

THE BOOK OF THE ROGUE

Joseph Lewis French

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Title: The Book of The Rogue

Date of first publication: 1926

Author: Joseph Lewis French (1858-1936)

Date first posted: Jan. 19, 2023

Date last updated: Jan. 19, 2023

Faded Page eBook #20230130

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FRANÇOIS VILLON

THE BOOK
of
THE ROGUE

STUDIES OF FAMOUS
SCOUNDRELS

Selected by
JOSEPH LEWIS FRENCH

Illustrated



BONI & LIVERIGHT
NEW YORK MCMXXVI

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To
CASHEL POMEROY

WHO, CONTENT TO HIDE HIS LIGHT UNDER A
BUSHEL, IS STILL A LIGHTHOUSE ON THE
SEA OF LITERATURE

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FOREWORD

Of dark lives and dark deeds the chronicle will always be enthralling. The reason is inherent in all civilizations. The majority of us are reasonably good,—we have a wholesome respect for the statutes, and our lives are for the most part humdrum and peaceful. The criminal presents the other side of the picture. So he takes us out of ourselves,—something that we are somehow always on the look-out for; he ushers us into another world—his own; he effects a transformation of the Commonplace; he gives us the thrill of adventure. He shows us perpetually the bright face of Danger. He lives in her smile. He of all men conforms to the Nietzschean mandate “live dangerously”! We follow him from one exploit to another and are always in the embrace of absorbing interest. A great criminal is often a hero altho we cannot afford to acknowledge this to our ownselves even in the glow of the page—it would dim his laurel somehow. Such is the perversity of human nature. His exploits provide something unusual and worth while in that they charm us quite away from our common selves. We sit and share his daring by our cozy firesides, and bless ourselves that we are not as he is. But we are fully able to realize that if the Lord had not created him we should have missed a vast store of mundane pleasure. He is really one of the choicest figures in literature, eagerly sought alike, by the small boy who devours him in secret, and the connoisseur of letters, who regards him as a real tid-bit. I am pointing these remarks especially at the really great criminal, of whom I herewith present the reader with a choice collection, all of whom have achieved immortality altho two of them live only in the pages of fiction.

Joseph Lewis French.

THE BOOK OF THE ROGUE

I

FRANÇOIS VILLON

Poet-Housebreaker

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

François de Montcorbier, *alias* François des Loges, *alias* François Villon, *alias* Michel Mouton, Master of Arts in the University of Paris, was born in that city in the summer of 1431. It was a memorable year for France on other and higher considerations. A great-hearted girl and a poor-hearted boy made, the one her last, the other his first appearance on the public stage of that unhappy country. On the 30th of May the ashes of Joan of Arc were thrown into the Seine, and on the 2d of December our Henry Sixth made his Joyous Entry dismally enough into disaffected and depopulating Paris. Sword and fire still ravaged the open country. On a single April Saturday twelve hundred persons, besides children, made their escape out of the starving capital. The hangman, as is not uninteresting to note in connection with Master Francis, was kept hard at work in 1431; on the last of April and on the 4th of May alone, sixty-two bandits swung from Paris gibbets.^[1] A more confused or troublous time it would have been difficult to select for a start in life. Not even a man's nationality was certain; for the people of Paris there was no such thing as a Frenchman. The English were the English indeed, but the French were only the Armagnacs, whom, with Joan of Arc at their head, they had beaten back from under their ramparts not two years before. Such public sentiment as they had centred about their dear Duke of Burgundy, and the dear Duke had no more urgent business than to keep out of their neighbourhood. . . . At least, and whether he liked it or not, our disreputable troubadour was tubbed and swaddled as a subject of the English crown.

We hear nothing of Villon's father except that he was poor and of mean extraction. His mother was given piously, which does not imply very much in an old Frenchwoman, and quite uneducated. He had an uncle, a monk in

an abbey at Angers, who must have prospered beyond the family average, and was reported to be worth five or six hundred crowns. Of this uncle and his money-box the reader will hear once more. In 1448 Francis became a student of the University of Paris; in 1450 he took the degree of Bachelor, and in 1452 that of Master of Arts. His *bourse*, or the sum paid weekly for his board, was of the amount of two sous. Now two sous was about the price of a pound of salt butter in the bad times of 1417; it was the price of half a pound in the worse times of 1419; and in 1444, just four years before Villon joined the University, it seems to have been taken as the average wage for a day's manual labour.^[2] In short, it cannot have been a very profuse allowance to keep a sharp-set lad in breakfast and supper for seven mortal days; and Villon's share of the cakes and pastry and general good cheer, to which he is never weary of referring, must have been slender from the first.

The educational arrangements of the University of Paris were, to our way of thinking, somewhat incomplete. Worldly and monkish elements were presented in a curious confusion, which the youth might disentangle for himself. If he had an opportunity, on the one hand, of acquiring much hair-drawn divinity and a taste for formal disputation, he was put in the way of much gross and flaunting vice upon the other. The lecture room of a scholastic doctor was sometimes under the same roof with establishments of a very different and peculiarly unedifying order. The students had extraordinary privileges, which by all accounts they abused extraordinarily. And while some condemned themselves to an almost sepulchral regularity and seclusion, others fled the schools, swaggered in the street "with their thumbs in their girdle," passed the night in riot, and behaved themselves as the worthy forerunners of Jehan Frolo in the romance of *Notre Dame de Paris*. Villon tells us himself that he was among the truants, but we hardly needed his avowal. The burlesque erudition in which he sometimes indulged implies no more than the merest smattering of knowledge; whereas his acquaintance with blackguard haunts and industries could only have been acquired by early and consistent impiety and idleness. He passed his degrees, it is true; but some of us who have been to modern universities will make their own reflections on the value of the test. As for his three pupils, Colin Laurent, Girard Gossouyn, and Jehan Marceau—if they were really his pupils in any serious sense—what can we say but God help them! And sure enough, by his own description, they turned out as ragged, rowdy, and ignorant as was to be looked for from the views and manners of their rare preceptor.

At some time or other, before or during his university career, the poet was adopted by Master Guillaume de Villon, chaplain of St. Benoît-le-

Bétourné near the Sorbonne. From him he borrowed the surname by which he is known to posterity. It was most likely from his house, called the *Porte Rouge*, and situated in a garden in the cloister of St. Benoît, that Master Francis heard the bell of the Sorbonne ring out the Angelus while he was finishing his *Small Testament* at Christmastide in 1456. Toward this benefactor he usually gets credit for a respectable display of gratitude. But with his trap and pitfall style of writing, it is easy to make too sure. His sentiments are about as much to be relied on as those of a professional beggar; and, in this, as in so many other matters, he comes toward us whining and piping the eye, and goes off again with a whoop and his finger to his nose. Thus, he calls Guillaume de Villon his “more than father,” thanks him with a great show of sincerity for having helped him out of many scrapes, and bequeaths him his portion of renown. But the portion of renown which belonged to a young thief, distinguished (if, at the period when he wrote this legacy, he was distinguished at all) for having written some more or less obscene and scurrilous ballads, must have been little fitted to gratify the self-respect or increase the reputation of a benevolent ecclesiastic. The same remark applies to a subsequent legacy of the poet’s library, with specification of one work which was plainly neither decent nor devout. We are thus left on the horns of a dilemma. If the chaplain was a godly, philanthropic personage, who had tried to graft good principles and good behaviour on this wild slip of an adopted son, these jesting legacies would obviously cut him to the heart. The position of an adopted son toward his adopted father is one full of delicacy; where a man lends his name he looks for great consideration. And this legacy of Villon’s portion of renown may be taken as the mere fling of an unregenerate scapegrace who has wit enough to recognize in his own shame the readiest weapon of offence against a prosy benefactor’s feelings. The gratitude of Master Francis figures, on this reading, as a frightful *minus* quantity. If, on the other hand, those jests were given and taken in good humour, the whole relation between the pair degenerates into the unedifying complicity of a debauched old chaplain and a witty and dissolute young scholar. At this rate the house with the red door may have rung with the most mundane minstrelsy; and it may have been below its roof that Villon, through a hole in the plaster, studied, as he tells us, the pleasures of a rich ecclesiastic.

It was, perhaps, of some moment in the poet’s life that he should have inhabited the cloister of St. Benoît. Three of the most remarkable among his early acquaintances are Catherine de Vausselles, for whom he entertained a short-lived affection and an enduring and most unmanly resentment; Regnier de Montigny, a young blackguard of good birth; and Colin de Cayeux, a fellow with a marked aptitude for picking locks. Now we are on a

foundation of mere conjecture, but it is at least curious to find that two of the canons of St. Benoît answered respectively to the names of Pierre de Vaucel and Etienne de Montigny, and that there was a householder called Nicolas de Cayeux in a street—the Rue des Poirées—in the immediate neighbourhood of the cloister. M. Longnon is almost ready to identify Catherine as the niece of Pierre; Regnier as the nephew of Etienne, and Colin as the son of Nicolas. Without going so far, it must be owned that the approximation of names is significant. As we go on to see the part played by each of these persons in the sordid melodrama of the poet's life, we shall come to regard it as even more notable. Is it not Clough who has remarked that, after all, everything lies in juxtaposition? Many a man's destiny has been settled by nothing apparently more grave than a pretty face on the opposite side of the street and a couple of bad companions round the corner.

Catherine de Vausselles (or de Vaucel—the change is within the limits of Villon's license) had plainly delighted in the poet's conversation; near neighbours or not, they were much together; and Villon made no secret of his court, and suffered himself to believe that his feeling was repaid in kind. This may have been an error from the first, or he may have estranged her by subsequent misconduct or temerity. One can easily imagine Villon an impatient wooer. One thing, at least, is sure: that the affair terminated in a manner bitterly humiliating to Master Francis. In presence of his lady-love, perhaps under her window and certainly with her connivance, he was unmercifully thrashed by one Noë le Joly—beaten, as he says himself, like dirty linen on the washing-board. It is characteristic that his malice had notably increased between the time when he wrote the *Small Testament* immediately on the back of the occurrence, and the time when he wrote the *Large Testament* five years after. On the latter occasion nothing is too bad for his "damsel with the twisted nose," as he calls her. She is spared neither hint nor accusation, and he tells his messenger to accost her with the vilest insults. Villon, it is thought, was out of Paris when these amenities escaped his pen; or perhaps the strong arm of Noë le Joly would have been again in requisition. So ends the love story, if love story it may properly be called. Poets are not necessarily fortunate in love; but they usually fall among more romantic circumstances and bear their disappointment with a better grace.

The neighbourhood of Regnier de Montigny and Colin de Cayeux was probably more influential on his after life than the contempt of Catherine. For a man who is greedy of all pleasures, and provided with little money and less dignity of character, we may prophesy a safe and speedy voyage downward. Humble or even truckling virtue may walk unspotted in this life. But only those who despise the pleasures can afford to despise the opinion of the world. A man of a strong, heady temperament, like Villon, is very

differently tempted. His eyes lay hold on all provocations greedily, and his heart flames up at a look into imperious desire; he is snared and broached to by anything and everything, from a pretty face to a piece of pastry in a cookshop window; he will drink the rinsing of the wine cup, stay the latest at the tavern party; tap at the lit windows, follow the sound of singing, and beat the whole neighbourhood for another reveller, as he goes reluctantly homeward; and grudge himself every hour of sleep as a black empty period in which he cannot follow after pleasure. Such a person is lost if he have not dignity, or, failing that, at least pride, which is its shadow and in many ways its substitute. Master Francis, I fancy, would follow his own eager instincts without much spiritual struggle. And we soon find him fallen among thieves in sober, literal earnest, and counting as acquaintances the most disreputable people he could lay his hands on: fellows who stole ducks in Paris Moat; sergeants of the criminal court, and archers of the watch; blackguards who slept at night under the butchers' stalls, and for whom the aforesaid archers peered about carefully with lanterns; Regnier de Montigny, Colin de Cayeux, and their crew, all bound on a favouring breeze toward the gallows; the disorderly abbess of Port Royal, who went about at fair time with soldiers and thieves, and conducted her abbey on the queerest principles; and most likely Perette Mauger, the great Paris receiver of stolen goods, not yet dreaming, poor woman! of the last scene of her career when Henry Cousin, executor of the high justice, shall bury her, alive and most reluctant, in front of the new Montigny gibbet.^[3] Nay, our friend soon began to take a foremost rank in this society. He could string off verses, which is always an agreeable talent; and he could make himself useful in many other ways. The whole ragged army of Bohemia, and whosoever loved good cheer without at all loving to work and pay for it, are addressed in contemporary verses as the "Subjects of François Villon." He was a good genius to all hungry and unscrupulous persons; and became the hero of a whole legendary cycle of tavern tricks and cheateries. At best, these were doubtful levities, rather too thievish for a schoolboy, rather too gamesome for a thief. But he would not linger long in this equivocal border land. He must soon have complied with his surroundings. He was one who would go where the cannikin clinked, not caring who should pay; and from supping in the wolves' den, there is but a step to hunting with the pack. And here, as I am on the chapter of his degradation, I shall say all I mean to say about its darkest expression, and be done with it for good. Some charitable critics see no more than a *jeu d'esprit*, a graceful and trifling exercise of the imagination, in the grimy ballad of Fat Peg (*Grosse Margot*). I am not able to follow these gentlemen to this polite extreme. Out of all Villon's works that ballad stands forth in

flaring reality, gross and ghastly, as a thing written in a contraction of disgust. M. Longnon shows us more and more clearly at every page that we are to read our poet literally, that his names are the names of real persons, and the events he chronicles were actual events. But even if the tendency of criticism had run the other way, this ballad would have gone far to prove itself. I can well understand the reluctance of worthy persons in this matter; for of course it is unpleasant to think of a man of genius as one who held, in the words of Marina to Boulton—

“A place, for which the pained’st fiend
Of hell would not in reputation change.”

But beyond this natural unwillingness, the whole difficulty of the case springs from a highly virtuous ignorance of life. Paris now is not so different from the Paris of then; and the whole of the doings of Bohemia are not written in the sugar-candy pastorals of Murger. It is really not at all surprising that a young man of the fifteenth century, with a knack of making verses, should accept his bread upon disgraceful terms. The race of those who do is not extinct; and some of them to this day write the prettiest verses imaginable. . . . After this, it were impossible for Master Francis to fall lower: to go and steal for himself would be an admirable advance from every point of view, divine or human.

And yet it is not as a thief, but as a homicide, that he makes his first appearance before angry justice. On June 5, 1455, when he was about twenty-four, and had been Master of Arts for a matter of three years, we behold him for the first time quite definitely. Angry justice had, as it were, photographed him in the act of his homicide; and M. Longnon, rummaging among old deeds, has turned up the negative and printed it off for our instruction. Villon had been supping—copiously we may believe—and sat on a stone bench in front of the Church of St. Benoît, in company with a priest called Gilles and a woman of the name of Isabeau. It was nine o’clock, a mighty late hour for the period, and evidently a fine summer’s night. Master Francis carried a mantle, like a prudent man, to keep him from the dews (*serain*), and had a sword below it dangling from his girdle. So these three dallied in front of St. Benoît, taking their pleasure (*pour soy esbatre*). Suddenly there arrived upon the scene a priest, Philippe Chermoye or Sermaise, also with sword and cloak, and accompanied by one Master Jehan le Mardi. Sermaise, according to Villon’s account, which is all we have to go upon, came up blustering and denying God; as Villon rose to make room for him upon the bench, thrust him rudely back into his place; and finally drew his sword and cut open his lower lip, by what I should

imagine was a very clumsy stroke. Up to this point, Villon professes to have been a model of courtesy, even of feebleness; and the brawl, in his version, reads like the fable of the wolf and the lamb. But now the lamb was roused; he drew his sword, stabbed Sermaise in the groin, knocked him on the head with a big stone, and then, leaving him to his fate, went away to have his own lip doctored by a barber of the name of Fouquet. In one version, he says that Gilles, Isabeau, and Le Mardi ran away at the first high words, and that he and Sermaise had it out alone; in another, Le Mardi is represented as returning and wresting Villon's sword from him: the reader may please himself. Sermaise was picked up, lay all that night in the prison of St. Benoît, where he was examined by an official of the Châtelet and expressly pardoned Villon, and died on the following Saturday in the Hôtel Dieu.

This, as I have said, was in June. Not before January of the next year could Villon extract a pardon from the king; but while his hand was in, he got two. One is for “François des Loges, alias (*autrement dit*) de Villon”; and the other runs in the name of François de Montcorbier. Nay, it appears there was a further complication; for in the narrative of the first of these documents, it is mentioned that he passed himself off upon Fouquet, the barber-surgeon, as one Michel Mouton. M. Longnon has a theory that this unhappy accident with Sermaise was the cause of Villon's subsequent irregularities; and that up to that moment he had been the pink of good behaviour. But the matter has to my eyes a more dubious air. A pardon necessary for Des Loges and another for Montcorbier? and these two the same person? and one or both of them known by the *alias* of Villon, however honestly come by? and lastly, in the heat of the moment, a fourth name thrown out with an assured countenance? A ship is not to be trusted that sails under so many colours. This is not the simple bearing of innocence. No—the young master was already treading crooked paths; already, he would start and blench at a hand upon his shoulder, with the look we know so well in the face of Hogarth's Idle Apprentice; already, in the blue devils, he would see Henry Cousin, the executor of high justice, going in dolorous procession toward Montfaucon, and hear the wind and the birds crying around Paris gibbet.

[1] *Bourgeois de Paris*, ed. Panthéon, pp. 688, 689.

[2] *Bourgeois*, pp. 627, 636, and 725.

[3] *Chronique Scandaleuse*, ed. Panthéon, p. 237.

A GANG OF THIEVES

In spite of the prodigious number of people who managed to get hanged, the fifteenth century was by no means a bad time for criminals. A great confusion of parties and great dust of fighting favoured the escape of private housebreakers and quiet fellows who stole ducks in Paris Moat. Prisons were leaky; and as we shall see, a man with a few crowns in his pocket and perhaps some acquaintance among the officials, could easily slip out and become once more a free marauder. There was no want of a sanctuary where he might harbour until troubles blew by; and accomplices helped each other with more or less good faith. Clerks, above all, had remarkable facilities for a criminal way of life; for they were privileged, except in cases of notorious incorrigibility, to be plucked from the hands of rude secular justice and tried by a tribunal of their own. In 1402, a couple of thieves, both clerks of the University, were condemned to death by the Provost of Paris. As they were taken to Montfaucon, they kept crying "high and clearly" for their benefit of clergy, but were none the less pitilessly hanged and gibbeted. Indignant Alma Mater interfered before the king; and the Provost was deprived of all royal offices, and condemned to return the bodies and erect a great stone cross, on the road from Paris to the gibbet, graven with the effigies of these two holy martyrs.^[1] We shall hear more of the benefit of clergy; for after this the reader will not be surprised to meet with thieves in the shape of tonsured clerks, or even priests and monks.

To a knot of such learned pilferers our poet certainly belonged; and by turning over a few more of M. Longnon's negatives, we shall get a clear idea of their character and doings. Montigny and De Cayeux are names already known; Guy Tabary, Petit-Jehan, Dom Nicolas, little Thibault, who was both clerk and goldsmith, and who made picklocks and melted plate for himself and his companions—with these the reader has still to become acquainted. Petit-Jehan and De Cayeux were handy fellows and enjoyed a useful pre-eminence in honour of their doings with the picklock. "*Dictus des Cahyeus est fortis operator crochetorum,*" says Tabary's interrogation, "*sed dictus Petit-Jehan, ejus socius, est forcus operator.*" But the flower of the flock was little Thibault; it was reported that no lock could stand before him; he had a persuasive hand; let us salute capacity wherever we may find it. Perhaps the term *gang* is not quite properly applied to the persons whose fortunes we are now about to follow; rather they were independent malefactors, socially intimate, and occasionally joining together for some serious operation, just as modern stockjobbers form a syndicate for an important loan. Nor were they at all particular to any branch of misdoing. They did not scrupulously confine themselves to a single sort of theft, as I

hear is common among modern thieves. They were ready for anything, from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter. Montigny, for instance, had neglected neither of these extremes, and we find him accused of cheating at games of hazard on the one hand, and on the other with the murder of one Thevenin Pensete in a house by the Cemetery of St. John. If time had only spared us some particulars, might not this last have furnished us with the matter of a grisly winter's tale?

At Christmas-time in 1456, readers of Villon will remember that he was engaged on the *Small Testament*. About the same period, *circa festum nativitatis Domini*, he took part in a memorable supper at the Mule Tavern, in front of the Church of St. Mathurin. Tabary, who seems to have been very much Villon's creature, had ordered the supper in the course of the afternoon. He was a man who had had troubles in his time and languished in the Bishop of Paris's prisons on a suspicion of picking locks; confiding, convivial, not very astute—who had copied out a whole improper romance with his own right hand. This supper party was to be his first introduction to De Cayeux and Petit-Jehan, which was probably a matter of some concern to the poor man's muddy wits; in the sequel, at least, he speaks of both with an undisguised respect, based on professional inferiority in the matter of picklocks. Dom Nicolas, a Picardy monk, was the fifth and last at table. When supper had been dispatched and fairly washed down, we may suppose, with white Baigneux or red Beaune, which were favourite wines among the fellowship, Tabary, was solemnly sworn over to secrecy on the night's performances; and the party left the Mule and proceeded to an unoccupied house belonging to Robert Saint-Simon. This, over a low wall, they entered without difficulty. All but Tabary took off their upper garments; a ladder was found and applied to the high wall which separated Saint-Simon's house from the court of the College of Navarre; the four fellows in their shirt-sleeves (as we might say) clambered over in a twinkling; and Master Guy Tabary remained alone beside the overcoats. From the court the burglars made their way into the vestry of the chapel, where they found a large chest, strengthened with iron bands and closed with four locks. One of these locks they picked, and then, by levering up the corner, forced the other three. Inside was a small coffer, of walnut wood, also barred with iron, but fastened with only three locks, which were all comfortably picked by way of the keyhole. In the walnut coffer—a joyous sight by our thieves' lantern—were five hundred crowns of gold. There was some talk of opening the aumries, where, if they had only known, a booty eight or nine times greater lay ready to their hand; but one of the party (I have a humorous suspicion it was Dom Nicolas, the Picardy monk) hurried them away. It was ten o'clock when they mounted the ladder; it was about midnight before Tabary beheld

them coming back. To him they gave ten crowns, and promised a share of a two-crown dinner on the morrow; whereat we may suppose his mouth watered. In course of time, he got wind of the real amount of their booty and understood how scurvily he had been used; but he seems to have borne no malice. How could he, against such superb orators as Petit-Jehan and De Cayeux; or a person like Villon, who could have made a new improper romance out of his own head, instead of merely copying an old one with mechanical right hand?

The rest of the winter was not uneventful for the gang. First they made a demonstration against the Church of St. Mathurin after chalices, and were ignominiously chased away by barking dogs. Then Tabary fell out with Casin Chollet, one of the fellows who stole ducks in Paris Moat, who subsequently became a sergeant of the Châtelet and distinguished himself by misconduct, followed by imprisonment and public castigation, during the wars of Louis Eleventh. The quarrel was not conducted with a proper regard to the king's peace, and the pair publicly belaboured each other until the police stepped in, and Master Tabary was cast once more into the prisons of the Bishop. While he still lay in durance, another job was cleverly executed by the band in broad daylight, at the Augustine Monastery. Brother Guillaume Coiffier was beguiled by an accomplice to St. Mathurin to say mass; and during his absence, his chamber was entered and five or six hundred crowns in money and some silver plate successfully abstracted. A melancholy man was Coiffier on his return! Eight crowns from this adventure were forwarded by little Thibault to the incarcerated Tabary; and with these he bribed the jailer and reappeared in Paris taverns. Some time before or shortly after this, Villon set out for Angers, as he had promised in the *Small Testament*. The object of this excursion was not merely to avoid the presence of his cruel mistress or the strong arm of Noë le Joly, but to plan a deliberate robbery on his uncle the monk. As soon as he had properly studied the ground, the others were to go over in force from Paris—picklocks and all—and away with my uncle's strongbox! This throws a comical sidelight on his own accusation against his relatives, that they had "forgotten natural duty" and disowned him because he was poor. A poor relation is a distasteful circumstance at the best, but a poor relation who plans deliberate robberies against those of his blood, and trudges hundreds of weary leagues to put them into execution, is surely a little on the wrong side of toleration. The uncle at Angers may have been monstrously undutiful; but the nephew from Paris was upsides with him.

