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OLD LONDON TOWN

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LONDON TOWN

Illustrated & Described by

WILL OWEN

NEW YORK:

ROBERT M. MCBRIDE & COMPANY,

1922

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PREFACE

I make no apology for the publication of this little book—on the contrary.

WILL OWEN.

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INTRODUCTION

A sluggish river meandering through marshes to the sea, a cluster of huts and a primitive fort by Walbrook—such was old London Town when the Romans first appeared. The name is probably derived from the Celtic "Llyn," a pool (that portion of the river below London Bridge is still known as "The Pool"), and "din" or "dun," a hill or fort.

Four centuries of Roman domination and London, or Augusta, as it was then called, had become the principal port of Britain—a walled city with marsh lands surrounding it upon all sides, save one, the north, where stood a dense forest, portions of which still remain at Hampstead and Epping to delight the hearts of Bank Holiday trippers to-day. The Roman Wall, some two miles in length, is said to have been built about 360 A.D., but there is reason to believe it may be a couple of centuries older. Much of it may still be seen; the considerable length of the wall in St. Alphage Churchyard, and a bastion has been discovered quite recently when excavating for the General Post Office extension.

Many of the fragments are on private property hidden away in city cellars, and one portion of the wall I remember to have seen from the staircase window of a city rectory.

It may seem strange to find so little evidence remaining of the Roman occupation. Portions of the wall and Watling Street, a Roman bath and possibly London Stone at St. Swithin's Church, these are the only relics of that time so far as London is concerned. The explanation, however, is a simple one. We have seen that London was surrounded on every side by waste lands, and was therefore dependent for its supplies from far afield.

When the Roman legions were finally recalled owing to urgent private affairs London fell on evil times. A series of invasions of Britain, beginning with Picts and Scots and followed by Angles, Jutes and Saxons and even Irish pirates, cut off London from communication with the surrounding country. The merchants ruined and the inhabitants starved, London became desolate and deserted, the houses and quays fell into decay—Roman Augusta had disappeared. Gradually the East Saxons, forsaking their farming and nomadic life, together with some remnants of the conquered Britons, ventured back to the deserted town, and were shortly followed by foreign merchants. Trade revived and London was born again.

The history of London between 600 A.D. and the Norman Conquest is practically the history of England. It fell into the hands of the Danes and was recovered by Alfred, who made it the capital, York and Winchester having previously occupied that proud position. London was again captured by the Danes without fighting, and surrendered eventually to William of Normandy.

If there is little to remind us of the Roman occupation there is nothing at all to perpetuate the Saxon period. Saxon London was destroyed by the Great Fire of 1135 more effectually than a later London was destroyed by the fire of 1666, when, as the schoolboy stated, the city was purified by the burning of 89 churches. The principal market and trading centre of the city was Chepe—now Cheapside—and the names of the narrow streets branching off that busy highway indicate the trades that were carried on there. We still have our Bread Street, Milk Street, Fish Street and other sustaining byways.

Of Norman remains there are several. The Great White Tower, part of the Church of St. Bartholomew and St. Ethelburga's in Bishopsgate, the crypt of Bow Church and the crypt of St. John's Priory.

Across the river a ferry had existed from earliest times, and when the first London Bridge was built is impossible to say, but one is mentioned as in existence in 994. For a long time the bridges were built of timber, and an early chronicler tells us that in the year 1091 a dreadful "whirlwind coming from Africa" blew upon the city, causing immense damage and incidentally sweeping the bridge away. Another bridge was built, and forty years later was destroyed by fire. Its successor lasted thirty years, and then a stone bridge was decided upon. It took thirty-three years to build, but it served for six and a half centuries.

In Plantagenet times London was entirely dominated by the Church. There was no street without its monastery, its convent garden, with priests, friars, pardoners and other goodly folk.

From early Norman days pilgrimage had been a popular undertaking. It was an agreeable and economical way of seeing the world and obtaining absolution. Even the poorest in the land could so adventure. The pilgrim needed no money, he would receive bed, sup and breakfast at some monastery, and, once his objective was reached, he would receive absolution and return home with such a store of amazing adventures with dragons and demons and stories of one-eyed

men and men with tails, to serve him the remainder of his days. The pilgrimage might be to Canterbury or Rome, or it might be farther afield even to the Holy Land.

It is safe to say that one-fourth of the population was dependent directly or indirectly upon the Church for its existence. There was the Priory of Crutched Friars behind Seething Lane, to the north of Broad Street stood the splendid house of Austin Friars. By Newgate Street was the great foundation of the Grey Friars, whose library was given by Dick Whittington. Later this became the Blue Coat School, and has now disappeared to give place to the enlarged General Post Office. Then there were White Friars, Black Friars, Templars and Carmelites. Scarcely anything of their buildings remain, but of two of the priories we still have the wonderful Church of St. Bartholomew and the Gate of St. John. The Carthusians were situated to the north of St. Bartholomew, and the Charterhouse is still with us.

In addition to the religious houses London contained a vast number of palaces. These were the town houses of great nobles, and large enough to accommodate their numerous retinues, consisting of anything from four to eight hundred men. The rich merchants, too, had their mansions not less grand than those of the nobles, and it must not be supposed that these city magnates were of lowly origin. They were almost invariably the younger sons of good families. Dick Whittington was the son of a west-country knight, and his master, Sir John Fitz-Warren, was his cousin.

By the time good Queen Bess had arrived the power of the Church had waned considerably. The monasteries, priories and churches had mostly vanished under Henry's persuasive influence. The memories of Grey Friars still survive in the foundation of Christ's Hospital that sprang from its ruin, but all that remains of the Black Friars is a dismal underground station and an unpicturesque but very useful bridge.

The White Friars and Carmelites remain as street names only.

As the Church and the old feudal system weakened so grew the power of the city merchants and their city companies. In these latter days the powers wielded by the city companies have sadly diminished, and their functions now are mainly gastronomical and charitable. Some of the companies, indeed, have disappeared. What has become of the Whitawers, the Fustarers and the Megusers? Moreover, what was a Whitawer, a Fustarer or a Meguser? Others, such as the Bow String Makers, the Bowyers and the Patten Makers, have outlasted the trades they served.

Many of their halls are of great beauty, but are not open to the general public.

During the spacious days of Elizabeth the trade of London Town increased amazingly, and much of this was due to Sir Thomas Gresham, a Lombard Street shopkeeper—a mercer and a merchant adventurer. His shop bore the sign of a grasshopper, his family crest, and you will find a copy of the old sign in Lombard Street to-day.

London Town in the time of Charles II. was much as it had been during Elizabeth's reign. Apart from the licentiousness of the Court the townspeople lived much as before, but two events occurred at this time to change completely the appearance of the city—the Plague and the Fire. It was not the first plague that had visited London, nor was it the first fire. The plagues of 1407 and 1517 are said to have killed half the population. Read Defoe's account of the Plague, and you will realise the awful and deserted aspect of the town—the streets empty but for the carts gathering up the victims, the deserted churches, grass growing in the streets, and the roads leading to the country covered with fugitives.

And then the fire that followed.

It began early in the morning of a Sunday in September, 1666, in the house of a baker in Pudding Lane, where the Monument now stands. All the houses in the street and round about were of wood covered with pitch, and the projecting upper storeys nearly met. It was the most densely-populated part of the city, and the neighbouring warehouses were stored with oil, pitch and tar, wine and brandy and other combustibles. The baker's shop was stored with faggots and brushwood, so that everything that could be done to make the fire a success seems to have been done and done well. Altogether the fire destroyed five-sixths of the city, including St. Paul's Cathedral, four of the city gates, and some 132,000 houses, and the value of the property consumed amounted to £10,000,000.

Of the new London that arose possibly the most interesting change was the setting up of coffee-houses for the first time. Here assembled the wits of the day, together with their satellites, to discuss any and everything that called for argument. As coffee declined in favour these developed more into taverns and chop-houses.

The gates of London were still standing and were closed at sunset, but were abolished in 1760 and the materials sold.

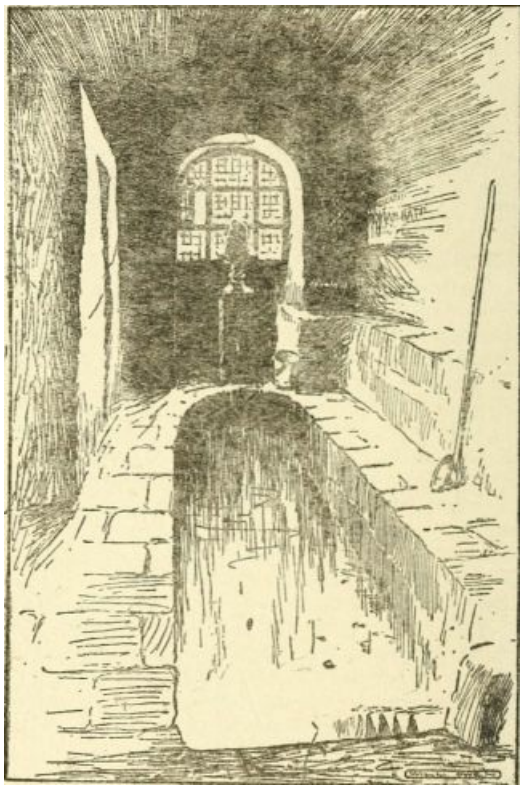
On the front of St. Dunstan's in Fleet Street is a statue of Queen Elizabeth which formerly adorned the Lud Gate.

At this time shops were built against the church walls, as you will still find them against St. Ethelburga's in Bishopsgate Street. Every shop front had its projecting sign hanging precariously over the pedestrian. The roads and pavings were of the petrified kidney pattern with posts to indicate where the paving began.

By all accounts it must have been an anxious time for the citizen of London Town in the days of the Georges. Pickpockets, swaggering bullies and highwaymen abounded, and mad bulls were constantly encountered in the streets, the noise must have been deafening, and in wet weather the rain spouts on the roofs deluged the passers-by.

The great city merchants still lived in town, but the nobles had long since departed. The gardens at Ranelagh and Vauxhall were popular resorts, and the public hangings at Newgate attracted in some strange fashion our rude forefathers. Gibbets were to be seen everywhere, and some remained until the early nineteenth century. It was a time of rough-and-ready justice, or rather injustice. The punishment did not necessarily fit the crime. What do you think of a law that condemned to hanging two children who had stolen a purse containing a couple of shillings? Stocks and the pillory were everywhere, and flogging in the Army and Navy was a matter of course at a time when the press-gang was an institution.

The public were admitted to Bedlam to see the lunatics at one penny each, and from this source the hospital derived an income of £400 a year. Of that home from home, the Fleet Prison, Dickens has given us a perfect picture in the *Pickwick Papers*. It has long since been swept away, together with much that he described so vividly, but here and there an odd corner still remains exactly as he saw it—a relic of old London Town.



The Roman Bath in the Strand.

The Roman Bath in the Strand

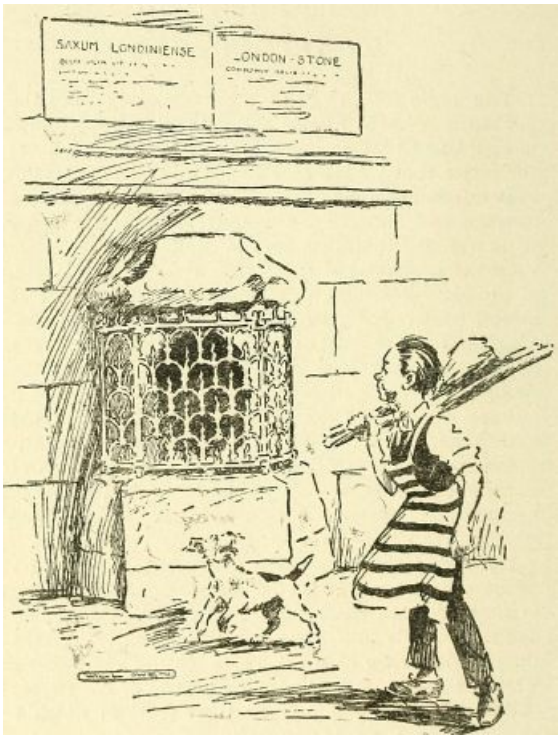
There would seem to be little connection between the Roman invasion of Britain and a popular drapery firm in New Oxford Street, but it is owing to the courtesy of the latter that we are able to see to-day one relic of that interesting time. The late head of the firm, a distinguished antiquary, purchased the property many years ago, and it still remains in the family.

On the south side of the Strand, opposite the Church of St. Mary-le-Strand, is a narrow turning known as Strand Lane. The name is probably exhibited somewhere, but I have not been able to find it; so, to make all clear, let me say at once it is a tortuous passage alongside Lockhart's refreshment rooms.

A few yards down the passage on the left is an old Roman bath, the last of its race in London. Antiquaries agree that it dates as far back as the reign of Titus or Vespasian, if not Julius Cæsar himself, that strong man of whom it is recorded that he flung three bridges across the Tiber.

The bath is fed by a perpetual spring, and was, no doubt, one of the attractions of a desirable Roman villa.

In quite recent times it has been used by the public, and Dickens is said to have done so frequently. David Copperfield writes of it: "There was an old Roman bath in those days at the bottom of one of the streets out of the Strand—it may be there still—in which I have had many a cold plunge."



London Stone.

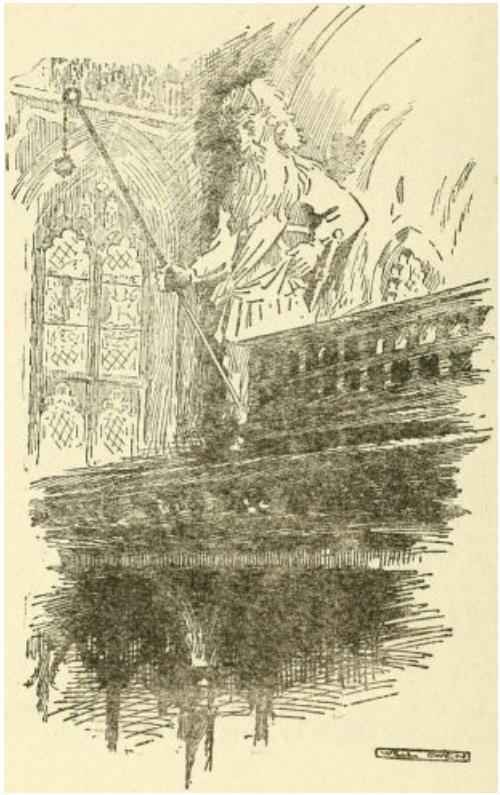
London Stone

The fragment built into the face of St. Swithin's Church in Cannon Street, and so carefully protected by an iron grille that it is well-nigh invisible, is known as London Stone, and is believed to be a Roman milliarium or milestone, and to have marked the point in London whence all Roman roads radiated and distances were measured. Holinshed mentions Jack Cade striking his sword upon the stone after the storming of London Bridge and announcing himself lord of the city—as does Shakespeare in *Henry VI.*

The stone stood formerly on the south side of Cannon Street, and, as Sir John Fielding tells us, "it was fixed so very deep in the ground, and was so thoroughly fastened by bars of iron, that the most ponderous carriages could do it no injury." Something, however, seems to have been more successful than the ponderous carriages, as there is but a fragment left of the "great stone" described by John Stow.

Mr. Walter George Bell, in his interesting and informative *Unknown London*, is at some pains to cast doubt upon its Roman origin, as no mention of the stone appears before about 1200, and I think we may leave the verdict as one of "not proven."

St. Swithin's, the church that now affords sanctuary to the stone, was one of those destroyed by the Great Fire, and was rebuilt by Wren as we now see it.



Gogmagog.

Gog and Magog

On either side of the west window in the Great Hall of the Guildhall stand two gigantic figures known to the multitude as Gog and Magog respectively; but to the more erudite, such as you and I, dear reader, the one is Gogmagog and the other Corineus.

The story of these giants dates back to the earliest days.

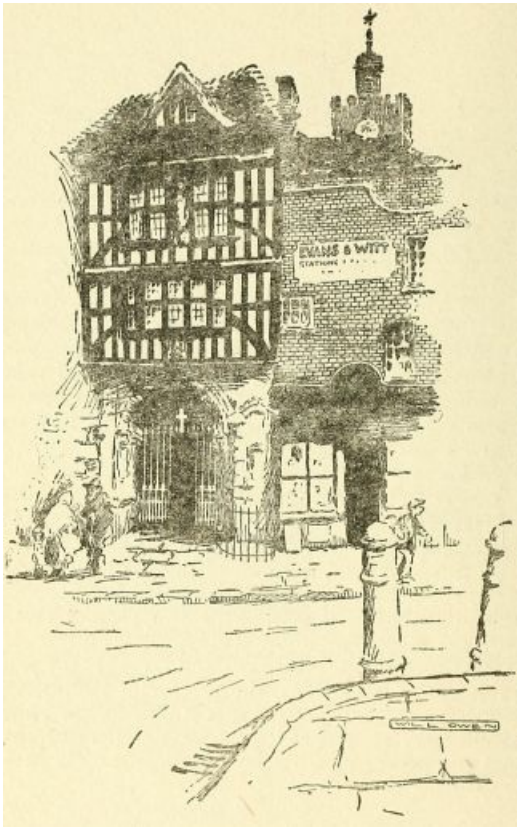
This is one story—it is not altogether convincing, but I give it for what it is worth. The Emperor Diocletian of Troy had thirty-three wicked daughters who murdered their respective husbands, and being banished by their indignant father, arrived in Britain, where they married demons and had giants for their sons.

So far so good.

One of these giant sons was Albion, who ruled over Britain until the arrival of Brutus of Troy, who attempted to wrest the kingdom from him.

Brutus was at first unsuccessful but triumphed later, and Albion was slain in a hand-to-hand conflict, and at the same time Albion's two giant brothers, Gog and Magog, were captured.

That, as I say, is one story; but there is another to the effect that Corineus, the brother of Brutus, was the slayer of Albion, and that it is his effigy in Trojan armour that appears facing Gogmagog—the conqueror and the conquered.



St. Bartholomew's Gateway.

St. Bartholomew-the-Great

This fine old Norman relic, the Priory of St. Bartholomew, of which only the choir remains, was founded by one Rahere in the reign of Henry I.

Rahere is said to have been the king's minstrel and jester, a knight of good family and a man of low origin, so we will leave it at that; but there seems to be no doubt that about the year 1120 he began to take life seriously, and undertook a pilgrimage to Rome.

There he was stricken with fever, and vowed that if he were allowed to return safely he would found a hospital for the poor.

During his convalescence he had an extraordinary vision.

A winged, fearsome beast, with eight feet, carried him on high and was about to drop him into a bottomless pit, when a noble form, St. Bartholomew, appeared, disposed of the many-footed one and commanded Rahere to build a church in Smithfield.

The church was founded in 1123, and ten years later the king granted to the Priory a Charter of Privileges.

The charter issued by the king was a thoroughly good one. It was a far, far better one than I have ever known. It enacted that the Priory should have sacc and socc and thol and theme and likewise infogheneteof. It granted liberties, free customs and acquittances within and without and in all places, now and for ever.

It provided also for ferdwit and hegwit, schewigt and fridsoke, forvenge and withfange, and a number of other unconsidered trifles.

The Priory flourished and must have been of a great size, but it suffered at the Dissolution in common with others.

A great portion of the building was removed, as was the case also at the Priory of St. John, both being used to build Somerset House.

There is much of interest to see within the stately interior.

Rahere's tomb with its recumbent effigy under a vaulted canopy is a thing of beauty.

Hogarth, who lived in Bartholomew Close, was baptised here, and the font is still in use.

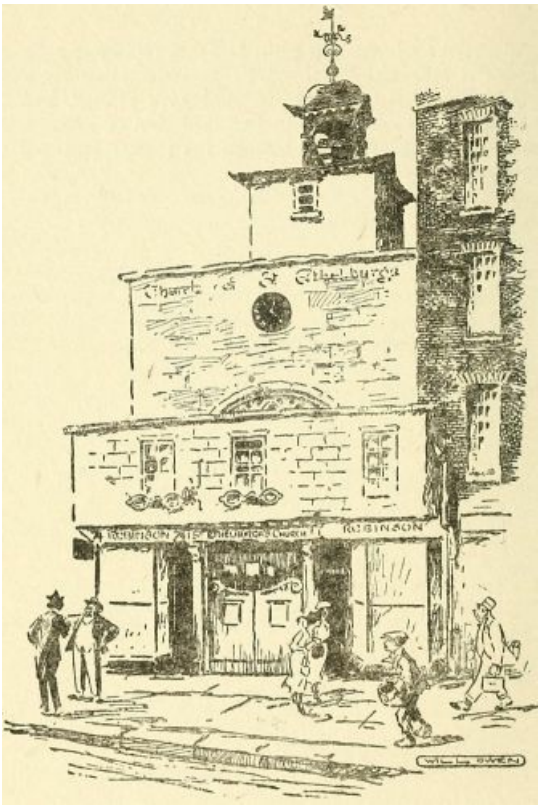
There are many tablets. One I remember to a long-departed Darby and Joan concluded with these lines:—

> "Shee first deceased, Hee for a little Tryd
> To live without her, likd it not and dyd."

