature, and took place, as on many previous occasions, at the Trocadero. It was the last of a series of C.I.D. feasts which commenced in 1904 and terminated in 1908. The banquets were rather formidable affairs, but they did good in many ways, and introduced the detectives of London to a "lot of nice new friends" (as the village constable in *Dandy Dick* would put it), besides giving pensioned officers a chance of seeing how the rising generation was shaping, and whether the traditions of the Yard were being properly maintained. Why they were discontinued I never quite knew, and probably nobody else did. It may be that the chairman was rather unduly taxed, and found four speeches in the evening too much for him, or it may be that he thought the younger inspectors were spending too much money over the guests whom they delighted to honour.

From first to last a good many notabilities partook of the C.I.D. hospitality. Most of the Metropolitan police-court magistrates honoured us with their presence at one time or another, and there are few bodies of men whom, collectively and individually, I hold in greater admiration (I had almost written *affection*!). For justice, tempered with mercy and combined with gentlemanly common sense, the police-court magistrates, as a whole, are, and always have been, hard to beat.

The after-dinner speeches on these occasions generally reached a very high level. The late Sir C. E. Howard Vincent was ever a welcome guest, and always favoured us with a speech, whether or no his name was down on the chairman's list. He was the only diner, too, who habitually wore his miniature medals, and a brave show they made on his dress coat. Howard Vincent may be said to have been the father of the Criminal Investigation Department, as he was appointed "Director" when it came into being in 1878; he was once described by the chairman at one of these dinners as "the most 'ancient chief' of the London Sûreté, whose antiquity was belied by his extremely youthful appearance!" And this he preserved to the end of his life.

In March 1908, M. Hamard, who had been for some time at the head of the detective force in Paris, accepted our invitation to dinner, and we gave him a very warm welcome. For more than twenty-five years our relations with the French police have been on the friendliest footing, and any request for inquiries made by them is attended to on this side with as much care and promptitude as if it emanated from any constabulary force in Great Britain. This reciprocal co-operation has been of the greatest assistance to both countries.

Nor is America behind France in this respect, for William Pinkerton, the greatest private inquiry agent that the world has ever seen, is hand in glove with the authorities at the Yard, and never loses an opportunity of doing them a good turn.

At this dinner also, among others, were present J. Eldon Bankes (now Mr. Justice Bankes, "and a good judge too!") and Mr. George R. Sims, and two better after-dinner orators I have rarely heard. Just at this time the Royal Commission for inquiry into the methods of Metropolitan Police was bringing its labours to a conclusion, and during the two years of its protracted existence Mr. Eldon Bankes had been looking after the interests of police; and they required a deal of

watching, seeing how unscrupulous were the tactics of some of our critics. However, *magna est veritas*, and it all panned out right in the end.

Mr. G. R. Sims is as amusing in private conversation as he is in public speaking, and possesses the extremely rare faculty of being brilliant on the spur of the moment, which is a very different thing to firing off carefully prepared *impromptus*. As an illustration I recall an incident which took place at the National Sporting Club some ten years ago. A boxing contest was taking place between "two likely lads" for, I presume, the usual "substantial purse." The better boxer of the two was not well trained and was evidently tiring; he began to hit low, and, after being twice cautioned, was, on the occasion of a third offence, very properly disqualified. A good deal of heated discussion arose on the matter, and two of his backers came over to where Mr. Sims was standing, and said, "What do you think, Mr. Sims? We thought our man was winning hands down." "Too low down," replied G. R. S., and never smiled!

CHAPTER XXV.

TWO FAREWELLS AND THREE LOVING CUPS.

"I count myself in nothing else so happy—
As in a heart remembering my good friends."

SHAKESPEARE.

FINIS CORONAT OPUS.

"THERE is many a true word spoken in jest," and when, during Coronation preparations in May 1911, in writing to a friend, I translated (in a very feeble attempt at being humorous) the above Latin phrase as "*Coronat opus*," this Coronation job, "*finis*," is finishing me, I was not far from actual truth. Up till 1910 I had hardly had a day's ill-health, and anything in the shape of sick leave—till a year later—was quite unknown to me. About this time, however, I had premonitory symptoms of a breakdown. With me detective work was literally a labour of love, and I cannot imagine two more delightful posts than those which I was privileged to fill for twenty-four years. I liked the work, and I loved the

officers, from the very outset, though I fear I was irritable and unreasonable at times.