On the 23d April, that venerable and discreet person, Master Pierre Marchand, Curate and Prior of Paray-le-Monial, in the diocese of Chartres, arrived in Paris and put up at the sign of the Three Chandeliers, in the Rue

de la Huchette. Next day, or the day after, as he was breakfasting at the sign of the Armchair, he fell into talk with two customers, one of whom was a priest and the other our friend Tabary. The idiotic Tabary became mighty confidential as to his past life. Pierre Marchand, who was an acquaintance of Guillaume Coiffier's and had sympathized with him over his loss, pricked up his ears at the mention of picklocks, and led on the transcriber of improper romances from one thing to another, until they were fast friends. For picklocks the Prior of Paray professed a keen curiosity; but Tabary, upon some late alarm, had thrown all his into the Seine. Let that be no difficulty, however, for was there not little Thibault, who could make them of all shapes and sizes, and to whom Tabary, smelling an accomplice, would be only too glad to introduce his new acquaintance? On the morrow, accordingly, they met; and Tabary, after having first wet his whistle at the Prior's expense, led him to Notre Dame and presented him to four or five "young companions," who were keeping sanctuary in the church. They were all clerks, recently escaped, like Tabary himself, from the episcopal prisons. Among these we may notice Thibault, the operator, a little fellow of twenty-six, wearing long hair behind. The Prior expressed, through Tabary, his anxiety to become their accomplice and altogether such as they were (*de leur sorte et de leurs complices*). Mighty polite they showed themselves, and made him many fine speeches in return. But for all that, perhaps because they had longer heads than Tabary, perhaps because it is less easy to wheedle men in a body, they kept obstinately to generalities and gave him no information as to their exploits, past, present, or to come. I suppose Tabary groaned under this reserve; for no sooner were he and the Prior out of the church than he fairly emptied his heart to him, gave him full details of many hanging matters in the past, and explained the future intentions of the band. The scheme of the hour was to rob another Augustine monk, Robert de la Porte, and in this the Prior agreed to take a hand with simulated greed. Thus, in the course of two days, he had turned this wineskin of a Tabary inside out. For a while longer the farce was carried on; the Prior was introduced to Petit-Jehan, whom he describes as a little, very smart man of thirty, with a black beard and a short jacket; an appointment was made and broken in the De la Porte affair; Tabary had some breakfast at the Prior's charge and leaked out more secrets under the influence of wine and friendship; and then all of a sudden, on the 17th of May, an alarm sprang up, the Prior picked up his skirts and walked quietly over to the Châtelet to make a deposition, and the whole band took to their heels and vanished out of Paris and the sight of the police.

Vanish as they like, they all go with a clog about their feet. Sooner or later, here or there, they will be caught in the fact, and ignominiously sent

home. From our vantage of four centuries afterward, it is odd and pitiful to watch the order in which the fugitives are captured and dragged in.

Montigny was the first. In August of that same year, he was laid by the heels on many grievous counts; sacrilegious robberies, frauds, incorrigibility, and that bad business about Thevenin Pensete in the house by the Cemetery of St. John. He was reclaimed by the ecclesiastical authorities as a clerk; but the claim was rebutted on the score of incorrigibility, and ultimately fell to the ground; and he was condemned to death by the Provost of Paris. It was a very rude hour for Montigny, but hope was not yet over. He was a fellow of some birth; his father had been king's pantler; his sister, probably married to some one about the Court, was in the family way, and her health would be endangered if the execution was proceeded with. So down comes Charles the Seventh with letters of mercy, commuting the penalty to a year in a dungeon on bread and water, and a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James in Galicia. Alas! the document was incomplete; it did not contain the full tale of Montigny's enormities; it did not recite that he had been denied benefit of clergy, and it said nothing about Thevenin Pensete. Montigny's hour was at hand. Benefit of clergy, honourable descent from king's pantler, sister in the family way, royal letters of commutation—all were of no avail. He had been in prison in Rouen, in Tours, in Bordeaux, and four times already in Paris; and out of all these he had come scathless; but now he must make a little excursion as far as Montfaucon with Henry Cousin, executor of high justice. There let him swing among the carrion crows.

About a year later, in July, 1458, the police laid hands on Tabary. Before the ecclesiastical commissary he was twice examined, and, on the latter occasion, put to the question ordinary and extraordinary. What a dismal change from pleasant suppers at the Mule, where he sat in triumph with expert operators and great wits! He is at the lees of life, poor rogue; and those fingers which once transcribed improper romances are now agonizingly stretched upon the rack. We have no sure knowledge, but we may have a shrewd guess of the conclusion. Tabary, the admirer, would go the same way as those whom he admired.

The last we hear of is Colin de Cayeux. He was caught in autumn, 1460, in the great Church of St. Leu d'Esserens, which makes so fine a figure in the pleasant Oise valley between Creil and Beaumont. He was reclaimed by no less than two bishops; but the Procureur for the Provost held fast by incorrigible Colin. 1460 was an ill-starred year: for justice was making a clean sweep of "poor and indigent persons, thieves, cheats, and lock-

pickers,” in the neighbourhood of Paris;^[2] and Colin de Cayeux, with many others, was condemned to death and hanged.^[3]

[1] Monstrelet: *Panthéon Littéraire*, p. 26.

[2] *Chron. Scand.*, ut supra.

[3] Here and there, principally in the order of events, this article differs from M. Longnon’s own reading of his material. The ground on which he defers the execution of Montigny and De Cayeux beyond the date of their trials seems insufficient. There is a law of parsimony for the construction of historical documents; simplicity is the first duty of narration; and hanged they were.

VILLON AND THE GALLOWS

Villon was still absent on the Angers expedition when the Prior of Paray sent such a bombshell among his accomplices; and the dates of his return and arrest remain undiscoverable. M. Campaux plausibly enough opined for the autumn of 1457, which would make him closely follow on Montigny, and the first of those denounced by the Prior to fall into the toils. We may suppose, at least, that it was not long thereafter; we may suppose him competed for between lay and clerical Courts; and we may suppose him alternately pert and impudent, humble and fawning, in his defence. But at the end of all supposing, we come upon some nuggets of fact. For first, he was put to the question by water. He who had tossed off so many cups of white Baigneux or red Beaune, now drank water through linen folds, until his bowels were flooded and his heart stood still. After so much raising of the elbow, so much outcry of fictitious thirst, here at last was enough drinking for a lifetime. Truly, of our pleasant vices, the gods make whips to scourge us. And secondly he was condemned to be hanged. A man may have been expecting a catastrophe for years, and yet find himself unprepared when it arrives. Certainly, Villon found, in this legitimate issue of his career, a very staggering and grave consideration. Every beast, as he says, clings bitterly to a whole skin. If everything is lost, and even honour, life still remains; nay, and it becomes, like the ewe lamb in Nathan’s parable, as dear as all the rest. “Do you fancy,” he asks, in a lively ballad, “that I had not enough philosophy under my hood to cry out, ‘I appeal’? If I had made any bones about the matter, I should have been planted upright in the fields, by the St. Denis Road”—Montfaucon being on the way to St. Denis. An appeal

to Parliament, as we saw in the case of Colin de Cayeux, did not necessarily lead to an acquittal or a commutation; and while the matter was pending, our poet had ample opportunity to reflect on his position. Hanging is a sharp argument, and to swing with many others on the gibbet adds a horrible corollary for the imagination. With the aspect of Montfaucon he was well acquainted; indeed, as the neighbourhood appears to have been sacred to junketing and nocturnal picnics of wild young men and women, he had probably studied it under all varieties of hour and weather. And now, as he lay in prison waiting the mortal push, these different aspects crowded back on his imagination with a new and startling significance; and he wrote a ballad, by way of epitaph for himself and his companions, which remains unique in the annals of mankind. It is, in the highest sense, a piece of his biography:

“La pluye nous a debuez et lavez,
Et le soleil dessechez et noirciz;
Pies, corbeaulx, nous ont les yeux cavez,
Et arrachez la barbe et les sourcilz.
Jamais, nul temps, nous ne sommes rassis;
Puis çà, puis la, comme le vent varie,
A son plaisir sans cesser nous charie,
Plus becquetez d’oiseaulx que dez à couldre.
Ne soyez donc de nostre confrairie,
Mais priez Dieu que tous nous vueille absouldre.”

Here is some genuine thieves’ literature after so much that was spurious; sharp as an etching, written with a shuddering soul. There is an intensity of consideration in the piece that shows it to be the transcript of familiar thoughts. It is the quintessence of many a doleful nightmare on the straw, when he felt himself swing helpless in the wind, and saw the birds turn about him, screaming and menacing his eyes.

And, after all, the Parliament changed his sentence into one of banishment; and to Roussillon, in Dauphiny, our poet must carry his woes without delay. Travellers between Lyons and Marseilles may remember a station on the line, some way below Vienne, where the Rhone fleets seaward between vine-clad hills. This was Villon’s Siberia. It would be a little warm in summer perhaps, and a little cold in winter in that draughty valley between two great mountain fields; but what with the hills, and the racing river, and the fiery Rhone wines, he was little to be pitied on the conditions of his exile. Villon, in a remarkably bad ballad, written in a breath, heartily thanked and fulsomely belauded the Parliament; the *envoi*, like the

proverbial postscript of a lady's letter, containing the pith of his performance in a request for three days' delay to settle his affairs and bid his friends farewell. He was probably not followed out of Paris, like Antoine Fradin, the popular preacher, another exile of a few years later, by weeping multitudes;^[1] but I dare say one or two rogues of his acquaintance would keep him company for a mile or so on the south road, and drink a bottle with him before they turned. For banished people, in those days, seem to have set out on their own responsibility, in their own guard, and at their own expense. It was no joke to make one's way from Paris to Roussillon alone and penniless in the fifteenth century. Villon says he left a rag of his tails on every bush. Indeed, he must have had many a weary tramp, many a slender meal, and many a to-do with blustering captains of the Ordonnance. But with one of his light fingers, we may fancy that he took as good as he gave; for every rag of his tail, he would manage to indemnify himself upon the population in the shape of food, or wine, or ringing money; and his route would be traceable across France and Burgundy by housewives and inn-keepers lamenting over petty thefts, like the track of a single human locust. A strange figure he must have cut in the eyes of the good country people: this ragged, blackguard city poet, with a smack of the Paris student, and a smack of the Paris street arab, posting along the highways, in rain or sun, among the green fields and vineyards. For himself, he had no taste for rural loveliness; green fields and vineyards would be mighty indifferent to Master Francis; but he would often have his tongue in his cheek at the simplicity of rustic dupes, and often, at city gates, he might stop to contemplate the gibbet with its swinging bodies, and hug himself on his escape.

How long he stayed at Roussillon, how far he became the protégé of the Bourbons, to whom that town belonged, or when it was that he took part, under the auspices of Charles of Orleans, in a rhyming tournament to be referred to once again in the pages of the present volume, are matters that still remain in darkness, in spite of M. Longnon's diligent rummaging among archives. When we next find him, in summer, 1461, alas! he is once more in durance: this time at Méun-sur-Loire, in the prisons of Thibault d'Aussigny, Bishop of Orleans. He had been lowered in a basket into a noisome pit, where he lay, all summer, gnawing hard crusts and railing upon fate. His teeth, he says, were like the teeth of a rake: a touch of haggard portraiture all the more real for being excessive and burlesque, and all the more proper to the man for being a caricature of his own misery. His eyes were "bandaged with thick walls." It might blow hurricanes overhead; the lightning might leap in high heaven; but no word of all this reached him in his noisome pit. "Il n'entre, ou gist, n'escler ni tourbillon." Above all, he

was fevered with envy and anger at the freedom of others; and his heart flowed over into curses as he thought of Thibault d'Aussigny, walking the streets in God's sunlight, and blessing people with extended fingers. So much we find sharply lined in his own poems. Why he was cast again into prison—how he had again managed to shave the gallows—this we know not, nor, from the destruction of authorities, are we ever likely to learn. But on October 2, 1461, or some day immediately preceding, the new king, Louis Eleventh, made his joyous entry into Méun. Now it was a part of the formality on such occasions for the new king to liberate certain prisoners; and so the basket was let down into Villon's pit, and hastily did Master Francis scramble in, and was most joyfully hauled up, and shot out, blinking and tottering, but once more a free man, into the blessed sun and wind. Now or never is the time for verses! Such a happy revolution would turn the head of a stocking-weaver, and set him jingling rhymes. And so—after a voyage to Paris, where he finds Montigny and De Cayeux clattering their bones upon the gibbet, and his three pupils roystering in Paris streets, “with their thumbs under their girdles,”—down sits Master Francis to write his *Large Testament*, and perpetuate his name in a sort of glorious ignominy.

[1] *Chron. Scand.*, p. 338.

THE LARGE TESTAMENT

Of this capital achievement and, with it, of Villon's style in general, it is here the place to speak. The *Large Testament* is a hurly-burly of cynical and sentimental reflections about life, jesting legacies to friends and enemies, and, interspersed among these, many admirable ballades, both serious and absurd. With so free a design, no thought that occurred to him would need to be dismissed without expression; and he could draw at full length the portrait of his own bedevilled soul, and of the bleak and blackguardly world which was the theatre of his exploits and sufferings. If the reader can conceive something between the slap-dash inconsequence of Byron's *Don Juan* and the racy humorous gravity and brief noble touches that distinguish the vernacular poems of Burns, he will have formed some idea of Villon's style. To the latter writer—except in the ballades, which are quite his own, and can be paralleled from no other language known to me—he bears a particular resemblance. In common with Burns he has a certain rugged compression, a brutal vivacity of epithet, a homely vigour, a delight in local personalities, and an interest in many sides of life, that are often despised and passed over by more effete and cultured poets. Both also, in their strong,

easy colloquial way, tend to become difficult and obscure; the obscurity in the case of Villon passing at times into the absolute darkness of cant language. They are perhaps the only two great masters of expression who keep sending their readers to a glossary.

“Shall we not dare to say of a thief,” asks Montaigne, “that he has a handsome leg?” It is a far more serious claim that we have to put forward in behalf of Villon. Beside that of his contemporaries, his writing, so full of colour, so eloquent, so picturesque, stands out in an almost miraculous isolation. If only one or two of the chroniclers could have taken a leaf out of his book, history would have been a pastime, and the fifteenth century as present to our minds as the age of Charles Second. This gallows-bird was the one great writer of his age and country, and initiated modern literature for France. Boileau, long ago, in the period of perukes and snuff-boxes, recognized him as the first articulate poet in the language; and if we measure him, not by priority of merit, but living duration of influence, not on a comparison with obscure forerunners, but with great and famous successors, we shall install this ragged and disreputable figure in a far higher niche in glory’s temple than was ever dreamed of by the critic. It is, in itself, a memorable fact that, before 1542, in the very dawn of printing, and while modern France was in the making, the works of Villon ran through seven different editions. Out of him flows much of Rabelais; and through Rabelais, directly and indirectly, a deep, permanent, and growing inspiration. Not only his style, but his callous pertinent way of looking upon the sordid and ugly sides of life, becomes every day a more specific feature in the literature of France. And only the other year, a work of some power appeared in Paris, and appeared with infinite scandal, which owed its whole inner significance and much of its outward form to the study of our rhyming thief.

The world to which he introduces us is, as before said, blackguardly and bleak. Paris swarms before us, full of famine, shame, and death; monks and the servants of great lords hold high wassail upon cakes and pastry; the poor man licks his lips before the baker’s window; people with patched eyes sprawl all night under the stalls; chuckling Tabary transcribes an improper romance; bare-bosomed lasses and ruffling students swagger in the streets; the drunkard goes stumbling homeward; the graveyard is full of bones; and away on Montfaucon, Colin de Cayeux and Montigny hang draggled in the rain. Is there nothing better to be seen than sordid misery and worthless joys? Only where the poor old mother of the poet kneels in church below painted windows, and makes tremulous supplication to the Mother of God.

In our mixed world, full of green fields and happy lovers, where not long before, Joan of Arc had led one of the highest and noblest lives in the whole story of mankind, this was all worth chronicling that our poet could

perceive. His eyes were indeed sealed with his own filth. He dwelt all his life in a pit more noisome than the dungeon at Méun. In the moral world, also, there are large phenomena not cognizable out of holes and corners. Loud winds blow, speeding home deep-laden ships and sweeping rubbish from the earth; the lightning leaps and cleans the face of heaven; high purposes and brave passions shake and sublimate men's spirits; and meanwhile, in the narrow dungeon of his soul, Villon is mumbling crusts and picking vermin.

Along with this deadly gloom of outlook, we must take another characteristic of his work: its unrivaled insincerity. I can give no better similitude of this quality than I have given already: that he comes up with a whine, and runs away with a whoop and his finger to his nose. His pathos is that of a professional mendicant who should happen to be a man of genius; his levity that of a bitter street arab, full of bread. On a first reading, the pathetic passages preoccupy the reader, and he is cheated out of an alms in the shape of sympathy. But when the thing is studied the illusion fades away: in the transitions, above all, we can detect the evil, ironical temper of the man; and instead of a flighty work, where many crude but genuine feelings tumble together for the mastery as in the lists of tournament, we are tempted to think of the *Large Testament* as of one long-drawn epical grimace, pulled by a merry-andrew, who has found a certain despicable eminence over human respect and human affections by perching himself astride upon the gallows. Between these two views, at best, all temperate judgments will be found to fall; and rather, as I imagine, toward the last.

There were two things on which he felt with perfect and, in one case, even threatening sincerity.

The first of these was an undisguised envy of those richer than himself. He was forever drawing a parallel, already exemplified from his own words, between the happy life of the well-to-do and the miseries of the poor. Burns, too proud and honest not to work, continued through all reverses to sing of poverty with a light, defiant note. Béranger waited till he was himself beyond the reach of want, before writing the *Old Vagabond* or *Jacques*. Samuel Johnson, although he was very sorry to be poor, "was a great arguer for the advantages of poverty," in his ill days. Thus it is that brave men carry their crosses, and smile with the fox burrowing in their vitals. But Villon, who had not the courage to be poor with honesty, now whiningly implores our sympathy, now shows his teeth upon the dung-heap with an ugly snarl. He envies bitterly, envies passionately. Poverty, he protests, drives men to steal, as hunger makes the wolf sally from the forest. The poor, he goes on, will always have a carping word to say, or if that outlet be denied, nourish rebellious thoughts. It is a calumny on the noble army of the poor.

Thousands in a small way of life, ay, and even in the smallest, go through life with tenfold as much honour and dignity and peace of mind as the rich gluttons whose dainties and state-beds awakened Villon's covetous temper. And every morning's sun sees thousands who pass whistling to their toil. But Villon was the "mauvais pauvre" defined by Victor Hugo, and, in its English expression, so admirably stereotyped by Dickens. He was the first wicked sans-culotte. He is the man of genius with the moleskin cap. He is mighty pathetic and beseeching here in the street, but I would not go down a dark road with him for a large consideration.

The second of the points on which he was genuine and emphatic was common to the Middle Ages: a deep and somewhat snivelling conviction of the transitory nature of this life and the pity and horror of death. Old age and the grave, with some dark and yet half-sceptical terror of an after-world—these were ideas that clung about his bones like a disease. An old ape, as he says, may play all the tricks in its repertory, and none of them will tickle an audience into good humour. "Tousjours vieil synges est desplaisant." It is not the old jester who receives most recognition at a tavern party, but the young fellow, fresh and handsome, who knows the new slang, and carries off his vice with a certain air. Of this, as a tavern jester himself, he would be pointedly conscious. As for the women with whom he was best acquainted, his reflections on their old age, in all their harrowing pathos, shall remain in the original for me. Horace has disgraced himself to something the same tune; but what Horace throws out with an ill-favoured laugh, Villon dwells on with an almost maudlin whimper.

It is in death that he finds his truest inspiration; in the swift and sorrowful change that overtakes beauty; in the strange revolution by which great fortunes and renowns are diminished to a handful of churchyard dust; and in the utter passing away of what was once lovable and mighty. It is in this that the mixed texture of his thought enables him to reach such poignant and terrible effects, and to enhance pity with ridicule, like a man cutting capers to a funeral march. It is in this, also, that he rises out of himself into the higher spheres of art. So, in the ballade by which he is best known, he rings the changes on names that once stood for beautiful and queenly women, and are now no more than letters and a legend. "Where are the snows of yester year?" runs the burden. And so, in another not so famous, he passes in review the different degrees of bygone men, from the holy Apostles and the golden Emperor of the East, down to the heralds, pursuivants, and trumpeters, who also bore their part in the world's pageantries and ate greedily at great folks' tables: all this to the refrain of "So much carry the winds away!" Probably, there was some melancholy in his mind for a yet lower grade, and Montigny and Colin de Cayeux

clattering their bones on Paris gibbet. Alas, and with so pitiful an experience of life, Villon can offer us nothing but terror and lamentation about death! No one has ever more skilfully communicated his own disenchantment; no one ever blown a more ear-piercing note of sadness. The unrepentant thief can attain neither to Christian confidence, nor to the spirit of the bright Greek saying, that whom the gods love die early. It is a poor heart, and a poorer age, that cannot accept the conditions of life with some heroic readiness.

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The date of the *Large Testament* is the last date in the poet's biography. After having achieved that admirable and despicable performance, he disappears into the night from whence he came. How or when he died, whether decently in bed or trussed up to a gallows, remains a riddle for foolhardy commentators. It appears his health had suffered in the pit at Méun; he was thirty years of age and quite bald; with the notch in his under lip where Sermaise had struck him with the sword, and what wrinkles the reader may imagine. In default of portraits, this is all I have been able to piece together, and perhaps even the baldness should be taken as a figure of his destitution. A sinister dog, in all likelihood, but with a look in his eye, and the loose flexible mouth that goes with wit and an overweening sensual temperament. Certainly the sorriest figure on the rolls of fame.



CE SAR BORGIA

II

THE BORGIAS

Wholesale Criminals

ALEXANDRE DUMAS

Towards the end of the fifteenth century—that is to say, at the epoch when our history opens—the Piazza of St. Peter's at Rome was far from presenting so noble an aspect as that which is offered in our own day to anyone who approaches it by the Piazza dei Rusticucci.

All the same, on the 9th of August, 1492, the whole of Rome, from the People's Gate to the Coliseum and from the Baths of Diocletian to the castle of Sant' Angelo, seemed to have made an appointment on this Piazza; the multitude thronging it was so great as to overflow into all the neighbouring streets, which started from this centre like the rays of a star. Now all this multitude had its eyes fixed on one single point in the Vatican; for in the Vatican was the Conclave, and as Innocent VIII had been dead for sixteen days, the Conclave was in the act of electing a pope.

The eyes of the multitude were fixed upon the Vatican, and particularly upon one chimney, from which would come the first signal, when suddenly, at the moment of the *Ave Maria*—that is to say, at the hour when the day begins to decline—great cries went up from all the crowd, mixed with bursts of laughter, a discordant murmur of threats and raillery; the cause being that they had just perceived at the top of the chimney a thin smoke, which seemed like a light cloud to go up perpendicularly into the sky. This smoke announced that Rome was still without a master, and that the world still had no pope; for this was the smoke of the voting tickets which were being burned, a proof that the cardinals had not yet come to an agreement.

About this time a man wrapped in a cloak stood up like a ghost against one of the columns of the uncompleted basilica, and gliding slowly and carefully among the stones which were lying about around the foundations of the new church, advanced as far as the fountain which formed the centre of the piazza, erected in the very place where the obelisk is now set. When he reached this spot he stopped, doubly concealed by the darkness of the night and by the shade of the monument, and after looking around him to

see if he were really alone, drew his sword, and with its point rapping three times on the pavement of the piazza, each time made the sparks fly. This signal, for signal it was, was not lost; the last lamp which still kept vigil in the Vatican went out, and at the same instant an object thrown out of the window fell a few paces off from the young man in the cloak; he, guided by the silvery sound it had made in touching the flags, lost no time in laying his hands upon it in spite of the darkness, and when he had it in his possession hurried quickly away.

Thus the unknown walked without turning round, half-way along the Borgo-Vecchio; but there he turned to the right and took a street at the other end of which was set up a Madonna with a lamp; he approached the light, and drew from his pocket the object he had picked up, which was nothing else than a Roman crown piece; but this crown unscrewed, and in a cavity hollowed in its thickness enclosed a letter, which the man to whom it was addressed began to read at the risk of being recognized, so great was his haste to know what it contained.

He did not stand there long; for scarcely had he finished the letter when he replaced it in its silver receptacle, and, readjusting his cloak so as to hide the lower part of his face, resumed his walk as far as the Church of Regina Coeli. When he arrived at this place, he gave three rapid knocks on the door of a house of good appearance, which immediately opened; then slowly mounting the stairs he entered a room where two women were awaiting him, with an impatience so unconcealed that both as they saw him exclaimed together—

“Well, Francesco, what news?”

“Good news, my mother; good, my sister. Our father has gained three votes to-day, but he still needs six to have the majority.”

“Then there is no means of buying them?”

“Certainly, my mother, certainly.”

And so it happened that two days later Cardinal Ascanio Sforza made the following proclamation to the Roman populace:

“I announce to you a great joy; the most Eminent and Most Reverend Signor Roderigo Lenzuolo Borgia, Archbishop of Valencia, Cardinal-Deacon of San Nicolao-in-Carcere, Vice-Chancellor of the Church, has now been elected Pope, and has assumed the name of Alexander VI.”

Roderigo Borgia had the reputation of a dissolute man; but libertinism had mounted the papal throne with Sixtus IV and Innocent VIII, so that for the Romans there was nothing new in the singular situation of a pope with a mistress and five children. There had also grown up in Cardinal Borgia that talent for hypocrisy which made of him the most perfect incarnation of the devil that has perhaps ever existed.

Caesar Borgia, son of the new pope, learned the news of his father's election at the University of Pisa, where he was a student. He hastened to Rome with certain of his friends, and went straight to the pope to kiss his feet. His Holiness received Caesar with a gracious countenance; still, he did not allow himself any demonstration of his paternal love. After this audience, Caesar left the Vatican, and hurried to his mother.