Until quite recently the north transept had been used for many generations as a blacksmith's forge, while the Lady Chapel was a fringe factory.

The sketch accompanying this narrative is the old gateway entrance from Smithfield, the half-timbered house above having been built in 1590, replacing some monastic buildings which were removed at that time.

The timbered front was covered with plaster, and was only revealed owing to the explosion of a bomb near by during an air raid, when the plaster loosened and fell.



St. Ethelburga's Church.

St. Ethelburga's Church

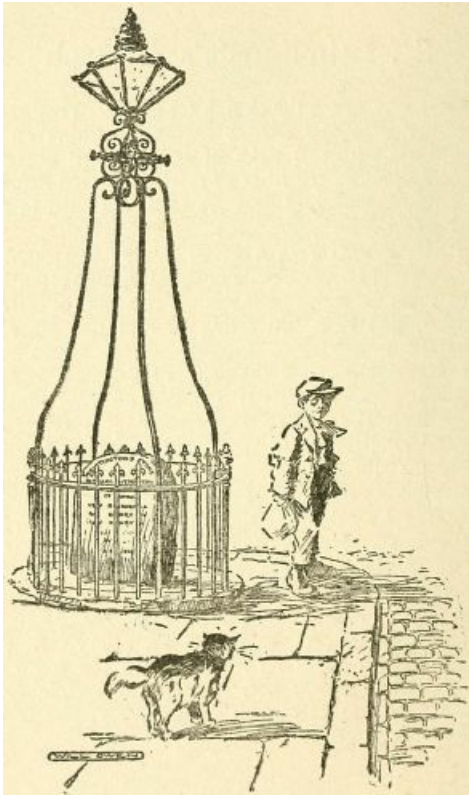
It is not easy to see the church for shops. They seem to grudge even the narrow entrance opening on to Bishopsgate. Several pairs of spectacles of gigantic proportions adorn the front of this famous old church, and I presume smaller sizes are to be obtained in the shops below.

As long ago as 1754 a writer issuing a pamphlet, urging certain improvements in the city, calls attention to the sheds for shops built against the walls of certain churches, and it is interesting to find this state of affairs still in existence.

St. Ethelburga was the wife of Sebert the first Christian king, traditional founder of Westminster Abbey, and the church now standing is one that escaped the Great Fire. Some of its early English masonry is still retained.

According to tradition the church was much frequented by sailors setting out or returning from their voyages. Hudson and many of his crew came here to receive the Holy Sacrament before they left their native shores in 1610.

The western arch of the church is said to have formed part of the gateway of St. Helen's Priory. In St. Helen's Church adjoining may be seen the tomb of Julius Cæsar. This is not, as might be imagined, a Roman relic, but of one Sir Julius Cæsar, Master of the Rolls to James I.



Dick Whittington's Stone.

Dick Whittington's Stone

The story of Dick Whittington and his famous cat is familiar to all earnest students of the drama. It is the most popular of pantomimes, and, although the details may vary, the essential story remains the same, and therefore must be true.

The part of Richard is usually played by a lady of surpassing beauty, and the faithful animal is invariably a humorist, but these are merely concessions to a popular demand. For the benefit of those ignorant of the history of their motherland, let me recapitulate the story.

A poor, ill-treated orphan from the west-country, one Richard Whittington, set out for London, having heard its streets were paved with gold. Arriving in a state of destitution, he attracted the commiseration of a wealthy merchant, Sir John Fitz-Warren, who appointed the lad scullion in his kitchen. Here Richard's gentle nature suffered greatly at the hands of a cruel cook, so much so, in fact, that even the kindness shown to him by his master's daughter was not sufficient to prevent our hero from running away.

His worldly possessions at this time consisted of one small bundle and one cat, for which he had paid a penny to keep down the rats in his garret.

Fed up with the west-country and likewise the city of London, Richard set off in a northerly direction, and having reached the fourth milestone on Highgate Hill sat him down to rest.

It is this milestone I want you to see, for here it was that fortune called to him. The entire city of London at that time covered a space no larger than Hyde Park, and as Dick sat gazing down over the fields to his late home the bells of Bow Church began to chime, and to our romantic Richard they seemed to sing a song, "Return again, Whittington, Lord Mayor of London."

I do not know, of course, but I imagine the sweet voice of Miss Fitz-Warren had something to do with it all. Be that as it may, Richard returned, and was certainly thrice Lord Mayor of London.

Now as to the cat. She or he, as the case may be, was, as we know, a good ratter, and thereby hangs a story.

It was the practice in those days for merchants to allow their servants to contribute to any venture their master had in hand, and to take a corresponding share of profits in its successful issue, so that when Sir John's good ship *Unicorn* set sail for "furrin" parts Richard ventured his sole possession, his cat, and the *Unicorn*, with a cat aboard, arriving at Barbary when the palace was overrun with rats made good. The king purchased the famous ratter at ten times the value of the entire freight.

The story is a good one with a healthy moral. But coming down to mere fact, Dick was the son of a Gloucestershire knight, was apprenticed to his cousin Sir John Fitz-Warren, and the legend of the cat made its first appearance two centuries after Whittington's death. A similar story can be traced in many other countries.

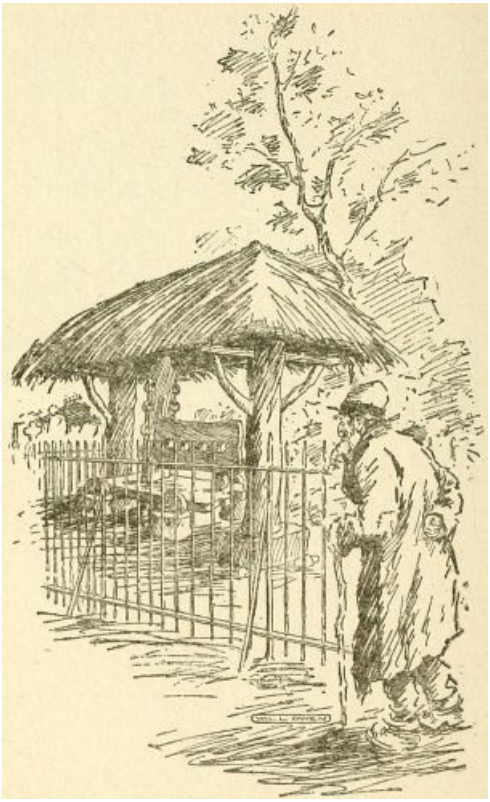
The first reference to Whittington is in 1379, when he contributed 5 marks to a city loan. Ten years later he subscribed £10 towards the defence of the city.

Nearly thirty years later he is Lord Mayor, presiding at a banquet to Henry V. to celebrate the victory at Agincourt, and doing the thing handsomely.

The banquet is described as magnificent beyond parallel, rare and costly dishes, the wine running in conduits and the wood fires fed with spices and aromatics.

"Even the fires are filled with perfume," cried the amazed King. "If your Majesty forbids me not," said Sir Richard (*Sir* Richard, mark you), "I will make these fires still more fragrant," and the King graciously acquiescing, Dick drew forth a packet of bonds, which he threw into the flames, exclaiming, "Thus do I acquit your Majesty of a debt of £60,000." As this sum would be equal to a couple of millions or so at the present day, we may take it that our friend Richard was getting on.

To cut a long story short, Richard was Lord Mayor of London in 1397, 1406, and 1419, and died in 1423.



Stocks and Whipping-post in Shoreditch Churchyard.

Stocks and Whipping-post in Shoreditch Churchyard

"When I grow rich, say the bells of Shoreditch."

And very sweetly they would have said it, for the bells of St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, have a reputation that is world-wide.

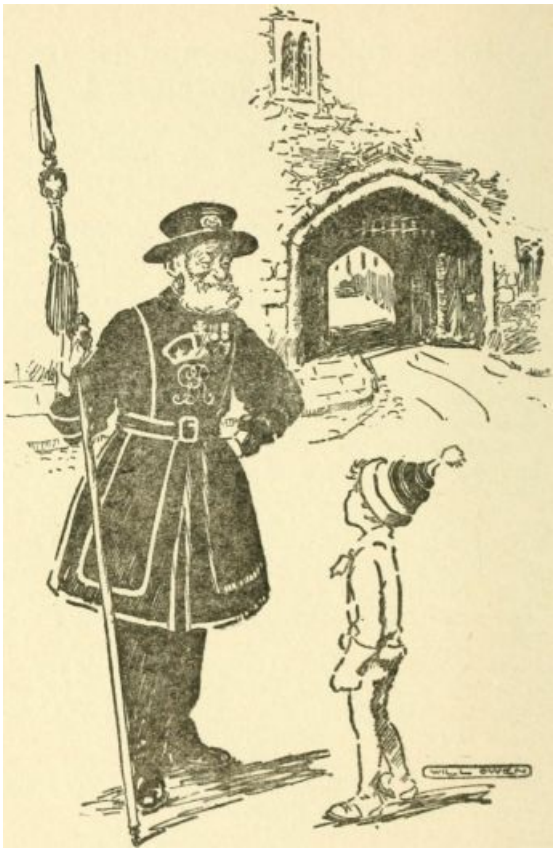
It is believed by some that Shoreditch derived its name from Jane Shore, a favourite of Edward IV., whose body is said to have been discovered in a ditch in the neighbourhood. But as the name is recorded some two-and-a-half centuries before Jane's time—well, I leave it to you, partner.

A church stood on the present site a thousand years ago. It was built principally of wood, and in due course was burnt down.

A second church was erected and stood for centuries, the present structure being only two hundred years old.

The whipping-post and stocks, when no longer used, were consigned to the vaults of the church, and lay hidden for seventy years. They were only discovered some twenty years ago during certain alterations, and were placed in the churchyard, where they stand to-day.

The church and crypt have many interesting tombs and brasses, and would have had more but for an amiable weakness on the part of one Meredith Hammer, Vicar in 1581, who purloined the brasses and converted them into money. One of the grave-diggers was committed to the Old Bailey a hundred and fifty years later for indulging in a similar hobby.



Beefeater, the Tower.

The Tower

The costume worn by the Beefeater of the Tower is a picturesque survival of the happy days of Charles II., and is still more picturesque when on State occasions he discards his baggy trousers in favour of knee breeches and stockings. The Tower has in its time served as palace, prison, fortress, mint and even as a home for lions.

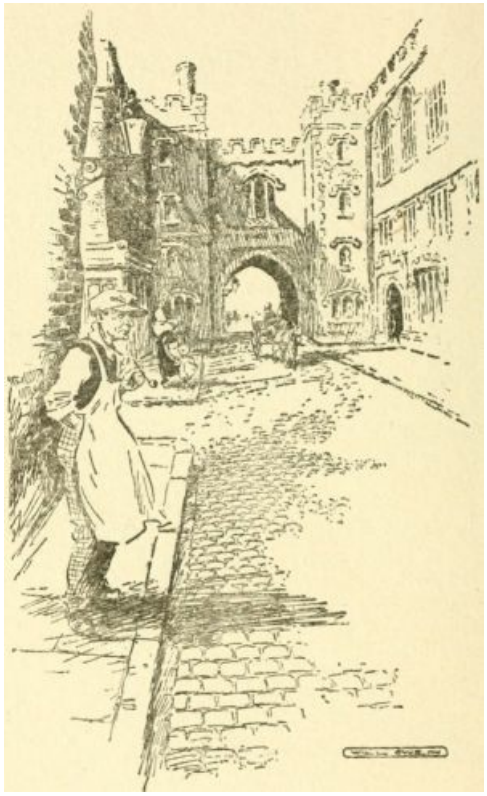
No lion, however, has been in residence since 1834, when the last of them was removed to the Zoological Gardens. The place was built by the Conqueror in 1078 in order that he might have control over the city, and was used as a palace by all our kings and queens until the reign of Charles II.

Many distinguished visitors have resided here, and not a few have died here—suddenly.

You may see the small square plot, paved with granite, where Anne Boleyn, Lady Jane Grey and other hardened criminals were executed, and you may, if you so desire, even see the axe and block that helped in the good work.

There are a rack and thumbscrew and other delicate instruments of torture for those who would visualise those stirring times of long ago.

There is the Traitors' Gate, that gate of dreadful memories, and the Bloody Tower, which adjective, as the Beefeater informed the inquisitive old lady, applied equally to every coiner of the Tower.



St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell.

St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell

Most of the London gates have attained the dignity of an underground station, and why St. John's should have remained a mere gate I do not know, possibly because it does not block a sufficiently important thoroughfare.

It is the only remaining relic of the mediæval Priory of St. John, the chief English seat of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem, and was built by Prior Docwra in 1504.

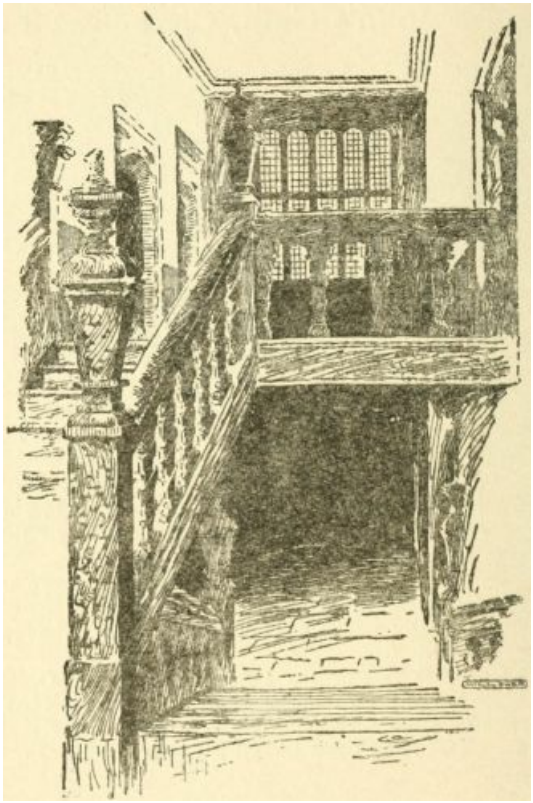
In 1731 the priory buildings had disappeared, and the Gate House was inhabited by a printer, Edward Cave, where he printed and issued the *Gentleman's Magazine*, with our old friend Dr. Johnson as the principal contributor.

Cave does not appear to have paid large salaries, for Johnson was so shabbily dressed that he took his meals behind a screen when Cave had visitors.

At this period Johnson brought to the gate a young friend with a taste for acting, one David Garrick, who gave his first performance in the large room over the gate to Cave's workmen.

At a later date the place became an inn, known as the Jerusalem Tavern, and the proprietor advertised a particularly potent and fearsome quencher known as Chevalric Gin.

The gate is now the headquarters of the Order which has in recent years been re-incorporated, and has, amongst other work, founded the St. John Ambulance Association, and I fear Chevalric Gin is a thing of the past.



The Charterhouse.

The Charterhouse

A monastery that still retains something of its collegiate character is the Charterhouse, a picturesque, rambling, red-brick building, with cloisters and courtyard all within a stone's-throw of busy Smithfield Market.

It harbours some five-and-sixty Poor Brothers, and the curfew rings each night.

In 1349, when the Plague was at its height and the dead were lying in the streets, Sir Walter de Manny, a soldier of Edward III., who had won honour on many a field in France, bought from the Hospital of St. Bartholomew some thirteen acres for the more seemly burial of these poor victims.

Twenty-two years later the Carthusian Monastery was founded, and had achieved fame and prosperity, when it was destroyed by that engaging monarch Henry VIII.

The treatment of the Prior, John Houghton, and certain of the monks, seems to call for censure; they were dragged on hurdles from the Tower to Tyburn, where they were disembowelled while still living, and then hanged.

Ten others were chained upright in a dungeon at Newgate until they died—slowly.

This almost Hunnish treatment seems to have affected the morale of the remaining monks, who submitted, and were dismissed eventually with small pensions.

It is, of course, difficult to say what one would do in certain circumstances, but, speaking without prejudice, I am inclined to think I would have taken my pension.

After the passing of the monks, the Charterhouse came into the hands of various favourites, and eventually became the property of the Duke of Norfolk, who altered it considerably, making it less monastic and more palatial in character.

The Duke, who favoured Mary Queen of Scots, became involved in a plot against Elizabeth, and was arrested (on the great staircase, it is said), and in due course was executed.

The house remained in the possession of the Norfolk family until 1611, when it was purchased by Thomas Sutton, a retired soldier, with business instincts, who had made money in coal.

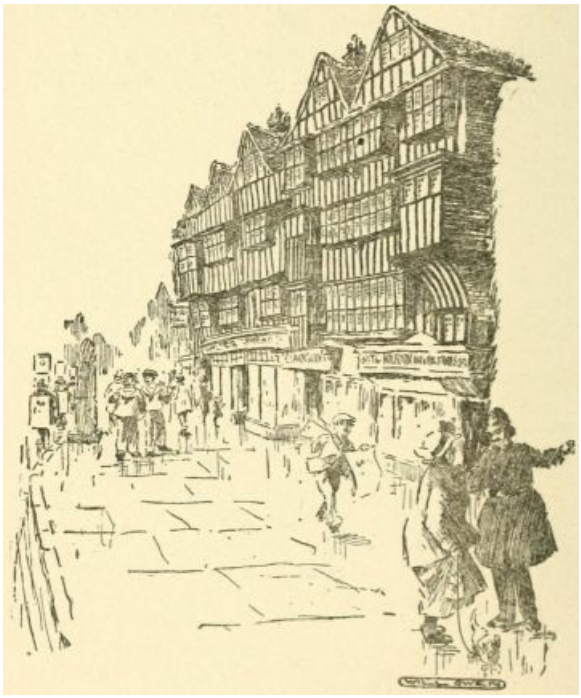
He converted the place into a hospital for eighty old men, and founded a famous school.

It is as a Poor Brother that Colonel Newcombe ended his days, and at No. 16 lived Captain Thomas Light, whom Thackeray used to visit while writing the closing chapters of *The Newcomes*.

At the present time the Hospital is only able to maintain sixty-five Brothers instead of the eighty intended by the founder, owing to the depreciation in the value of the land bequeathed by Sutton.

The School is no longer in London, having been removed to Godalming in 1872.

Sir Henry Havelock, Thackeray, Leech and John Wesley are only some of the many famous old Carthusians.



Old Houses in Holborn.

The Old Houses in Holborn

A famous London landmark is the row of quaint old timbered houses facing Gray's Inn Road, giving us a fair idea of what London must have been in the merrie days when much-married Henry ruled the land.

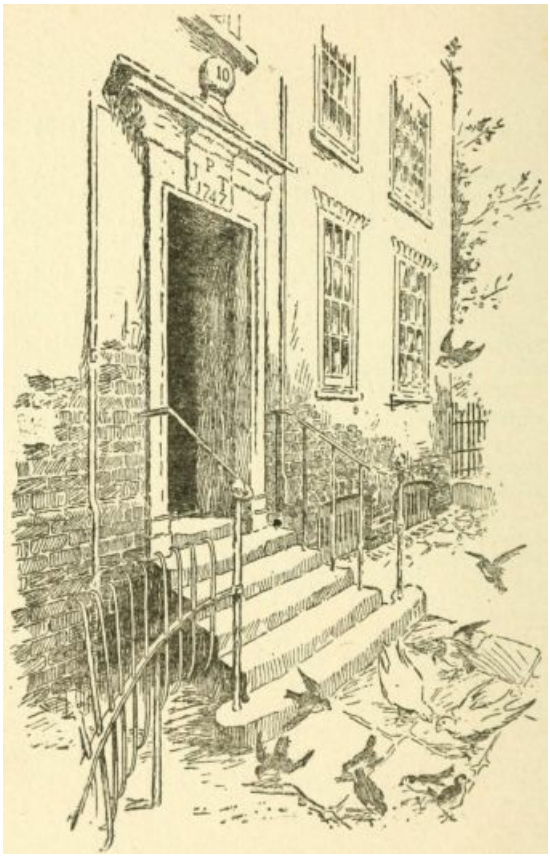
It does not require a very vivid imagination to see those overhanging windows peopled with eager faces watching the poor wretch passing on his way to Tyburn carrying the bouquet of flowers presented to him at the Church of St. Sepulchre on leaving Newgate.