It was "Jehu Junior" who wrote of me: "There have been, perhaps, few chiefs at the Yard who have taken the failure of the Department to solve a mystery so much to heart. The public impatience when the capture of a criminal, for whom there is a hue and cry, is long delayed, is nothing to the impatience of the chief." He went on to add that: "He has a whole-hearted faith in his staff,"—this latter statement, at any rate, was absolutely true, and I had good grounds for "the faith that was in me." But, in any case, I do not think that my "children" at the Yard ever bore me ill-will for any lengthy period. I don't know that the Criminal Investigation Department is a very good abiding-place for a nervous man, and yet I am quite certain that unless a man is "nervous" in the classical sense of the word, he will not do much good at the Yard.

All through the spring of that Coronation year I suppose I presented a sorry appearance, because friends began to look askance at me, and occasionally to ask me if I was well. I used to answer that I hoped so, and thus matters proceeded. I well remember the morning of the Coronation Day—I was up at 3.30, and walked down to

the Abbey at 4.15. I had, at that time, what doctors call, I believe, a "tired" throat! Its weariness was considerably augmented by some evil smells from decaying vegetable matter, which I encountered in the slums of Westminster while making a short cut across country. Arrived at the Abbey, I was shortly joined by a chief inspector and a posse of thirty officers, with whom I had arranged to traverse the sacred edifice for the last time. I knew it pretty well by heart, and, on that particular morning, I felt too unwell to climb to the lantern at the head of my searchers. I sat me down, therefore, on the pulpit steps, murmuring to myself—

"Go you, and scale the dizzy heights,
While I keep watch below."

Then I cheered on my beaters, who, fifteen on each side, made a very exhaustive investigation of every hole and cranny. Before it was finished, officials of all sorts and sizes began to arrive at the Abbey, and at 8.30 I got away home to breakfast. I only elaborate these facts because that was the very first "day" that I ever remember to have felt really ill.

I was holiday-making in the Engadine, for the month of August, but returned no better so far as health was concerned. In October I was

compelled to see more than one doctor, and the Faculty arrived at the conclusion that I had, for many years past, been drawing overdrafts on my nervous system, and that, unless I dropped it, it would assuredly drop me. I went away again for a month, and then struggled on till the end of February, when a six months' rest was deemed absolutely imperative, and a voyage to Australia was prescribed.

I shall always remember the morning of 23rd February, when we left Liverpool Street Station. I thought it improbable that I should ever take up the work again ; I felt it was impossible that I could ever resume it with the vigour which is so wholly essential if it is to be properly carried out, so that the bitterness of death was practically past after I had made up my mind to leave England and the Yard for six months ; but I was not prepared for the send-off which I received. I had said good-bye previously, and personally, to almost all of the C.I.D. officers, but a great many turned up at Liverpool Street on about as nasty a morning as I have ever been out in. A large number of personal friends also were present, which was gratifying but rather upsetting, because so wholly unexpected. An old friend and director of the P. & O. " accompanied us unto the ship "

at Tilbury, and, thanks to his good offices, and to those of the kind chairman of the Company, everything that could make for our comfort and convenience was carried out, and I found steamer travelling very different to what it had been five-and-twenty years before.

Throughout the voyage seas were uniformly flat. Both the Bay of Biscay and the dreaded "Bight" of the Australian coast were benignant to a degree, while the absence of papers, telegrams, and (very specially) telephonic calls gave a much-needed rest to the nervous system. Great changes have come over Port Said and Colombo, but Aden seems to me to stand exactly where it did forty years ago.

Port Said has grown up and become quite a respectable middle-aged person! When I knew him first, between thirty and forty years ago—he was a very naughty and nasty little boy—about the worst I ever came across. We have it on the authority of Mr. Rudyard Kipling that "east is east, and west is west, and never the twain shall meet." So best! for when the Oriental and the Occidental do come together, as, to wit, at Port Said, the conjunction must be deemed eminently unsatisfactory, and a thing not to be desired.