Rosa Vanozza, mistress of Pope Alexander, possessed all the vices and all the virtues of a courtesan. Lucrezia Borgia, wife of Giovanni Sforza, was with her mother when her brother Caesar arrived. These two exchanged a lover-like kiss beneath their mother's very eyes; and before he left Caesar had made an appointment with Lucrezia, who was now living—apart from her husband, to whom Roderigo paid a pension—in her palace of the Via del Pelegrino, and there enjoying entire liberty.

For a year after he mounted the papal throne Roderigo Borgia (Pope Alexander VI) made great strides in the extension of his temporal power. In his own hands he held, to be sure, only the least in size of the Italian territories; but by a marriage of his daughter Lucrezia, who had become divorced from Sforza, with the Lord of Pesaro he was stretching out one hand as far as Venice, while by the marriage of his son, the Prince of Squillace, with Dona Sancha, he was touching with the other hand the boundary of Calabria. He made Caesar Cardinal of Santa Maria Novella. As there was no precedent in Church history for a bastard's donning the scarlet, the pope found four false witnesses who declared that Caesar was the legitimate son of Count Ferdinand of Castile.

The wedding of the two bastards was most splendid, rich with the double pomp of Church and King. As the pope had settled that the young bridal pair should live near him, Caesar Borgia, the new cardinal, undertook to manage the ceremony of their entry into Rome, and Lucrezia desired on her part to contribute all the splendour she had it in her power to add. "Thus," writes Tommaso Tommasi, "by the look of the assembly and the sort of conversation that went on for hours, you would suppose you were present at some voluptuous royal audience of ancient Assyria, rather than at the severe consistory of a Roman pontiff, whose solemn duty it is to exhibit in every act the sanctity of the name he bears."

Thus writes the master of the ceremonies in his journal:

"The pope made his entry into the Church of the Holy Apostles, and beside him on the marble steps of the pulpit where the canons of St. Peter are wont to chant the Epistle and the Gospel, sat Lucrezia, his daughter, and Sancha, his son's wife; round about them, a disgrace to the Church and a public scandal, were grouped a number of other Roman ladies far more fit to dwell in Messalina's city than in St. Peter's."

One day, shortly after his father's elevation to the papal throne, Caesar Borgia sent for his most trusted servant, Michelotto. Caesar received him leaning against a tall chimney-piece, no longer wearing his cardinal's robe and hat, but a doublet of black velvet slashed with satin of the same colour. One hand toyed mechanically with his gloves, while the other rested on the handle of a poisoned dagger which never left his side. This was the dress he kept for his nocturnal expeditions, so Michelotto felt no surprise at that; but his eyes burned with a flame more gloomy than their wont; and his cheeks, generally pale, were now livid. Michelotto had but to cast one look upon his master to see that Caesar and he were about to share some terrible enterprise.

Caesar signed to him to shut the door. Michelotto obeyed. Then, after a moment's silence, during which the eyes of Borgia seemed to burn into the soul of the bravo, who with a careless air stood bareheaded before him, he said, in a voice whose slightly mocking tone gave the only sign of his emotion.

"Michelotto, how do you think this dress suits me?"

"Admirably, Monsignore; thanks to the dress, your Excellency has the appearance as well as the true spirit of a captain."

"I am glad you think so," replied Caesar. "And now let me ask you, do you know who is the cause that, instead of wearing this dress, which I can only put on at night, I am forced to disguise myself in the daytime in a cardinal's robe and hat, and pass my time trotting about from church to church, from consistory to consistory, when I ought properly to be leading a magnificent army in the battlefield where you would enjoy a captain's rank, instead of being the chief of a few miserable sbirri?"

"Yes, Monsignore," replied Michelotto, who had divined Caesar's meaning at his first word; "the man who is the cause of this is Francesco, Duke of Gandia, your elder brother."

"Do you know," Caesar resumed, "who has all the money and none of the genius, who has the helmet and none of the brains, who has the sword and no hand to wield it?"

"That, too, is the Duke of Gandia," said Michelotto.

"Do you know," continued Caesar, "who is the man whom I find continually blocking the path of my ambition, my fortune, and my love?"

"It is the same, the Duke of Gandia," said Michelotto.

"And what do you think of it?" asked Caesar.

"I think he must die," replied the man coldly.

"That is my opinion also, Michelotto," said Cardinal Caesar Borgia, stepping towards him and grasping his hand; "and my only regret is that I did not think of it sooner; for if I had carried a sword at my side instead of a

crossier in my hand when the King of France was marching through Italy, I should now have been master of a fine domain. The pope is anxious to aggrandize his family, but he is mistaken in the means he adopts; it is I who ought to have been made duke, and my brother a cardinal. The man who would make his way to vast domains and a kingdom ought to trample under foot all the obstacles in his path. Such a man, if he would open out his path to fortune, should seize his dagger and strike out with his eyes shut; he should not shrink from bathing his hands in the blood of his kindred; he should follow the example offered him by every founder of empire from Romulus to Bajazet, both of whom climbed to the throne by the ladder of fratricide. Yes, Michelotto, as you say, such is my condition, and I am resolved I will not shrink. Now you know why I sent for you; am I wrong in counting upon you?"

Michelotto, seeing his own fortune in this crime, replied that he was entirely at Caesar's service, and that he had nothing to do but to give his orders as to time, place, and manner of execution. Caesar replied that the time must needs be very soon, since he was on the point of leaving Rome for Naples; as to the place and mode of execution, they would depend on circumstances, and each of them must look out for an opportunity, and seize the first that seemed favourable.

Two days after this resolution had been taken, Caesar learned that the day of his departure was fixed for Thursday, the 15th of June; at the same time he received an invitation from his mother to come to supper with her on the 14th.

The table was set in the open air in a magnificent vineyard, a property of Rosa Vanozza's, in the neighbourhood of San Piero-in-Vinculis; the guests were Caesar Borgia; the Duke of Gandia; the Prince of Squillace; Dona Sancha; the Cardinal of Monte Reale; Francesco Borgia, son of Pope Calixtus III; Don Roderigo Borgia, Captain of the Apostolic Palace; Don Goffredo, brother of the Cardinal; Gian Borgia, Ambassador at Perugia; and lastly, Don Alfonso Borgia, the pope's nephew. The whole family therefore was present, except Lucrezia.

In the middle of the feast a man in a mask brought the Duke of Gandia a letter. The duke opened it, colouring up with pleasure; and when he had read it answered, "I will come"; then he quickly hid the letter in the pocket of his doublet, but not before Caesar had had time to cast a glance that way, and thought he recognized the handwriting of his sister Lucrezia. At that period it was the custom for love messages to be conveyed by men in disguise, or by women whose faces were concealed by a veil.

At ten o'clock they rose from the table, and as the air was mild walked about under the pine trees that shaded the house, while Caesar never let his

brother out of his sight. At eleven o'clock the Duke of Gandia bade good-night to his mother. Caesar at once followed suit, alleging his desire to go to the Vatican to bid farewell to the pope, his departure being fixed at daybreak. This pretext was all the more plausible since the pope was in the habit of sitting up till two or three o'clock in the morning.

The two brothers went out together, mounted their horses, and rode side by side as far as the Palazzo Borgia, a gift to Cardinal Sforza from the pope. There the Duke of Gandia separated from his brother, saying with a smile that he had several hours to spend with a fair lady who was expecting him. Caesar wished him happiness and a very good-night. The duke turned to the right, and Caesar to the left; but Caesar observed that the street the duke had taken led in the direction of the convent of San Sisto, where their sister Lucrezia was at that time in retreat. Caesar's suspicions as to who the lady was were confirmed by this observation. He directed his horse to the Vatican, found the pope, and received his benediction.

From this moment all is wrapped in mystery and darkness, like that in which the terrible deed was done that we are now to relate.

This, however, is what is believed:

The Duke of Gandia, when he quitted his brother the cardinal, sent away his servants, and in the company of one confidential valet alone pursued his course towards the Piazza della Giudecca. There he found the same man in a mask who had come to speak to him at supper, and forbidding his valet to follow any further, he bade him wait on the piazza where they then stood, promising to be on his way back in two hours' time at least, and to take him up as he passed. And at the appointed time the duke reappeared, took leave this time of the man in the mask, and retraced his steps towards his palace. But scarcely had he turned the corner of the Jewish Ghetto, when four men on foot, led by a fifth, who was on horseback, flung themselves upon him. Thinking they were thieves, or else that he was the victim of some mistake the Duke of Gandia mentioned his name; but instead of the name checking the assassins' daggers, their strokes were redoubled, and the duke very soon fell dead, his valet dying beside him.

Then the man on horseback, who had watched the assassination with no sign of emotion, backed his horse toward the dead body; the four murderers lifted the corpse across the crupper, and walking by the side to support it, made their way down the lane that leads to the Church of Santa Maria-in-Monticelli. The wretched valet they left for dead upon the pavement. But he, after the lapse of a few minutes, regained some small strength, and his groans were heard by the inhabitants of a house hard by; they came and picked him up, and laid him on a bed, where he died almost at once, unable to give any evidence as to the assassins or any details of the murder.

All night the duke was expected home, and all the next morning; then expectation was turned into fear, and fear at last into deadly terror. The pope was approached, and told that the Duke of Gandia had never come back to his palace since he left his mother's house. But the pope tried to deceive himself all through the rest of the day, hoping that his son might have been surprised by the coming of daylight in the midst of an amorous adventure, and was waiting till the next night to get away in the darkness which had aided his coming thither.

But the night, like the day, passed and brought no news. On the morrow, the pope, tormented by the gloomiest presentiments, let himself fall into the depths of despair; amid sighs and sobs of grief, all he could say was, "Search, search, let us know how my unhappy son died."

Everybody joined in the search; but nothing could be discovered from scouring the city, except the body of the duke's valet; of his master there was no trace whatever. It was then thought that he had probably been thrown in the Tiber, and they began to follow along its banks, questioning every boatman and fisherman who might possibly have seen what had happened on the river banks. At first all inquiries were in vain; but when they had gone up as far as the Via del Fontanone, they found a man who said he had seen something happen on the night of the 14th which might have some bearing on the subject of inquiry. He was a Slav, named George, who was taking a load of wood in a boat up the river. He told the following:

"Gentlemen," he said, "last Wednesday evening, when I had unloaded my wood on the bank, I remained in my boat, watching lest others should come and take away the wood. About two o'clock in the morning I saw coming out of the lane on the left of San Girolamo's Church two men on foot, who came forward into the middle of the street, and looked carefully all around. When they felt that the street was deserted they went back along the same lane, whence issued two other men. Next appeared one man on a dappled-grey horse, which was carrying on the crupper the body of a dead man, his head and arms hanging over on one side and his feet on the other. The two men I had first seen were holding him up by the arms and legs. The other three went up the river, while the first two kept watch, and advancing to where the sewers are discharged into the Tiber, the horseman turned his horse, backing on the river; then the two who were at either side, taking the corpse, one by the hands, the other by the feet, swung it three times, and the third time threw it out into the stream. At the noise made when the body splashed into the water the horseman asked, 'It is done?' and the men answered, 'Yes, sir,' and he turned right about face; but seeing the dead man's cloak floating, he asked what was that black thing swimming about. 'Sir,' said one of the men, 'it is his cloak'; and then one of them picked up

some stones, and running to where it was floating, threw them so as to make it sink. As soon as it had disappeared they went off, and went into the lane that leads to San Giacomo. That was all I saw, gentlemen.”

One of the pope’s servants asked the Slav why, when he was witness of such a deed, he had not gone to denounce it to the governor. But the Slav replied that since he had exercised his present trade he had seen dead men thrown into the Tiber a hundred times, and had never heard of anybody being troubled about them; so he supposed it would be the same with this corpse as with the others.

Acting on this intelligence the servants of His Holiness the pope summoned all the boatmen who were accustomed to go up and down the river, and offered a large reward to anyone who would find the duke’s body; and before the evening of the same day two men were drawn out of the water, of whom one was recognized as the duke.

There could be no doubt as to the cause of death. The body was pierced with nine wounds, one in the throat cutting the artery.

Meantime the bloodstained hands of Cardinal Caesar Borgia were placing a royal crown upon the head of Frederic of Aragon.

At first the pope did not know whom to suspect. He gave orders for the pursuit of the murderers. But soon the truth was forced upon him. He realized that the blow which struck at the House of Borgia came from that very House itself, and his despair was changed to madness. He ran through the rooms of the Vatican like a maniac, and entering the consistory with torn garments and ashes on his head, he avowed all the sins of his past life, declaring that the disaster that had struck his offspring through another of his offspring was a punishment from God. He retired to a secret dark chamber of the papal palace, and there shut himself up, declaring his resolve to die of starvation. For more than sixty hours he took no nourishment; even the beautiful Giulia Farnese, his new mistress, could not move him, and was obliged to send for his daughter Lucrezia.

The pope remained alone with Lucrezia for three days and nights; then he reappeared in public, outwardly calm, if not resigned; for the writer Guicciardini assures us that Lucrezia had made him understand how dangerous it would be to himself to show too openly before Caesar, who was coming home, the affection he felt for Caesar’s victim.

Caesar Borgia remained awhile at Naples, partly to give time for the pope’s grief to cool down, and partly to attend to another business, which was nothing else than a proposition of marriage between his sister Lucrezia and Don Alfonso of Aragon, Duke of Bicelli and Prince of Salerno, natural son of Alfonso II, and brother of Dona Sancha. True, Lucrezia was already married a second time, but she was the daughter of a father who had

received from heaven the right of uniting and disuniting. There was no need to trouble about so trifling a matter; when the two were ready to be married, the divorce would be effected. Pope Alexander was too good a statesman to leave his daughter married to a son-in-law who had become useless to him.

Towards the end of August it was announced that Caesar was coming back to Rome; and thither he returned on the 5th of September—nearly three months after the assassination of the Duke of Gandia—and on the next day, the 6th, from the Church of Santa Maria Novella, where, according to custom, the cardinals and the Spanish and Venetian ambassadors were awaiting him on horseback at the door, he proceeded to the Vatican. Entering the consistory, he was admitted by the pope, and received his benediction and kiss. Then, accompanied once more by the ambassadors and cardinals, he was escorted to his own apartments. Thence he proceeded to the pope's, as soon as he was left alone; for at the consistory they had had no conversation with one another, and the father and son had a hundred things to talk about.

But of these the Duke of Gandia was not one; his name was not spoken, and neither on that day nor afterwards was there ever any mention of the murdered duke.

Caesar brought good news to the pope. King Frederic had given his consent to the proposed union; so the marriage of Sforza and Lucrezia was dissolved on a pretext of nullity.

After this, all came about as Caesar had desired. He became the man who was all-powerful after the pope. But when he became second in power it was soon evident to the Roman people that their city was making a new stride in the direction of ruin. There was nothing but balls, fêtes, masquerades; there were gorgeous hunting parties, in which Caesar Borgia, who had begun to cast off his cardinal's robe, appeared in a French dress, followed, like a king, by cardinals, envoys and bodyguard. The Holy City, given up like a courtesan to all kinds of orgies and debauchery, had never before been such a home of sedition, luxury and carnage, according to the Cardinal of Viterbo, not even in the days of Nero and Heliogabalus.

The gold was melting as in a furnace at these orgies. Pope Alexander and his son Caesar were beginning to covet the fortunes of those very men whom they had raised to their present social elevation. The first attempt at a new method of coining money was tried upon the Cardinal of Cosenza. The occasion was as follows: A certain dispensation had been granted some time before to a nun who had taken the vows of chastity; she was the only surviving heir to the throne of Portugal, and by means of the dispensation she had been wedded to the natural son of the last king. This marriage was prejudicial to the interests of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain; so they sent

ambassadors to the pope to lodge a complaint against a proceeding of this nature, especially as it happened at the very moment when an alliance was to be formed between the House of Aragon and the Holy See. Alexander appreciated the complaint, and resolved that all should be set right. So he denied all knowledge of the papal brief—though he had as a fact received 60,000 ducats for signing it—and accused the Archbishop of Cosenza, secretary for apostolic briefs, of having granted a false dispensation, allowing the nun to marry. By reason of this accusation the archbishop was taken to the castle of Sant' Angelo, and a suit was begun.

But as it was no easy task to prove an accusation of this nature, especially if the archbishop should persist in maintaining that the dispensation was really granted by the pope, it was resolved to employ a trick with him which could not fail to succeed.

One evening the Archbishop of Cosenza saw Cardinal Valentino come into his prison; with that frank air of affability which he knew well how to assume when it could serve his purpose, he explained to the prisoner the embarrassing situation in which the pope was placed, from which the archbishop alone, whom His Holiness looked upon as his best friend, could save him. The archbishop replied that he was entirely at the service of His Holiness. Then appeared Caesar Borgia.

Caesar Borgia, on his entrance, found the prisoner seated, leaning his elbow on a table, and took a seat opposite him and explained the pope's position. It was an embarrassing one. At the very time of contracting so important an alliance with the House of Aragon as that of Lucrezia and Alfonso, His Holiness could not avow to Ferdinand and Isabella that, for the sake of a few miserable ducats, he had signed a dispensation that would unite in the husband and wife together all the legitimate claims of a throne, to which Ferdinand and Isabella had no right at all but that of conquest. This avowal would necessarily put an end to all negotiations, and the pontifical house would fall by the overthrow of that very pedestal which was to have heightened its grandeur. Accordingly the archbishop would understand what the pope expected of his devotion and friendship; it was a simple and straight avowal that he had supposed he might take it upon himself to accord the dispensation. Then, as the sentence to be passed on such an error would be the business of Alexander, the accused could easily imagine beforehand how truly paternal such a sentence would be. Besides, the reward was in the same hands, and if the sentence was that of a father, the recompense would be that of a king. In fact, this recompense would be no less than the honour of assisting as envoy, with the title of cardinal, at the marriage of Lucrezia and Alfonso—a favour which would be very appropriate, since it would be thanks to his devotion that the marriage could take place.

The Archbishop of Cosenza knew the men he was dealing with; he knew that to save their own ends they would hesitate at nothing; he knew they had a poison like sugar to the taste and to the smell, impossible to discover in food—a poison that would kill slowly or quickly as the poisoner willed and would leave no trace behind; he knew the secret of the poison key that lay always on the pope's mantelpiece, so that when His Holiness wished to destroy some one of his intimates, he bade him open a certain cupboard; on the handle of the key there was a little spike, and as the lock of the cupboard turned stiffly the hand would naturally press, the lock would yield, and nothing would have come of it but a trifling scratch; the scratch was mortal. He knew, too, that Caesar Borgia wore a ring made like two lions' heads, and that he would turn the stone on the inside when he was shaking hands with a friend. Then the lion's teeth became the teeth of a viper, and the friend died cursing Borgia. So he yielded, partly through fear, partly blinded by the thought of the reward; and Caesar returned to the Vatican armed with a precious paper, in which the Archbishop of Cosenza admitted that he was the only person responsible for the dispensation granted to the royal nun.

Two days later, by means of the proofs kindly furnished by the archbishop, the pope, in the presence of the governor of Rome, the auditor of the apostolic chamber, the advocate, and the fiscal attorney, pronounced sentence, condemning the archbishop to the loss of all his benefices and ecclesiastical offices, degradation from his orders, and confiscation of his goods; his person was to be handed over to the civil arm.

Then two days later the civil magistrate entered the prison to fulfil his office as received from the pope, and appeared before the archbishop, accompanied by a clerk, two servants, and four guards. The clerk unrolled the paper he carried and read the sentence; the two servants untied a packet, and stripped the prisoner of his ecclesiastical garments, then re clothed him in a dress of coarse cloth which only reached to his knees, breeches of the same, and a pair of coarse shoes.

Then the guards took him and led him into one of the deepest dungeons of the castle of Sant' Angelo, where for furniture he found nothing but a wooden crucifix, a table, a chair, and a bed; for occupation, a Bible and a breviary, with a lamp to read by; for nourishment, two pounds of bread and a small cask of water, which were to be renewed every three days; and a bottle of oil for burning.

At the end of a year the archbishop died. He had gnawed his own arms in his agony and despair.

The day the Archbishop of Cosenza was taken into the dungeon, Caesar Borgia was presented by the pope with all the belongings of the condemned victim.

The hunting parties, balls and feasts were not the only pastime enjoyed by the pope and his family; from time to time startling spectacles were exhibited. We will only describe two—one of them a case of punishment, the other an exhibition of the stud farm. As both of these give details of which we would not have the reader credit our imagination, we will state that they are translated from Burchard's *Latin Journal*:

“About the same time—that is, about the beginning of 1499—a certain courtesan named La Corsetta was in prison, and had a lover who came to visit her in woman's clothes, a Spanish Moor, called from his disguise ‘the Spanish lady from Barbary.’ As a punishment, both of them were led through the city, the woman without petticoat or skirt, but wearing only the Moor's dress unbuttoned down the front. The man wore a woman's garb; his hands were tied behind his back, and the skirt fastened up to his middle, giving a complete exposure before the eyes of all. When in this attire they had made the circuit of the town, the Corsetta was sent back to prison with the Moor. But on the 7th day of April following, the Moor was again taken out and escorted in the company of two thieves towards the Campo dei Fiori. The three condemned men were preceded by a constable, who rode backwards on an ass, and held in his hand a long pole, on the end of which were hung, still bleeding, the amputated limbs of a Jew who had suffered torture and death for a trifling offence. Then the procession reached the place of execution, the thieves were hanged, and the unfortunate Moor was tied to a stake piled round with wood, where he was to have been burnt to death, had not rain fallen in such torrents that the fire would not burn in spite of the efforts of the executioner.”

This unlooked-for happening, taken as a miracle by the people, robbed Lucrezia Borgia of the most exciting part of the spectacle prepared by her father the pope; but her father was holding in reserve another spectacle to console her. The few lines that we are about to set before the reader are a translation from the journal of Burchard, who saw nothing in the bloodiest or most wanton performances of the Borgias, but facts for his journal:

“On the 11th of November a certain peasant was entering Rome with two stallions laden with wood, when the servants of His Holiness, just as he passed the Piazza of St. Peter's, cut their girths, so that their loads fell on the ground with the pack-saddles, and led off the horses to a court between the palace and the gate; then the stable doors were opened, and four other stallions, free and unbridled, rushed out and in an instant all six animals began kicking, fighting and biting each other until several were killed. The pope and Lucrezia, who sat at the window just over the papal palace gate, took great delight in the fight and called their courtiers to witness the battle being fought below them.”

Caesar's trick in the matter of the Archbishop of Cosenza had the desired result, and Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain could no longer impute to Alexander the signature of the brief they had complained of; so nothing was now in the way of the marriage of Lucrezia and Alfonso. This gave the pope great joy, for he attached all the more importance to this marriage because he was already cogitating a second, between Caesar and Dona Carlota, Frederic's daughter.

Caesar had shown in all his actions since his brother's murder his lack of vocation for the ecclesiastical life, so no one was astonished when, a consistory having been summoned one morning by the pope, Caesar entered, and addressing the pope, began by saying that from his earliest years he had been drawn towards secular pursuits both by natural inclination and ability, and it had only been in obedience to the commands of His Holiness that he entered the Church, accepted the cardinal's scarlet, and other dignities, and finally the sacred order of the diaconate; but feeling that in this situation it was improper to follow his passions, and at his age impossible to resist them, he humbly entreated His Holiness graciously to yield to the desires he had failed to overcome, and to permit him to lay aside the dress and dignity of the Church, and enter into the world, there to contract a lawful marriage; also he entreated the lord cardinals to intercede for him with His Holiness, to whom he would freely resign all his churches, abbeys, and benefices, as well as every ecclesiastical dignity and preferment that had been accorded him.

The cardinals, deferring to Caesar's wishes, gave a unanimous vote, and the pope, like a good father, accepted his son's resignation. Thus Caesar Borgia put off the scarlet robe, which was suited to him, says the historian, Tommaso Tommasi, in one particular only—it was the colour of blood.

In truth, the resignation was a pressing necessity. Charles VIII of France, one day after he had come home tired from the hunting-field, had bathed his head in cold water, and going straight to the dining table, had been struck down by an apoplectic fit immediately after his meal, and was dead, leaving the throne to Louis XII, a man of two conspicuous weaknesses; the first was the lust of conquest; the second was his desire to beget children. The pope, who was on the watch for political changes, had seen what he could obtain from Louis XII's accession to the throne, and was prepared to profit by the fact that the new King of France needed his help for the accomplishment of his twofold desire. First, Louis needed his temporal aid in an expedition against the Duchy of Milan; secondly, Louis needed his spiritual aid to annul his marriage with Jeanne, daughter of Louis XI, a barren and deformed woman, whom he had married on account of his fear of her father.

Now Alexander was willing to do all this for King Louis, and to give in addition a cardinal's hat to his friend d'Amboise, provided that the King of

France would use his influence in persuading Dona Carlota to marry his son Caesar.

It was Wednesday, the 18th of December, 1499, when Caesar Borgia entered the town of Chinon, with pomp worthy the son of a pope who is about to marry the daughter of a king.

But all his pomp had no effect on the lady for whose sake it had been displayed; for when Dona Carlota was told that Caesar Borgia had come to France in the hope of becoming her husband, she replied that she would never take a priest for a husband, and he a son of a priest; a creature who was not only a murderer, but a fratricide; not only of infamous birth, but still more infamous in character and deeds.