Here too came in 1780 that roaring mob the Gordon rioters, so vividly described in *Barnaby Rudge*. They sacked and burnt the "Black Swan," an old time hostelry close by and the starting-point for the York stage coach.

Some idea of the leisurely way in which our forefathers travelled may be gathered from an old "Black Swan" way-bill of 1706, giving the time for the journey as four days, with the pious reservation, "if God permits."

It must have been a cheery neighbourhood in those days of long ago—a gallows stood at either end of Fetter Lane, and as an old writer has it, "Holborn had no lack of excitement."

The ancient archway beneath the old houses gives entrance to Staple Inn, one of the few remaining of the smaller Inns of Chancery that once stood in and about Chancery and Fetter Lanes.



No. 10 Staple Inn.

Staple Inn

Staple Inn has had a varied career. It was, we know, a market of some importance in 1375, when the wool staplers of Westminster were transferred there, and you will find the cobble stones in squares as they were laid so many centuries ago for the merchants to set out their wares.

It ceased to be a wool market in 1378 and passed into the hands of the lawyers, and here in 1759 came Dr. Johnson from his house in Gough Square.

The doorway I have sketched is that of No. 10 in the second courtyard, and is thus described in *Edwin Drood*:—

"Neither wind nor sun, however, favoured Staple Inn one December afternoon towards six o'clock, when it was filled with fog, and candles shed murky and blurred rays through the windows of all its then occupied chambers; notably from a set of chambers in a corner house in the little inner quadrangle presenting in black and white over its ugly portal the mysterious inscription:

P
J T
1747.

In which set of chambers, never having troubled his head about the inscription unless to bethink him at odd times on glancing up at it, that haply it might mean 'Perhaps John Thomas,' or 'Perhaps Joe Tyler,' sat Mr. Grewgious writing by his fire.

"However, if you insist upon knowing what these mysterious letters mean, it may be a clue that in 1747 Principal John Thomson presided over the Inn."

Ringing the Curfew.

Ringing the Curfew—Lincoln's Inn Chapel

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day at 9 p.m. precisely at Lincoln's Inn, but the ploughmen from Lincoln's Inn Fields have plodded their weary way homeward some hours earlier.

A sound like unto the lowing herd winding slowly o'er the lea is heard, but a trifle sharper, and may be only the toot of the Holborn motor-bus taking the air.

The custom of ringing a bell at sunset in summer and at eight o'clock in winter was instituted by William of Normandy to warn all householders to extinguish lights and fires, and was at that time a very necessary precaution when all houses were made of wood.

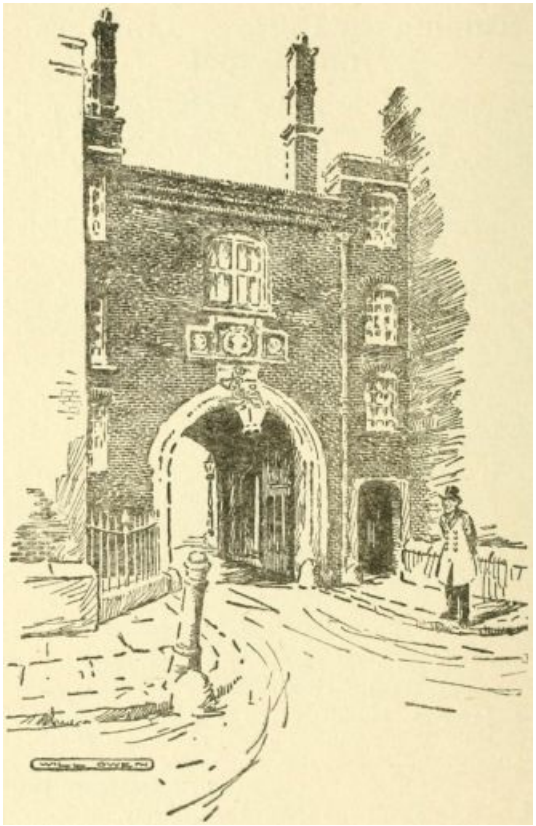
The danger exists no longer, but, nevertheless, the bell is rung nightly by the head porter in the chapel of Lincoln's Inn.

It is one of those quaint survivals still to be found in London Town, and by no means the only one—herbs are still strewn upon the floor of the Old Bailey to ward off gaol fever, but that interesting ailment has long disappeared.

I wish the ringing of the curfew were more picturesque, but as a matter of fact it is a very unimpressive ceremony.

The head porter who sounds the nightly warning is not arrayed as befits the occasion. He wears no uniform and proceeds to his duties unaccompanied and apparently unconcerned—a guard of yeomen or men-at-arms would brighten things up considerably.

The chapel is, or was, designed by Inigo Jones, but has been improved and suffered accordingly.



Lincoln's Inn.

Lincoln's Inn

In the fifteenth century there flourished no fewer than fourteen inns, or hostels, for the rearing of lawyers, and of these ten were known as Inns of Chancery, being offshoots from the parent societies known as the Inns of Court.

These latter are the Temple (Inner and Middle), Lincoln's Inn, and Gray's Inn. The Inns, both of Court and of Chancery, had their origin through the necessity experienced by the legal profession for an organised system of education apart from the Church, and their constitution was for a long time of a semi-monastic nature; but with the Reformation all clerical control vanished.

Lincoln's Inn, with which we are for the moment concerned, was built upon land acquired from the Earl of Lincoln.

The fine old gateway that opens upon Chancery Lane is an admirable relic of the Tudor age, and the old gates are as sound as when their oaken timbers were first brought from Henley-on-Thames.

Tradition has it that Ben Jonson, a poor bricklayer, was found working on the gate, a trowel in one hand and a *Horace* in the other, and the sight so touched the hearts of those who discovered him that they forthwith provided him with funds to enable the poor student to "down tools" and carry on with his books.

It is a pretty story, but thin. Bricklaying is essentially a two-handed job.

Just inside the gateway are Old Buildings, and they could not well be better named.

At No. 24 resided John Thurloe, Cromwell's secretary, and in this connection another story is told.

The Protector is said to have called on his secretary to discuss plans for seizing the young princes, sons of Charles I. At this interesting moment it was discovered that Thurloe's clerk was in the room apparently asleep. Cromwell was for slaughtering the slumberer, but was dissuaded by the secretary, who believed his man to be really asleep. Needless to say, he was shamming, and found means to warn the intended victims.

Close by is the chapel, with unusually fine stained-glass windows.

It possesses also an open crypt of great beauty, and here the students of the Inn would meet their clients and talk over their affairs.

Lincoln's Inn Fields, one of the largest and shadiest of London squares, had in former times the shadiest of reputations. It was the resort of footpads and thieves and the scene of occasional executions.

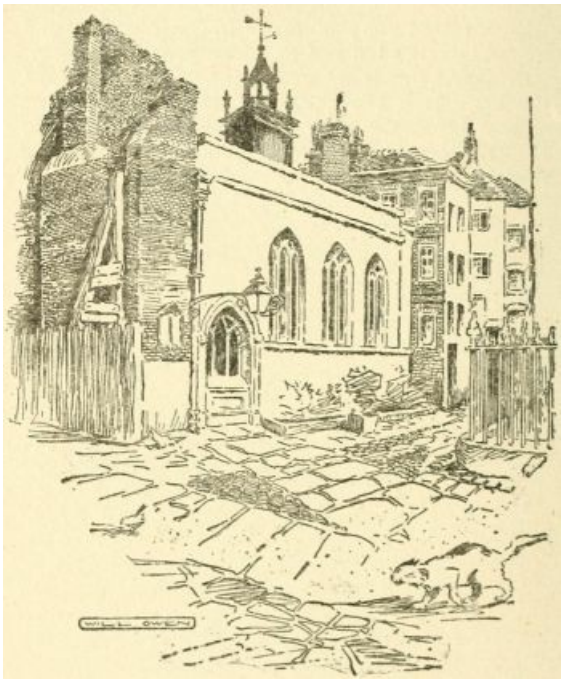
There are some fine old houses round the square, and at No. 58 lived Dickens's friend, John Forster, whose rooms are described in *Bleak House* as those occupied by that most inscrutable of family lawyers, the old man Tulkinghorn.

"Here in a large house, formerly a house of state, lived Mr. Tulkinghorn. It is let off in sets of chambers now; and in those shrunken fragments of its greatness, lawyers lie like maggots in nuts."

Such is the cheery description of No. 58 and tenants.

Much of the story of *Bleak House* is laid in and around Lincoln's Inn and its picturesque old gateway.

On the north side of Lincoln's Inn Fields is the Soane Museum. It is less known than it deserves to be, as it contains some excellent paintings by Hogarth, Turner, Reynolds, Watteau and other promising youngsters.



Clifford's Inn.

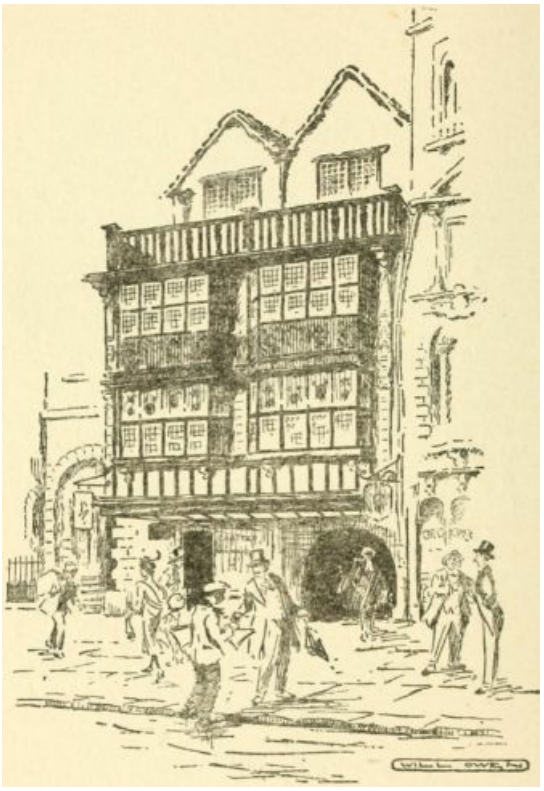
Clifford's Inn

Clifford's Inn, an old-time Inn of Chancery, is a dilapidated picturesque relic that looks as though it were itself in Chancery.

It is modest and unassuming, and is tucked away in a corner behind St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet Street. The vane over the old hall is broken and the clock has no hands, but there was a time when this hall housed the committee that sat after the Great Fire to adjudicate in disputes that necessarily arose regarding boundaries, etc., on that festive occasion.

These Inns of Chancery were originally regarded as offshoots from the various Inns of Court—something in the nature of poor relations—and this Inn was always regarded, except by its members, as a dependency of the Inner Temple.

Clifford's Inn to me is always gloomy—even the cats seem nervy, and perhaps the fact that the six attorneys of the Marshalsea Court—that den of misery—lived here, may have something to do with it. I only knew one man who lived there, and he has recently deserted it for Wigan.



Old Council Chamber of the Duchy of Cornwall.

The Old Council Chamber of the Duchy of Cornwall

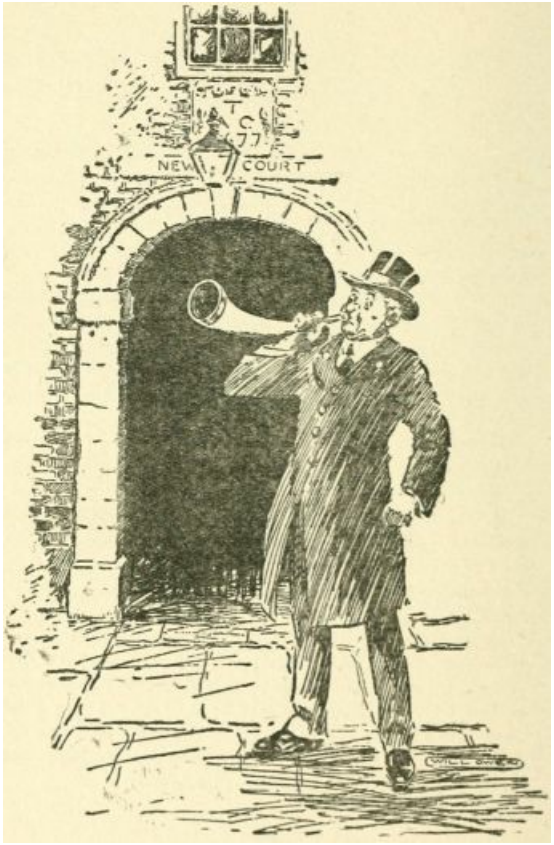
At the foot of Chancery Lane stood Isaac Walton's shop, which disappeared when the lane was widened, and immediately opposite over a gate leading to the Inner Temple stands a fine example of a seventeenth-century timber-constructed city house. This fine old building has had a varied career.

For many years it bore with pride upon its front an announcement that it had been a former palace of one Cardinal Wolsey and his king, Henry VIII., but latterly this claim has been withdrawn. The place was purchased in recent years by the London County Council and its true history revealed.

Starting life as a tavern, it was known in 1540 as "The Hande," and by 1610 it had developed into the "Prince's Arms."

In 1665, the year of the Great Plague, a remedy for stopping the Plague was advertised as on sale by Mr. Drinkwater at the appropriate sign of "The Fountain"—the late lamented "Hande" and "Prince's Arms."

Later the place became a wax-works exhibition, the tavern business still continuing at the rear of the premises. A small charge is now made for admission to the panelled room on the first floor, at one time used as a Council Chamber for the Duchy of Cornwall. Adjoining is "Grooms," an old-time coffee-house mentioned by Thackeray in *Pendennis*.



The Horn Blower, Temple.

The Horn Blower

It is only natural to find in the romantic old Inns of Court curious customs still surviving. If you should find yourself in Fountain Court or, in fact, any part of the Middle Temple about half-past five in the evening during term time, you will imagine you hear Little Boy Blue blowing his horn, but you will find presently that it is only the Inn porter warning all whom it may concern that dinner will shortly be served in hall.

The custom is said to date from early days, when the Temple meadows were wilder, and students wandering 'mang the heather became so immersed in their studies and oblivious to the pangs of hunger that a reminder became necessary.

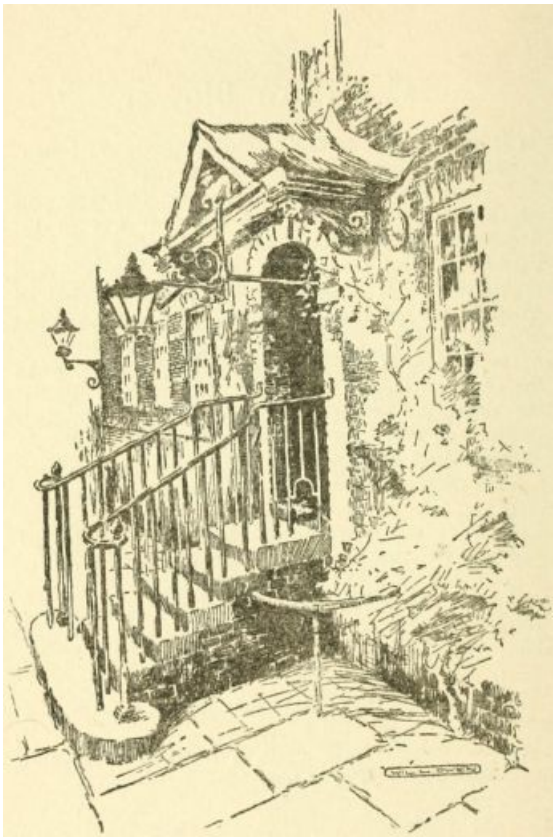
From what one knows of students and their appetites there seems to be a catch somewhere.

Much of the Temple, of course, was destroyed during the Great Fire, but some relics of the earlier time remain.

Middle Temple Lane is one of these, with its projecting upper floors and musty, mysterious-looking shops below, that look as though none but ghostly clients ever enter.

It is here, perhaps, that one should go to raise a mortgage on a haunted house.

I have passed these shops a hundred times and never seen a soul go in or out.



Lamb Building, Temple.

Lamb Building, the Temple

It may not be generally known that the Temple was not the original home of the Templars. They settled in Holborn, near by Staple Inn, shortly after their foundation by Baldwin, King of Jerusalem, in 1118, but towards the end of the twelfth century migrated to certain meadows sloping down to the Thames.

It is at once the oldest and largest of the Inns of Court, a quiet haven full of memories and charming old-world dwellings.

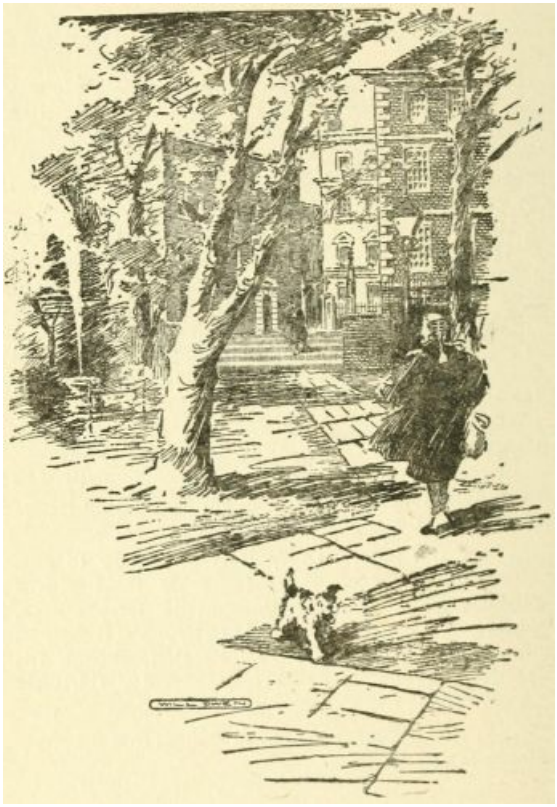
Of the many beautiful doorways in the Temple, that of Lamb Building on the south side of the church is one of the most beautiful. Geographically it should belong to the Inner Temple, but actually is part of the Middle.

The building forms one side of a tiny quadrangle together with the church, the hall and the cloisters.

In the hall dinner is served to members of the Inn daily during term time, and in this connection let me quote from the *Quarterly Review* of 1836:—

> "At the Inner Temple it is customary to pass huge silver goblets down the table filled with a delicious composition immemorially termed sack, and each student is restricted to a *sip*. Yet it chanced not long since at the Temple, that, though the number present fell short of seventy, thirty-six quarts of the liquid were consumed!"

The writer appears not to have realised that the study of law is dry work.



Fountain Court, the Temple.

Fountain Court, the Temple

In the days when William the Conqueror ruled the fair land it was the pleasing wont of the monarch to ride about the country collecting or distributing largesse, administering justice, and so on and so forth. Hence it was necessary for suitors to scour the country in search of their king to settle their little differences.

Thus a saucy varlet and scurvy knave having "parted brass rags" in York might find it necessary to travel to Winchester to lay their case before the king.

In course of time it was realised that the system was cumbersome, and Magna Charta enacted that the law should be administered in some determined place.

Hitherto the lawyers had been the clergy—the only educated class of the day—but objection was taken to the unseemly spectacle of clerics wrangling at the Bar, and under Edward I. the system of lay lawyers was inaugurated.

At all times students have shown a tendency to congregate in hostels and inns, and these law students were no exception.

They began to look around for a suitable habitation, and eventually commandeered the desirable possessions of the Knights Templars. Just a word as to the Knights Templars.

Theirs was an Order vowed to poverty and the care of pilgrims to the Holy Land, and after a couple of centuries in the business it acquired enormous wealth, and was, naturally, fair game for the lawyers. To cut a long story short, the lawyers came to the Temple something like six hundred years ago, and are there now.