Of Aden we saw a great deal in a very short space of time, because the governor most kindly took us for a long motor drive in, around, and outside the town. For the first time in my life I saw cricket and football being played simultaneously on a small arid patch of ground. The performers were, of course, Arabs, but at both games they played with zest ; and the cricketers fielding out in the country were not infrequently " barged into " by the football players, as they " chased the rolling circle's speed."

Colombo is always interesting. Within the last generation it has grown out of all knowledge, and now boasts of two hotels which would do credit to any Western city. But alas ! there were no spicy breezes blowing during our stay of twenty-four hours, and the climate is not one to please an elderly valetudinarian. We were glad to be off again and on the way to Fremantle.

If Australia was the land of convicts once, it is the land of kindness now. In all I spent some three weeks on the Continent, and the amount of hospitality which was crowded into those twenty-one days was overwhelming. The courtesies commenced at Fremantle. The head of the Western Australian Police met me in his motor—took me to the club at Perth and on to see the

police headquarters. There I found searchings for finger-prints being carried on, and might have been back at the Yard again! It was all very homely and pleasant. But what struck me most of all, and continued to strike me in every port of Australia, was the mounted police. A more workmanlike and serviceable set of men it would be impossible to imagine. Mounted on wiry horses (the same good old waler which we had loved in Bengal) the men look as tough as pin wire, and about both horses and riders there is an appearance of self-reliance which is very convincing. These are the sons of the men who rode down Captain "Starlight," and who exterminated the Kelly gang of bushrangers. Perhaps the north-country adjective "leash" describes them better than any other; tall, clean-limbed, and strong are they, with eyes which are not likely to mislead them in the bush, or anywhere else. Sir John Forrest—that grand old pioneer of Western Australia—had most kindly invited us to lunch; it was very delightful, after the dust and heat, to turn into his cool garden and cooler house.

We spent a few hours in Adelaide and one day in Melbourne, where kind friends insisted on putting us up (the botanical gardens here are

very beautiful), then on to Sydney, where we remained while the steamer went to, and from, New Zealand. This gave us two weeks on shore; we just came in for the Easter meeting, and "raced" more in those fourteen days than I had done in the fourteen preceding years in England. There was so much to be done each and every day that we could only get very hurried rushes out of the town; therefore, to our great regret, we saw practically nothing of "station" life. If you want to take a short, and certain, cut to an Australian's heart, praise Sydney harbour! You can do this with truthful lips, for it unquestionably ranks very high amongst the beauty spots of the world.

The return journey was a replica of the voyage out, save that we were fortunate enough to stop at Hobart Town for a few hours, and so just got a glimpse at the charming island of Tasmania. We took in as cargo the last shipment of apples, and literally thousands of boxes were brought on board. The island dwellers maintain that the climate is the most perfect in the world for three hundred and sixty-one days: the heat on the remaining four days is admitted to be excessive. It was certainly delightful on the day we sampled it. Again, the weather was exceptionally fine,

during our six weeks' voyage, but the heat (in the merry month of May) between Fremantle and Port Said was distinctly trying, and did away with much of the benefit derived from the first part of the holiday. However, I was well enough to take up work in the Yard in August, and remained on till 31st May of the following year. No "days" of particular interest can be recorded during those nine months, but over every hour there was to me the shadow of a coming departure, of a breaking away from the interests of a lifetime, and from the ties of friendships which had lasted for a generation.

The orders of the doctors, however, had again become imperative, and with a sad heart I "put in my papers" on 1st May. And then kind letters of condolence reached me from many quarters, some all the more welcome because least expected. Several old convicts wrote; many of these documents have been preserved. I have one before me now from an "expiree" whose name was in everyone's mouth twenty years ago. He served his full sentence. On his release I saw him and rendered such assistance as was in my power, which, I am bound to say, was very little. He writes:—

"You are receiving so many expressions of

and that they would be at once recognised and returned as "empties" if any descent on London were made. How far this had any effect on the "wrong 'uns" I cannot say, but I do know that, whereas we had expected an invasion of Yankee criminals, we were remarkably free from them, and, as a matter of fact, for some weeks before, and after, the Coronation festivities, crime within the Metropolitan Police District was distinctly subnormal. Private inquiry agents on this side of the Atlantic are sometimes slightly spoken of; but in the United States it is very different. "Pinkerton's" has obtained a world-wide celebrity and may almost be said to be a semi-official police force.