However, Caesar found another desirable princess who consented to be his wife—Mademoiselle d'Albert, daughter of the King of Navarre. The news of this marriage, which made the coveted papal alliance with Louis XII, was received with great joy by the pope.

Shortly after this came the burning at the stake—the victims being charged with heresy—of Girolamo Savonarola, Domenico Bonvinci, and Silvestro Marufi. Pope Alexander VI, in his burning of Savonarola, set himself free from his own most formidable enemy, and the best friend the people had.

During the wars of Guelphs and Ghibellines and the long exile of the popes at Avignon, most of the towns and forests of the Romagne had been usurped by petty tyrants, who for the most part had received from the Empire the investiture of their new possessions; but ever since German influence had retired beyond the Alps, and the popes had again made Rome the centre of the Christian world, all the small princes, robbed of their original protector, had rallied round the Papal See, and received at the hands of the pope a new investiture, and now they paid annual dues, for which they received the title of duke, count, or lord, and the name of Vicar of the Church.

It had been no difficult matter for Alexander, scrupulously examining the actions and behaviour of these gentlemen during the seven years that had elapsed since he was exalted to St. Peter's throne, to find in the conduct of each one of them something that could be charged as an infraction of the treaty between vassals and suzerain; accordingly he brought complaints at a tribunal he had established for that purpose, and obtained sentences from the judges to the effect that the small princes were despoiled of their possessions, which should become the property of the Holy See. As the pope found that he was now dealing with men against whom it was easier to pass a sentence than to get it carried out, he nominated as Captain-General Caesar Borgia, who was now the Duke of Valentinois and who was commissioned

to take the territories. But the Duke of Valentinois, eager to keep his friendship with his ally and relative, Louis XII, was staying with his royal friend at Milan, where, after a month's occupation, the king having departed for his own capital, the Duke of Valentinois ordered his men-at-arms and his Swiss soldiers to await him between Parma and Modena, and departed post-haste for Rome, to explain to his father and to receive his final instructions.

When he arrived he found that the fortune of his sister Lucrezia had been greatly augmented in his absence, not from the side of her husband Alfonso, but from his father's side, upon whom (in an unnatural way) she exercised an influence more astonishing than ever. The pope had declared Lucrezia Borgia of Aragon life-governor of Spoleto and its duchy, with all emoluments, rights, and revenues accruing thereunto. This had so increased her position that she never showed herself in public without a company of two hundred horses ridden by the most illustrious knights and ladies of Rome. Moreover, as the "double" love of her father was a secret to nobody, the first prelates in the Church, the frequenters of the Vatican, the friends of His Holiness, were all her most humble servants. Cardinals gave her their hands when she stepped from her litter or her horse, archbishops disputed the honour of celebrating mass in her private apartments.

But Lucrezia had been obliged to quit Rome in order to take possession of her new estates; and as her father could not spend much time away from her, he determined to take into his hands the town of Nepi, which on a former occasion he had bestowed upon Ascanio Sforza in exchange for his suffrage. Ascanio had lost this town by attaching himself to the fortunes of the Duke of Milan; and now that the pope was about to take it again, he incited Lucrezia to join him there and be present at the festivities in honour of his resuming possession.

Lucrezia's readiness to comply with her father's wishes brought her a new gift from him; this was the town and territory of Sermoneta, which belonged to the Caetani. Of course the gift was as yet a secret, because the two owners had first to be disposed of, one being Monsignore Giacomo Caetano, apostolic protonotary, the other Prospero Caetano, a young cavalier; but as both lived at Rome, and entertained no suspicion, but supposed themselves to be in high favour with His Holiness, the matter presented no difficulty to a Borgia. So immediately after the return of Alexander to Rome, Giacomo Caetano was arrested on some pretext, taken to the castle of Sant' Angelo, and there died of poison; Prospero was strangled in his own house. The estates of both were confiscated, and given to Lucrezia by the pope.

Another fortune had been making prodigious strides during Caesar's stay in France, viz., the fortune of Gian Borgia, the pope's nephew, who had been

one of the most devoted friends of the Duke of Gandia up to the time of his death. It was said in Rome that the young Cardinal owed the favours heaped upon him by His Holiness less to the memory of the brother than to the protection of the sister. Both these reasons made Gian Borgia a special object of suspicion to Caesar Borgia, and it was with an inward vow that he should not enjoy his new dignities very long that the Duke of Valentino heard that his cousin Gian had been nominated cardinal *a latere* of all the Christian world, and had quitted Rome to make a circuit through the pontifical states with a suite of archbishops, bishops, prelates, and gentlemen, such as would have done honour to the pope himself.

Caesar had only come to Rome to get news; so he only stayed three days, and then, with all the troops His Holiness could supply, rejoined his forces on the borders of the Euza, and marched at once to Imola.

This town, abandoned by its chiefs, who had retired to Forli, was forced to capitulate. Imola taken, Caesar marched straight upon Forli. There he met with a serious check, a check, moreover, which came from a woman. Caterina Sforza, widow of Girolamo and mother of Ottaviano Riario, had returned to this town and stirred up the courage of the garrison by putting herself, her goods and her person, under their protection. Caesar saw that it was no longer a question of a sudden capture, but of a regular siege; so he began to make all his arrangements with a view to it, and placing a battery of cannon in front of the place where the walls seemed to him the weakest, he ordered an uninterrupted fire, to be kept up until the breach was practicable.

When he returned to the camp after giving this order, he found there Gian Borgia, who had started for Rome from Ferrara and was unwilling to be so near Caesar without paying him a visit. He was received with effusion and apparently the greatest joy, and stayed three days. On the fourth day all the officers and members of the court were invited to a grand farewell supper, and Caesar bade farewell to his cousin, charging him with dispatches for the pope, and lavishing upon him all the tokens of affection he had shown on his arrival.

Cardinal Gian Borgia posted off as soon as he left the supper table, but on arriving at Urbino he was seized with such a sudden and strange sickness that he was forced to stop; but after a short while, feeling somewhat better, he went on. Scarcely, however, had he entered Rocca Contrada when he again became so ill that he resolved to go no farther, and stayed there a couple of days. Then, as he felt a little better again, and as he had heard the news of the taking of Forli and also that Caterina Sforza had been taken prisoner, he resolved to go back to Caesar and congratulate him. But at

Fossombrone he was forced to stop a third time. This was his last halt. Three days later he was dead—another victim of the poison of the Borgias.

Thus passed away those who were swept to destruction by the ambition of the terrible trio, Alexander, Lucrezia, and Caesar.

Almost at the same time Rome was startled by another murder. Don Giovanni Cerviglione, a gentleman by birth and a soldier, captain of the pope's men-at-arms, was attacked at night by assassins. One of the men asked his name, and as he pronounced it, plunged a dagger through his heart, while a second with a back stroke of his sword cut off his head. The governor of Rome lodged a complaint with the pope; but perceiving that he had better keep quiet concerning the assassination, he stopped all inquiries.

It was said that Caesar Borgia had had a rendezvous with Cerviglione's wife, who was a Borgia by birth, and that her husband had threatened her and her lover.

Another death followed quickly on that of Don Giovanni Cerviglione. Monsignore Agnelli of Mantua, Archbishop of Cosenza, having fallen into disfavour with the pope, was poisoned at his own table. His possessions were divided into three portions: the land and houses were given to Caesar Borgia; the bishopric to Francesco Borgia and the office of clerk of the chamber was sold for 5,000 ducats, and the money handed over to the pope.

This last death served the purpose of determining a point of law hitherto uncertain; as Monsignore Agnelli's natural heirs had made some difficulty about being disinherited, *Alexander issued a brief, whereby he took from every cardinal and every priest the right of making a will, and declared that all their property should fall to the pope.*

One thing alone was wanting to assure the success of the projects that the pope and his son were founding upon the friendship of King Louis—that was money. But Alexander was not the man to be troubled about a paltry worry of that kind. True, the sale of benefices was now exhausted, the ordinary and extraordinary taxes had been collected for the year, and the prospect of more inheritances from cardinals and prelates was poor now that the richest of them had been poisoned. But Alexander had other means of raising money at his disposal.

The first he employed was to spread a report that the Turks were threatening an invasion of Christendom, and that he knew for a positive fact that before the end of the summer Bajazet would land two armies, one in Romagna, the other in Calabria. He therefore published two papal bulls, one to levy tithes of all ecclesiastical revenues in Europe, of whatever nature they might be, the other to force the Jews to pay an equivalent sum. Both bulls contained the severest sentences against those who failed to submit, or attempted opposition.

The second plan was the selling of indulgences—a thing which had never been done before. These indulgences especially affected those who had been prevented by sickness or business from coming to Rome for the Jubilee. The journey was rendered unnecessary—sins were pardoned by paying one-third of what the journey would cost. For gathering this tax an army of tax collectors was instituted, with Ludovico della Torre at their head.

The vast sum that Alexander gathered into the papal treasury is incalculable. Some idea of it may be gathered from the fact that 799,000 livres in gold was paid by the territory of Venice alone.

It happened that the Turks did make some sort of a demonstration from the Hungarian side, and the Venetians began to fear that they might be coming in their direction; so they asked help from the pope. Thereupon he gave orders that an *Ave Maria* be said, to pray God to protect the Venetians. This was the only help they got in exchange for the 799,000 livres in gold.

Before he left Rome to complete the conquest of the Romagna, Caesar Borgia, Duke of Valentinois, had been reflecting that the marriage between his sister Lucrezia and Alfonso had turned out quite useless to himself and his father. If Alfonso were only out of the way, Lucrezia would now be in position to marry some powerful lord of Ferrara or Brescia, who would be able to help his brother-in-law in the conquest of Romagna. Alfonso was not only useless, but also dangerous, which to a Borgia seemed worse. Therefore Caesar decided that Alfonso should die.

But Lucrezia's husband, who had realized for some time the risk he incurred by living near his terrible father-in-law, the pope, had retired to Naples. However, since neither Alexander nor Caesar had changed in his dissimulation towards him, he was beginning to lose fear, when he received an invitation from the pope to take part in a bull-fight in honour of Caesar before his departure. In the present precarious position of Naples it would not have been good policy for Alfonso to afford Alexander any sort of pretext for a rupture, so he accepted the invitation to go to Rome, where he was received by the pope and the duke with every demonstration of friendship and assigned to rooms in the Vatican.

Great lists were prepared on the Piazza of St. Peter's. The streets about it were barricaded, and the windows of the surrounding houses served as boxes for spectators. The pope and his court took their places on the balconies of the Vatican in full view of the arena. The fête was started by professional toreadors. After these had exhibited their strength and skill, Alfonso and Caesar descended to the arena, and to offer a proof of their mutual friendship, agreed that the bull which pursued Caesar should be killed by Alfonso, and the bull that pursued Alfonso by Caesar.

Caesar remained alone on horseback within the list, Alfonso going out by an improvised door which was kept ajar, in order that he might go back on the instant if he judged that his presence was necessary. At the same time, from the opposite side of the lists, the bull came forth, and was immediately pierced with darts and arrows, some containing explosives, which took fire and maddened the bull so that he rolled in pain, then arose in a fury, and perceiving Caesar on horseback rushed upon him. Caesar displayed all that skill which proclaimed him one of the best horsemen of the period. Yet, clever as he was, he could not have remained long with an adversary against whom he had no recourse other than flight, had not Alfonso suddenly appeared waving a red cloak in his left hand, and holding in his right hand a long Aragon sword. The bull was now only a few paces from Caesar, and the risk he was running was so imminent that a woman's scream was heard from one of the windows.

At the sight of a man on foot the bull stopped short, and judging that he could do better work with the new enemy turned upon him. For a moment he stood motionless, roaring with pain, and lashing his sides with his tail. Then he rushed upon Alfonso, his eyes bloodshot, his horns tearing up the ground. Alfonso awaited him with a tranquil air; then, when he was only three paces away, he made a bound to one side, and presented instead of his body his sword, and sunk it to the hilt; the bull, checked in his onslaught, stopped, trembled, fell upon his knees, uttered one dull roar, and breathed his last.

Applause resounded on all sides, so rapid and clever had been the blow. Caesar had remained on horseback, seeking to discover the fair spectator who had given so lively a proof of her interest in him. His search had not been unrewarded. He recognized her as one of the maids of honour to Elizabeth, Duchess of Urbino.

It was now Alfonso's turn to run from the bull, Caesar's to fight him. The young men therefore changed parts, and when four mules had dragged the dead bull from the arena, and the valets and servants of His Holiness had scattered sand over the spots stained with blood, Alfonso mounted an Andalusian steed of Arabian origin, light as the wind of Sahara that had wedded with his mother, while Caesar, dismounting, retired in his turn, to reappear at the moment when Alfonso should be meeting the same danger from which he had just rescued him.

Then a second bull was brought upon the scene, excited in the same manner with darts and explosives. Like his predecessor, when he perceived a man on horseback he rushed upon him, and then began an exciting race, in which it was impossible to see whether the horse was pursuing the bull or the bull the horse.

After five or six rounds the bull began to gain upon the Arabian steed with all his speed; in a moment there was only the length of two lances between them; then suddenly Caesar appeared, armed with one of those long two-handled swords which the French used in battle, and just when the bull, almost upon Don Alfonso, came in front of Caesar, he brandished his sword, which flashed like lightning, and cut off the bull's immense head; while the body, impelled by the speed of the run, fell ten paces farther on.

This blow, performed with such dexterity, was received not only with clapping of hands, but with wild and frantic outcry.

Caesar, remembering nothing in his hour of triumph but the scream that had been caused by his former danger, picked up the bull's head, and, giving it to one of his equerries, ordered him to carry it to the feet of the fair Venetian.

This fête, besides affording an exhibition of strength and skill to both Caesar and Alfonso, had another object as well; it was staged to show the populace the goodwill that existed between the two. If any accident should now happen, nobody would accuse Caesar.

There was a supper at the Vatican. Alfonso made an elegant toilet, and about ten o'clock at night prepared to go from his quarters in the Vatican to where the pope lived; but the door which separated the two courts of the building was shut, and knock as he would, no one came to open it. Alfonso then thought that it would be a simple matter to go round by the Piazza of St. Peter's; so he went out unaccompanied through one of the garden gates of the Vatican and made his way across the gloomy streets which led to the stairway that went up to the piazza.

But hardly had he set foot on the first step when he was attacked by armed men. Alfonso started to draw his sword; but before it was out of the scabbard he received two blows from a halberd, one on his head, the other on his shoulder; he was stabbed in the side, and wounded both in the leg and on the temple. Struck down by these blows, he lost his footing and fell to the ground unconscious. His assailants, thinking he was dead, went up the stairway and found forty horsemen waiting for them on the piazza, who escorted them from the city by way of the Porta Portesa.

Alfonso was found at the point of death by some passers-by, some of whom recognized him, and who conveyed the news of his assassination to the Vatican, while others carried him to his quarters in the Torre Nuova. The pope and Caesar showed great distress at the news of the assassination, and went at once to see Alfonso. The next morning, in order to divert any suspicion from themselves, they arrested Alfonso's uncle, Francesco Gazella, and had him beheaded.

But they had only accomplished half of what they wanted. Alfonso was not dead, and thanks to his strong condition was making progress towards recovery. There was no time to lose, and Caesar summoned Michelotto.

“The same night,” records Bucardus, “Don Alfonso, who would not die of his wounds, was found strangled in his bed.”

Lucrezia arrived the same evening that Alfonso was strangled to death. She knew her father and brother too well to be put on the wrong scent; and although they had arrested the doctors, and the valets, she knew from what quarter the blow had come.

This important family business being now settled, Lucrezia was once more a widow, and ready to be utilized in the pope’s political machinations. Caesar only remained at Rome long enough to receive the ambassadors from France and Venice; but as their arrival was somewhat delayed, and as considerable inroads had been made upon the pope’s treasury by the recent festivities, the creation of twelve new cardinals was arranged, the scheme being to bring 600,000 ducats into the papal treasury by charging 50,000 ducats for each cardinal’s hat.

Caesar’s first enterprise was against Pesaro, which he readily captured and looted. Afterwards he went to Cesena, a third-rate town, and transformed it into a city of luxury and pleasure. For Caesar’s restless spirit there must needs be no cessation of warfare, or festivities. So, when war was interrupted, fêtes began, as magnificent and exciting as he knew how to make them. The days were passed in games and displays of horsemanship, the nights in revelry. The fairest women of the Romagna had come hither to make a seraglio for Caesar that might have been envied by the Sultan of Constantinople.

When Caesar was making one of his excursions in the neighbourhood of the town with his retinue of flatterers and courtesans, he noticed a cortège on the Rimini road that indicated the approach of someone of importance. Caesar, perceiving that the principal person was a woman, approached, and recognized in her the lady-in-waiting to the Duchess of Urbino, who, on the day of the bull-fight, had screamed when he appeared to be in danger. She was betrothed to Gian Carracciuolo; and Elizabeth of Gonzaga, her protectress and godmother, was now sending her with a retinue to Venice, where the wedding was to take place.

Caesar had already been struck by the beauty of this young woman, when at Rome; but when he saw her again she seemed more lovely than ever, and he resolved to keep the fair flower for himself. He saluted her as an old acquaintance, inquired whether she was staying at Cesena, and ascertained that she was only passing through.

This was all Caesar cared to know. He summoned Michelotto.

The cortège had scarcely travelled a league further when a troop of horsemen overtook and surrounded them. Although the soldiers in the escort were a small force, they were at first eager to defend their master's bride. But when a number fell dead, the others, terrified, took to flight; and when the bride-to-be tried to escape, the chief of the troop of horsemen seized her and set her in front of him on his horse. Then, ordering his men to return to Caesar, he put his horse on a gallop in another direction, and as the shades of evening fell disappeared in the darkness.

Carracciuolo learned of the abduction through one of the fugitives, who declared that he had recognized among the ravishers the Duke of Valentinois' soldiers.

At first it was hard for him to believe the terrible tale; then suddenly, with a cry of vengeance, he dashed away to the ducal palace, where sat the Doge Barberigo and the Council of Ten.

"Most serene lords," he cried, "I am come to bid you farewell, for I am resolved to sacrifice my life to my private vengeance, though indeed I had hoped to devote it to the service of the republic. I have been wounded in the soul's noblest part—in my honour. The dearest thing I possessed, my bride, has been stolen from me, and the thief is the most treacherous, the most impious, the most infamous of men, Caesar Borgia! My lords, I beg you will not be offended if I speak thus of a man whose boast it is to be a member of your noble ranks and to enjoy your protection. It is not so. He lies, and his vicious and criminal life has made him unworthy of such honours, even as he is unworthy of the life whereof my sword shall deprive him. In truth, his very birth was a sacrilege. He is a fratricide, a usurper of the property of others, an oppressor of the innocent, and a highway assassin. He is a man who will violate every law, even the law of hospitality respected by the veriest barbarian, a man who will do violence to a virgin who is passing through his own country, where she has every right to expect from him not only the consideration due to sex and condition, but also that which is due to the most serene republic, whose condottiere I am, and which is insulted in my person and in the dishonouring of my bride. This man, I say, merits indeed to die by another hand than mine. Yet, since he who ought to punish him is a father as guilty as the son, I myself will seek him out, and I will sacrifice my own life, not only in avenging my own injury and the blood of so many innocent beings, but also in promoting the welfare of the most serene republic, on which it is his ambition to trample when he has accomplished the ruin of the other princes of Italy."

The doge and the senators, who were already apprised of the event that had brought Carracciuolo before them, listened with interest and profound indignation; for they, as he told them, were themselves insulted in the person

of their general. They all swore, on their honour, that if he would put the matter in their hands, and not yield to his rage, which could only work his own undoing, either his bride should be returned to him without a smirch upon her bridal veil, or else punishment should be dealt to the guilty. And without delay, as proof of the earnestness wherewith the tribunal would take action in the affair, Luigi Manenti, Secretary to the Ten, was sent to Imola, where Caesar Borgia was now reported to be, that he might disclose to him the extreme anger with which the most serene republic viewed the outrage. At the same time the Council of Ten and the doge sought the French ambassador, entreating him to join with them and go in person with Manenti to Caesar Borgia, Duke of Valentinois, and demand, in the name of King Louis XII, that he immediately send back to Venice the lady he had carried off.

The two messengers duly arrived at Imola, where they found Caesar, who listened to their story with every mark of astonishment, denying that he had been in any way connected with the crime. He authorized Manenti and the French ambassador to pursue the guilty parties, promising to aid himself in the search.

Manenti and the French ambassador went to the spot where the abduction had taken place. On the highway there had been found dead and wounded. A man had been seen galloping by, carrying a woman on his saddle. He had left the road and rode across the country. A peasant had seen him appear and vanish again, taking the direction towards a lonely house. An old woman declared she had seen him go into this house. But the next day the house was gone, as though by enchantment, and the ploughshare had passed over where it stood. So none could say what had become of her whom they sought, for those who had dwelt in the house, together with the house itself, were there no longer.

Manenti and the French ambassador returned to Venice, and related what Caesar had said, what they had done, and how all search had been in vain.

No one doubted that Caesar was the guilty party, but no one could prove it. So the most serene republic, which could not be embroiled with His Holiness the pope, forbade Carracciuolo to take any private vengeance, and finally the deed was no more mentioned.

Astor Manfredi was the young ruler of Faenza, which was captured by Caesar's army. Caesar was seized with an unnatural passion for this youth, who was of beautiful appearance, and resembled a girl in features. One day Astor disappeared, just as Carracciuolo's bride disappeared. No one knew what had become of him. Caesar himself appeared uneasy, saying that he had no doubt wandered away, and, in order to give credence to this story, sent out couriers to seek him.

A year after this double disappearance there was found in the Tiber, a little below the castle of Sant' Angelo, the body of a beautiful young woman, her hands bound together behind her back; also the corpse of a handsome youth with the bowstring he had been strangled with tied round his neck.

The girl was Carracciuolo's bride, the youth was Astor.

Both had been the slaves of Caesar's beastly pleasure. Tired at last of them, he had them thrown into the Tiber.

The pope was now dreaming of still another addition to his fortune. This was to come from marriage between his daughter Lucrezia and Don Alfonso d'Este, son of Duke Hercules of Ferrara. His Holiness had heard that Duke Hercules looked favourably upon the marriage; and the thought that Lucrezia should marry the heir to the Duchy of Ferrara filled him with joy.

Rome was made ready for unlimited pleasure. An announcement was made that a racecourse for women would be opened between the castle of Sant' Angelo and the Piazza of St. Peter's; that on every third day there would be a bull-fight; and that from the end of the present month, which was October, until the first day of Lent, masquerades would be allowed in the streets of Rome.

Such was the nature of the public fêtes. The program of those going on within the Vatican was not made public. By the account of Bucciardo, an eye-witness, this is what happened:

"On the last Sunday of October, fifty courtesans supped in the apostolic palace in the Duke of Valentino's rooms, and after supper danced with the equerries and servants, first wearing their usual garments, afterwards without a vestige of clothing; the table was then removed, candlesticks were set on the floor in a symmetrical pattern, and a great quantity of chestnuts were scattered on the ground; these the fifty women, still naked, running about on all fours, in and out between the burning lights, picked up; the pope, the Duke of Valentino, and his sister Lucrezia, who were looking on at the spectacle from a gallery, encouraged the most agile with their applause, and they received prizes of embroidered garters, velvet boots, golden caps, and laces; then new pleasures took the place of these, and . . ."

* * * * *

We must humbly ask pardon of our readers, and especially our lady readers; but though we have found words to describe the first part of the spectacle, we have sought in vain for the second; suffice it to say that just as there had been prizes for feats of adroitness, others were now given for unmentionable sensualities.

Some days after this wild night, which calls to mind the Roman nights in the days of Tiberius, Nero, and Heliogabalus, Lucrezia, clad in a robe of golden brocade, her train carried by young girls dressed in white and crowned with roses, issued from her palace to the sound of trumpets and clarions, and made her way over carpets that were laid down in the streets through which she had to pass. Accompanied by cavaliers and the handsomest women of Rome, she betook herself to the Vatican, where in the Pauline hall the pope awaited her, with the Duke of Valentinois, Don Ferdinand, acting as proxy for Duke Alfonso, and his cousin, Cardinal d'Este. The pope sat on one side of the table, while the envoys from Ferrara stood on the other; into their midst came Lucrezia, and Don Ferdinand placed on her finger the nuptial ring. This ceremony over, Cardinal d'Este approached and presented to the bride four magnificent rings set with precious stones; then a casket was placed on the table, richly inlaid with ivory, whence the cardinal drew forth many trinkets, chains, necklaces of pearls and diamonds, of workmanship as costly as their material; these he begged Lucrezia to accept, before she received those the bridegroom would offer himself, which would be still more worthy.

Lucrezia showed the utmost delight in accepting these gifts; then she retired into the next room leaning on the pope's arm, followed by the ladies of her suite, leaving her brother Caesar to do the honours of the Vatican to those present.

The ceremony of betrothal over, the pope and Caesar busied themselves with making preparations for the departure. The pope, who wished the journey to be made with great splendour, sent in his daughter's company the Senate of Rome and all the lords who could display the most magnificence in their costumes and liveries.

Among this brilliant throng was a daughter of the pope whose mother was not the mother of his daughter Lucrezia.