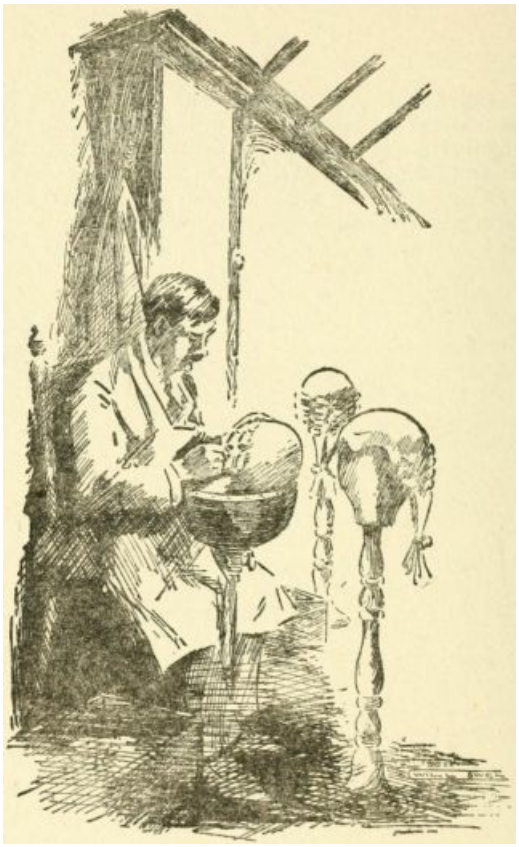
The discipline of the students was strict. "They were forbidden to keep hawkes or to ill-treat the butlers. They were not allowed to play shove-groat, and a three weeks' beard was fined 20 shillings." One would imagine they were a cowed and bloodless lot, but I am not so sure. At all events, they frolicked riotously at Christmas time. They had their revels, and I find it recorded: "On Christmas Day, Service in the Church ended, the gentlemen presently repair into the Hall to breakfast with Malmsey, Brawn and Mustard"—hot stuff for breakfast surely.

Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* was first produced by the Law Students in Middle Temple Hall three hundred years ago.

There is not space in this short note to give even the most cursory history of the Temple; but it is worth a stroll through the old cloisters, passages and byways. Step into any of the old doorways, and you will find quaint winding stairways, up which have passed so many famous men. Chaucer and Shakespeare have been here before you. I regret to say there is a record of Geoffrey being fined 2s. for knocking down a Franciscan Friar in Fleet Street.

In the Middle Temple Hall is a serving table made out of the timbers of Drake's ship, the *Golden Hind*.

Drake, Frobisher, Hawkins and Raleigh were all members of the Temple. The little sketch accompanying these pages is of Fountain Court, the trysting-place of Ruth Pinch and Westlock in *Martin Chuzzlewit*; and, for all I know to the contrary, other lovers may have met there since.



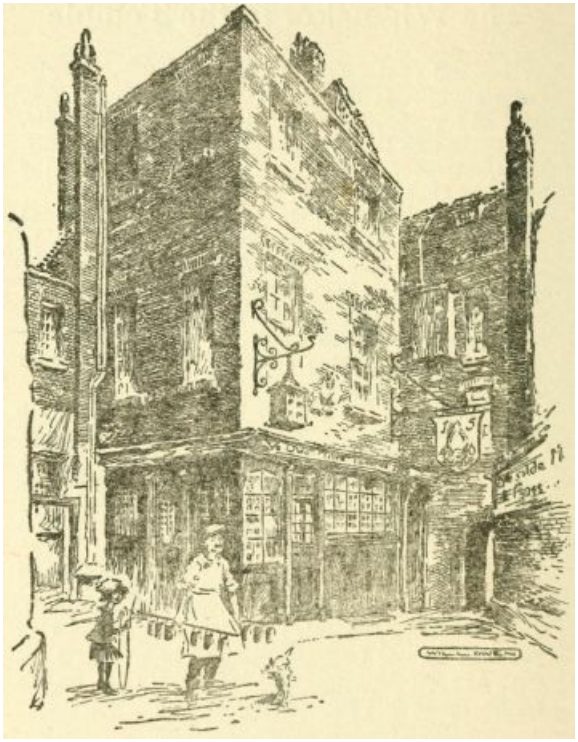
The Wigmaker in the Temple.

The Wigmaker in the Temple

At one end of the Temple Cloisters stands the wigmaker's shop. It may better be described as office, shop and studio, as in addition to wig-making Mr. Witts sells such things as gowns and picture postcards. He is, moreover, something of an estate agent, as the letting of chambers comes within his province.

In days of yore, when Mr. Justice Hawkins presided over the Old Bailey, it was the duty of Mr. Witts to attend there each day to powder the Hawkins wig, but the best judges have decided that this is no longer necessary. Truth to tell, the perfect wig nowadays is not white as driven snow, but distinctly grey in colour, black hair being deftly mixed with white to secure this effect.

A word as to the picturesque cloisters. They are the work of Sir Christopher Wren and were erected in 1681, the old cloisters having been destroyed in the fire of 1678, a more disastrous fire so far as the Temple is concerned than was the Great Fire of London. The Thames was frozen, and the fire-engines could only be supplied with beer from the Temple cellars, which, strange to say, soon gave out. During the fire the Lord Mayor, Sir William Turner, arrived with assistance, but taking offence at his reception, departed in high dudgeon, sending back an engine on its way from the city, and soothing his offended dignity by getting royally drunk in a neighbouring tavern.



"The Mitre."

"The Mitre"

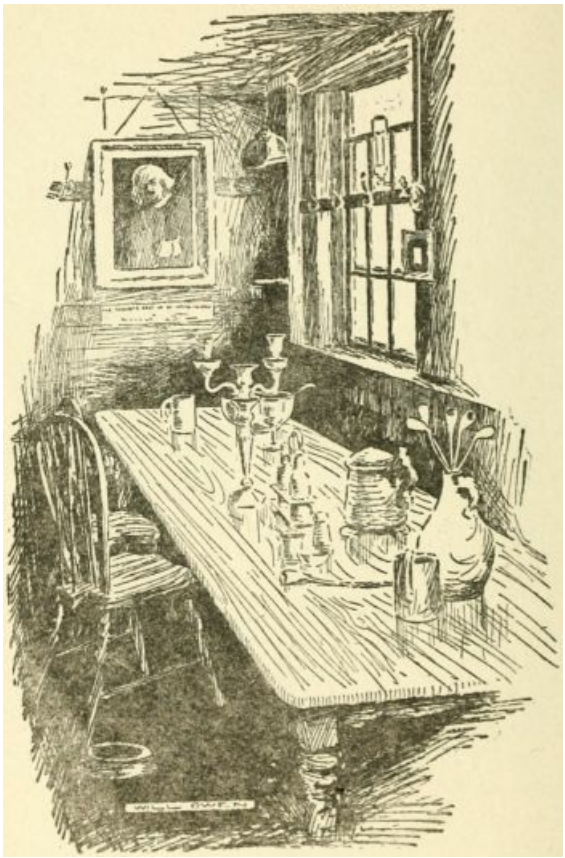
One of the oldest taverns of London Town, if not the oldest, is "The Mitre" in Mitre Court, alongside Hatton Garden Post Office. The little place has been rebuilt, but the old character has been preserved.

There are some panelled rooms, and inside the bar is the trunk of an old cherry tree still supporting a portion of the house. Some modern lanterns hanging from ornamental iron work adorn the exterior, and a mitre sculptured in stone bearing the date 1546 appears on the wall. This relic probably once decorated Ely House, the palace of the Bishops of Ely. A portion of the palace of Ely House was let by the See to noblemen, and it was here that John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster, died in 1399.

"The Mitre" stands on what was formerly the garden of the Bishop's Palace, the garden to which Shakespeare refers in *Richard III*. when the Duke of Gloucester thus addresses the Bishop of Ely:—

> "My lord of Ely, when I was last in Holborn,
> I saw good strawberries in your garden there."

The only strawberries to be found in Hatton Garden now are on the costers' barrows, and bishops are not so plentiful as are the diamond merchants, who may be found in little groups doing their business in the open street.



"The Cheshire Cheese."

"The Cheshire Cheese"

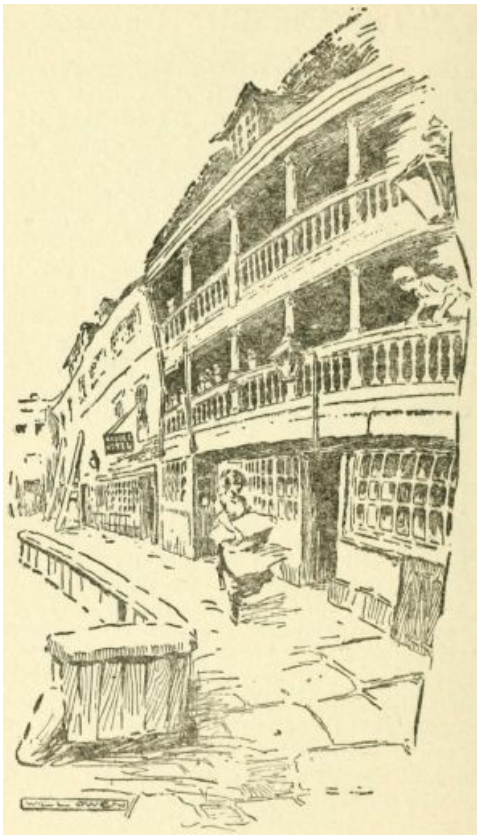
There is a tavern in the town—in fact, there are many, but there is one that stands alone. This cosy old estaminet in Fleet Street, on the left-hand side as you come from Charing Cross, is like nothing else in London. "The Cheshire Cheese" is an old-world tavern, exactly as it was when Dr. Johnson and Goldsmith made merry there. The entrance is in Wine Office Court, a narrow passage turning out of Fleet Street.

In this Court at No. 6, a dozen yards away, lived Oliver Goldsmith, with Dr. Johnson only a minute's walk farther on in Gough Square. The beginnings of "The Cheese" are "wropt in mystery," but the place was rebuilt two hundred and fifty years ago, and since that time no change has been made, except that some years ago a craze for modernity led to the gas being laid on.

Had the old tavern relied solely upon its historical associations it would probably have disappeared long since, but it has always been famous for its catering. "The Cheshire Cheese" pudding has a world-wide reputation, both for size and quality, and contains many things—steak and kidney, lark and oysters are but some of them. It is like the pudding mother used to make—only better.

As might be expected in so Bohemian a survival as "The Cheese," there are many things of interest scattered through the house—Johnson relics, sketches by famous artists, and so on.

If you love old passages and narrow, winding stairways, low-ceilinged, panelled rooms, and a sawdusted floor, take my advice and try "The Cheese."



The George Hotel, Southwark.

The George Hotel, Southwark

"'Pretty busy, eh?' said the little man.

"'Oh, werry well, sir,' replied Sam, 'we shan't be bankrupts, and we shan't make our fort'ns. We eats our biled mutton without capers, and don't care for horse-radish when ve can get beef.'

"'Ah,' said the little man, 'you're a wag, a'nt you?'

"'My eldest brother was troubled with that complaint,' said Sam; 'it may be catching—I used to sleep with him.'

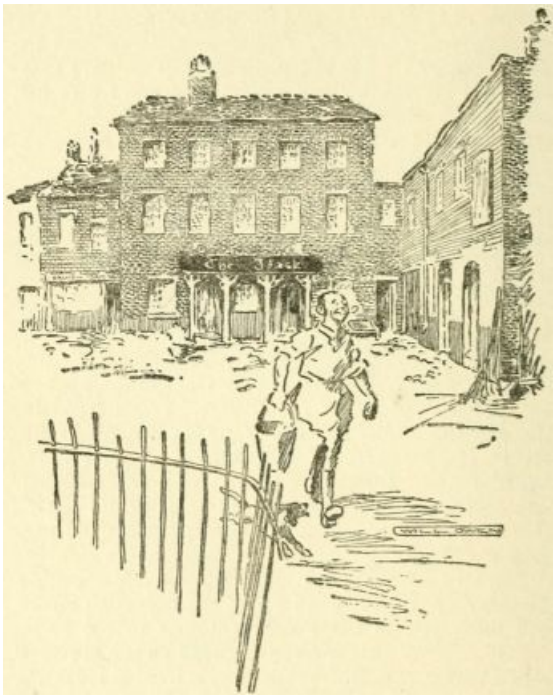
"'This is a curious old house of yours,' said the little man, looking round him."

The conversation between Mr. Perker and Sam Weller, here recorded, marked a great event—in fact, the first meeting between Mr. Pickwick and the immortal Sam Weller, and it took place in the yard of an old-fashioned inn, "The George," camouflaged in the *Pickwick Papers* as "The White Hart." A "White Hart" stood close by "The George" at that time, but the description given is that of "The George," and does not altogether tally with "The White Hart." One wing of the old place still remains as it was when Sam was there.

Three or four minutes' walk from London Bridge Station down the left-hand side of Borough High Street will bring you to the narrow entrance to the yard.

Five minutes farther down the road on the opposite side is Lant Street, where Bob Sawyer lived in lodgings.

Apart from the interesting fact that Dickens himself once lived there, probably the most unattractive street in London.



"The Flask," Highgate.

"The Flask," Highgate

If you are inclined to faint, and nothing but malt liquors will stave off the peril, "The Flask" at Highgate is, I imagine, as good a place as any in which to recuperate.

There is a pleasing appropriateness about the name of the old inn that stands in Highgate Village at the very top of the famous hill.

Why a house of refreshment should be known as "The Pig and Piecrust" or "The World Turned Upside Down" I do not know; but "The Flask" is something we can understand, something we have always with us, or wish we had. Nor have I any fault to find with "The Leather Bottle" as a name. It was the forerunner of the flask—a trifle large for the pocket, but it belonged to more spacious times.

On the snow-capped summit of Highgate Hill stands Highgate Village, a medley of ancient and modern buildings; and a few minutes from the main road across Pond Square is what is left of Highgate Green, where in olden times a fair was held, and standing on the edge of the Green is "The Flask."

It has all the appearance of an old coaching house, but it is some three or four minutes off the main road, and probably supplied extra horses to assist the coach up the hill or highwaymen to lighten the load.

I have only been able to trace one authentic story of the old inn.

In the wild and woolly days of his apprenticeship, Hogarth, in company with a number of his fellow industrious apprentices, set out one day to make Highgate sit up and take notice.

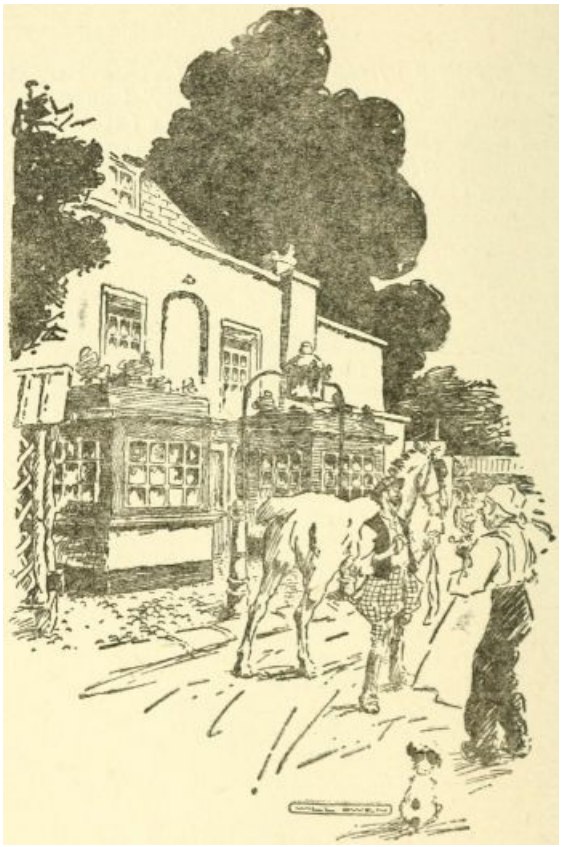
They duly arrived at "The Flask," and finding there an inoffensive native taking his rest in the bar, one of the more playful of the light-hearted youngsters bashed the inoffensive stranger on the head with a pint pot.

Blood poured down the gentle stranger's face in streams, and he presented so amusing a spectacle that our young friend Hogarth, with that keen sense of humour we so much admire, made a sketch of the victim so successfully that as the old chronicler has it, "It was the most comicallest face he ever drew," and he drew a few in his time, did Hogarth.

"The Flask," by the way, was one of the numerous Highgate houses of call which observed the ancient ceremony known as "swearing on the horns."

Some writers believed that this function had a religious origin, but its birth was really due to the fact that an assembly of drovers staying the night in Highgate before descending the hill into London with their flocks were at a loose end in their convivialities, and a brain wave of one of their number, with the connivance of the landlord, did the rest.

The ceremony, which mainly consisted of a mock oath administered by one of the number who was styled "the father," assisted by his "clerk," both garbed in an eccentric manner, and in which a fair modicum of liquor played a principal part, was revived, as a curiosity of other day customs, by the Highgate Thirty Club in recent years.



The Old "Bull and Bush."

The Old "Bull and Bush"

It was a famous house long before the song was sung, but the song has made it still more famous.

Originally a farmhouse, Hogarth was so charmed with it that he made it his home.

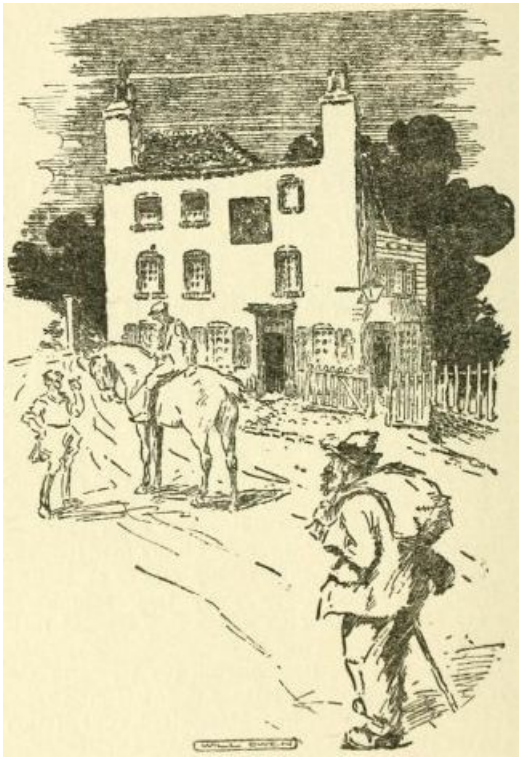
Hampstead must have been a merry little spot in those glad days of yore. The Heath was the happy hunting ground of footpads and highwaymen, and strung up on prominent trees might be seen some of those unfortunate gentry who, having been tried and found wanting, had, so to speak, got it in the neck.

The house appears always to have found favour in the eyes of the literary and the artistic world, and that coterie known as the Cockney Club, of which Leigh Hunt, Keats and Shelley were such shining lights, often found their way there.

Later Dickens and his friends made frequent pilgrimages to the inn. There is a story told of Lamb and Hone, the antiquary, who returning from an evening well spent at the "Bull and Bush" arrived on the Heath and talked themselves into a fit of indignation on the subject of snuff-taking, and as an earnest of their convictions threw away their snuff-boxes into the furze bushes, after which they wended their way to their respective homes.

Having slept it off, they met on the Heath in the early hours next morning seeking their lost property.

It is a delightful walk from Hampstead Tube Station across the Heath, with London stretching away below.



"The Spaniards," Hampstead.

"The Spaniards," Hampstead

"The Spaniards" takes its name from its former owners, two brothers who hailed from the land of the Toreador.

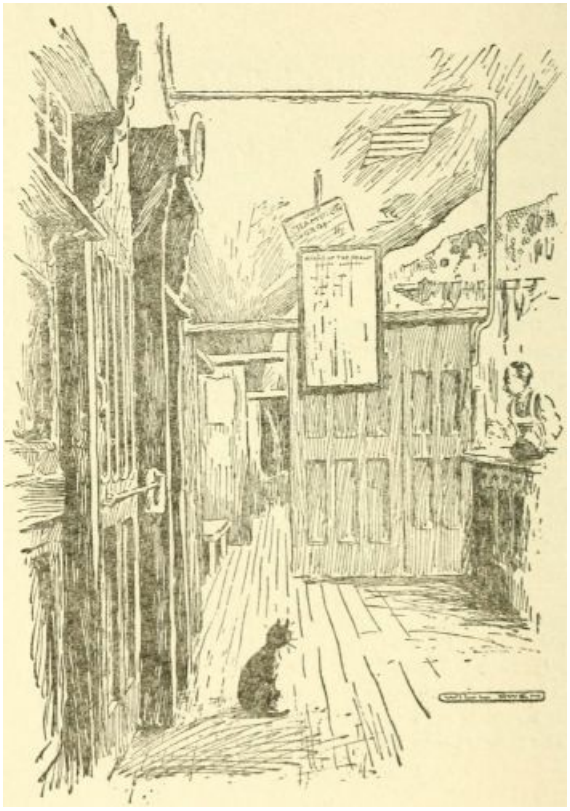
As the memory of the late lamented Dr. Johnson imparts to-day an air of romance to "The Cheshire Cheese," so at "The Spaniards" on Hampstead Heath do we find a tavern with hallowed memories of a former guest.