Allan Pinkerton, the father, and founder of the firm, was a cooper in Glasgow who migrated to the States about the middle of the forties. A stranger in the land, he pitched his tent at Dundee, near Chicago, and there carried on his trade. After a few years he became Mayor of the township, a position, I understand, something akin to that of a centenier in the Channel Islands. This made him a kind of ex-officio Chief Constable. With a natural taste for detective work he "did the State some service," and, in so doing, attracted the attention of the great Abraham Lincoln, than

whom no man was ever more keen to recognise and appreciate sterling merit. Pinkerton *père* eventually became Lincoln's secret agent, and was with him throughout the war. Indeed, I believe he was in the theatre at the time when the President was shot by Wilks Booth. I have a large picture—presented to me by William Pinkerton—of Abraham Lincoln, General John A. M'Clelland, and Allan Pinkerton, standing together outside the President's tent on the battlefield of Antietam in September 1862.

At Lincoln's death Pinkerton started a private inquiry agency, of which his sons have made so colossal a success. It needed no loving cup to remind me of the ties of friendship and affection which exist between the Pinkerton family and myself, but, shortly after I retired, there arrived at my house a beautiful and brobdingnagian goblet, engraved: "With the love and best wishes of Willam and Allan Pinkerton." I have no more treasured possession.

On looking through what I have written, it is forcibly borne in on me that "the days of my years" might almost as well be called "A new Newgate Calendar"—a volume which, personally, I have always found very dull reading.

My apologies must be that the particular "days" which I have tried to describe were all of very special interest to myself. My readers, however, may think differently, and be glad that I am not extending them. And, indeed, the time would fail to tell of "days" with James Canham Reed (the murderer of a young woman at South-end), who was tracked down in the Metropolitan District after a long and stern chase; of "days" with Paul Katzula, who murdered Mrs. Rasch in Shaftesbury Avenue; of "days" with Donovan and Wade, the brutal murderers of Miss Farmer, who kept a newspaper shop in the Mile End Road. These men were eventually brought to justice on evidence of a wholly circumstantial nature. Wade, I remember, had the unsavoury reputation of being the most foul-mouthed man who ever entered a condemned cell! Of "days" with Edwards—a human beast of the type of Seaman—who murdered Mr. and Mrs. Darby at Camberwell, conveyed their bodies across London, and buried them in a back garden at Leyton—and many others which crowd up in my mind.

But the sands are running out, the minutes are ticking off, and the day of my official death is at hand. Prior to this the superintendents of Metropolitan Police asked for an interview, and

gave me their good wishes—served up on massive silver plate—and also a stick, which is, and ever shall be, my constant companion.

And now came, for me, black Saturday, the 31st of May. I went down to the office at the usual hour, and moved about even as a man in a dream. The words, "The last time, the last time," kept ringing in my ears; and what a lot they meant to me! To give up my work and my officers! In the latter I was parting from men who had done everything for me, and who had never, on any single occasion, failed me at a pinch. During the twenty-four years I had been in the Criminal Investigation Department I honestly believe that I could count up the black sheep of the fold on the fingers of my hands—and some of these weren't so very dark coloured after all. The temptations to which the detectives of London are exposed are little realised by the ratepayers, who are sometimes inclined to exaggerate their faults, and to be blind to their virtues. Of course amongst six hundred men you can't expect a very large percentage of "flyers." You must do the best you can with the material at hand, and if the majority of the officers of the C.I.D. are honest "tryers," I don't think the public will have much to complain of—

that they are a thoroughly effective force every reasonable citizen will admit.

Three o'clock is the hour fixed for the final farewell. I go down to the candidates' room (still as in a dream) and see on a table a massive loving cup. I take a seat behind it, and then my dear and trusted friend, the Chief Constable, says some most kind things in the kindest possible way. I say something in reply, not much, for everything is now getting a bit blurred, and, behind the faces of those who have worked with me in the present, I seem to see the faces of those who had worked with me in the past.

And so, as I put down my pen, I raise my cup of tea, and drink to the memory of my dear "children" of the C.I.D., knowing, as I do, that they will continue to maintain the best traditions of the Yard. God bless them every one!

FINIS.

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