Also the Duke of Valentinois sent out messengers into all the cities of Romagna to order that Lucrezia be received as sovereign lady and mistress. Grand preparations were at once set on foot for the fulfilment of his orders; but the messengers reported that they greatly feared that there would be some grumbling at Cesena, where Caesar had left Ramiro d'Orco as governor with plenary powers, to calm the agitation of the town.

Now d'Orco had accomplished his task so well that there was little to fear in the way of rebellion; for one-sixth of the population had been put to death on the scaffold. The result of this was that it seemed improbable that demonstrations of joy could be expected of the town over which Caesar Borgia was the real master.

Caesar taught the people of Cesena a lesson. One morning they awoke to find a scaffold set up in the square, and upon it the four quarters of a man, his head, severed from the trunk, being stuck upon a pike. This man was Ramiro d'Orco.

No one knew by whose hands the scaffold had been raised in the night, nor by whom the terrible deed had been done; but when the Florentine Republic sent to ask Macchiavelli, their ambassador at Cesena, what he thought of it, he replied:

“Magnificent Lords: I can tell you nothing concerning the execution of Ramiro d'Orco, except that Caesar Borgia is a prince who best knows how to make and unmake men according to their deserts.”

The Duke of Valentino was not disappointed; the future Duchess of Ferrara was admirably received in every town along her route, and particularly at Cesena.

It was on the Feast of St. Peter's that Pope Alexander VI decided to create nine more cardinals. What he had to gain from these is as follows:

First, the cardinals elected would leave all their offices vacant; these offices would fall into the hands of the pope, and he would sell them.

Secondly, each of them would buy his election, more or less dear according to his fortune; the price, left to be settled at the pope's fancy, would vary from 10,000 to 40,000 ducats.

Lastly, since as cardinals they would by law lose the right of making a will, the pope, in order to inherit from them, had only to poison them; this put him in the position of a butcher who, if he needs money, has only to cut the throat of the fattest sheep in the flock.

The nominations came to pass. The new cardinals were Giovanni Castellaro Valentino, Archbishop of Trani; Francesco Remoline, Ambassador from the King of Aragon; Francesco Soderini, Bishop of Volterra; Melchior Copis, Bishop of Brissina; Nicolas Fiesque, Bishop of Frejus; Francesco di Sprate, Bishop of Leome; Adriano Castellense, Clerk of the Chamber, Treasurer-General, and Secretary of Briefs; Francesco Loris, Bishop of Elva, Patriarch of Constantinople, and Secretary to the Pope; and Giacomo Casanova, Protonotary and Private Chamberlain to His Holiness.

The price of their simony paid and their vacated offices sold, the pope made his choice of those he was to poison; the number was fixed at three, one old and two new. The old one was Cardinal Casanova, and the new ones, Melchior Copis and Adriano Castellense, who had taken the name of Adrian of Corneto, from the town where he was born, and where, in the capacity of Clerk of the Chamber, Treasurer-General, and Secretary of Briefs, he had amassed an immense fortune.

So, when all was settled between Caesar and the pope, they invited their chosen guests to supper in a vineyard situated near the Vatican, belonging to the Cardinal of Corneto. In the morning of this day, the 2nd of August, they sent their servants and the stewards to make preparations; and Caesar himself gave the pope's butler two bottles of wine prepared with the white powder resembling sugar whose mortal properties he had so often proved, and gave orders that he was to serve this wine only when he was told, and only to persons specially indicated. The butler accordingly put the wine on a sideboard apart, bidding the waiters on no account to touch it, as it was reserved for the pope's drinking.

(The poison of the Borgias, say contemporary writers, was of two kinds, powder and liquid. The poison in the form of powder was a sort of white flour, almost impalpable, with the taste of sugar, and called Contarella. Its composition is unknown. The liquid poison was prepared, we are told, in so strange a fashion that we cannot pass it by in silence. We repeat here what we read, and vouch for nothing ourselves, lest science should give us the lie. A strong dose of arsenic was administered to a boar; as soon as the poison began to take effect, he was hung up by his heels; convulsions supervened, and a froth, deadly and abundant, ran out from his jaw; it was this froth, collected into a silver vessel and transferred into a bottle hermetically sealed, that made the liquid poison.)

Towards evening Pope Alexander VI walked from the Vatican leaning on Caesar's arm, and turned his steps towards the vineyard, accompanied by Cardinal Caraffa; but as the heat was great and the climb rather steep, the pope, when he reached the top, stopped to take breath. Then, putting his hand on his breast, he discovered that he had left in his bedroom a chain that he always wore round his neck, which suspended a gold medallion that enclosed the sacred host. He owed this habit to a prophecy that an astrologer had made, that so long as he carried about the sacred wafer neither steel nor poison could take hold of him. Now, finding himself without his talisman, he ordered Monsignore Caraffa to hurry back to the Vatican, and told him in which part of the room he had left it, and to bring it to him without delay. Then, as the walk had made him thirsty, he turned to a valet and asked for something to drink. Caesar, who was also thirsty, ordered the man to bring two glasses.

By a strange coincidence the butler had just gone back to the Vatican to fetch some choice peaches that had been sent that very day to the pope, but which had been forgotten when he came here; so the valet went to the under-butler, stating that His Holiness and Caesar were thirsty and asking for a drink. The under-butler, observing the two bottles of wine set apart, and having heard that this wine was reserved for the pope, took one, and telling

the valet to bring two glasses on a tray, poured out the wine, which both the pope and Caesar drank, never dreaming that this was the wine they themselves had prepared to poison their guests.

Meanwhile Caraffa had hurried to the Vatican, and, as he knew the place well, went to the pope's bedroom, a light in his hand and attended by no servant. As he turned round a corridor a puff of wind blew out his lamp; still, as he knew the way, he went on, thinking there was no need of a light to find the object he was searching for.

But as he entered the room he recoiled a step, with a cry of terror; he beheld a ghastly apparition; it seemed that there before his eyes, in the middle of the room, between the door and the cabinet which held the medallion, Alexander VI, motionless and livid, was lying on a bier at whose four corners there burned four torches. The cardinal stood still for a moment, his eyes fixed, and his hair standing on end, without strength to move either backward or forward; then, thinking it was all a trick of fancy, or an apparition of the devil's making, he made the sign of the cross, invoking God's holy name. All instantly vanished, torches, bier and corpse, and the seeming mortuary chamber was once more in darkness.

Then Cardinal Caraffa, who himself recorded this strange event, and who afterwards became Pope Paul IV, entered boldly, and though an icy sweat ran down his brow went straight to the cabinet and in the drawer found the gold chain and medallion, and hastily left to give them to the pope.

He found supper served, the guests arrived, and His Holiness ready to take his place at the table. As soon as the cardinal was in sight, His Holiness, who was very pale, made one step towards him; Caraffa doubled his pace, and handed the medallion to him; but he fell back with a cry, instantly followed by violent convulsions.

An instant later, as he advanced to render his father assistance, Caesar was similarly seized.

The effect of the poison had been more rapid than usual, for Caesar had doubled the dose.

The two stricken men were carried to the Vatican, where each was taken to his own rooms; from that moment they never met again.

As soon as he was placed in bed the pope was taken with a severe fever, which did not give way to emetics or bleeding. Almost immediately it became necessary to administer the last sacraments of the Church (a saving grace, by the way, that many victims of the Borgias had not enjoyed).

However, the pope's strong constitution, which had defied old age, enabled him to fight eight days with death. At last, after these days of mortal agony, he died, without once uttering the name of Caesar or Lucrezia, who

were the two poles around which he had turned all his ambitions and all his crimes. His age was seventy-two, and he had reigned eleven years.

Caesar Borgia, perhaps because he had taken less of the fatal wine, perhaps because the strength of his youth overcame the strength of the poison, or maybe, as some writers claim, because when he reached his own room he had swallowed an antidote known only to himself, was not so prostrated as to lose sight for a moment of the terrible position he was in. He summoned his faithful Michelotto, together with those among his servants he could rely on, and disposed them in the various rooms that led to his own, ordering the chief never to leave the foot of his bed, but to sleep lying on a rug, his hand upon the handle of his sword.

The treatment had been the same for Caesar as for the pope, but in addition to bleeding and emetics novel baths were added, which Caesar himself had demanded, having heard that in a similar case they had once restored Ladislaus, King of Naples. Four posts, strongly welded to the floor and ceiling, were set up in his room, like the arrangements at which farriers shoe horses. Every day a bull was brought in, turned over on his back and tied by his four legs to the four posts; then a cut was made in his belly a foot and a half long, through which the intestines were drawn out; then Caesar slipped into this living bath of blood. When the bull was dead Caesar was taken out and rolled up in hot blankets, where, after copious perspirations, he felt some relief.

Every two hours Caesar sent to ask news of his father. He hardly waited to hear that he was dead, before, though still at death's door himself, he summoned up all the force of character and presence of mind that naturally belonged to him and ordered Michelotto to shut the doors of the Vatican before the news of Alexander's decease could spread about the city, and forbade everybody to enter the pope's rooms until after the money and papers had been removed.

Michelotto at once found Cardinal Casanova, held a dagger at his throat, and made him deliver up the keys. Then he took away two chests of gold, several boxes of jewels, silver and costly vases. These were carried to Caesar's apartments. The guards were then doubled, the doors of the Vatican thrown open, and the death of the pope proclaimed.

Although the news was expected, it produced none the less a tragic effect upon Rome; for although Caesar was still alive, his condition left all in suspense. Had the Duke of Romagna, the powerful general who had taken thirty towns and fifteen fortresses in five years, been seated, sword in hand, upon his charger, all might have been well. As it was, as Caesar afterwards told Macchiavelli, his ambitious soul had provided for all things that could occur on the day of the pope's death, except the one that he should be dying

himself—helpless on his bed, sweating off the effects that his own poison had wrought. So, though he retained the power to think, he could not act, but must needs wait and suffer the course of events, instead of confronting and controlling them. Thus he was forced to regulate his actions no longer by his own plans, but according to circumstances.

His most bitter enemies, who could press him hardest, were the Orsini and the Colonnas; from the one family he had taken their blood, from the other their possessions. So Caesar addressed himself to those to whom he could return what he had taken, and opened negotiations with the Colonnas.

Meanwhile the obsequies of the pope were going ahead. The Vice-Chancellor had sent out orders to the highest among the clergy not to fail to appear, according to custom, on pain of being despoiled of their office and dignities, to be present at the pope's funeral. Each therefore appeared at the hour appointed at the pontifical palace, whence the body was to be conveyed to the Church of St. Peter, and there buried.

The corpse was found to be abandoned and alone in the mortuary chamber; for everyone of the name of Borgia, except Caesar, lay hidden, not knowing what might come to pass. And well they might; for Fabio Orsini, meeting one member of the Borgias, stabbed him, and as a token of his hatred bathed his mouth and hands in the blood.

The agitation in Rome was so great that when the body of Pope Alexander VI was about to be brought into the church there occurred a panic, such as suddenly arises in times of popular excitement, causing so great a disturbance in the funeral cortège that the guards drew up in battle array, the clergy fled into the sacristy, and the bearers dropped the bier. The people, tearing off the pall, disclosed the corpse, and everyone could gaze with impunity upon the one who, fifteen days before, had made princes and kings tremble.

Towards seven o'clock in the evening, when the declining day adds so deep a melancholy to the silence of a church, four porters and two carpenters carried the body into the chapel where it was to be interred, and, lifting it off the catafalque where it lay in state, brought it to the coffin which was to be its last abode. But it was found that the coffin was too short, and the body could not be got in till the legs were bent and pushed in with heavy blows. Then the carpenters put on the lid, and while one of them sat on the top to force the knees to bend, the others hammered down the nails amid those Shakespearean pleasantries that sound as the last orisons in the ears of the haughty of earth. Then, says Tommaso Tommasi, he was placed on the right of the great altar of St. Peter's.

The next morning this epitaph was found inscribed upon the tomb:

“Vendit Alexander claves, altaria, Christum;
Emerat ille prius, vendere jure potest.”

Which being translated, reads:

“Pope Alexander sold the Christ, the altars, and the keys;
But anyone who buys a thing may sell it if he please.”

Caesar Borgia recovered his health, but from the time of his father’s death his fortunes changed. He made his way to Spain where he was thrown into prison by the king, from which he managed to make his escape, only to meet the fate in store for him. Of this history narrates:

Half-way between the prison and the village two men and a led horse were waiting for him. The two men were Michelotto and the Count of Benevento. Caesar sprang upon the riderless horse, pressed with fervour the hand of the count and the sbirro. Then all three galloped to the frontier of Navarre, where they arrived three days later, and were received by the King, Jean d’Albert, brother of Caesar’s wife.

From Navarre Caesar thought to pass into France, and from France to make an attempt upon Italy, with the aid of Louis XII. But with Caesar’s detention in prison, Louis had made peace with the King of Spain; and when he heard of Caesar’s flight, instead of helping him, as there was some reason to expect he would, since he was a relative by marriage, he took away from Caesar the Duchy of Valentinois, together with his pension.

Still, Caesar had nearly 200,000 ducats in charge of the bankers at Genoa. He wrote asking for this money, with which he hoped to levy troops in Spain and Navarre, and make an attack upon Pisa.

The bankers denied the deposit.

Caesar was at the mercy of his brother-in-law.

One of the vassals of the King of Navarre, named Prince Alarino, had just then revolted; Caesar was then given command of the army which his brother-in-law, the King of Navarre, was sending out against the prince. With Caesar was Michelotto, who was as faithful in adversity as ever before.

Thanks to Caesar’s courage and tactics Prince Alarino was beaten in a first encounter; but the day after his defeat he rallied his army, and offered battle about three o’clock in the afternoon. Caesar accepted it.

For nearly four hours they fought obstinately on both sides; but at length as the day was closing Caesar proposed to decide the issue by making a charge himself, at the head of a hundred men-at-arms, upon a body of cavalry which constituted his adversary’s chief force. To his great astonishment this cavalry gave way at the first shock and took to flight in the

direction of a forest. Caesar followed close on their heels up to the edge of the forest; then suddenly the pursued turned, three or four hundred archers rushed forth from the woods, and Caesar's men, realizing they had fallen into an ambush, fled.

Caesar alone remained. He would not retreat an inch. Perhaps he had had enough of life. Anyway, he fought alone like a tiger at bay; but, fast riddled with arrows and bolts, his horse fell, with Caesar underneath him. His adversaries rushed upon him, and one thrust an iron pike through his armour and pierced his breast. Caesar cursed God and died.

Thus fell, on the 10th of March, 1507, on an unknown field, near an obscure village called Viane, in a skirmish with the vassal of a petty king, the man whom Macchiavelli presents to all princes and rulers as the model of ability, diplomacy and courage.

The army of Prince Alarino was finally defeated, thanks to the courage of Michelotto, but who learned, on returning to the camp that night, that Caesar had not returned. Then, only too certain, knowing his master's character, he wished to give one last proof of his devotion by not leaving the body to the wolves and birds of prey. Torches were lighted, and with a guard he went to seek his master. He found five men dead on the field. Four of them were dressed, but the fifth had been stripped and lay completely naked. Michelotto dismounted, lifted the head upon his knees, and by the light of a torch recognized Caesar Borgia.

As to Lucrezia, the Duchess of Ferrara, she died full of years and honours, adored as a queen, and sung as a goddess by Ariosto and by Bembo.

EPILOGUE

There was once in Paris, says Boccaccio, a brave and good merchant named Jean de Civigny, who did a great trade in drapery, and who was connected in business with a neighbour and fellow-merchant, a very rich Jew named Abraham, who enjoyed a good reputation.

Jean de Civigny, appreciating the qualities of the worthy Israelite, feared lest, good man as he was, his false religion would bring his soul to eternal perdition; so he began to urge him as a friend to renounce his errors and open his eyes to the Christian faith, which he could see for himself was prospering and spreading day by day; being the only true and good religion; whereas his own creed, it was very plain, was rapidly diminishing and would soon disappear. The Jew replied that, except in his own religion, there was no salvation; that he was born in it, and that he knew nothing in the world that could change his faith.

Still, Jean would not admit himself beaten, and never a day passed but he demonstrated, with those fair words the merchant uses to entice a customer, the superiority of the Christian religion over the Jewish; and although Abraham was a master of the Mosaic law, he began to enjoy his friend's preaching, either on account of the esteem he felt for him, or because the Holy Ghost had descended upon the tongue of the ardent apostle. Still, obstinate in his own belief, he would not change. But the more he persisted in his obstinacy, the more determined was Jean to convert him; so that at last, being somewhat shaken by his friend's earnestness, Abraham said one day:

"Listen, Jean; since you have it so much at heart that I should be converted to your religion, behold me disposed to satisfy you; but before I comply, I must go to Rome to see him whom you call God's vicar on earth. I must learn his manner of life and morals, as well as those of his brethren the cardinals; and if, as I doubt not, they are in harmony with what you preach, I will admit that your faith is better than mine, and I will do as you desire. But if it should prove otherwise, I shall remain a Jew; for it is not worth while, at my age, to change my belief for a worse one."

Jean was very sad when he heard these words, and he said mournfully to himself: "Now I have lost my time and pains, which I had thought I had spent so profitably to convert Abraham; for if he unfortunately goes to the court of Rome, as he says he will, and there sees the shameful life led by the servants of the Church, instead of becoming a Christian the Jew will be more of a Jew than ever."

Then turning to Abraham he said:

"Ah, friend, why do you wish to incur such fatigue and expense by going to Rome, besides the fact that travelling by sea or by land must be very dangerous for so rich a man as you are? Do you suppose that there is no one here to baptize you? If you have any doubts concerning the faith I have expounded, where better than here will you find theologians capable of allaying them? So, you see, this journey seems to me quite unnecessary. Just imagine that the priests there are such as you see here, and all the holier in that they are nearer to the Holy Father. If you are guided by my advice, you will postpone this wearisome journey till you have committed some grave sin and need absolution; then you and I will go together."

But Abraham replied:

"I believe, dear Jean, that everything is as you tell me; but you know how obstinate I am. I will go to Rome, or I will never be a Christian."

Then Jean realized that it was useless to try to thwart him, and wished him good luck: but in his heart he gave up all hope, for he felt certain that

his friend would come back from Rome more of a Jew than ever, if the papal court was still as he himself had once seen it.

So Abraham mounted his horse, and at his best speed took the road to Rome, where upon his arrival he was warmly received by his coreligionists.

After staying for some time he began to study the actions of the pope, the cardinals and other prelates, and of the entire papal court. Much to his surprise he found out, partly by what passed under his own eyes and partly by what he was told by others, that all, from the pope down to the lowest sacristan of St. Peter's, were living the most abandoned and luxurious lives, in a most disgraceful and unbridled manner, with no apparent remorse or shame, so that attractive women and handsome youths obtained any favors they desired. In addition to the sensuality they exhibited even in public, he found that they were gluttons and drunkards, more slaves of the belly than the greediest brutes. When he looked further, he found them so avaricious that they sold for cash human bodies and divine offices. Seeing all this, together with much more that cannot be told, it appeared to the Jew, himself a chaste, sober and upright man, that he had seen enough; therefore he returned to his home.

Jean de Civigny held a fête in honour of Abraham's return, although he had no hope of his coming back converted. But he waited for him to become more settled before he approached the subject on his mind.

So, when after a few days' rest, Abraham came to see his friend, Jean ventured to inquire of him what he thought of the Holy Father, the cardinals, and other dignitaries at the papal court. At these words the Jew exclaimed:

"God damn them all! I never once succeeded in finding among them any sanctity, any good works; but, on the contrary, riotous living, greed, fraud, envy, pride—and even worse. All the machinery seemed to be run by an impulse more diabolical than divine. After all I saw, it is my firm conviction that your pope, and all the others connected with him, are using their arts and endeavours to banish the Christian religion from the face of the earth, though they should be its foundation and support; and since, in spite of all the efforts they expend to arrive at this end, I see that your religion is spreading every day, it is manifest to me that the Holy Ghost himself protects it as the true religion. Therefore, deaf as you found me to your counsel, and rebellious to your wish, I am now, since I returned from that Sodom, resolved on becoming a Christian. So let us go at once to the Church, for I am ready to be baptized."

There is no need to state that Jean de Civigny was pleased at this avowal. Without delay they went to Notre Dame de Paris, where Jean prayed the first priest he met to baptize his friend. This done, Abraham changed his Jewish name to the Christian one of Jean; and ever after his natural good

qualities greatly increased, and after leading a most exemplary life, he died as a saint.

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This tale of Boccaccio's gives so admirable an answer to the charge of irreligion which some might make against us if they mistook our intentions as they read the story of the Borgias, that, as we shall not offer any other reply, we have presented it in full to our readers. And let us not forget that if the papacy has had an Innocent VIII and an Alexander VI, who are its shame, it has also had a Pius VII and a Gregory XV, who are its honour and glory.

III

GILDEROY

King of the Highway

CHARLES WHIBLEY^[1]

He stood six feet ten in his stockinged feet, and was the tallest ruffian that ever cut a purse or held up a coach on the highway. A mass of black hair curled over a low forehead, and a glittering eye intensified his villainous aspect; nor did a deep scar, furrowing his cheek from end to end, soften the horror of his sudden apparition. Valiant men shuddered at his approach; women shrank from the distant echo of his name; for fifteen years he terrorized Scotland from Caithness to the border; and the most partial chronicler never insulted his memory with the record of a good deed.

He was born to a gentle family in the Calendar of Monteith, and was celebrated even in boyhood for his feats of strength and daring. While still at school he could hold a hundredweight at arm's length, and crumple up a horseshoe like a wisp of hay. The fleetest runner, the most desperate fighter in the country, he was already famous before his name was besmirched with crime, and he might have been immortalized as the Hercules of the seventeenth century, had not his ambition been otherwise flattered. At the outset, though the inclination was never lacking, he knew small temptation to break the sterner laws of conduct. His pleasures were abundantly supplied by his father's generosity, and he had no need to refrain from such vices as became a gentleman. If he was no drunkard, it was because his head was equal to the severest strain, and, despite his forbidding expression, he was always a successful breaker of hearts. His very masterfulness overcame the most stubborn resistance; and more than once the pressure of his dishonourable suit converted hatred into love. At the very time that he was denounced for Scotland's disgrace, his praises were chanted in many a dejected ballad. "Gilderoy was a bonny boy," sang one heart-broken maiden:

Had roses till his shoon,
His stockings were of silken soy,
Wi' garters hanging doon.

But in truth he was admired less for his amiability than for that quality of governance which, when once he had torn the decalogue to pieces, made him a veritable emperor of crime.

His father's death was the true beginning of his career. A modest patrimony was squandered in six months, and Gilderoy had no penny left wherewith to satisfy the vices which insisted upon indulgence. He demanded money at all hazards, and money without toil. For a while his more clamant needs were fulfilled by the amiable simplicity of his mother, whom he blackmailed with insolence and contempt. And when she, wearied by his shameless importunity, at last withdrew her support, he determined upon a monstrous act of vengeance. With a noble affectation of penitence he visited his home; promised reform at supper; and said good-night in the broken accent of reconciliation. But no sooner was the house sunk in slumber than he crawled stealthily upstairs in order to forestall by theft a promised generosity. He opened the door of the bed-chamber in a hushed silence; but the wrenching of the coffer-lid awoke the sleeper, and Gilderoy, having cut his mother's throat with an infamous levity, seized whatever money and jewels were in the house, cruelly maltreated his sister, and laughingly burnt the house to the ground, that the possibility of evidence might be destroyed.

Henceforth his method of plunder was assured. It was part of his philosophy to prevent detection by murder, and the flames from the burning walls added a pleasure to his lustful eye. His march across Scotland was marked by slaughtered families and ruined houses. Plunder was the first cause of his exploits, but there is no doubt that death and arson were a solace to his fierce spirit; and for a while this giant of cruelty knew neither check nor hindrance. Presently it became a superstition with him that death was the inevitable accompaniment of robbery, and, as he was incapable of remorse, he grew callous, and neglected the simplest precautions. At Dunkeld he razed a rifled house to the ground, and with the utmost effrontery repeated the performance at Aberdeen. But at last he had been tracked by a company of soldiers, who, that justice might not be cheated of her prey, carried him to gaol, where after the briefest trial he was condemned to death.

Gilderoy, however, was still master of himself. His immense strength not only burst his bonds, but broke prison, and this invincible Samson was once more free in Aberdeen, inspiring that respectable city with a legendary dread. The reward of one hundred pounds was offered in vain. Had he shown himself on the road in broad daylight, none would have dared to arrest him, and it was not until his plans were deliberately laid, that he crossed the sea. The more violent period of his career was at an end. Never again did he yield to his passion for burning and sudden death; and, if the

world found him unconquerable, his self-control is proved by the fact that in the heyday of his strength he turned from his unredeemed brutality to a gentler method. He now deserted Scotland for France, with which, like all his countrymen, he claimed a cousinship; and so profoundly did he impose upon Paris with his immense stature, his elegant attire, his courtly manners (for he was courtesy itself, when it pleased him), that he was taken for an eminent scholar, or at least a soldier of fortune.