The redoubtable Dick Turpin, not so ripe a scholar, perhaps, as the worthy Samuel, but probably a better judge of horseflesh, made this house his home when doing business on the Heath.

There are many relics of this famous sportsman at "The Spaniards." They will show you the staircase up which he escaped after the regrettable incident of the Bow Street runner who met so untimely a death, and you may take your modest quencher in the room which the bold highwayman honoured in similar fashion.

There is an underground passage leading to another famous tavern, "Jack Straw's Castle," half a mile away, used by Dick and others of his kidney when the sleuth-hounds were getting warm.

The leg-irons that Richard wore when residing at Newgate are to be seen somewhat the worse for wear, and the stable in which he stalled Black Bess.



"Dirty Dick's."

"Dirty Dick's," Bishopsgate Street

There was a thoroughness about Dirty Dick that one cannot help admiring.

In his early days Nathaniel Bentley, to give Richard his proper name, was a beau.

What Nathaniel didn't know about powdered hair, ruffles and lace wasn't worth writing home about; but owing to a disappointment in a love affair the erstwhile dandy turned over a new leaf—discarded such useless habits as washing and shaving, and became famous the world over as Dirty Dick.

He was the proprietor of a hardware shop in Leadenhall Street, which he inherited from his father, who lived there in considerable style.

Young Bentley received an excellent education, but owing to the old man's harsh disposition he ran away from home for several years.

Previous to his father's death, and for some years after that sad event, young Bentley was to be seen at all public places dressed as a man of fashion.

He visited Paris, was introduced to Louis XVI., and was considered one of the most accomplished English gentlemen then at the French Court.

He spoke several languages, particularly French and Italian, with great fluency.

Even after his lapse from dandyism he emerged occasionally, in all his old finery, but these spasmodic appearances soon ceased.

Bentley's house, which was of a large size, had originally a front of white plaster, which time had converted into a dingy black. The windows were literally as black and covered as thickly with dirt and smoke as the back of a chimney which has not been swept for many years.

Of the windows scarcely a pane was left whole, to remedy which several of the window shutters were never opened, and the remaining broken windows were filled up with tea trays and similar transparencies.

This pleasing peculiarity of Nathaniel excited much curiosity, and attracted considerable notice, and his business appears to have prospered amazingly in consequence.

The confusion which prevailed in the interior of this place was not less remarkable than its ruinous appearance without.

Gold ear-rings, trinkets, and other valuable articles lay buried among his goods in various parts of the house.

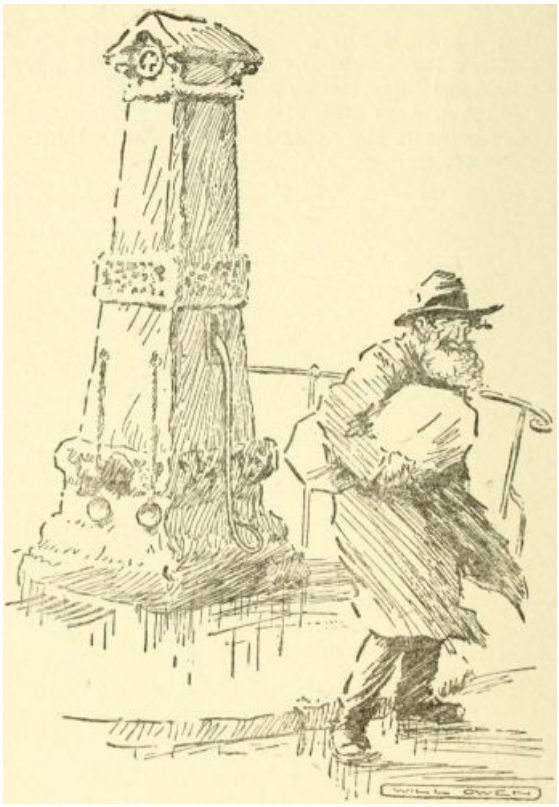
Bentley's remarkable change of habits is said to have been due to the sudden death of a young lady to whom he was about to be married.

A sumptuous entertainment had been provided for her and her relations, and Bentley was anxiously awaiting their arrival, when a messenger entered with the sad news.

Nathaniel closed the room with the resolve that it should never be opened again.

What connection Bentley had with the famous old port wine and spirit house in Bishopsgate Street I do not know, but it is stated that he carried on a vintner's business on those premises, and the place is dark and dismal enough in all conscience.

My sketch was made after closing time, but during business hours the house is packed with a thirsty, clamorous throng.



Aldgate Pump.

Aldgate Pump

It stands at the junction of Fenchurch Street and Leadenhall Street, and in time of drought it must be a great comfort to the burgesses of Aldgate to feel that, unlike other London wards, they still have their pump to fall back on.

Aldgate derives its name from Ald Gate or Old Gate, which was the eastern entrance to the city, and was in the Middle Ages one of the most important districts of London, including within its boundaries the Priory of Holy Trinity, the richest priory in England.

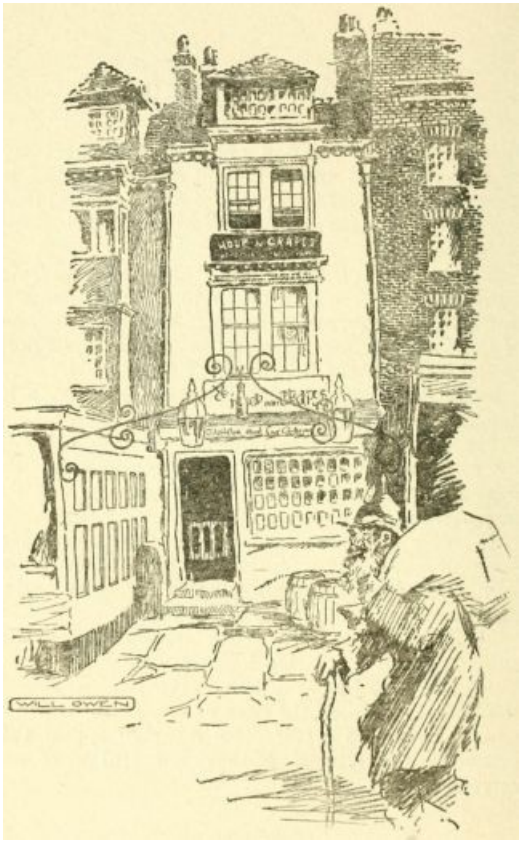
Being the richest, it was naturally the first to be despoiled by that earnest churchman, Henry VIII.

The district of Aldgate, in fact, was largely occupied by religious establishments, including, besides the famous priory, the nunnery in the Minories and the monastery of the Crutched Friars.

The pump at that time, of course, was not a mere pump, it was a holy well, the Well of St. Michael, and I understand its waters are quite as efficacious to-day as then.

In 1374 Chaucer lived in the apartments over the gate, which, of course, has long since vanished.

Aldgate is said to have found favour in the eyes of the Jews as early as the days of Cromwell, and from what I have seen of the place it would appear that many of the original settlers are still alive and carrying on.



"The Hoop and Grapes," Aldgate.

"The Hoop and Grapes," Aldgate

In Aldgate High Street, facing Aldgate Station, stands a row of picturesque old shops—a colony of butchers—and the place is known as The Shambles.

In their midst, like unto a precious jewel, in its setting, is an old-time hostelry, "The Hoop and Grapes."

It claims to be the only inn that escaped the Fire of London, but methinks I have heard of other "sole survivors."

Be that as it may, it is a quaint old house, with crazy old staircases, and a fireplace large enough to roast an elephant.

Almost directly opposite is Middlesex Street, known in a more immodest age as Petticoat Lane. It is worth a visit on a Sunday morning.

A narrow street of shops and stalls, filled with a slowly-moving mob. The merchants are Yiddish, one and all, with raucous voices and persuasive arguments.

The market is a comprehensive one—second-hand clothes (a courtesy title this—they are probably twenty second-hand), musical instruments, gaudy vases that make one ill and patent medicines to pull one round again, love-birds that tell fortunes and weighing machines that tell lies—altogether a charming and interesting neighbourhood and quite a change from Bond Street.

Huguenot Hand-loom Weaver.

The Huguenot Hand-loom Weaver

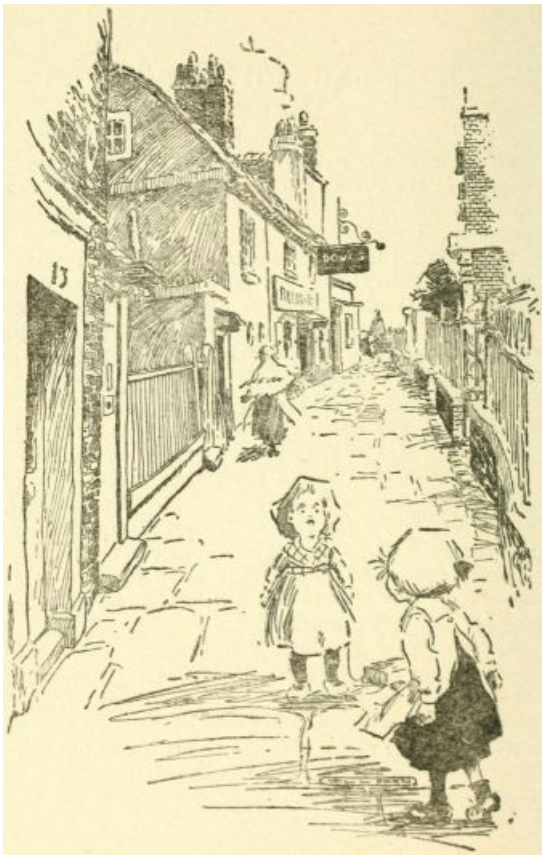
The origin of the term Huguenot is obscure. It was applied to the French Protestants in the first instance as a nickname, but the splendid heroism shown by those brave folk speedily converted it into one of honour.

Of those Flemings and French who fled to England many settled on the coast at Rye, Sandwich and other ports, while a larger number made for London, congregating in special districts, and descendants of those Huguenot weavers who settled in Spitalfields are working there to-day.

Alma Street, Bethnal Green, is an unpretentious little street, and outside one of the houses there may be seen the sign of the weaver's hand-stick suspended from a bracket. The sign is really an enlargement of the bobbin (on which the silk is delivered by the dyer), and indicates the presence on the premises of a cane-spreader, a machine of vital importance to the trade.

Many years ago no less than sixty of these signs could have been seen in this district, but there is now only one solitary survival.

On the upper floor you will find Mrs. Dorée still working her hand-loom as did those fugitives from France after the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. Mr. Dorée who died in 1916, was descended from an ancient Picardy family, and a kinsman of his is mentioned in Evelyn's *Diary* as engaged in chambletting silk and grograms in Moorfields in 1652.



"The Doves," Hammersmith.

"The Doves," Hammersmith

"The village is situated on the Thames. It has several good houses in and about it, inhabited by gentry and persons of quality."

Such is the description of Hammersmith as it used to be, and as far as it goes the description still holds good, but it is incomplete.

In addition to the several good houses inhabited, etc., there should be added many thousands of houses, fair to medium, inhabited by just ordinary folk—people of no account, such as you and I, dear reader.

The Broadway, Hammersmith, is usually a confused mass of humanity and traffic, as dense as any to be found in London, and shopping at Palmer's Stores is not so much a business as a battle.

Fronting the river, alongside the bridge, are a few of the good houses already mentioned, and if you will proceed a little way you will presently arrive at what appears to be a modest fishing village.

It is a colony of quaint, old-fashioned, red-roofed cottages, with a creek flowing through into the river.

This district is known as Little Wapping, and just beyond is "The Doves," a tiny inn with a tiny garden overlooking the river.

It was formerly a coffee-house, but when it became an inn I do not know, possibly when a family named Beer took possession.

The place is famous owing to a tradition that Thompson, the poet, wrote "The Seasons" there.

It has a further claim to fame, however, which the historians appear to have ignored, for in the garden I discovered a table on which is still played the royal and ancient game of Bumble Puppy.

The game seems simple enough to an outsider, but in conversation with an expert I learned that a life-long devotion to the sport is essential to success in the winning of drinks.

It was at "The Doves" that E. F. Knight, the famous war correspondent, fitted out for one of his treasure hunting expeditions.

He was ably assisted in his preparations by a retired burglar who had attained some eminence in his profession as an acquitted murderer.

The indignation, therefore, of the late professor on arriving one morning to find the place had been burgled during the night was only natural, and needless to say the stolen property was speedily recovered.

Just beyond "The Doves" a row of beautiful old houses—the Upper Mall—face the river with a row of stately elms between.

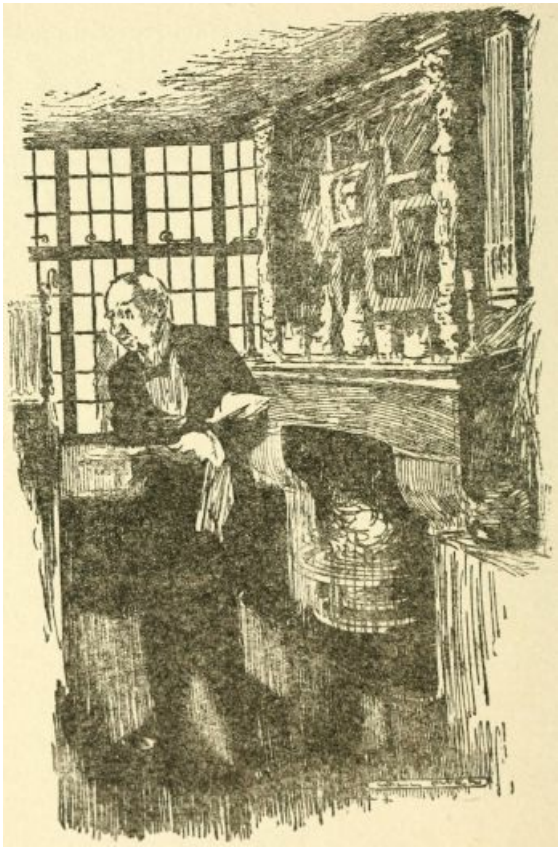
The first of these houses is Kelmscott House, where William Morris lived and died, and it was in the garden of this house that the first electric telegraph, eight miles long, was constructed in 1816 by Sir Francis Ronalds.

Among a number of famous people who have lived in the Mall was the Queen Dowager of Charles II., who spent some years here during her widowhood. The house has long since disappeared.

Charles' enthusiastic description of his bride is interesting:—

> "Her face is not so exact as to be called a beauty, though her eyes are excellent, good, and not anything in her face that in the least can shock one."

Round about "The Doves" are a number of workshops, supported by the Hampshire House Trust, a Quaker body; and should you notice a curious sign over one of the doors—a strange animal like nothing you have ever seen—this is the Hampshire hog, to remind us of a former inn, "The Hampshire Hog" of Hog Lane.



"The Cock Tavern."

"The Cock Tavern," Fleet Street

"The Cock Tavern" in Fleet Street was originally "The Cock and Bottle" across the road, commonly called "The Cock Alehouse" at Temple Bar. It dates back to the joyous days of James I., and Henry, the present head-waiter, is, I believe, a few years older.

The ancient tavern escaped the Great Fire of 1666, but it was a near thing, probably a change of wind that stopped it at Temple Bar.

"The Cock" and its belongings were transferred to new premises in Fleet Street, and the coffee-room on the first floor, with the original mahogany pews and handsome old fireplace, is almost a facsimile of the old room.

Pepys, who knew a good thing if anyone did, used the house, and a youngster named Tennyson even wrote a poem about Will Waterproof, the head-waiter of his time.

It begins:—

"O plump head-waiter of 'The Cock,'
To which I most resort,
How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock;
Go, fetch a pint of port."

I am not going to enlarge upon the fare to be had at "The Cock," and the waiters, curiously enough, speak nothing but English.

Baker's Chop House.

Baker's Chop House

One of the conveniences of Baker's Chop House is that if you have an appointment with the Lord Mayor of London or the Governor of the Bank of England, you can rise from your repast and be with either of these gentlemen well under the minute.

It is an old seventeenth-century eating-house in Change Alley, just off Cornhill, and as comfortable inside as it is quaint and charming outside.

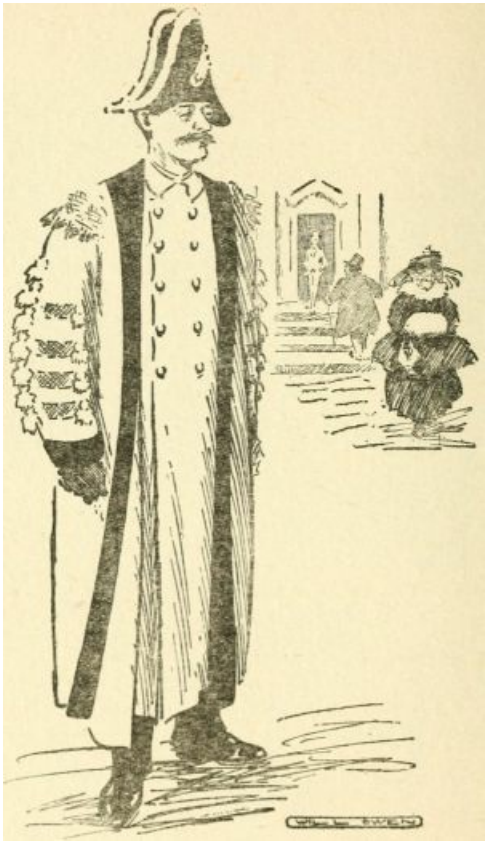
Here it was that in 1720 the South Sea Bubble was blown and burst, the £100 shares in the South Sea Company soaring to £1,000 in a few days and "nose-diving" just as rapidly.

The gullibility of the great British public at that time may be realised when we find amongst the bogus concerns floated during the boom "one for carrying on an undertaking of great advantage but nobody to know what it is."

On the brickwork of the building you will see one of the old firemarks of the Guardian Insurance Company. It is a relic of the days when each Insurance Company maintained its own fire brigade.

When a fire occurred all the companies were notified and hastened to save their property, and if on arrival the firemark indicated a rival company the brigade would promptly withdraw, leaving perhaps a little kerosene to help the good work along.

> NOTE.—Since writing the above this quaint old house has been absorbed by a further extension of neighbouring business premises.



Beadle—Bank of England.

Bank of England

When I asked the beadle if I might sketch him he referred me to the Secretary of the Bank of England, and when I had interviewed that dignitary the matter was referred to the Board of Governors, and I was asked to state my intentions.

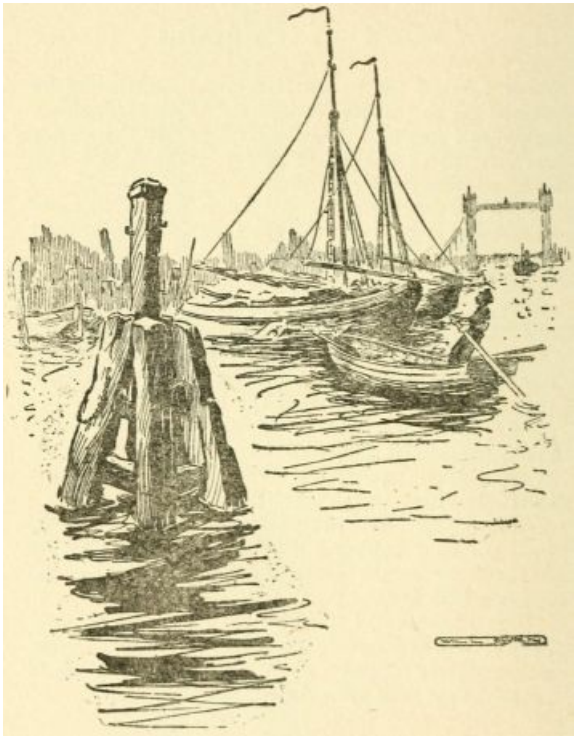
I think it only right to mention this in order that you may realise at once that the old lady of Threadneedle Street is not to be trifled with.

The beadle is a picturesque figure in his scarlet cloak, but he shrinks from publicity, and the sketch was made after closing hours in the guard-room.

I have pictured him as in the little public courtyard, but that is merely what is known as artistic license. I do not know exactly what the beadle's duties comprise, but amongst them is the awkward one of interviewing eccentric individuals who labour under the delusion that the Bank is withholding millions that rightfully belong to the inquirer.

One such individual explained that he bore a letter from the King enforcing his claim. Tact was needed in that case, as the gentleman had also brought his revolver with him.

Most Londoners, I imagine, have seen a little company of Guards marching through the city each evening, and wondered vaguely where they go. They go to guard the old lady while she sleeps.



Dutch Eel Boats.

Dutch Eel Boats

Stroll down Fish Street Hill by the Monument, turn to the left at the bottom, and you will find yourself any morning in the midst of a busy crowd of struggling humanity. These are the Billingsgate fish porters. You will find them wearing a curious head-dress, rather like a number of bowler hats placed one above the other and flattened into a solid mass by the continual pressure of the boxes of fish they carry on their heads. The street is blocked with horses and carts and motor vans waiting for their supplies, and as the porters dodge in and out with their burdens, should you get in their way so much the worse for you.

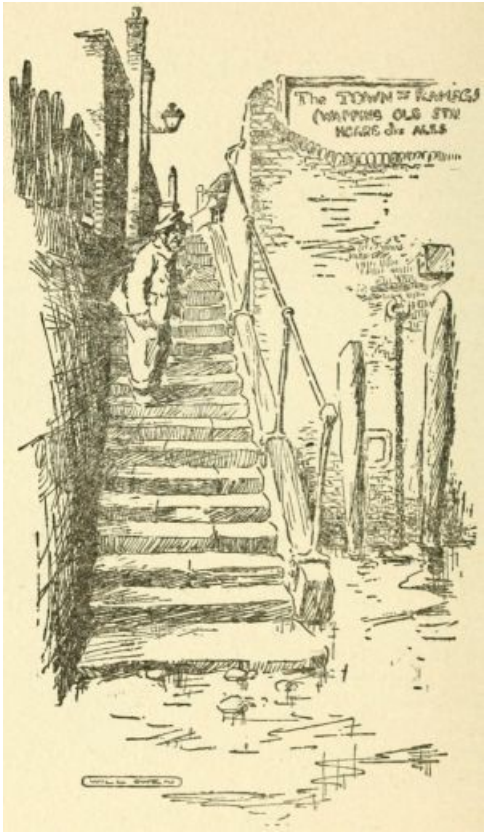
Their clothes are greasy and covered with fish scales, and your smart suit or dainty frock will suffer rather more than theirs in the event of a collision.

The market, however, is a busy scene and worth a visit.

Walk through the market, and you will always find two or three Dutch eel boats lying at their moorings. These boats have enjoyed the privilege of lying here ever since the days of Queen Elizabeth, and since that grant the moorings have never been vacated, one or more boats being always on the spot.

Billingsgate has been a quay, if not a market, for nearly a thousand years, and adjoining it stands the Custom House.

The present building is Custom House the Fifth and is barely a century old.



Wapping Old Stairs.

Wapping Old Stairs

"It was a still fair evening in late summer in the Parish of Wapping. The hands had long since left, and the night watchman, having abandoned his trust in favour of a neighbouring bar, the wharf was deserted. An elderly seaman came to the gate and paused irresolute, then, seeing all was quiet, stole cautiously on to the jetty, and stood for some time gazing anxiously down on the deck of the billy-boy *Psyche* lying alongside.

"With the exception of the mate, who since the lamented disappearance of its late master and owner was acting as captain, the deck was as deserted as the wharf.

"'How do, George?' said the man on the jetty somewhat sheepishly as the other looked up.

"The mate opened his mouth, and his pipe fell from it and smashed to pieces unnoticed.

"'Here I *am*, George,' said the intruder. 'What's the news?'

"'The news,' said George, who was of slow habits and speech, 'is that you was found last Tuesday week off St. Katherine's Stairs, you was sat on o' Friday week at the "Town o' Ramsgate" public-house, and buried on Monday afternoon at Lowestoft.'

"'Buried?' gasped the other. 'Sat on? You've been drinking, George.'

"'An' a pretty penny your funeral cost, I can tell you,' continued the mate. 'There's a headstone being made now, "Lived lamented, and died respected," I think it is, with "Not lost, but gone before" at the bottom.'

"'"Lived respected and died lamented," you mean,' growled the old man. 'Well, a nice muddle you have made of it between you. Things always go wrong when I'm not here to look after them.'"

If you have read W. W. Jacobs' stories of the night watchman you will be already somewhat familiar with the charms of Wapping, and may recognise above the opening of one of the tales in *Many Cargoes*.

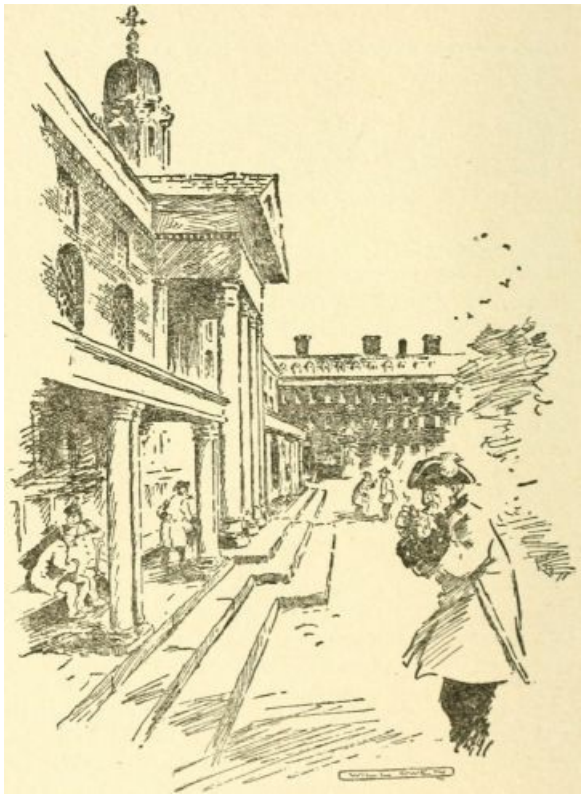
The "Town of Ramsgate" public-house referred to by George stands at the head of Wapping Old Stairs, and you can picture those three musketeers, Ginger Dick, Peter Russet, and Old Sam concocting their money-making schemes in the old bar parlour.

The famous days of Wapping Old Stairs have gone for ever.

It is a rickety old stairway leading down to the water, and nowadays not much used; but time was when watermen lay off the stairs by dozens, taking the sailors to and from their craft lying out in the river. Wapping may have its attractions as a residential suburb, but easy access to the West End of London is not one of them.

To reach Wapping Old Stairs from the Tower Bridge you must walk about a mile along Wapping High Street, a narrow thoroughfare between warehouses and wharves with an occasional peep at the docks or river.

To vary the monotony you may, on your return, strike inland from the Stairs to Cable Street and Ratcliffe Highway through a picturesque and dirty neighbourhood peopled by the Children of Israel, and so to Aldgate and civilisation.



Royal Hospital, Chelsea.

The Royal Hospital, Chelsea

It has been said that "old soldiers never die." This, however, is not quite correct.

They die sooner or later, but are sometimes an uncommonly long time about it.

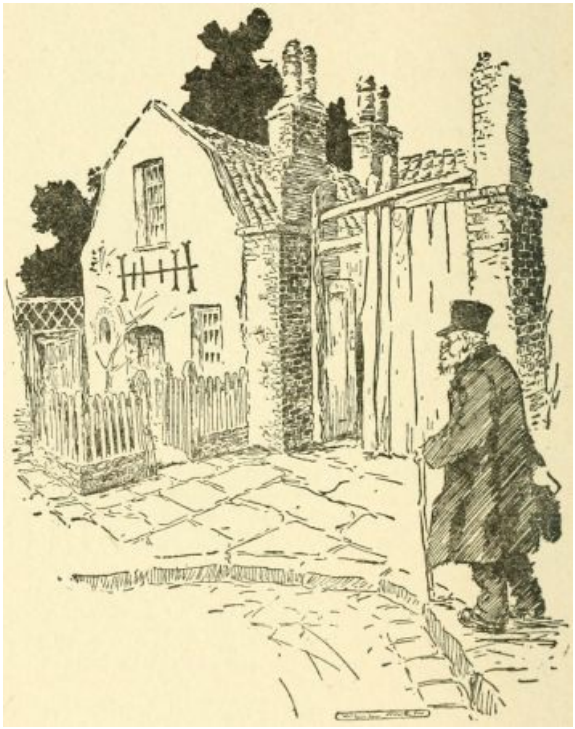
This was borne in upon me recently during a visit to Chelsea Hospital, where I came across a portrait of the late William Hiseland hanging in the Great Hall. He served under Charles I., Oliver Cromwell, Charles II., James II., King William, Queen Anne and George I. He married at 100, and had he not been cut off in his prime at 112, would probably have been putting in some useful work to-day. He lies in the little churchyard in company with about a dozen other centenarians.

William, of course, may be an exceptional case, but an old sportsman whom I saw knitting in the churchyard looked like running him very close.

The Royal Hospital at Chelsea is not a hospital as we understand the word, it is a home for something like 600 Army pensioners, and tradition has it that we owe the place to Nell Gwynn, who pleaded to the king for the poor discharged soldiers ruined in the wars.

The building was designed by Wren, and the great architect, having in mind that the place would be occupied by veterans, has arranged that the rake of the stairs leading to the upper stories should be particularly easy.

Go round and talk to the old men, switch the conversation off rheumatics, and you will hear some wonderful tales of long ago.



Old Cottage, Chelsea.

Old Cottage, Chelsea

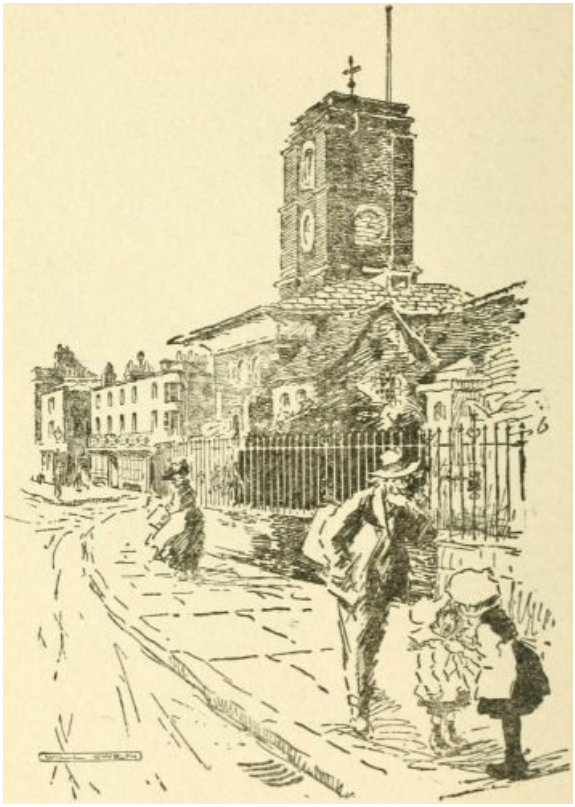
Chelsea, like Hampstead, is full of old-world corners, and the country cottage I have sketched is to be found at the end of Glebe Place tucked away up in the left-hand corner.

It is said to have been at one time a hunting lodge for Henry VIII., but is occupied at present by a mere artist and his artist wife, who have added to it two gigantic studios.

Henry had a palace in the old village of Chelsea, and on the site now stands what is known as Queen's House in Cheyne Walk, where lived Dante Gabriel Rossetti with a menagerie of wombats, marmots, kangaroos and wallabies and even a poet person, one Swinburne.

The garden of the cottage backs on to the garden of a remarkable house on the north side of Upper Cheyne Row at the corner of Oakley Street. This house was the residence for many years of the eccentric Dr. Phené, and the curiously decorated front was a reproduction of a château in Savenay that had belonged to his ancestors.

Many of the gardens and basements of the Cheyne Walk houses still show traces of the old palace.



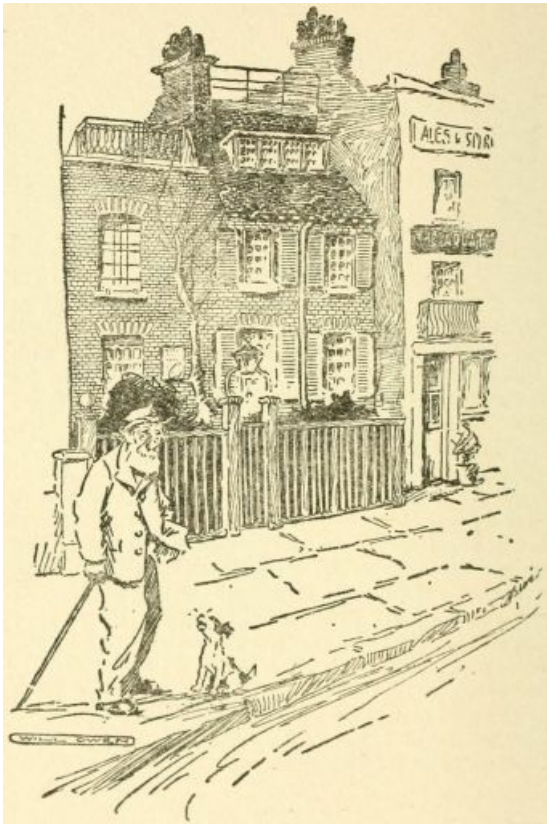
Chelsea Old Church.

Chelsea Old Church

It is in Chelsea that the artists and similar strange species dwell. The long-haired student may be found here, and an evening spent in his company at the "Six Bells" in King's Road is an art education for all time.

There is not very much of old Chelsea left, a few stately houses and two or three old shops beyond the church are all that remain on the river front, but the life of the place is more akin to the Latin Quarter of Paris than any other in London. I remember years ago forming one of a small but enthusiastic circle with high ambitions. It was an endeavour to live again our Paris student days, and a club was founded. But we were no longer in the late teens and early twenties. We were in the forties, respectable, paying rates (when the final notice came in) and pew rents (some of us). The "call of the Wild" came too late, and the little club died quickly.

The old church of Chelsea is, both for antiquity and monuments, one of the most interesting in London. Its interior has never been restored, and it still retains the appearance of an old village church. Sir Thomas More worshipped there, and in the chapel that he built is his monument. The house in which he lived near by has disappeared, together with the garden where King Henry used to walk with him, his arm around his neck—only a little while before the playful monarch had the head removed altogether.



Turner's House, Chelsea.

Turner's House, Cheyne Walk, Chelsea

As I strolled along Cheyne Walk in search of Turner's House I met a native whom I questioned.

He informed me that, although a resident for over forty years he did not know, and expressed a desire to be struck dead upon the spot if he did. I waited anxiously for a moment, but as nothing happened I resumed my quest.

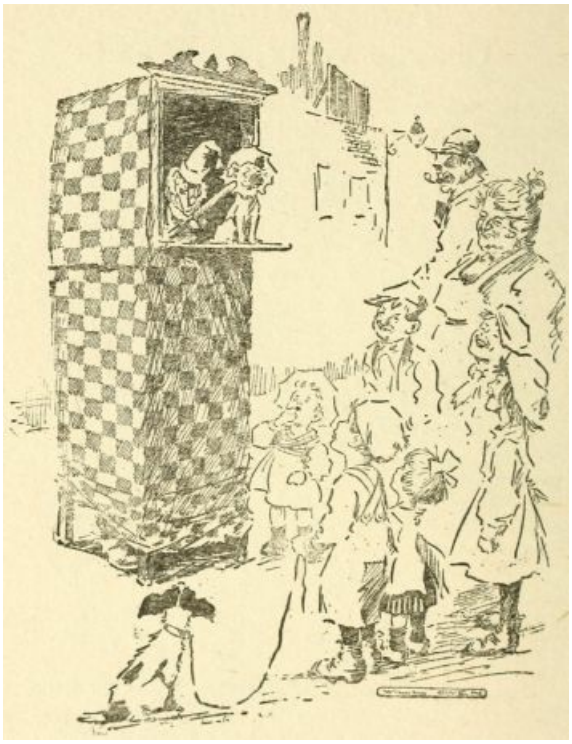
To save trouble, let me say at once the address is 119 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, and immediately opposite the house on the foreshore of the river lies a broken-backed wreck.

Turner, the painter, was the son of a barber, and was born in Maiden Lane, just off the Strand, in 1775.

He made good at a remarkably early age, and his first drawing was exhibited in the Royal Academy when he was only fifteen. He was elected an Associate at twenty-four, was already at the head of his profession and became a fully-fledged Academician three years later.

The great painter only occupied the Cheyne Walk house during the last years of his life, and lived there with his old Margate landlady, Sophia Caroline Booth, whose name he assumed, and passed as a retired admiral.

The youth of Chelsea, apparently, had very little respect for the Senior Service, as the old man was invariably greeted by them as "Old Puggy Booth."



Punch and Judy.

Punch and Judy

There is an air of mystery about the Punch and Judy show that I have all my life hoped some day to solve.

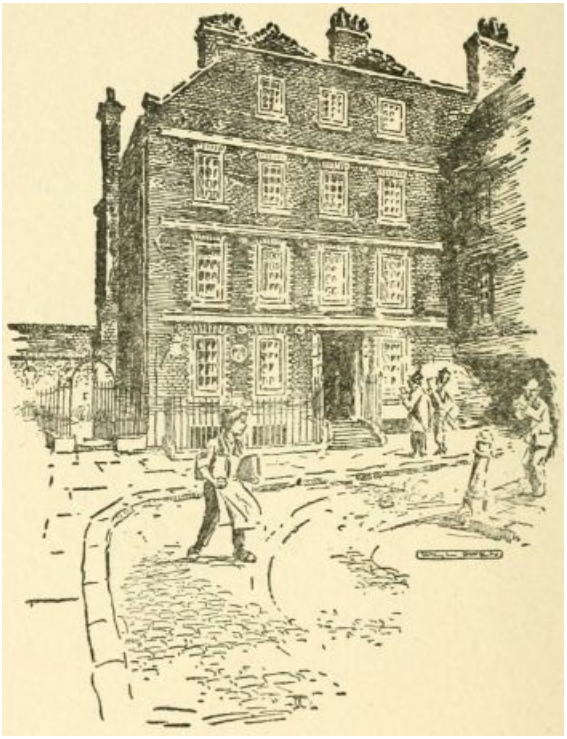
What goes on behind the artistic draperies that clothe that simple framework no outsider will ever know.

That the show possesses some attraction beyond that of any other dramatic production cannot be denied, as it has enjoyed an uninterrupted run in its present form for a couple of centuries, and this although the larger part of the audience is composed of deadheads.

The play itself is somewhat puzzling, and might truthfully be described as tragedy, comedy, farce or melodrama. The leading man, too, though suffering from an obscure spinal complaint, plays the part both of hero and a villain of the deepest dye.

It is popularly supposed to be a survival of the old miracle plays, the character of Pontius Pilate having degenerated into that of Punch, while Judas Iscariot has in the course of time become a woman, Judy.

Though Punch and Judy still remain, the Peep Show man has gone at last, and with him, I am glad to say, that sad collection of wretched animals the cat and dog, rabbits and mice that huddled together in a small and dirty box as the Happy Family!



Dr. Johnson's House.

Dr. Johnson's House

17 Gough Square

When you are in the neighbourhood of "The Cheshire Cheese" in Fleet Street wander along the narrow passage beside "The Cheese," up Wine Office Court. It is only a matter of yards to the end of the court, where turn to the left and you will find yourself immediately in a tiny square with a solid substantial red brick house directly facing you.

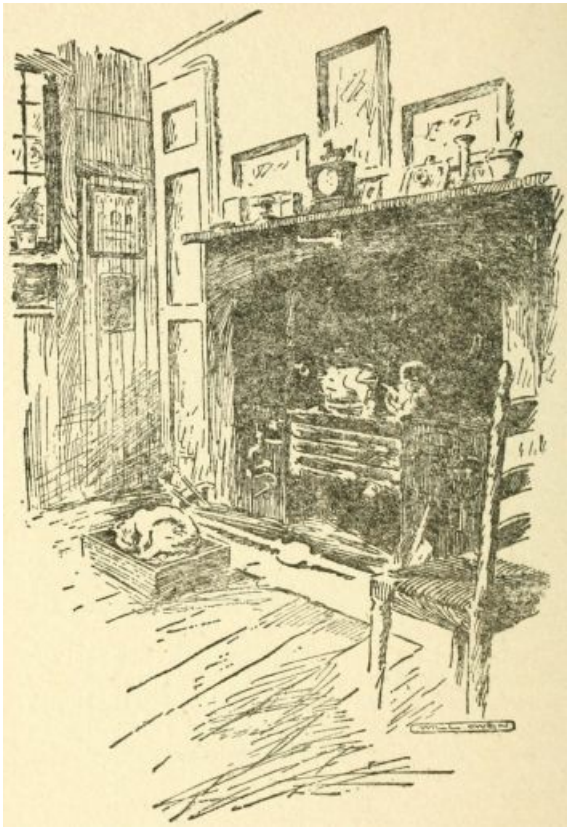
Here in the attic Dr. Johnson compiled his famous Dictionary and wrote *Rasselas* in a single week to defray his mother's funeral expenses.