Prosperity might doubtless have followed a discreet profession, but Gilderoy must still be thieving, and he reaped a rich harvest among the unsuspecting courtiers of France. His most highly renowned exploit was performed at St. Denis, and the record of France's humiliation is still treasured. The great church was packed with ladies of fashion and their devout admirers. Richelieu attended in state; the king himself shone upon the assembly. The strange Scotsman, whom no man knew and all men wondered at, attracted a hundred eyes to himself and his magnificent equipment. But it was not his to be idle, and at the very moment whereat Mass was being sung, he contrived to lighten Richelieu's pocket of a purse. The king was a delighted witness of the theft; but Gilderoy, assuming an air of facile intimacy, motioned him to silence; and he, deeming it a trick put upon Richelieu by a friend, hastened, at the service-end, to ask his minister if perchance he had a purse of gold upon him. Richelieu instantly discovered the loss, to the king's uncontrolled hilarity, which was mitigated when it was found that the thief, having emptied the king's pocket at the unguarded moment of his merriment, had left them both the poorer.

Such were Gilderoy's interludes of gaiety; and when you remember the cynical ferocity of his earlier performance, you cannot deny him the credit of versatility. He stayed in France until his ominous reputation was too widely spread; whereupon he crossed the Pyrenees, travelling like a gentleman, in a brilliant carriage of his own. From Spain he carried off a priceless collection of silver plate; and he returned to his own country, fatigued, yet unsoftened, by the grand tour. Meanwhile, a forgetful generation had not kept his memory green. The monster, who punished Scotland a year ago with fire and sword, had passed into oblivion, and Gilderoy was able to establish for himself a new reputation. He departed as far as possible from his ancient custom, joined the many cavaliers, who were riding up and down the country, pistol in hand, and presently proved a dauntless highwayman. He had not long ridden in the neighbourhood of Perth before he met the Earl of Linlithgow, from whom he took a gold watch, a diamond ring, and eighty guineas. Being an outlaw, he naturally espoused the King's cause, and would have given a year of his life to meet a Regicide. Once upon a time, says rumour, he found himself face to face with

Oliver Cromwell, whom he dragged from his coach, set ignominiously upon an ass, and so turned adrift with his feet tied under the beast's belly. But the story is incredible, not only because the loyal historians of the time caused Oliver to be robbed daily on every road in Great Britain, but because our Gilderoy, had he ever confronted the Protector, most assuredly would not have allowed him to escape with his life.

Tired of scouring the highway, Gilderoy resolved upon another enterprise. He collected a band of fearless ruffians, and placed himself at their head. With this army to aid, he harried Sutherland and the North, lifting cattle, plundering homesteads, and stopping wayfarers with a humour and adroitness worthy of Robin Hood. No longer a lawless adventurer, he made his own conditions of life, and forced the people to obey them. He who would pay Gilderoy a fair contribution ran no risk of losing his sheep or oxen. But evasion was impossible, and the smallest suspicion of falsehood was punished by death. The peaceably inclined paid their toll with regret; the more daring opposed the raider to their miserable undoing; the timid satisfied the utmost exactions of Gilderoy, and deemed themselves fortunate if they left the country with their lives.

Thus Scotland became a land of dread; the most restless man within her borders hardly dared travel beyond his byre. The law was powerless against this indomitable scourge, and the reward of a thousand marks would have been offered in vain, had not Gilderoy's cruelty estranged his mistress. This traitress—Peg Cunningham was her name—less for avarice than in revenge for many insults and infidelities, at last betrayed her master. Having decoyed him to her house, she admitted fifty armed men, and thus imagined a full atonement for her unnumbered wrongs. But Gilderoy was triumphant to the last. Instantly suspecting the treachery of his mistress, he burst into her bed-chamber, and, that she might not enjoy the price of blood, ripped her up with a hanger. Then he turned defiant upon the army arrayed against him, and killed eight men before the others captured him. Disarmed after a desperate struggle, he was loaded with chains and carried to Edinburgh, where he was starved for three days, and then hanged without the formality of a trial on a gibbet, thirty feet high, set up in the Grassmarket. But even then Scotland's vengeance was unsatisfied. The body, cut down from its first gibbet, was hung in chains forty feet above Leith Walk, where it creaked and gibbered as a warning to evildoers for half a century, until at last the inhabitants of that respectable quarter petitioned that Gilderoy's bones should cease to rattle, and that they should enjoy the peace impossible for his jingling skeleton.

Gilderoy was no drawing-room scoundrel, no villain of schoolgirl romance. He felt remorse as little as he felt fear, and there was no crime from whose commission he shrank. Before his death he confessed to thirty-

seven murders, and bragged that he had long since lost count of his robberies and rapes. Something must be abated for boastfulness. But after all deduction there remains a tale of crime that is unsurpassed. His most admirably artistic quality is his complete consistence. He was a ruffian finished and rotund; he made no concession, he betrayed no weakness. Though he never preached a sermon against the human race, he practised a brutality which might have proceeded from a gospel of hate. He spared neither friends nor relatives, and he murdered his own mother with as light a heart as he sent a strange widow of Aberdeen to her death. His skill is undoubted, and he proved by the discipline of his band that he was not without some talent of generalship. But he owed much of his success to his physical strength, and to the temperament which never knew the scandal of hesitancy or dread.

A born marauder, he devoted his life to his trade; and, despite his travels in France and Spain, he enjoyed few intervals of merriment. Even the humour, which proved his redemption, was as dour and grim as Scotland can furnish at her grimmest and dourest. Here is a specimen that will serve as well as another. Three of Gilderoy's gang had been hanged according to the sentence of a certain Lord of Session, and the chieftain, for his own vengeance and the intimidation of justice, resolved upon an exemplary punishment. He waylaid the Lord of Session, emptied his pockets, killed his horses, broke his coach in pieces, and having bound his lackeys drowned them in a pond. This was but the prelude of revenge, for presently (and here is the touch of humour) he made him ride at dead of night to the gallows, whereon the three malefactors were hanging. One arm of the crossbeams was still untenanted. "But my soul, mon," cried Gilderoy to the Lord of Session, "as this gibbet is built to break people's craigs, and is not uniform without another, I must e'en hang you upon the vacant beam." And straightway the Lord of Session swung in the moonlight, and Gilderoy had cracked his black and solemn joke.

But this sense of fun, is the single trait which relieves the colossal turpitude of Gilderoy. And, though even his turpitude was melodramatic in its lack of balance, it is this unity of character which is the foundation of his greatness. He was no fumbler, led away from his purpose by the first diversion; his ambition was clear before him, and he never fell below it. He defied Scotland for fifteen years, was hanged so high that he passed into a proverb, and though his handsome, sinister face might have made women his slaves, he was never betrayed by passion (or by virtue) to an amiability.



[1] From "A Book of Scoundrels," E. P. Dutton & Co., 1910.

IV

SIR HENRY MORGAN

The Pirate King

JOHN ESQUEMELING^[1]

Captain Henry Morgan was born in the kingdom of England, and there in the principality of Wales. His father was a rich yeoman, or farmer, and of good quality in that country, even as most who bear that name in Wales are known to be. Morgan, being as yet young, had no inclinations to follow the calling of his father; and therefore left his country and came towards the seacoasts to seek some other employ more suitable to his humour, that aspired to something else. There he found entertainment in a certain port where several ships lay at anchor, that were bound for the isle of Barbados. With these ships he resolved to go in the service of one who, according to what is commonly practised in those parts by the English and other nations, sold him as soon as he came on shore. He served his time at Barbados, and when he had obtained his liberty, thence transferred himself unto the island of Jamaica, there to seek new fortunes. Here he found two vessels of pirates that were ready to go to sea. Being destitute of employ, he put himself into one of these ships, with intent to follow the exercises of that sort of people. He learned in a little while their manner of living; and so exactly that, having performed three or four voyages with some profit and good success, he agreed with some of his comrades, who had gotten by the same voyages a small parcel of money, to join stocks and buy a ship. The vessel being bought, they unanimously chose him to be the Captain and Commander thereof.

With this ship, soon after, he set forth from Jamaica to cruise upon the coasts of Campeche, in which voyage he had the fortune to take several ships, with which he returned triumphant to the same island. Here he found at the same time an old pirate named Mansvelt (of whom we have already made mention in the First Part of this book), who was then busied in equipping a considerable fleet of ships with design to land upon the Continent and pillage whatever came in his way. Mansvelt seeing Captain Morgan return with so many prizes, judged him from his actions to be of

undaunted courage, and hereupon was moved to choose him for his Vice-Admiral in that expedition. Thus, having fitted out fifteen ships between great and small, they set sail from Jamaica with 500 men, both Walloons and French. With this fleet they arrived not long after at the isle of St. Catharine, situated nigh unto the continent of Costa Rica, in the latitude of twelve-degrees-and-a-half North, and distant thirty-five leagues from the river of Chagre, between North and South. Here they made their first descent, landing most of their men presently after.

Being now come to try their arms and fortune, they in a short while forced the garrison that kept the island to surrender and deliver into their hands all the forts and castles belonging thereunto. All these they instantly demolished, reserving only one, wherein they placed one hundred men of their own party and all the slaves they had taken from the Spaniards. With the rest of their men they marched unto another small island nigh unto that of St. Catharine, and adjoining so near unto it that with a bridge they could get over. In a few days they made a bridge, and passed thither, conveying also over it all the pieces of ordnance which they had taken upon the great island. Having ruined and destroyed, with sword and fire, both the islands, leaving what orders were necessary at the castle above-mentioned, they put forth to sea again with the Spaniards they had taken prisoners. Yet these they set on shore, not long after, upon the firm land nigh unto a place called Porto Bello. After this they began to cruise upon the coasts of Costa Rica, till that finally they came unto the river of Colla, designing to rob and pillage all the towns they could find in those parts, and afterwards to pass unto the village of Nata, to do the same.

The President, or Governor, of Panama, having had advice of the arrival of these pirates and the hostilities they committed everywhere, thought it his duty to set forth to their encounter with a body of men. His coming caused the pirates to retire suddenly with all speed and care, especially seeing the whole country alarmed at their arrival, and that their designs were known and consequently could be of no great effect at that present.

Captain Morgan later determined to take Panama and sack it, and so set forth from the castle of Chagre, towards Panama, the 18th day of August in the year 1670. He had under his conduct 1,200 men, 5 boats with artillery and 32 canoes, all which were filled with the said people. Thus he steered his course up the river towards Panama. That day they sailed only six leagues, and came to a place called De los Bracos. Here a party of his men went on shore, only to sleep some few hours and stretch their limbs, they being almost crippled with lying too much crowded in the boats. After they had rested awhile, they went abroad to see if any victuals could be found in the neighbouring plantations. But they could find none, the Spaniards being

fled and carrying with them all the provisions they had. This day, being the first of their journey, there was amongst them such scarcity of victuals that the greatest part were forced to pass with only a pipe of tobacco, without any other refreshment.

The next day, very early in the morning, they continued their journey, and came about evening to a place called Cruz de Juan Gallego. Here they were compelled to leave their boats and canoes, by reason the river was very dry for want of rain and the many obstacles of trees that were fallen into it.

The guides told them that about two leagues farther on the country would be very good to continue the journey by land. Hereupon they left some companies, being in all 160 men, on board the boats to defend them, with intent they might serve for a place of refuge in case of necessity.

The next morning, being the third day of their journey, they all went ashore, excepting those above-mentioned who were to keep the boats. Unto these Captain Morgan gave very strict orders, under great penalties, that no man, upon any pretext whatsoever, should dare to leave the boats and go ashore. This he did, fearing lest they should be surprised and cut off by an ambuscade of Spaniards that might chance to lie thereabouts in the neighbouring woods, which appeared so thick as to seem almost impenetrable. Having this morning begun their march, they found the ways so dirty and irksome that Captain Morgan thought it more convenient to transport some of the men in canoes (though it could not be done without great labour) to a place farther up the river called Cedro Bueno. Thus they re-embarked, and the canoes returned for the rest that were left behind. So that about night they found themselves altogether at the said place. The pirates were extremely desirous to meet any Spaniards or Indians, hoping to fill their bellies with what provisions they should take from them; for now they were reduced almost to the very extremity of hunger.

On the fourth day, the greatest part of the pirates marched by land, being led by one of the guides. The rest went by water, farther up with the canoes, being conducted by another guide, who always went before them with two of the said canoes, to discover on both sides the river the ambuscades of the Spaniards. These had also spies, who were very dexterous, and could at any time give notice of all accidents or of the arrival of the pirates six hours at least before they came to any place. This day about noon they found themselves nigh unto a post called Torna Cavallos. Here the guide of the canoes began to cry aloud he perceived an ambuscade. His voice caused infinite joy unto all the pirates, as persuading themselves they should find some provisions wherewith to satiate their hunger, which was very great. Being come unto the place, they found nobody in it, the Spaniards who were there not long before being every one fled, and leaving nothing behind

unless it were a small number of leather bags, all empty, and a few crumbs of bread scattered upon the ground where they had eaten. Being angry at this misfortune, they pulled down a few little huts which the Spaniards had made, and afterwards fell to eating the leathern bags, as being desirous to afford something to the ferment of their stomachs, which now was grown so sharp that it did gnaw their very bowels, having nothing else to prey upon. Thus they made a huge banquet upon those bags of leather, which doubtless had been more grateful unto them if divers quarrels had not risen concerning who should have the greatest share. By the circumference of the place, they conjectured 500 Spaniards, more or less, had been there. And these, finding no victuals, they were now infinitely desirous to meet, intending to devour some of them rather than perish: whom they would certainly in that occasion have roasted or boiled, to satisfy their famine, had they been able to take them.

After they had feasted themselves with those pieces of leather, they quitted the place, and marched farther on till they came about night to another post called Torna Munni. Here they found another ambuscade, but as barren and desert as the former. They searched the neighbouring woods, but could not find the least thing to eat, the Spaniards having been so provident as not to leave behind them anywhere the least crumb of sustenance, whereby the pirates were now brought to the extremity aforementioned. Here again he was happy that he had reserved since noon any small piece of leather whereof to make his supper, drinking after it a good draught of water for his greatest comfort. Some persons who never were out of their mothers' kitchens may ask how these pirates could eat, swallow, and digest those pieces of leather, so hard and dry: unto whom I only answer: That could they once experiment what hunger, or rather famine, is, they would certainly find the manner, by their own necessity, as the pirates did. For these first took the leather, and sliced it in pieces. Then did they beat it between two stones, and rub it, often dipping it in the water of the river to render it by these means supple and tender. Lastly, they scraped off the hair, and roasted or broiled it upon the fire. And, being thus cooked, they cut it into small morsels, and eat it, helping it down with frequent gulps of water, which by good fortune they had nigh at hand.

They continued their march the fifth day, and about noon came unto a place called Barbacoa. Here likewise they found traces of another ambuscade, but the place totally was unprovided as the two preceding were. At a small distance were to be seen several plantations, which they searched very narrowly, but could not find any person, animal, or other thing that was capable of relieving their extreme and ravenous hunger. Finally, having ranged up and down and searched a long time, they found a certain grotto

which seemed to be but lately hewn out of a rock, in the which they found two sacks of meal, wheat, and like things, with two great jars of wine, and certain fruits called *plantanos*. Captain Morgan, knowing that some of his men were now through the extremity of hunger reduced almost to the extremity of their lives, and fearing lest the major part should be brought into the same condition, caused all that was found to be distributed amongst them who were in greatest necessity. Having refreshed themselves with these victuals, they began to march anew with greater courage than ever. Such as could not well go for weakness were put into the canoes, and those commanded to land that were in them before. Thus they prosecuted their journey till late at night, at which time they came unto a plantation where they took up their rest; but without eating anything at all, for the Spaniards, as before, had swept away all manner of provisions, leaving not behind them the least signs of victuals.

On the sixth day they continued their march, part of them by land through the woods, and part by water in the canoes: howbeit they were constrained to rest themselves very frequently by the way, both for the ruggedness thereof and the extreme weakness they were under. Unto this they endeavoured to occur, by eating some leaves of trees and green herbs or grass such as they could pick, for such was the miserable condition they were in. This day, at noon, they arrived at a plantation, where they found a barn full of maize. Immediately they beat down the doors, and fell to eating of it dry, as much as they could devour. Afterwards they distributed great quantity, giving unto every man a good allowance thereof. Being thus provided, they prosecuted their journey, which having continued for the space of an hour or thereabouts, they met with an ambuscade of Indians. This they no sooner had discovered but they threw away their maize, with the sudden hopes they conceived of finding all things in abundance. But, after all this haste, they found themselves much deceived, they meeting neither Indians, nor victuals, nor anything else of what they had imagined. They saw notwithstanding on the other side of the river a troop of 100 Indians, more or less, who all escaped away through the agility of their feet. Some few pirates there were who leapt into the river, the sooner to reach the shore, to see if they could take any of the said Indians prisoners. But all was in vain; for, being much more nimble at their feet than the pirates, they easily baffled their endeavours. Neither did they only baffle them, but killed also two or three of the pirates with their arrows, howting at them at a distance, and crying: *Ha! perros, á la savana, á la savana! Ha, ye dogs! go to the plain; go to the plain!*

This day they could advance no farther, by reason they were necessitated to pass the river hereabouts to continue their march on the other side.

Hereupon they took up their repose for that night: howbeit their sleep was not heavy nor profound, for great murmurings were heard that night in the camp, many complaining of Captain Morgan and his conduct in that enterprise, and being desirous to return home. On the contrary, others would rather die there than go back one step from what they had undertaken. But others who had greater courage than any of these two parties did laugh and joke at all their discourses. In the meanwhile they had a guide who much comforted them, saying: *It would not be long before they met with people from whom they should reap some considerable advantage.*

The seventh day in the morning they all made clean their arms, and every one discharged his pistol or musket, without bullet, to examine the security of their firelocks. This being done, they passed to the other side of the river in the canoes, leaving the post where they had rested the night before, called Santa Cruz. Thus they proceeded on their journey till noon, at which time they arrived at a village called Cruz. Being at a great distance as yet from the place, they perceived much smoke to arise out of the chimneys. The sight hereof afforded them great joy and hopes of finding people in the town, and afterwards what they most desired, which was plenty of good cheer. Thus they went on with as much haste as they could, making several arguments to one another upon those external signs, though all like castles built in the air. *For (said they) there is smoke coming out of every house—therefore they are making good fires, for to roast and boil what we are to eat.* With other things to this purpose.

At length they arrived there in great haste, all sweating and panting, but found no person in the town, nor anything that was eatable wherewith to refresh themselves, unless it were good fires to warm themselves, which they wanted not. For the Spaniards before their departure had every one set fire to his own house, excepting only the storehouses and stables belonging to the King.

They had not left behind them any beast whatsoever, either alive or dead. This occasioned much confusion in their minds, they not finding the least thing to lay hold on, unless it were some few cats and dogs, which they immediately killed and devoured with great appetite. At last in the King's stables they found by good fortune fifteen or sixteen jars of Peru wine, and a leather sack full of bread. But no sooner had they begun to drink of the said wine when they fell sick, almost every man. This sudden disaster made them think that the wine was poisoned, which caused a new consternation in the whole camp, as judging themselves now to be irrecoverably lost. But the true reason was their huge want of sustenance in that whole voyage, and the manifold sorts of trash which they had eaten upon that occasion. Their sickness was so great that day as caused them to remain there till the next

morning, without being able to prosecute their journey, as they used to do, in the afternoon. This village is seated in the latitude of nine degrees and two minutes North, being distant from the river of Chagre twenty-six Spanish leagues, and eight from Panama. Moreover, this is the last place unto which boats or canoes can come; for which reason they built here storehouses, wherein to keep all sorts of merchandise, which hence to and from Panama are transported upon the backs of mules.

Here, therefore, Captain Morgan was constrained to leave his canoes and land all his men, though never so weak in their bodies. But, lest the canoes should be surprised or take up too many men for their defence, he resolved to send them all back to the place where the boats were, excepting one, which he caused to be hidden, to the intent it might serve to carry intelligence according to the exigence of affairs. Many of the Spaniards and Indians belonging to this village were fled unto the plantations thereabouts. Hereupon Captain Morgan gave express orders that none should dare to go out of the village except in whole companies of 100 together. The occasion hereof was his fear lest the enemies should take an advantage upon his men by any sudden assault. Notwithstanding, one party of English soldiers stickled not to contravene these commands, being thereunto tempted with the desire of finding victuals. But these were soon glad to fly into the town again, being assaulted with great fury by some Spaniards and Indians, who snatched up one of the pirates, and carried him away prisoner. Thus the vigilance and care of Captain Morgan was not sufficient to prevent every accident that might happen.

On the eighth day in the morning Captain Morgan sent 200 men before the body of his army, to discover the way to Panama, and see if they had laid any ambuscades therein. Especially considering that the places by which they were to pass were very fit for that purpose, the paths being so narrow that only ten or twelve persons could march in a file, and oftentimes not so many. Having marched about the space of ten hours, they came unto a place called Quebrada Obscura. Here, all on a sudden, three or four thousand arrows were shot at them, without being able to perceive whence they came or who shot them. The place whence it was presumed they were shot was a high rocky mountain excavated from one side to the other, wherein was a grotto that went through it, only capable of admitting one horse or other beast laded. This multitude of arrows caused a huge alarm among the pirates, especially because they could not discover the place whence they were discharged. At last, seeing no more arrows to appear, they marched a little further, and entered into a wood. Here they perceived some Indians to fly as fast as they could possibly before them, to take the advantage of another post, and thence observe the march of the pirates. There remained

notwithstanding one troop of Indians upon the place, with full design to fight and defend themselves. This combat they performed with huge courage, till such time as their Captain fell to the ground wounded, who, although he was now in despair of life, yet his valour being greater than his strength, would demand no quarter, but, endeavouring to raise himself, with undaunted mind laid hold of his *azagaya*, or javelin, and struck at one of the pirates. But, before he could second the blow, he was shot to death with a pistol. This was also the fate of many of his companions, who like good and courageous soldiers lost their lives with their Captain, for the defence of their country.

The pirates endeavoured, as much as was possible, to lay hold on some of the Indians and take them prisoners. But, they being infinitely swifter than the pirates, every one escaped, leaving eight pirates dead upon the place and ten wounded: yea, had the Indians been more dexterous in military affairs, they might have defended that passage and not let one sole man to pass. Within a little while after they came to a large campaign-field open and full of variegated meadows. Hence they could perceive at a distance before them a parcel of Indians who stood on the top of a mountain, very nigh unto the way by which the pirates were to pass. They sent a troop of fifty men, the nimblest they could pick out, to see if they could catch any of them and afterwards force them to declare whereabouts their companions had their mansions. But all their industry was in vain, for they escaped through their nimbleness, and presently after showed themselves in another place, hallooing unto the English, and crying: *Á la savana, á la savana, cornudos, perros Ingleses!*—that is, *To the plain, to the plain, ye cuckolds, ye English dogs!* While these things passed, the ten pirates that were wounded a little before were dressed and plastered up.

At this place there was a wood, and on each side thereof a mountain. The Indians had possessed themselves of the one, and the pirates took possession of the other that was opposite unto it. Captain Morgan was persuaded that in the wood the Spaniards had placed an ambuscade, as lying so conveniently for that purpose. Hereupon he sent before 200 men to search it. The Spaniards and Indians perceiving the pirates to descend the mountain, did so too, as if they designed to attack them. But, being got into the wood out of sight of the pirates, they disappeared, and were seen no more, leaving the passage open to them.

About night there fell a great rain, which caused the pirates to march the faster and seek everywhere for houses wherein to preserve their arms from being wet. But the Indians had set fire to every one thereabouts, and transported all their cattle unto remote places, to the end that the pirates, finding neither houses nor victuals, might be constrained to return

homewards. Notwithstanding, after diligent search they found a few little huts belonging to shepherds, but in them nothing to eat. These not being capable of holding many men, they placed in them out of every company a small number, who kept the arms of all the rest of the army. Those who remained in the open field endured much hardship that night, the rain not ceasing to fall until the morning.

The next morning, about break of day, being the ninth of this tedious journey, Captain Morgan continued his march while the fresh air of the morning lasted. For the clouds then hanging as yet over their heads were much more favourable unto them than the scorching rays of the sun, by reason the way was now more difficult and laborious than all the preceding. After two hours' march they discovered a troop of about 20 Spaniards, who observed the motions of the pirates. They endeavoured to catch some of them, but could lay hold on none, they suddenly disappearing, and absconding themselves in caves among the rocks totally unknown to the pirates. At last they came to a high mountain, which, when they had ascended, they discovered from the top thereof the South Sea. This happy sight, as if it were the end of their labours, caused infinite joy among all the pirates. Hence they could descry also one ship and six boats, which were set forth from Panama and sailed towards the islands of Tavoga and Tavogilla. Having descended this mountain, they came unto a vale, in which they found great quantity of cattle, whereof they killed good store. Here, while some were employed in killing and flaying of cows, horses, bulls, and chiefly asses, of which there was greatest number, others busied themselves in kindling of fires and getting wood wherewith to roast them. Thus cutting the flesh of these animals into convenient pieces, or goblets, they threw them into the fire, and, half-carbonadoed or roasted, they devoured them with incredible haste and appetite. For such was their hunger that they more resembled cannibals than Europeans at this banquet, the blood many times running down from their beards unto the middle of their bodies.