The house was bought by Mr. Cecil Harmsworth in 1911, and is now preserved for the public. No charge is made, and there are a number of Johnson relics to be seen.

The house was built in 1700, and Johnson lived here from 1748 to 1758, after which time he moved to Staple Inn.

It is unfortunate that we have only scanty records of his life in Gough Square, as our young friend Boswell did not meet the Doctor until after he had left the square.

But at least we know something. We know that the Doctor fed his cat on oysters, much to the annoyance of Boswell, who hated cats, and we also know the Doctor collected orange peel for some strange reason that he never would divulge to his inquisitive biographer.



Carlyle's House.

Carlyle's House, Chelsea

Like Dr. Johnson's house in Gough Square, that of Thomas Carlyle at 24 Cheyne Row, Chelsea, is preserved to the public as a museum.

This was the outcome of a movement begun by Mr. George A. Lumsden, when an influential committee was got together and the Carlyle's House Memorial Trust was formed. The house and much of the furniture remain exactly as they were in Carlyle's time.

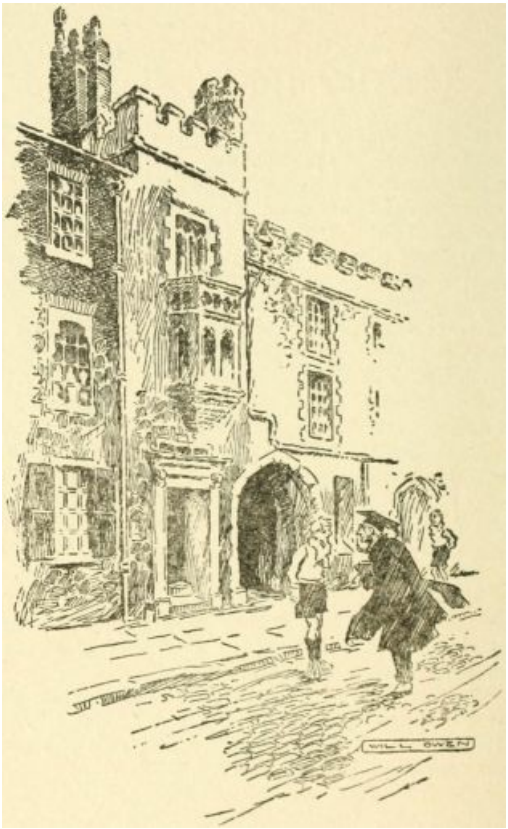
I have sketched the kitchen where Thomas was in the habit of retiring with his pipe when all the household had departed to their beds.

It was here that Carlyle and Tennyson forgathered so merrily one evening, when they sat and smoked before the fire the entire evening without exchanging a word, and both agreed (or so they said) that they had never spent so enjoyable a time.

The house is a couple of centuries old, and the Carlyles, forsaking Craigenputtock, made it their home in 1834, and here they lived for two-and-thirty years.

On the top story Carlyle built a sound-proof room at a cost of £200, that "all the cocks in nature may crow round it, without my hearing a whisper of them!" but with only moderate success.

They had for friends and neighbours Leigh Hunt and his Bohemian household in Upper Cheyne Row. "Hunt's House," Carlyle writes, "excels all you have ever read of—a poetical Tinkerdom."



Dean's Yard.

Westminster School, Dean's Yard

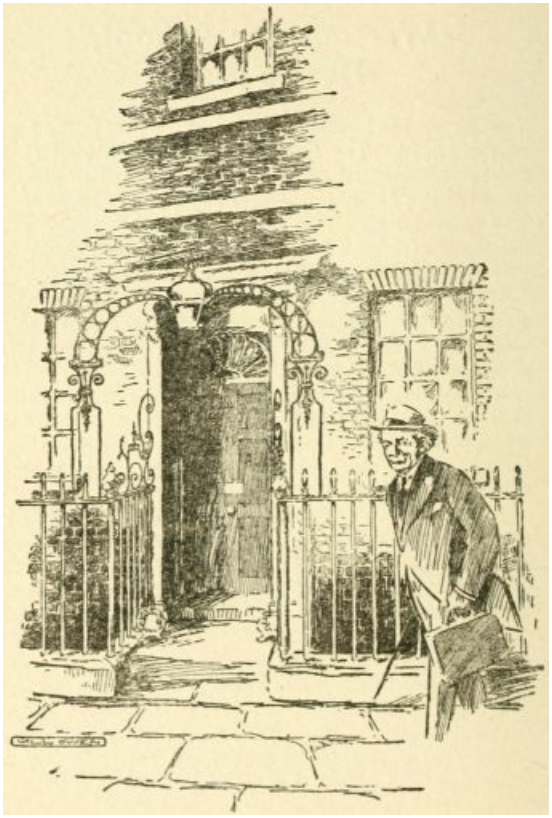
There seems to be some doubt as to the first beginnings of the school. The Chronicles of Ingulph contain a most circumstantial account of how he used to attend school at the Abbey in the year 1051, and as corroborative detail he adds that he frequently met Edith, the Confessor's Queen, who would question him on grammar and reward him with silver pence.

It is a pretty story, but unfortunately the Chronicles were the work of a clever forger about the year 1420, so that it does not help us beyond proving that the school was in existence during the reign of Edward III., and in confirmation of this the Abbey archives show that a salary was paid during Edward's reign to a schoolmaster who is described as "Magister Scholarium pro eruditione puerorum grammaticorum," so that's that.

The history of the school, however, really begins with Queen Elizabeth, who on the abolition of the monastery appointed as dean to the abbey church and school one William Bill, and it was largely owing to old Bill that Westminster achieved so great a reputation among the schools of that time.

A later head master, Richard Busby, left his mark on the school and on the scholars also, unless his reputation as a flogger maligns him.

The sketch herewith is of the head master's house in Dean's Yard, and the school itself is through the picturesque old archway alongside.



No. 10 Downing Street.

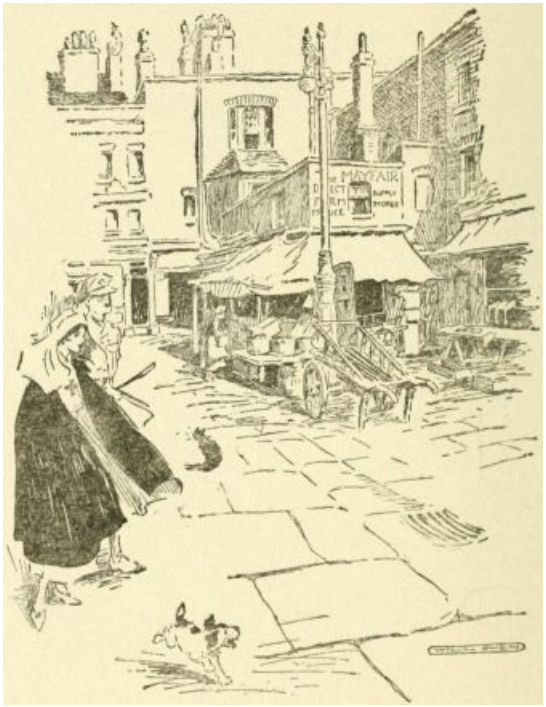
No. 10 Downing Street

It is nearly three centuries old, smoke-stained and unpretentious, and, I imagine, not quite large enough. It has a picturesque entrance and, I hope, a bit of a garden at the back. Altogether unimpressive, but it has been the home of fifty Prime Ministers, the present tenant being a Mr. Lloyd George, from Wales I understand. Pilgrims from the mountains and valleys of that beautiful land may frequently be seen gazing reverently at No. 10, and talking together in an unknown tongue.

Downing Street was built by Sir George Downing, a renegade Puritan, who betrayed his old friends to the gallows, and was rewarded by Charles II. with a baronetcy, a grant of land and other oddments. He lived at No. 10, letting the other houses at a high rental, starved his mother, and founded a fortune, which fortune, by the way, came back to the nation in the form of an endowment from his grandson.

Pitt's Cabinet sat here all through the Napoleonic Wars. Wellington and Nelson met for the only time in their lives in the entrance hall, both waiting to see the Minister, and neither knowing who the other was. They chatted, but not till later did they learn with whom they had each been talking.

Think for a moment of the men who have worked here—Chatham, Pitt, Canning, Grey, Peel, Disraeli—why, there can be no other house in the world so instinct with interest as "No. 10."



Shepherd Market.

Shepherd Market

There is a turning off Piccadilly called White Horse Street, about midway between Park Lane and the Ritz Hotel. It is a narrow, unpretentious street, a hundred yards or so in length, and hiding round the corner at the end is a modest little country town.

It is small, but busy, with its market place, and quaint old shops—a strange survival, set in this most aristocratic quarter of the great city.

There is an old rambling stable-yard, with a riding school where Queen Victoria learned to ride, the whole place looking like a sketch by Hogarth. The houses of the great stand round about—Beaconsfield died at No. 19 Curzon Street and Sir Walter Scott lived at the Piccadilly corner of White Horse Street—but in the little town itself nothing ever happens.

The only event of recent years that I can find to have disturbed the simple life of the village was the dramatic appearance one night of a gentleman in his nightshirt, who raced through the market-place and incidentally put the wind up the lonely policeman on duty, who took to his heels at sight of the ghostly apparition and flew for his life. The market-place takes its name from Edward Shepherd, the architect who built the place and lived in Wharncliffe House, a low white house with lodge near by.

45 Berkeley Square.

For years after the London streets were lighted with gas those citizens whom business or pleasure kept out late were accompanied on their road by linkmen bearing a torch to light the way. Wealthy folk would be lighted home by their own

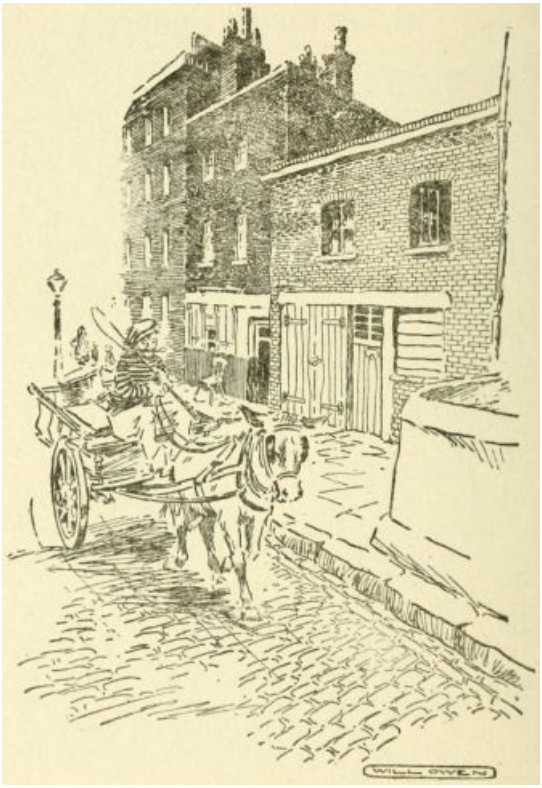
footmen, but others would employ the casual link boy who plied for hire and whose name was legion.

A reminder of these bright days may be seen in many a London square, where the horn-like extinguishers are still attached to the ornamental ironwork of the gates. One such gate I have sketched, the gate of 45 Berkeley Square, but it is typical of many in the Mayfair district. It was in this house that Clive, the founder of our Indian Empire, committed suicide in 1774.

The story of Berkeley Square and adjoining property is a particularly tragic one.

Hugh Audley, a miserly lawyer of the Inner Temple, died in 1662 worth half a million, and bequeathed to his grand-nephew, Alexander Davies, a small piece of land close to the Tyburn. Alexander died three years later of the plague, and the property, rapidly increasing in value, descended to his infant daughter Mary.

This wretched child at eleven years of age was married by interested persons to a boy of nineteen, Sir Thomas Grosvenor. Of her eight children four died in infancy, and after her husband's death poor Mary Grosvenor, one of the richest heiresses in this country, went mad.



Cato Street.

The Cato Street Conspiracy

I have a lively recollection, as a small boy, of encountering an examiner in history who was seeking information regarding the Cato Street Conspiracy.

I denied all knowledge of the affair, but even so he did not appear satisfied, and I felt at the time that I was being wrongly suspected.

I have discovered since, however, that the trouble was before my time.

The conspirators met one day in the year 1820 A.D., in a loft over a stable in what was then known as Cato Street, and the plot was simplicity itself.

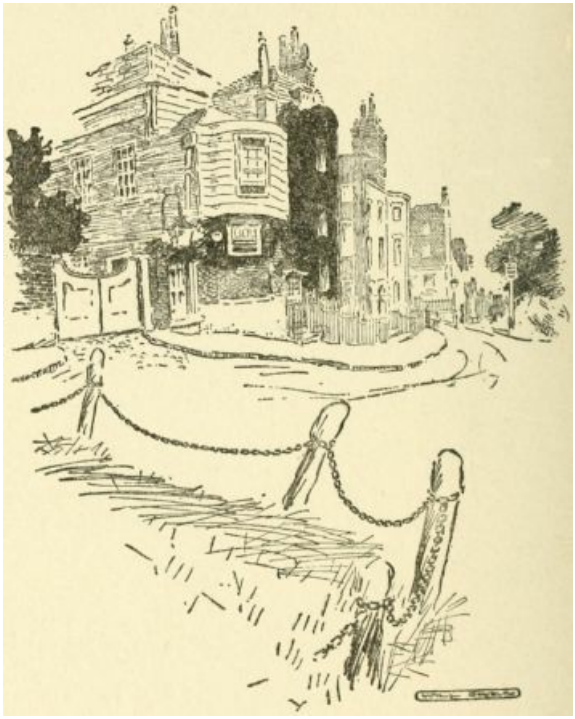
In those days the king's advisers had a pleasant habit of dining together in town at each other's houses, and on the date in question Lord Harrowby was entertaining the Cabinet at his house in Grosvenor Square.

The Cato Street boys, under the leadership of one Arthur Thistlewood, had planned an interesting evening.

One of the lads was to knock at the door in Grosvenor Square as bearer of a note, the others would then rush in and murder the entire Cabinet, and a popular uprising was to follow.

The plot was divulged by a spy, and the conspirators were lodged in the Tower, where they were hanged and, to make assurance doubly sure, afterwards beheaded.

Cato Street is no longer so called, it is now Horace Street, off Edgware Road, and known locally as the Bay or Cato Bay.



Romney's House.

Romney's House, Holly Bush Hill

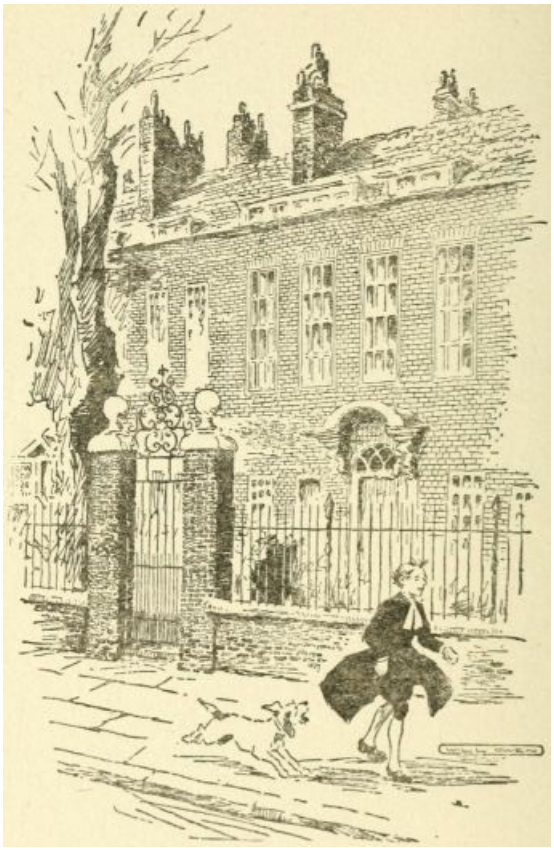
Romney was a Lancashire lad, and by all accounts a duffer at school, where the Rev. Mr. Fell agreed to teach him "the humanities" at 5s. a quarter. (I am not quite sure what the humanities cover exactly, but at 5s. per quarter it sounds fairly reasonable.) He was taken away from school, however, as not justifying the enormous expense. Later, owing to some signs of an artistic bent, he was apprenticed to an eccentric painter at Kendal, one Christopher Steele, who finding portrait painting a slow business, eloped with a wealthy pupil and married her at Gretna Green.

George helped his master in this romantic affair, and the excitement appears to have been too much for him. Christopher got the girl, and George got a fever.

He was nursed by Mary Abbot, with whom he promptly fell in love, and following the example of his illustrious master, married her.

Romney began his career as a portrait painter at £2 2s. per portrait, and as in recent years his pictures have realised prices from 10,000 to 25,000 guineas, someone evidently has been profiteering.

During his career as a fashionable painter he lived in Cavendish Square, and it was not until he began to fail mentally and physically that he moved to Hampstead, and after a short residence there returned to his sadly neglected wife at Kendal, where he died in 1802.



Church Row.

Church Row, Stoke Newington

Taking Stoke Newington in the lump, it is neither old nor picturesque, but there is one corner remaining to remind us of the days when it was both.

Accompanying this article is a sketch of the first of a number of beautiful old houses known as Church Row. They extend from the Free Library to the old Parish Church, a quaint old village church standing in an ancient graveyard almost hidden by the trees.

The old church is a thing of beauty and of many periods. There is Perpendicular work in it, and Decorated work, and some perfect Stoke Newington work.

As the place grew from a rural village to a great town it became necessary to build a new church to accommodate the people, and this church, an excellent specimen of its kind, with the proportions of a cathedral, stands near by looking down upon its venerable parent.

The old houses in Church Row have been occupied by many famous people. At No. 168 lived John Howard the great philanthropist, and at No. 170 Isaac D'Israeli, whose son Benjamin got himself talked about at one time.

Stoke Newington seems to have been a favourite resort of the better class of London merchants during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and when the Conventicle Act of 1664 forbade the Nonconformists to frequent their own places of worship it was in their country houses that the London merchants were able to worship after their own consciences unmolested.

The place became a stronghold of Nonconformity, Isaac Watts, Defoe and many Puritan leaders living here. There are still a few of their homes scattered about Stoke Newington, but they are rapidly disappearing.

Two regicides have hailed from Stoke Newington. Owen Rowe, a descendant of Sir Thomas Rowe, a former Lord Mayor of London, was one of the signatories to the warrant for Charles' execution, and after the Restoration was condemned to death, but as an act of clemency was committed to the Tower, where he died within the year. The other was John Okey, a drayman and a turbulent fellow, who became a Colonel of Cavalry under Cromwell. Okey found it necessary to fly to the Continent in due course, but was arrested in Holland and was ultimately executed at Tyburn.

Close by in Hackney Churchyard may be seen tombs and monuments of the André family, to which belonged that brave but unfortunate soldier Major André.

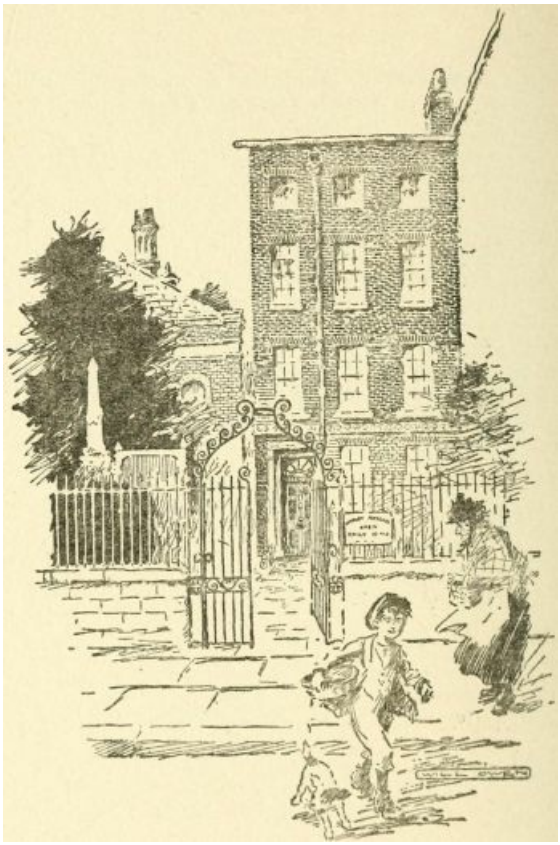
I am sorry this short historical note should contain so much of tragedy, and perhaps the depressing influence of Stoke Newington had some subtle effect upon young Edgar Allan Poe, who spent his schooldays here. Is it too much to assume that here we have an explanation of that atmosphere of gloom and terror that inspired his *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*, or *The Raven*.