Having satisfied their hunger with these delicious meats, Captain Morgan ordered them to continue the march. Here again he sent before the main body 50 men, with intent to take some prisoners, if possibly they could. For he seemed now to be much concerned that in nine days' time he could not meet one person who might inform him of the condition and forces of the Spaniards. About evening they discovered a troop of 200 Spaniards, more or less, who hallooed unto the pirates, but these could not understand what they said. A little while after they came the first time within sight of the highest steeple of Panama. This steeple they no sooner had discovered but they began to show signs of extreme joy, casting up their hats into the air, leaping for mirth, and shouting, even just as if they had already

obtained the victory and entire accomplishment of their designs. All their trumpets were sounded and every drum beaten, in token of this universal acclamation and huge alacrity of their minds. Thus they pitched their camp for that night with general content of the whole army, waiting with impatience for the morning, at which time they intended to attack the city. This evening there appeared 50 horse, who came out of the city, hearing the noise of the drums and trumpets of the pirates, to observe, as it was thought, their motions. They came almost within musket-shot of the army, being preceded by a trumpet that sounded marvellously well. Those on horseback hallooed aloud to the pirates, and threatened them, saying: *Perros! nos veremos!*—that is, *Ye dogs! we shall meet ye!* Having made this menace, they returned into the city, excepting only seven or eight horsemen who remained hovering thereabouts, to watch what motions the pirates made. Immediately after, the city began to fire, and ceased not to play with their biggest guns all night long against the camp, but with little or no harm unto the pirates, whom they could not conveniently reach. About this time also the 200 Spaniards whom the pirates had seen in the afternoon appeared again within sight, making resemblance as if they would block up the passages, to the intent no pirates might escape the hands of their forces. But the pirates, who were now in a manner besieged, instead of conceiving any fear of their blockades, as soon as they had placed sentries about their camp, began every one to open their satchels, and, without any preparation of napkins or plates, fell to eating very heartily the remaining pieces of bulls' and horses' flesh which they had reserved since noon. This being done, they laid themselves down to sleep upon the grass with great repose and huge satisfaction, expecting only with impatience the dawning of the next day.

On the tenth day, betimes in the morning, they put all their men into convenient order, and with drums and trumpets sounding, continued their march directly towards the city. But one of the guides desired Captain Morgan not to take the common highway that led thither, fearing lest they should find in it much resistance and many ambuscades. He presently took his advice, and chose another way that went through the wood, although very irksome and difficult. Thus the Spaniards, perceiving the pirates had taken another way, which they scarce had thought on or believed, were compelled to leave their stops and batteries, and come out to meet them. The Governor of Panama put his forces in order, consisting of 2 squadrons, 4 regiments of foot, and a huge number of wild-bulls, which were driven by a great number of Indians, with some negroes and others, to help them.

The pirates, being now upon their march, came unto the top of a little hill, whence they had a little prospect of the city and campaign country underneath. Here they discovered the forces of the people of Panama

extended in battle array, which, when they perceived to be so numerous, they were suddenly surprised with great fear, much doubting the fortune of the day. Yea, few or none there were but wished themselves at home, or at least free from the obligation of that engagement, wherein they perceived their lives must be so narrowly concerned. Having been some time at a stand, in a wavering condition of mind, they at last reflected upon the straits they had brought themselves into, and that now they ought of necessity either to fight resolutely or die, for no quarter could be expected from an enemy against whom they had committed so many cruelties on all occasions. Hereupon they encouraged one another, and resolved either to conquer, or spend the very last drop of blood in their bodies. Afterwards they divided themselves into three battalions, or troops, sending before them one of 200 buccaneers, which sort of people are infinitely dexterous at shooting with guns. Thus the pirates left the hill and descended, marching directly towards the Spaniards, who were posted in a spacious field waiting for their coming. As soon as they drew nigh unto them the Spaniards began to shout, and cry: *Viva el Rey!—God save the King!*—and immediately their horse began to move against the pirates. But the field being full of quags and very soft underfoot, they could not ply to and fro and wheel about, as they desired. The 200 buccaneers who went before every one putting one knee to the ground, gave them a full volley of shot, wherewith the battle was instantly kindled very hot. The Spaniards defended themselves very courageously, acting all they could possibly perform to disorder the pirates. Their foot, in like manner, endeavoured to second the horse, but were constrained by the pirates to separate from them. Thus, finding themselves frustrated of their designs, they attempted to drive the bulls against them at their backs and by this means put them into disorder. But the greatest part of that wild cattle ran away, being frightened with the noise of the battle. And some few that broke through the English companies did no other harm than to tear the colours in pieces; whereas the buccaneers, shooting them dead, left not one to trouble them thereabouts.

The battle, having now continued for the space of two hours, at the end thereof the greatest part of the Spanish horse was ruined and almost all killed. The rest fled away. Which being perceived by the foot, and that they could not possibly prevail, they discharged the shot they had in their muskets, and, throwing them on the ground, betook themselves to flight, every one which way he could run. The pirates could not possibly follow them, as being too much harassed and wearied with the long journey they had lately made. Many of them, not being able to fly whither they desired, hid themselves for that present among the shrubs of the seaside. But very unfortunately: for most of them being found out by the pirates were instantly

killed without giving quarter to any. Some religious men were brought prisoners before Captain Morgan; but he, being deaf to their cries and lamentations, commanded them all to be immediately pistoled, which was accordingly done. Soon after they brought a Captain to his presence, whom he examined very strictly about several things, particularly, wherein consisted the forces of those of Panama. Unto which he answered: Their whole strength did consist in 400 horse, 24 companies of foot, each being of 100 men complete, 60 Indians, and some negroes who were to drive 2,000 wild-bulls and cause them to run over the English camp, and thus by breaking their files put them into a total disorder and confusion. He discovered more, that in the city they had made trenches and raised batteries in several places, in all which they had placed many guns, and that at the entry of the highway which led to the city they had built a fort, which was mounted with 8 great guns of brass, and defended by 50 men.

Captain Morgan, having heard this information, gave orders instantly they should march another way. But, before setting forth, he made a review of all his men, whereof he found both killed and wounded a considerable number, and much greater than had been believed. Of the Spaniards were found 600 dead upon the place, besides the wounded and prisoners. The pirates were nothing discouraged seeing their number so much diminished, but rather filled with greater pride than before perceiving what huge advantage they had obtained against their enemies. Thus having rested themselves some while, they prepared to march courageously towards the city, plighting their oaths to one another in general they would fight till never a man was left alive. With this courage they recommenced their march, either to conquer or be conquered, carrying with them all the prisoners.

They found much difficulty in their approach unto the city. For within the town the Spaniards had placed many great guns, at several quarters thereof, some of which were charged with small pieces of iron and others with musket-bullets. With all these they saluted the pirates, at their drawing nigh unto the place, and gave them full and frequent broadsides, firing at them incessantly. Whence it came to pass that unavoidably they lost, at every step they advanced, great numbers of men. But neither these manifest dangers of their lives, nor the sight of so many of their own as dropped down continually at their sides, could deter them from advancing farther, and gaining ground every moment upon the enemy. Thus, although the Spaniards never ceased to fire and act the best they could for their defence, yet notwithstanding they were forced to deliver the city after the space of three hours' combat. And the pirates, having now possessed themselves thereof, both killed and destroyed as many as attempted to make the least

opposition against them. The inhabitants had caused the best of their goods to be transported unto more remote and occult places. Howbeit they found within the city as yet several warehouses, very well stocked with all sorts of merchandize, as well silks and cloths as linen, and other things of considerable value. As soon as the first fury of their entrance into the city was over, Captain Morgan assembled all his men at a certain place which he assigned, and there commanded them under very great penalties that none of them should dare to drink or taste any wine. The reason he gave for this injunction was because he had received private intelligence that it had been all poisoned by the Spaniards. Howbeit it was the opinion of many [that] he gave these prudent orders to prevent the debauchery of his people, which he foresaw would be very great at the beginning, after so much hunger sustained by the way: fearing withal lest the Spaniards, seeing them in wine, should rally their forces and fall upon the city, and use them as inhumanly as they had used the inhabitants before.

Captain Morgan, as soon as he had placed guards at several quarters where he thought necessary, both within and without the city of Panama, immediately commanded twenty-five men to seize a great boat which had stuck in the mud of the port for want of water at a low tide, so that she could not put out to sea. The same day, about noon, he caused certain men privately to set fire unto several great edifices of the city, nobody knowing whence the fire proceeded nor who were the authors thereof, much less what motives persuaded Captain Morgan thereunto, which are as yet unknown to this day. The fire increased so fast that before night the greatest part of the city was in flame. Captain Morgan endeavoured to make the public believe the Spaniards had been the cause thereof, which suspicions he surmised among his own people, perceiving they reflected upon him for that action. Many of the Spaniards, as also some of the pirates, used all means possible either to extinguish the flame or, by blowing up houses with gunpowder and pulling down others, to stop its progress. But all was in vain; for in less than half an hour it consumed a whole street. All the houses of this city were built with cedar, being of very curious and magnificent structure, and richly adorned within, especially with hangings and paintings, whereof part was already transported out of the pirates' way, and another great part was consumed by the voracity of the fire.

There belonged unto this city (which is also the head of a bishopric) eight monasteries, whereof seven were for men and one for women, two stately churches, and one hospital. The churches and monasteries were all richly adorned with altarpieces and paintings, huge quantity of gold and silver, with other precious things; all which the ecclesiastics had hidden and concealed. Besides which ornaments, here were to be seen 2,000 houses of

magnificent and prodigious building, as being all, or greatest part, inhabited by merchants of that country, who are vastly rich. For the rest of the inhabitants of lesser quality and tradesmen, this city contained 5,000 houses more. Here were also great number of stables, which served for the horses and mules that carry all the plate, belonging as well to the King of Spain as to private men, towards the coast of the North Sea. The neighbouring fields belonging to this city are all cultivated with fertile plantations and pleasant gardens, which afford delicious prospects unto the inhabitants the whole year long.

The Genoese had in this city of Panama a stately and magnificent house, belonging to their trade and commerce of negroes. This building likewise was commanded by Captain Morgan to be set on fire; whereby it was burnt to the very ground. Besides which pile of building there were consumed to the number of 200 warehouses and great number of slaves who had hid themselves therein, together with an infinite multitude of sacks of meal. The fire of all which houses and buildings was seen to continue four weeks after the day it began. The pirates in the meanwhile, at least the greatest part of them, encamped some time without the city, fearing and expecting that the Spaniards would come and fight them anew. For it was known they had an incomparable number of men more than the pirates were. This occasioned them to keep the field, thereby to preserve their forces united, which now were very much diminished by the losses of the preceding battles, as also because they had a great many wounded, all of which they had put into one of the churches which alone remained standing, the rest being consumed by the fire. Moreover, besides these decreases of their men, Captain Morgan had sent a convoy of 150 men to the Castle of Chagre, to carry the news of his victory obtained against Panama.

They saw many times whole troops of Spaniards cruize to and fro in the campaign-fields, which gave them occasion to suspect their rallying anew. Yet they never had the courage to attempt anything against the pirates. In the afternoon of this fatal day Captain Morgan re-entered again the city with his troops, to the intent every one might take up his lodgings, which now they could hardly find, very few houses having escaped the desolation of the fire. Soon after, they fell to seeking very carefully among the ruins and ashes for utensils of plate or gold which peradventure were not quite wasted by the flames. And of such things they found no small number in several places, especially in wells and cisterns, where the Spaniards had hid them from the covetous search of the pirates.

The next day Captain Morgan dispatched away two troops of pirates, of 150 men each, being all very stout soldiers and well armed, with orders to seek for the inhabitants of Panama who were escaped from the hands of

their enemies. These men, having made several excursions up and down the campaign-fields, woods, and mountains adjoining to Panama, returned after two days' time, bringing with them above 200 prisoners, between men, women, and slaves. The same day returned also the boat above-mentioned, which Captain Morgan had sent into the South Sea, bringing with her three other boats, which they had taken in a little while. But all these prizes they could willingly have given, yea, although they had employed greater labour into the bargain, for one certain galleon, which miraculously escaped their industry, being very richly laden with all the King's plate and great quantity of riches of gold, pearl, jewels, and other most precious goods, of all the best and richest merchants of Panama. On board of this galleon were also the religious women belonging to the nunnery of the said city, who had embarked with them all the ornaments of their church, consisting of great quantity of gold, plate, and other things of great value.

The strength of this galleon was nothing considerable, as having only 7 guns, and 10 or 12 muskets for its whole defence, being on the other side very ill provided of victuals and other necessaries, with great want of fresh water, and having no more sails than the uppermost sails of the main mast. This description of the said ship the pirates received from certain persons, who had spoken with seven mariners belonging to the galleon, at such time as they came ashore in the cock-boat to take in fresh water. Hence they concluded for certain they might easily have taken the said vessel, had they given her chase and pursued her, as they ought to do, especially considering the said galleon could not long subsist abroad at sea. But they were impeded from following this vastly rich prize by the lascivious exercises wherein they were totally at that present involved with women, which unto this effect they had carried with them and forced on board their boat. Unto this vice was also joined that of gluttony and drunkenness, having plentifully debauched themselves with several sorts of rich wines they found there ready to their hands. So that they chose rather to satiate their lust and appetite with the things above-mentioned than to lay hold on the occasion of such an huge advantage, although this only prize would certainly have been of far greater value and consequence unto them than all they purchased at Panama and other places thereabouts. The next day, repenting of their negligence and being totally wearied of the vices and debaucheries aforesaid, they sent forth to sea another boat well armed, to pursue with all speed imaginable the said galleon. But their present care and diligence was in vain, the Spaniards who were on board the said ship having received intelligence of the danger they were in one or two days before, while the pirates were cruising so nigh unto them, whereupon they fled unto places more remote and unknown to their enemies.

Notwithstanding, the pirates found in the ports of the islands of Tavoga and Tavogilla several boats, that were laden with many sorts of very good merchandize—all which they took and brought unto Panama, where, being arrived, they made an exact relation of all that had passed while they were abroad unto Captain Morgan. The prisoners confirmed what the pirates had said, adding thereunto that they undoubtedly knew whereabouts the said galleon might be at the present, but that it was very probable they had been relieved before now from other places. These relations stirred up Captain Morgan anew to send forth all the boats that were in the port of Panama, with design to seek and pursue the said galleon till they could find her. The boats aforesaid, being in all four, set sail from Panama, and, having spent eight days in cruizing to and fro and searching several ports and creeks, they lost all their hopes of finding what they so earnestly sought for. Hereupon they resolved to return unto the isles of Tavoga and Tavogilla. Here they found a reasonable good ship that was newly come from Payta, being laden with cloth, soap, sugar, and biscuit, with 20,000 pieces-of-eight in ready money. This vessel they instantly seized, not finding the least resistance from any person within her. Nigh unto the said ship was also a boat, whereof in like manner they possessed themselves. Upon the boat they laded great part of the merchandize they had found in the ship, together with some slaves they had taken in the said islands. With this purchase they returned unto Panama, something better satisfied of their voyage, yet withal much discontented they could not meet with the galleon.

The convoy which Captain Morgan had sent unto the Castle of Chagre returned much about the same time, bringing with them very good news. For while Captain Morgan was upon his journey to Panama, those he had left in the Castle of Chagre had sent forth to sea two boats to exercize piracy. These happened to meet with a Spanish ship, which they began to chase within sight of the Castle. This being perceived by the pirates that were in the Castle, they put forth Spanish colours, thereby to allure and deceive the ship that fled before the boats. Thus the poor Spaniards, thinking to refuge themselves under the Castle and the guns thereof, by flying into the port were caught in a snare and made prisoners, where they thought to find defence. The cargo which was found on board the said vessel consisted in victuals and provisions, that were all eatable things. Nothing could be more opportune than this prize for the Castle, where they had begun all ready to experiment great scarcity of things of this kind.

This good fortune of the garrison of Chagre gave occasion unto Captain Morgan to remain longer time than he had determined at Panama. And hereupon he ordered several new excursions to be made into the whole country round about the city. So that, while the pirates at Panama were

employed in these expeditions, those at Chagre were busied in exercising piracy upon the North Sea. Captain Morgan used to send forth daily parties of 200 men, to make inroads into all the fields and country thereabout; and, when one party came back, another consisting of 200 more was ready to go forth. By this means they gathered in a short time huge quantity of riches and no lesser number of prisoners. These, being brought into the city, were presently put unto the most exquisite tortures imaginable, to make them confess both other people's goods and their own. Here it happened that one poor and miserable wretch was found in the house of a gentleman of great quality, who had put on, amidst that confusion of things, a pair of taffety breeches belonging to his master with a little silver key hanging at the strings thereof. This being perceived by the pirates, they immediately asked him where was the cabinet to the said key. His answer was: *He knew not what was become of it, but only that, finding those breeches in his master's house, he had made bold to wear them.* Not being able to extort any other confession out of him, they first put him upon the rack, wherewith they inhumanly disjointed his arms. After this, they twisted a cord about his forehead, which they wrung so hard that his eyes appeared as big as eggs and were ready to fall out of his skull. But neither with these torments could they obtain any positive answer to their demands. Whereupon they soon after hung him up by the testicles, giving him infinite blows and stripes while he was under that intolerable pain and posture of body. Afterwards they cut off his nose and ears, and singed his face with burning straw, till he could speak nor lament his misery no longer. Then, losing all hopes of hearing any confession from his mouth, they commanded a negro to run him through with a lance, which put an end to his life and a period to their cruel and inhuman tortures. After this execrable manner did many others of those miserable prisoners finish their days, the common sport and recreation of these pirates being these and other tragedies not inferior to these.

They spared, in these their cruelties, no sex nor condition whatsoever. For, as to religious persons and priests, they granted them less quarter than unto others, unless they could produce a considerable sum of money, capable of being a sufficient ransom. Women themselves were no better used, except they would condescend unto the libidinous demands and concupiscency of the pirates. For such as would not consent unto their lust were treated with all the rigour and cruelty imaginable. Captain Morgan, their leader and commander, gave them no good example in this point. For, as soon as any beautiful woman was brought as a prisoner to his presence, he used all the means he could, both of rigour and mildness, to bend her to his lascivious will and pleasure: for a confirmation of which assertion, I shall here give my reader a short history of a lady whose virtue and

constancy ought to be transmitted unto posterity, as a memorable example of her sex.

Among the prisoners that were brought by the pirates from the islands of Tavoga and Tavogilla, there was found a gentlewoman of good quality, as also no less virtue and chastity, who was wife unto one of the richest merchants of all those countries. Her years were but few, and her beauty so great as peradventure I may doubt whether in all Europe any could be found to surpass her perfections either of comeliness or honesty. Her husband, at that present, was absent from home, being gone as far as the kingdom of Peru, about great concerns of commerce and trade, wherein his employments did lie. This virtuous lady, likewise, hearing that pirates were coming to assault the city of Panama, had absented herself thence in the company of other friends and relations, thereby to preserve her life amidst the dangers which the cruelties and tyrannies of those hard-hearted enemies did seem to menace unto every citizen. But no sooner had she appeared in the presence of Captain Morgan instantly she was designed for his voluptuous pleasures and concupiscence. Hereupon he commanded they should lodge her in a certain apartment by herself, giving her a negress, or black woman, to wait upon her, and that she should be treated with all the respect and regale [ment] due unto her quality. The poor afflicted lady did beg, with multitude of sobs and tears, she might be suffered to lodge among the other prisoners, her relations, fearing lest that unexpected kindness of the commander might prove to be a design upon her chastity. But Captain Morgan would by no means hearken to her petition, and all he commanded, in answer thereunder, was she should be treated with more particular care than before, and have her victuals carried from his own table.

This lady had formerly heard very strange reports concerning the pirates, before their arrival at Panama, intimating unto her, as if they were not men, but, as they said, heretics, who did neither invoke the Blessed Trinity nor believe in Jesus Christ. But now she began to have better thoughts of them than ever before, having experimented the manifold civilities of Captain Morgan, especially hearing him many times to swear by the name of God and of Jesus Christ, in whom, she was persuaded, they did not believe. Neither did she now think them to be so bad, or to have the shapes of beasts, as from the relations of several people she had oftentimes heard. For, as to the name of “robbers” or thieves, which was commonly given them by others, she wondered not much at it, seeing, as she said, that among all nations of the universe there were to be found some wicked men who naturally coveted to possess the goods of others. Conformable to the persuasion of this lady was the opinion of another woman, of weak understanding, at Panama, who used to say, before the pirates came thither,

she desired very much and had a great curiosity to see one of those men called pirates, for as much as her husband had often told her that they were not men, like others, but rather irrational beasts. This silly woman, at last happening to see the first of them, cried out aloud, saying: *Jesus bless me! these thieves are like unto us Spaniards.*

This false civility of Captain Morgan, wherewith he used this lady, as a thing very common unto such persons as pretend and cannot obtain, was soon after changed into barbarous cruelty. For, three or four days being past, he came to see her, and entertained her with dishonest and lascivious discourses, opening unto her his ardent desires of enjoying the accomplishment of his lust. The virtuous lady constantly repulsed him, with all the civility imaginable and many humble and modest expressions of her mind. But Captain Morgan still persisted in his disorderly request, presenting her withal with much pearl, gold, and all that he had got that was precious and valuable in that voyage. But the lady, being in no manner willing to consent thereunto, nor accept his presents, and showing herself in all respects like unto Susannah for constancy, he presently changed note, and began to speak unto her in another tone, threatening her with a thousand cruelties and hard usages at his hands. Unto all these things she gave this resolute and positive answer, than which no other could be extorted from her; *Sir, my life is in your hands; but, as to my body, in relation to that which you would persuade me unto, my soul shall sooner be separated from it, through the violence of your arms, than I shall condescend to your request.* No sooner had Captain Morgan understood this heroic resolution of her mind than he commanded her to be stripped of the best of her apparel, and imprisoned in a darksome and stinking cellar. Here she had allowed her an extremely small quantity of meat and drink, wherewith she had much ado to sustain her life for a few days.

Under this hardship the constant and virtuous lady ceased not to pray daily unto God Almighty for constancy and patience against the cruelties of Captain Morgan. But he, being now thoroughly convinced of her chaste resolutions, as also desirous to conceal the cause of her confinement and hard usage, since many of the pirates, his companions, did compassionate her condition, laid many false accusations to her charge, giving to understand she held intelligence with the Spaniards, and corresponded with them by letters, abusing thereby his former lenity and kindness. I myself was an eye-witness unto these things here related, and could never have judged such constancy of mind and virtuous chastity to be found in the world, if my own eyes and ears had not informed me thereof.

Captain Morgan, having now been at Panama the full space of three weeks, commanded all things to be put in order for his departure.

[1] From “The Buccaneers of America.” London: George P. Routledge & Sons. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.

JONATHAN WILD

*The King of the “Fences”*CAMDEN PELHAM^[1]

The name of this most notorious offender must be familiar to all; his arts and practices are scarcely less universally known. The power exercised by him over thieves of all classes, and both sexes, was so great, that he may have been considered their chief and director, at the same time that he did not disdain to become their coadjutor, or the participator in the proceeds of their villainy. The system which he pursued will be sufficiently disclosed in the notices which follow of the various transactions in which he was engaged; but it appears to have been founded upon the principle of employing a thief so long as his efforts proved profitable, or until their suspension should be attended with advantage, and then of terminating his career in the most speedy and efficacious manner, by the gallows.



JONATHAN WILD

The subject of this narrative was born at Wolverhampton in Staffordshire, about the year 1682; and his parents being persons of decent character and station, he was put to school, where he gained a competent knowledge of the ordinary minor branches of education. At the age of fifteen he was apprenticed to a buckle-maker, at Birmingham; and at the age of

twenty-two, his time having expired, he was united to a young woman of respectability, whom he was well able to support by the exercise of his trade. His wife soon afterwards presented him with a son; but getting tired of a life of quietude, he started for London, leaving his wife and child destitute, and soon gained fresh employment. His disposition, however, led him into extravagances, and having contracted some debts, he was arrested, and thrown into Wood Street Compter, where, according to his own statement, "it was impossible but he must, in some measure, be let into the secrets of the criminals there under confinement and particularly under Mr. Hitchin's management." He remained in prison upwards of four years, and the opportunity which was afforded him, of becoming acquainted with the persons, as well as the practices of thieves, was not lost upon him. A woman named Mary Milliner, one of the most abandoned prostitutes and pickpockets on the town, who was also in custody for debt, soon attracted his attention, and an intimacy having commenced in the prison, on their discharge they lived together as man and wife. The possession of a small sum of money having been obtained, they opened a public-house in Cock Alley, Cripplegate; and from the notoriety of Mrs. Milliner, and her intimate acquaintance with the thieves of the metropolis, it soon became the resort of the lowest of the class. While Wild was thus pursuing his course in the arts of knavery, and having, with great assiduity, penetrated into the secrets of his customers, he started as a "fence" or receiver of stolen goods; and by this means he obtained that power which subsequently proved so useful to him, and so dangerous to those who entrusted him with their secrets. He was at first at little trouble to dispose of the articles brought to him by thieves at something less than their real value, no law existing for the punishment of the receivers of stolen goods; but the evil having increased at length to an enormous degree, it was deemed expedient by the legislature to frame a law for its suppression; and an act was therefore passed, consigning such as should be convicted of receiving goods, knowing them to have been stolen, to transportation for the space of fourteen years.