And concerning this melancholy bird let me tell you a story of a certain rest camp where the men were gathered together in the hut for the usual sing-song.

"Private Perkins," announced the sergeant, "will now recite that famous poem by Edgar Allan Poe, entitled, 'Quoth the Raven, Never no More!'"

The easiest way to reach Stoke Newington is by train from Liverpool Street. Immediately on leaving the station turn sharp to the left along the high road, and the first turning on the right is Church Street.

It is a dull and uninteresting street, with here and there the decaying relic of a glorious old house and one ancient inn —"The Red Lion"—trying vainly to look young; and at the end comes a row of early eighteenth-century houses, built of that rich red brick that grows richer with age, with pretty porches creeper-covered, and this is Church Row.



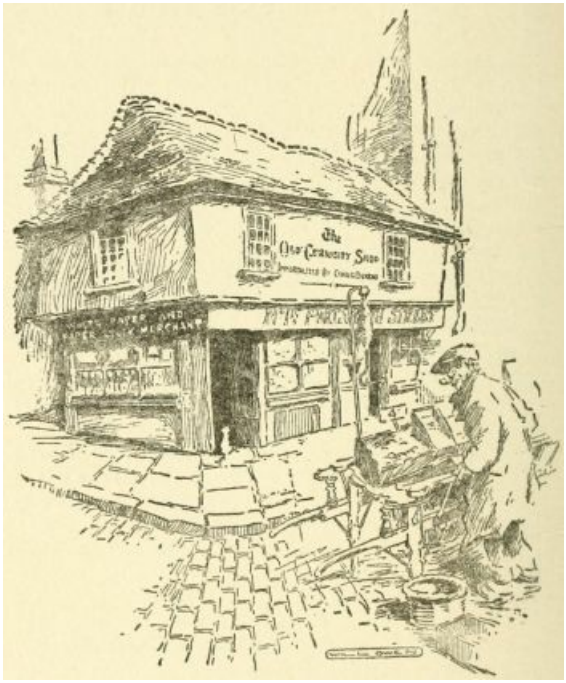
John Wesley's House.

John Wesley's House

No. 47 City Road, a plain, unpretentious, smoke-stained brick house, is where John Wesley lived, worked, and died. His famous chapel stands beside the house, and in the tiny graveyard behind lies buried the great Methodist. The monument that marks his last resting-place is mean and utterly unworthy of such a man.

London Methodism found its first home in a disused foundry in 1739. The damaged cannon taken from the French by Marlborough were being recast there, when a tremendous explosion occurred, causing many casualties, and the work was then transferred to Woolwich. The old foundry was abandoned and lay unused for nearly a quarter of a century, when Wesley took possession. The place was almost surrounded by fields, and the Methodists came there on winter mornings with candle and lantern. For forty years Wesley lived and preached at the old foundry, but in 1779 the house and chapel in City Road were ready and a tenant was discovered for the foundry at a rental of £4 10s. 0d.

Some idea of the difficulty Wesley must have encountered in securing funds for the building may be gathered when we find that at Keighley in 1777 he and Thomas Taylor stood on either side of the path, hat in hand, and together collected the colossal sum of £7. For twelve years John Wesley lived and laboured in the City Road house, and the place is sacred as the scene of his closing hours.



"*The Old Curiosity Shop.*"

"The Old Curiosity Shop"

Modesty is a virtue—up to a point—but the Old Curiosity Shop overdoes it. Its great ambition seems to be to remain invisible.

Having settled down to business hundreds of years ago in a narrow little street at the south-west corner of Lincoln's Inn Fields, it has carefully surrounded itself by lofty offices and warehouses until it is almost impossible to find.

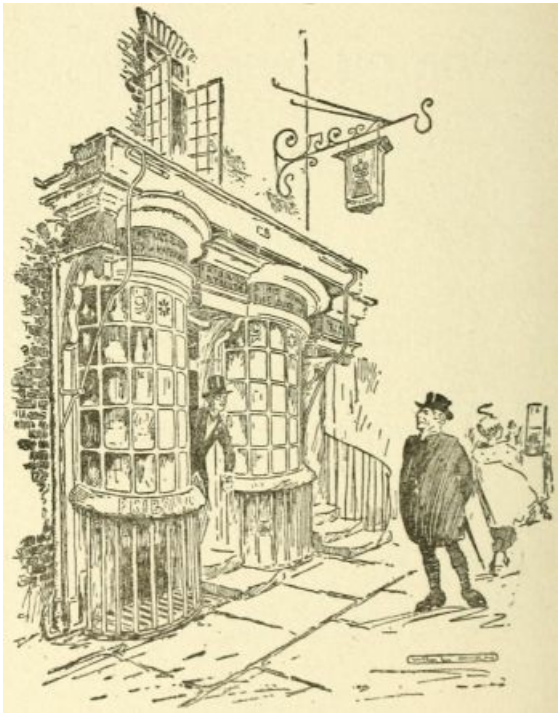
It is worth searching for, and you will find it immediately behind the big Stoll Picture House in Kingsway.

Whether the place is *the* Old Curiosity Shop I will not say.

Step inside the shop, and you will find it just such a one as Dickens portrayed.

"One of those receptacles for old and curious things, which seem to crouch in odd corners of the town and to hide their musty treasures from the public eye in jealousy and distrust."

It will not require much imagination to picture the scene with little Nell, her grandfather, bibulous Dick Swiveller, and the genial and fascinating Quilp.



Fribourg and Treyer.

Fribourg and Treyer

A middle-aged friend of mine assures me that he can remember the time when the Haymarket was really a market and the hay wagons lined up each day, but I think my middle-aged friend is remembering what his father may have seen, as the market was removed in 1830.

Close to the top of the Haymarket on the eastern side—No. 34, to be precise—stands a quaint old-fashioned tobacco shop known as Fribourg and Treyer.

It was founded in 1720, and was then simply a snuff house at the sign of the "Rasp and Crown."

There is more in the snuff business than the layman would imagine.

Who would suppose, for instance, that a snuff known as Spanish Sabilla was largely used as a tooth powder and was considered a certain cure for neuralgia.

Fribourg and Treyer appear always to have been in favour with a somewhat exalted clientele—princes, kings and even popes have been customers of this little old-fashioned shop.

Beau Brummell was on the books of the firm, and it appears that on one occasion when he dropped in a consignment of snuff had just arrived and had been entirely parcelled out to those customers who had ordered in advance. Brummell was indignant to find none reserved for him, and threatened to condemn the stuff, and as disparagement coming from such a source would mean ruination, the firm judged it wise to substitute Brummell's name for some less influential customer.

George Court, Strand.

George Court, Strand

There is a narrow passage opening off the Strand just opposite to the Charing Cross Hospital. It slopes down to Duke Street, Adelphi, has no historical associations so far as I know, but is a curious little old-fashioned backwater just off the busiest end of the Strand.

"I think the full tide of existence is at Charing Cross," said Dr. Johnson, and as it was then so it is now.

The little byway is known as George Court, and consists of two or three severely shuttered dingy shops and one brightly-coloured fruiterer's ditto.

What life and bustle there may be in the court centres round the fruiterer's.

The lower end of the passage opens into Duke Street and the medley of little streets built by the brothers Adam.

The Savage Club in Adelphi Terrace fronts the river, and near by live those modern giants Bernard Shaw and Sir J. M. Barrie.

Within a stone's-throw are the famous Adelphi Arches, as dark and mysterious as when in days gone by the bullies and pests of London Town found sanctuary in their gloomy corners.

The Blacksmith's Forge, Strand.

The Blacksmith's Forge, Strand

Milford Lane is a narrow byway sloping down from the busy Strand opposite the famous Church of St. Clement Danes.

There are stables in the lane and an inn, "Ye Old Cheshire Cheese." It is not the famous "Cheese," but another also of a ripe old age. Near the foot of the lane is an alley with a pretty name, and it is in Tweezers Alley that the village smithy stands.

There is no spreading chestnut tree, and I do not think this was the place Longfellow had in mind.

Milford Lane is not the delightful spot to-day it must have been when it possessed both mill and ford, it is a steeply-sloping, narrow thoroughfare noisy with the hum of printing presses.

The stables and the forge are required for horses used by W. H. Smith and Son.

The Church of St. Clement Danes in the Strand at the head of the lane is the church referred to in the verse beginning "Oranges and Lemons said the bells of St. Clemens," and the custom of distributing oranges and lemons to children of the district which has been in abeyance has recently been revived. Dr. Johnson attended Divine Service here for many years, and a statue to the Doctor has been erected on the eastern side of the church.

Foundling Hospital.

The Foundling Hospital

Captain Thomas Coram, born at Lyme Regis in 1668, was a shipmaster and an enthusiast in all that concerned his country's welfare.

He made money as a shipmaster, but he beggared himself by his philanthropic efforts.

The hospital in Guildford Street which he founded to relieve unfortunate young mothers of their burden was only one of his many activities.

The peopling of Nova Scotia with settlers from this country was largely due to Coram, and he successfully championed English hatters when they were up against trouble in foreign markets. The hatters wished to acknowledge this service by a grateful and handsome return, but Coram would accept nothing but a hat.

It was while living at Rotherhithe that Captain Coram was touched by the sight of so many abandoned children, and it was only after something like twenty years of persistent effort that, in 1740, he succeeded in carrying out his long-cherished scheme of building a hospital for foundlings.

In the early days a basket was hung outside the hospital gate, and into this were placed the poor infants, often enough naked as they were born.

Later a system was instituted of leaving a token with the child, so that in after years it might be identified, and a collection of these is shown to visitors to-day.

Some years since an aged banker in the North of England, who had been left as a babe in the basket, wished to ascertain some particulars of his origin, but all the information that could be furnished from the books of the establishment was that he was left there naked.

Needless to say many died, and many who were intended for the Hospital never reached their destination.

There were people who undertook for payment to convey these poor mites from all parts of the country, and naturally, the fee having been paid, the infants were frequently abandoned en route.

Some of the bequests to the Hospital are interesting.

One disgruntled dramatic author, who was unable to get his plays produced, bequeathed his entire stock of tragedies, comedies and other impedimenta in trust for the institution; but it was unfortunately before waste paper had reached its present high figure, and the Hospital did not benefit to any appreciable extent.

Hogarth appears to have been a very real friend to the institution. He was one of its first governors, and a number of his pictures are on its walls.

Amongst other benefactors were Gainsborough and Handel, and the Hospital is indebted to the latter for the manuscript score of *The Messiah*.

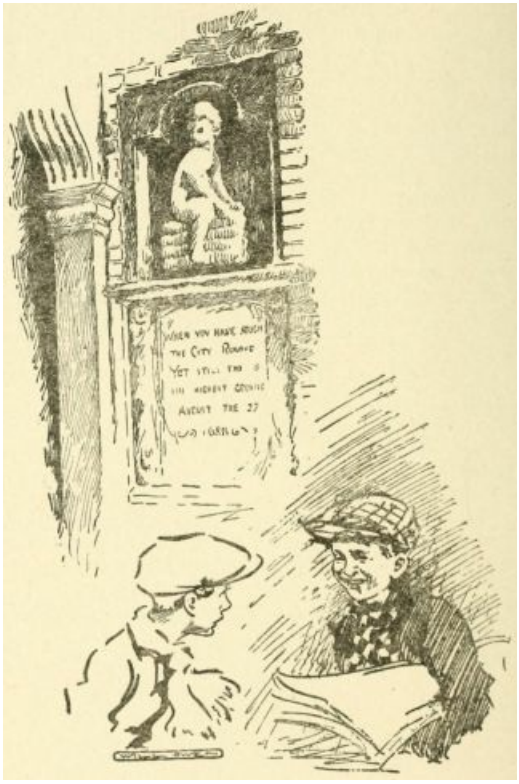
It was Handel also who presented the chapel organ, on which he used to give recitals for the benefit of the institution.

The best time to visit the Foundling is on a Sunday morning, when the boys and girls attend a service which is open to visitors, who are afterwards taken to see the youngsters dining.

The girls are dressed in a delightfully quaint, old-fashioned Puritan costume, while the boys are decked out in clothes that are correspondingly ugly.

In the immediate neighbourhood of the Hospital are many streets having artistic and literary associations.

At No. 32 Brunswick Square John Leech lived for ten years plagued by the peripatetic organ grinder. At No. 13 Great Coram Street Thackeray lived, and Dickens at No. 48 Doughty Street finished *Pickwick* and wrote *Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Barnaby Rudge*.



Boy Stone, Panyer Alley.

Panyer Alley

In the shadow of St. Paul's is Panyer Alley, a narrow passage leading from Paternoster Row to Newgate Street, and built into the wall near to the Newgate Street end is the naked boy stone.

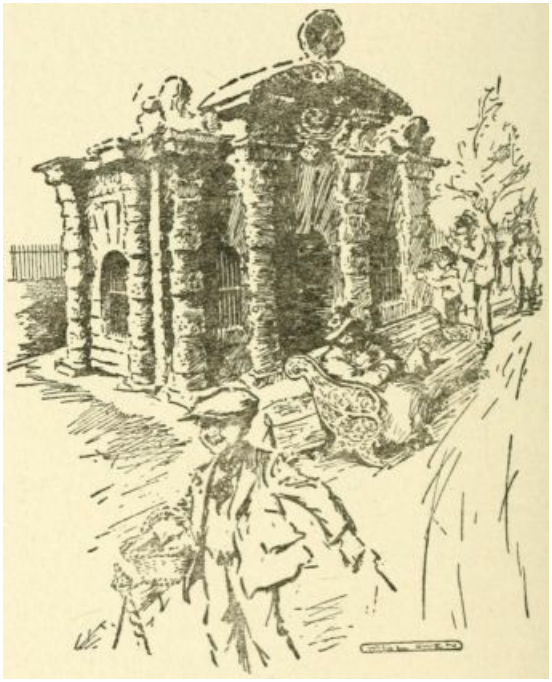
It was erected in 1688, and marks the highest ground in London City. It represents a naked boy sitting upon a pannier holding a bunch of grapes. The panyer was the name given to the bakers' basket of the fourteenth century.

The stone bears a curious inscription:—

t
"When you have sough
The City Round
Yet still this is
The Highest Ground.
August the 27
1688."

The artist appears to have been a trifle slack in arranging his lettering, as the final letter in the first line, owing to overcrowding, has been sent to a higher place. The monument has recently been framed and glazed for its better preservation, with the result that, like London stone, the whole thing is nearly invisible.

There is an air of boastfulness about this claim that is almost offensive, so while we are on the subject let me say that the naked boy is under a misapprehension—the highest point in the city is in Cornhill, and over-tops Panyer Alley by a foot.



York House Water Gate.

The York House Water Gate

The fine old Water Gate in the Embankment Gardens within a few yards of Charing Cross Underground Station is a reminder of the time when noble houses fronted the river and the Thames was almost as much a highway as any Venetian canal.

The gate was designed by Inigo Jones as the river entrance for York House, the town mansion of the first Duke of Buckingham, and apart from its beauty is particularly interesting as indicating the old river level before the building of the Embankment.

The portion of Westminster that extends from this point to St. James's Park was formerly known as York Place, for here stood the palace of the Archbishops of York.

Cardinal Wolsey was the last archbishop to occupy the palace, and at his fall in 1529 this desirable property was immediately appropriated by Henry, who built for himself the royal palace of Whitehall.

Inigo Jones in 1619 designed a palace to replace Whitehall. It was to cover an area of 24 acres, but was never built, owing to lack of funds and the civil unrest that preceded the Revolution. Of Inigo's magnificent design the banqueting-house only was completed, and it was from a window of the banqueting-house that Charles I. stepped out upon a platform to be executed.

An inscription is let into the wall below the window commemorating this fact, but is difficult to decipher.

Neasden-cum-Kingsbury Parish Church.

Neasden-cum-Kingsbury Parish Church

This trip is intended only for lovers of solitude. I was let in for it by a friend who calls himself an officer and a gentleman.

He assured me that within six miles of the Marble Arch was to be found a village church built upon one of Cæsar's camps, and apparently as remote from civilisation as any to be found in rural England.

He also assured me that I should reach this desirable spot in a twenty-minutes' walk from Neasden Station, but owing partly to stiffness in the joints and partly to a misunderstanding with a ploughman whom I found working at his lonely furrow, I wandered over the countryside for something over an hour before reaching my destination. I may add that after passing Blackbird Farm, where I should have turned off to the church, the road became a country lane, with wooded slopes and meadows on either side, and I walked for a mile or two without seeing any sign of house or living soul, nor did I get any great comfort when I learned later that this was an old Roman road.

A curious fact about Neasden Station is that if you turn to the right you will see nothing but bricks and mortar the whole of the way into London, but turning to the left you find yourself almost immediately in rural England at its truly ruralest.

It is a simple enough matter to find the old parish church really, but the rude forefathers of the hamlet take pride in a new church miles away, and will try and send you there.

Turning immediately to the left on leaving the station you cross a gurgling brook, pass a farm or two and a forge, and then cross a slightly larger stream, the Brent; continue up the hill for a few yards to Blackbird Farm, where turn sharply to the right, and the church is then close at hand.

The old church stands on Cæsar's Camp at Kingsbury, and an engraving of it may be seen in the Itinuarium Curiosum at the British Museum—so now you know.

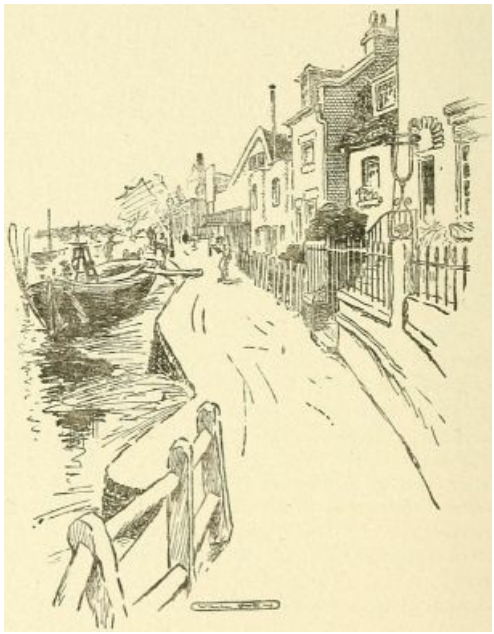
The village of Kingsbury, which no doubt was originally situated near the ancient parish church, has long since disappeared. According to the record in the Domesday Book the place was spelt Chingesberie, and one Albold held a manor in Chingesberie of Ernulf de Hesdig—an alien, I imagine—containing seven and a half hides of land. A mill is also mentioned, the rent of which was 3s., fairly reasonable as mills go nowadays.

Close to Neasden Station, on the brick and mortar side, is Willesden Parish Church.

It is famous as being the scene of Jack Sheppard's first effort.

He relieved an old lady of her purse, and was so encouraged by this early success that he took heart and embarked forthwith on that honoured career that led to fame and fortune. It is sad to think he died so young.

In the immediate neighbourhood long ago three brothers—Will, Harry and Ned, highwaymen all—had their dens, and their names still survive in the respectable suburbs Willesden, Harlesden and Neasden.



Strand-on-the-Green.

Strand-on-the-Green

Up to the moment of going to press I regret I have not been able to ascertain why Strand-on-the-Green is so called.

It is the name given to the half-mile of quaint old houses fronting the river from Kew Bridge eastwards, and during the early part of the eighteenth century was occupied almost wholly by fishermen.

On the springing up of some better class of houses, however, the place became more popular, and numbered amongst its residents one or two individuals whose names have become famous.

Joe Miller lived here. Joseph, who was a popular Drury Lane comedian, was not the author of the famous jest-book that bears his name. He was innocent of the crime. It was compiled at his death by a friend to help his widow, who had been left in needy circumstances.

Zoffany, a famous painter, was also a Strand-on-the-Greener in the time of George III., and used the fishermen as his models. A painting by him is in old East Brentford Church over the Communion Table, representing the Last Supper. The faces of the apostles are taken from the fishermen, with the exception of St. Peter, who is Zoffany.

At the present time the fishing industry is slack, and boat repairing would seem to be the hobby of the place.

A picturesque old malthouse that I remember many years ago has now fallen into decay, and only the shell remains.

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Transcriber's Notes:
Page 65, should be adminstered ==> should be administered

[The end of *Old London Town* by Will Owen]