This was a check of no very trifling character to his proceedings, but his imagination suggested to him a plan by which he would save himself from all his profits being lost. He therefore called a meeting of thieves, and observed that, if they carried their booties to such of the pawnbrokers as were known to be not much affected by scruples of conscience, they would scarcely receive on the property one-fourth of the real value; and that if they were offered to strangers, either for sale or by way of deposit, it was a chance of ten to one but the parties offering were rendered amenable to the laws. The most industrious thieves, he said, were now scarcely able to obtain a livelihood, and must either submit to be half-starved, or live in great

and continual danger of Tyburn. He had, however, devised a plan for removing the inconveniences which existed, which he would act upon most honourably, provided they would follow his advice, and behave towards him with equal honesty. He proposed, therefore, that when they made prize of anything, they should deliver it to him, instead of carrying it to the pawnbrokers, saying that he would restore the goods to the owners, by which means greater sums might be raised, while the thieves would remain perfectly secure from detection. This proposition was one which met with universal approbation, and the plan was immediately carried into effect, convenient places being established as the depositories of the stolen goods. The plan thus concerted, it became the business of Wild to apply to persons who had been robbed, and pretending to be greatly concerned at their misfortunes, to say that some suspected goods had been stopped by a friend of his, a broker, who would be willing to give them up; and he failed not then to throw out a hint that the broker merited some reward for his disinterested conduct and for his trouble, and to exact a promise that no disagreeable consequences should follow because the broker had omitted to secure the thieves as well as the property. The person whose goods had been carried off was not generally sufficient to remunerate the "broker," as well as agent. This trade was successfully carried on for several years, and considerable sums of money were amassed; but at length another and a safer plan was adopted. The name of our hero having become pretty extensively known, instead of applying to the parties who had been plundered, he opened an office, to which great numbers resorted, in the hope of obtaining the restitution of their property. In this situation he lost no opportunity of procuring for himself the greatest credit, as well as the greatest profit possible. He made a great parade in his business, and assumed a consequence which enabled him more effectually to impose upon the public. When persons came to his office, they were informed that they must each pay a crown in consideration of receiving his advice. This ceremony being dispatched, he entered into his book the name and address of the applicants, with all the particulars they could communicate respecting the robberies, and the rewards that would be given provided the goods were recovered: they were then required to call again in a few days, when, he said, he hoped he should be able to give them some agreeable intelligence. Upon returning to know the success of his inquiries, he told them that he had received some information concerning their goods, but that the agent he had employed to trace them had apprised him that the robbers pretended they could raise more money by pawning the property than by restoring it for the promised reward; saying, however, that if he could by any means procure an interview with the villains, he doubted not of being able to settle matters agreeably to

the terms already stipulated; but, at the same time, artfully insinuating that the safest and most expeditious method would be to make some addition to the reward; and thus having secured the promise of the largest sum that could be obtained, he would direct a third call, and then the goods would be ready to be delivered. It will be seen that considerable advantages were derived from examining the person who had been robbed; for by that means he became acquainted with particulars which the thieves might omit to communicate, and was enabled to detect them if they concealed any part of their booties. Being in possession of the secrets of every notorious thief, they were under the necessity of complying with whatever terms he thought proper to exact, because they were aware that, by opposing his inclination, they would involve themselves in the most imminent danger of being sacrificed to the injured laws of their country; and thus he was enabled to impose on both the robber and the robbed. The accumulation of money by these artifices enabled Wild to maintain the character of a man of consequence; and to support his imaginary dignity, he dressed in laced clothes and wore a sword, which martial instrument he first exercised on the person of his accomplice and reputed wife, Mary Milliner, who having on some occasion provoked him, he instantly struck at her with it, and cut off one of her ears. This event was the cause of separation; but in acknowledgment of the great services she had rendered him, by introducing him to so advantageous a *profession*, he allowed her a weekly stipend till her decease.

In the year 1715 Wild removed from his house in Cock Alley to a Mrs. Seagoe's, in the Old Bailey, where he pursued his business with the usual success; but while resident there, a controversy of a most singular character arose between him and a fellow named Charles Hitchin, who had been city marshal, but had been suspended for malpractices, to whom before his adoption of the lucrative profession which he now carried on, he had acted as assistant. These celebrated co-partners in villainy paraded the streets from Temple Bar to the Minories, searching houses of ill-fame, and apprehending disorderly and suspected persons; but those who complimented the reformers with *douceurs* were allowed to practise every species of wickedness with impunity. Hitchin and Wild, however, grew jealous of each other, and an open rupture taking place, they parted, each pursuing the business of thief-taking on his own account.

Our readers will doubtless be somewhat surprised to hear that these rivals in villainy appealed to the public, and attacked each other with all possible scurrility in pamphlets and advertisements. Never was the press so debased as in publishing the productions of their pens. Hitchin published what he called "The Regulator; or a Discovery of Thieves and Thief-

Takers.” It is an ignorant and impudent insult to the reader, and replete with abuse of Wild, whom he brands, in his capacity as thief-taker, with being worse than the thief. Wild retorts with great bitterness; but Hitchin having greatly debased the respectable post of city marshal, the lord mayor suspended him from that office. In order to repair his loss, he determined, as the most prudent step, to strive to bury his aversion, and confederate with Wild. To effect this, he wrote as follows:

“I am sensible that you are let into the knowledge of the secrets of the Compter, particularly with relation to the securing of pocket-books; but your experience is inferior to mine! I can put you in a far better method than you are acquainted with, and which may be done with safety; for though I am suspended, I still retain the power of acting as constable, and notwithstanding I cannot be heard before my lord mayor as formerly, I have interest among the aldermen upon any complaint:

“But I must first tell you that you spoil the trade of thief-taking, in advancing greater rewards than are necessary. I give but half-a-crown a book, and when thieves and pickpockets see you and me confederate, they will submit to our terms, and likewise continue their thefts, for fear of coming to the gallows by our means. You shall take a turn with me, as my servant or assistant, and we’ll commence our rambles this night.”

Wild, it appears, readily accepted the ex-marshal’s proposals, and they accordingly proceeded to take their walks together, imposing upon the unwary and confederating with thieves, whom at the same time they did not hesitate to make their slaves. One or two instances of their mode of doing business may not be uninteresting. They are taken from a pamphlet written by Wild, and may therefore be supposed to be correct:

“A biscuit-baker near Wapping having lost a pocket-book containing, among other papers, an exchequer-bill for £100, applied to Wild for its recovery: the latter advised him to advertise it, and stop the payment of the bill, which he did accordingly; but having no account of his property, he came to Wild several times about it, and at length told him that he had received a visit from a tall man, with a long peruke and sword, calling himself the city marshal, who asked him if he had lost his pocket-book? He said that he had, and desired to know the inquirer’s reasons for putting such a question, or whether he could give him any intelligence; but he replied, no, he could not give him any intelligence of it as yet, and wished to be informed whether he had employed any person to search after it? He said that he had employed one Wild; whereupon the marshal told him he was under a mistake; that he should have applied to him, as he was the only person in England that could serve him, being well assured it was entirely out of the powers of Wild, or any of those fellows, to know where the

pocket-book was (this was very certain, he having it at that time in his custody); and begged to know the reward that would be given? The biscuit-baker replied that he would give ten pounds, but the marshal said that a greater reward should be offered, for that exchequer-bills and those things were ready money, and could immediately be sold; and that if he had employed him in the beginning, and offered forty or fifty pounds, he would have served him. Wild gave it as his opinion, that the pocket-book was in the marshal's possession, and that it would be to no purpose to continue advertising it; and he advised the owner rather to advance his bidding, considering what hands the note was in, especially as the marshal had often told him how easily he could dispose of bank-notes and exchequer-notes at gaming-houses, which he very much frequented. Pursuant to this advice, the losing party went to the marshal, and bid forty pounds for his pocket-book and bill, but 'Zounds, sir,' said the marshal, 'you are too late!' and that was all the satisfaction he gave him. Thus was the poor biscuit-baker tricked out of his exchequer-bill, which was paid to another person, though it could never be traced back; but it happened a short time after, that some of the young fry of pickpockets, under the tuition of the marshal, fell out in sharing the money given them for this very pocket-book; whereupon one of them came to Wild, and discovered the whole matter, *viz.*, that he had sold the pocket-book, with the £100 exchequer-note in it, and other bills, to the city marshal, at a tavern in Aldersgate Street, for four or five guineas.

"The marshal going one night up Ludgate Hill, observed a well-dressed woman walking before, who he told Wild was a lewd woman, for that he saw her talking with a man. This was no sooner spoke but he seized her, and asked who she was. She made answer that she was a bailiff's wife. 'You are more likely to be a prostitute,' said the marshal, 'and as such you shall go to the Compter.'

"Taking the woman through St. Paul's churchyard, she desired liberty to send for some friends, but he would not comply with her request. He forced her into the Nag's Head tavern in Cheapside, where he presently ordered a hot supper and plenty of wine to be brought in; commanding the female to keep at a distance from him, and telling her that he did not permit such vermin to sit in his company, though he intended to make her pay the reckoning. When the supper was brought to the table, he fell to it lustily, and would not allow the woman to eat any part of it with him, or to come near the fire, though it was extreme cold weather. When he had supped he stared round, and applying himself to her, told her that if he had been an informer, or such a fellow, she would have called for eatables and wine herself, and not have given him the trouble of direction, or else would have slipped a piece into his hand; adding, 'You may do what you please; but I can assure

you it is in my power, if I see a woman in the hands of informers, to discharge her, and commit them. You are not so ignorant but you must guess my meaning.’ She replied, ‘that she had money enough to pay for the supper, and about three half-crowns more’; and this desirable answer being given, he ordered his attendant to withdraw, while he compounded the matter with her.

“When Wild returned, the gentlewoman was civilly asked to sit by the fire, and eat the remainder of the supper, and in all respects treated very kindly, only with a pretended reprimand to give him better language whenever he should speak to her for the future; and, after another bottle drunk at her expense, she was discharged.”

The object of these allegations on the part of Wild may be easily seen, and the effect which he desired was at length produced; for the marshal, having been suspended, and subsequently fined twenty pounds, and pilloried, for a crime too loathsome to be named, he was at length compelled to retire; and thus he left Wild alone to execute his plans of depredation upon the public. The latter, not unmindful of the tenure upon which his reputation hung, was too wary to allow discontent to appear among his followers, and therefore he found it to his interest to take care that where he promised them protection, his undertaking should not be neglected or pass unfulfilled. His powers in supporting his word were greater than can be well imagined, in the present state of things, where so much corruption has been got rid of; and where his influence among persons in office failed him, his exertions in procuring the testimony of false witnesses to rebut that evidence which was truly detailed, and the nature of which he could always learn beforehand, generally enabled him to secure the object, which he had in view. His threats, however, were not less amply fulfilled than his promises; and his vengeance once declared was never withdrawn, and seldom failed in being carried out.

By his subjecting such as incurred his displeasure to the punishment of the law, he obtained the rewards offered for pursuing them to conviction; and greatly extended his ascendancy over the other thieves, who considered him with a kind of awe; while at the same time, he established his character as being a man of great public utility.

A few anecdotes of the life and proceedings of this worthy will sufficiently exhibit the system which he pursued.

A lady of fortune being on a visit in Piccadilly, her servants, leaving her sedan at the door, went to refresh themselves at a neighbouring public-house. Upon their return the vehicle was not to be found; in consequence of which the men immediately went to Wild, and having informed him of their loss, and complimented him with the usual fee, they were desired to call

upon him again in a few days. Upon their second application Wild extorted from them a considerable reward, and then directed them to attend the chapel in Lincoln's Inn Fields on the following morning, during the time of prayers. The men went according to the appointment, and under the piazzas of the chapel perceived the chair, which upon examination they found to contain the velvet seat, curtains, and other furniture, and that it had received no kind of damage.

A thief of most infamous character, named Arnold Powel, being confined in Newgate, on a charge of having robbed a house in the neighbourhood of Golden Square of property to a great amount, was visited by Jonathan, who informed him that, in consideration of a sum of money, he would save his life; adding that if the proposal was rejected, he should inevitably die at Tyburn for the offence on account of which he was then imprisoned. The prisoner, however, not believing that it was in Wild's power to do him any injury, bade him defiance. He was brought to trial, but through a defect of evidence he was acquitted. Having gained intelligence that Powel had committed a burglary in the house of Mr. Eastlick, near Fleet Ditch, Wild caused that gentleman to prosecute the robber. Upon receiving information that a bill was found for the burglary, Powel sent for Wild, and a compromise was effected according to the terms which Wild himself had proposed, in consequence of which Powel was assured that his life should be preserved. Upon the approach of the sessions Wild informed the prosecutor that the first and second days would be employed in other trials; and as he was willing Mr. Eastlick should avoid attending with his witnesses longer than was necessary, he would give timely notice when Powel would be arraigned. But he contrived to have the prisoner put to the bar; and the court ordered Mr. Eastlick's recognizances to be estreated. Powel was ordered to remain in custody till the next sessions, there being another indictment against him; and Mr. Eastlick represented the behaviour of Wild to the court, who reprimanded him with great severity. Powel now put himself into a salivation, in order to avoid being brought to trial the next sessions; but, notwithstanding this stratagem, he was arraigned and convicted, and was executed on the 20th of March, 1717.

At this time Wild quitted his apartments at Mrs. Seagoe's, and hired a house adjoining to the Cooper's Arms, on the opposite side of the Old Bailey. His unexampled villainies were now become an object of so much consequence, as to excite the particular attention of the legislature; and in the year 1718 an act was passed, deeming every person guilty of a capital offence who should accept a reward in consequence of restoring stolen effects without prosecuting the thief. It was the general opinion that this law would effectually suppress the iniquitous practices he had carried on; but,

after some interruption to his proceedings, he devised means for evading it, which were for several years attended with success.

He now declined the custom of receiving money from the persons who applied to him; but, upon the second or third time of calling, informed them that all he had been able to learn respecting their business was, that if a sum of money were left at an appointed place, their property would be restored the same day. Sometimes, as the person robbed was returning from Wild's house he was accosted in the street by a man who delivered the stolen effects, at the time producing a note, expressing the sum that was paid for them; but in cases where he supposed danger was to be apprehended, he advised people to advertise that whoever would bring the stolen goods to Jonathan Wild should be rewarded, and no questions asked.

In the first two instances it could not be proved that he either saw the thief, received the goods, or accepted of a reward; and in the latter case he acted agreeably to the directions of the injured party, and there appeared no reason to incriminate him as being in confederacy with the felons.

Our adventurer's business had by this time so much increased, that he opened an office in Newtoner's Lane, to the management of which he appointed his man Abraham Mendez, a Jew. This fellow proved a remarkably industrious and faithful servant to Jonathan, who entrusted him with matters of the greatest importance, and derived great advantage from his labours. The species of despotic government which he exercised may be well collected from the following case: He had inserted in his book a gold watch, a quantity of fine lace, and other property of considerable value, which one John Butler had stolen from a house at Newington Green; but Butler, instead of coming to account as usual, gave up his felonious practices, and lived on the produce of his booty. Wild, highly enraged at being excluded his share, determined to pursue every possible means to secure his conviction.

Being informed that he lodged at a public-house in Bishopgate Street, he went to it early one morning, when Butler, hearing him ascending the stairs, jumped out of the window of his room, and climbing over the wall of the yard got into the street. Wild broke open the door of the room, but was disappointed at finding that the man of whom he was in pursuit had escaped. In the meantime, Butler ran into a house the door of which stood open, and descending to the kitchen, where some women were washing, told them he was pursued by a bailiff, and they advised him to conceal himself in the coal-hole. Jonathan coming out of the ale-house, and seeing a shop on the opposite side of the way open, inquired of the master, who was a dyer, whether a man had not taken refuge in his house? The dyer answered in the negative, saying he had not left his shop more than a minute since it had

been opened. Wild then requested to search the house, and the dyer having readily complied, he proceeded to the kitchen, and asked the women if they knew whether a man had taken shelter in the house. They also denied that they had, but on his informing them that the man he sought was a thief, they said he would find him in the coal-hole.

Having procured a candle, Wild and his attendants searched the place without effect, and they examined every part of the house with no better success. He observed that the villain must have escaped into the street; but the dyer saying that he had not quitted the shop, and it was impossible that a man could pass to the street without his knowledge, they all again went into the cellar, and, after some time spent in searching, the dyer turned up a large vessel used in his business, and Butler appeared.

Butler, however, knowing the means by which an accommodation might be effected, directed our hero to go to his lodging, and look behind the head of the bed, where he would find what would recompense him for his time and trouble. Wild went to the place and found what perfectly satisfied him; but as Butler had been apprehended in a public manner, the other was under the necessity of taking him before a magistrate, who committed him for trial. He was tried at the ensuing sessions at the Old Bailey, but, by the artful management of Wild, instead of being condemned to die, he was only sentenced to transportation.

The increased quantity of unclaimed property now in his hands, compelled Wild to seek some new mode of disposing of it, in a manner which should benefit him; and with this view he purchased a sloop, in order to transport the goods to Holland and Flanders, where he conceived he should find an easy market for them. The command of his vessel was entrusted to a fellow named Johnson, a notorious thief; and Ostend was selected by him as the port to which the vessel should principally trade. The goods, however, not being all disposed of there, he would carry them to Bruges, Ghent, Brussels, and other places. In return he brought home lace, wine, brandy, and the other commodities of the countries which he visited, which he always contrived to land without affording any trouble to the officers of his Majesty's customs. When this traffic had continued for about two years, a circumstance occurred which entirely and effectually prevented it being any longer carried on. Five pieces of lace were missing on the arrival of the ship in England, and Johnson, deeming the mate to be answerable for its production, deducted their value from the amount due to him for his pay. The latter was naturally violently irritated at this harsh proceeding, and he forthwith lodged an information against his captain, for running goods subject to exciseable duties. The vessel was in consequence seized, and Johnson was cast into prison for penalties to the amount of £700.

This was of course the ruin of the commercial proceedings; and the only remaining subject to be touched upon in this sketch is that which proved the ruin and the termination of the career of Jonathan Wild.

Johnson, having obtained his liberty from the government prosecution, soon returned to his old practices of robbery; but it was not long before a disagreement took place between him and Thomas Edwards, the keeper of a house which was the resort of thieves in Long Lane, with respect to the division of some spoil, and meeting one day in the Strand, a scene of mutual recrimination took place between them, and they were at length both taken into custody. Johnson was bailed by Wild, and Edwards gained his liberty by there being no prosecution against him; but his enmity being now diverted in some degree from Johnson to Wild, he was no sooner at large than he gave information against him, in consequence of which, his warehouses being searched, a great quantity of stolen goods was discovered. It was pretended that the property belonged to Johnson, and Edwards was arrested at his suit for a supposed debt, and lodged in the Marshalsea; but he soon procured bail. His anger against Johnson for this act was much increased, and he determined to have his revenge upon him; and meeting him in the Whitechapel Road, he gave him into the custody of an officer, who conveyed him to a neighbouring ale-house. Wild, being sent for, made his appearance, accompanied by Quilt Arnold, one of his assistants, and they soon raised a riot, in the midst of which the prisoner ran off. Information was immediately given of the escape, and of Wild's interference in it; and the attention of the authorities being now called to this notorious offender, he judged it prudent to abscond, and he remained concealed for three weeks. He was unaware of the extent of the danger which threatened him, however, and at the end of that time he returned to his house. Being apprised of this, Mr. Jones, high-constable of Holborn division, went to his house in the Old Bailey, and on the 15th of February, 1725, apprehended him and Quilt Arnold, and took them before Sir John Fryer, who committed them to Newgate, on a charge of having assisted in the escape of Johnson.

On Wednesday, the 24th of the same month, Wild moved to be either admitted to bail or discharged, or brought to trial that session; and on the following Friday a warrant of detainer was produced against him in court, to which were affixed the following articles of information:

I. That for many years past he had been a confederate with a great number of highwaymen, pickpockets, housebreakers, shoplifters, and other thieves.

II. That he had formed a kind of corporation of thieves, of which he was the head or director; and that notwithstanding his pretended services in

detecting and prosecuting offenders, he procured such only to be hanged as concealed their booty, or refused to share it with him.

III. That he had divided the town and country into so many districts, and appointed distinct gangs for each, who regularly accounted with him for their robberies. That he had also a particular set to steal at churches in time of divine service; and likewise other moving detachments to attend at court on birthdays, balls, etc., and at both houses of Parliament, circuits, and country fairs.

IV. That the persons employed by him were for the most part felon convicts, who had returned from transportation before the time for which they were transported was expired; and that he made choice of them to be his agents, because they could not be legal evidences against him, and because he had it in his power to take from them what part of the stolen goods he thought fit, and otherwise use them ill, or hang them, as he pleased.

V. That he had from time to time supplied such convicted felons with money and clothes, and lodged them in his own house, the better to conceal them: particularly some against whom there are now informations for counterfeiting and diminishing broadpieces and guineas.

VI. That he had not only been a receiver of stolen goods, as well as of writings of all kinds, for near fifteen years past, but had frequently been a confederate, and robbed along with the above-mentioned convicted felons.

VII. That in order to carry on these vile practices, and to gain some credit with the ignorant multitude, he usually carried a short silver staff, as a badge of authority from the government, which he used to produce when he himself was concerned in robbing.

VIII. That he had, under his care and direction, several warehouses for receiving and concealing stolen goods; and also a ship for carrying off jewels, watches, and other valuable goods, to Holland, where he had a superannuated thief for his factor.

IX. That he kept in pay several artists to make alterations, and transform watches, seals, snuff-boxes, rings, and other valuable things, that they might not be known, several of which he used to present to such persons as he thought might be of service to him.

X. That he seldom or never helped the owners to the notes and papers they had lost unless he found them able exactly to specify and describe them, and then often insisted on having more than half their value.

XI. And, lastly, it appeared that he had often sold human blood, by procuring false evidence to swear persons into facts of which they were not guilty; sometimes to prevent them from being evidences against himself, and at other times for the sake of the great rewards given by the government.

The information of Mr. Jones was also read in court, setting forth that two persons would be produced to accuse the prisoner of capital offences. The men alluded to in the affidavit were John Follard and Thomas Butler, who had been convicted, but pardoned on condition of their appearing to support the prosecution against their former master. On the 12th of April a motion for the postponement of the trial until the ensuing sessions was made on behalf of Wild, and after some discussion it was granted; the ground of postponement being alleged to be the absence of two material witnesses for the defence, named Hays, of the Packhorse, Turnham Green, and Wilson, a clothier, at Frome, in Somersetshire.

On Saturday, May 15, 1725, the trial came on, and the prisoner was then arraigned on an indictment for privately stealing in the house of Catherine Stretham, in the parish of St. Andrew, Holborn, fifty yards of lace, the property of the said Catherine, on the 22d of January, in the same year.

He was also indicted for feloniously receiving from the said Catherine, on the 10th of March, the sum of ten guineas, on account and under pretence of restoring the said lace, and procuring the apprehension and prosecution of the person by whom the same was stolen.

Before the trial came on, the prisoner was not a little industrious in endeavouring to establish a feeling in his favour, and he distributed a great number of printed papers among the jurymen and others walking about the court, entitled, "A list of persons discovered, apprehended, and convicted of several robberies on the highway; and also for burglaries and housebreaking; and also for returning from transportation; by Jonathan Wild." The list contained the names of thirty-five persons for robbing on the highway, twenty-two for housebreaking, and ten for returning from transportation, and the following note was appended to it.

"Several others have been also convicted for the like crimes; but, remembering not the persons' names who had been robbed, I omit the criminals' names.

"Please to observe that several others have been also convicted for shoplifting, picking of pockets, etc., by the female sex, which are capital crimes, and which are too tedious to be inserted here, and the prosecutors not willing of being exposed.

"In regard, therefore, of the numbers above convicted, some that have yet escaped justice, are endeavouring to take away the life of the said

"JONATHAN WILD."

The prisoner, being put to the bar, requested that the witnesses might be examined apart, which was complied with.

The trial then commenced, and the first witness called was Henry Kelly, who deposed that by the prisoner's direction he went, in company with Margaret Murphy, to the prosecutor's shop, under pretence of buying some lace; that he stole a tin box, and gave it to Murphy in order to deliver to Wild, who waited in the street for the purpose of receiving their booty, and rescuing them if they should be taken into custody; that they returned together to Wild's house, where the box being opened, was found to contain eleven pieces of lace; that Wild said he could afford to give no more than five guineas, as he should not be able to get more than ten guineas for returning the goods to the owner; that the witness received as his share three guineas and a crown, and that Murphy had what remained of the five guineas.

Margaret Murphy was next sworn, and her evidence corresponded in every particular with that of the former witness.

Catherine Stretham, the elder, deposed that between three and four in the afternoon of the 22d of January, a man and a woman came to her house, pretending that they wanted to purchase some lace; that she showed them two or three parcels, to the quality and price of which they objected; and that in about three minutes after they had left the shop she missed a tin box, containing a quantity of lace, the value of which she estimated at fifty pounds.

The prisoner's counsel on this contended, that he could not be legally convicted, because the indictment positively expressed that *he stole* the lace in the house, whereas it had been proved in evidence that he was at a considerable distance outside when the fact was committed. They allowed that he might be liable to conviction as an accessory before the fact, or for receiving the property, knowing it to be stolen, but conceived that he could not be deemed guilty of a capital felony, unless the indictment declared (as the act directs) that he did *assist, command, or hire*.

Lord Raymond, who presided, in summing up the evidence, observed that the guilt of the prisoner was a point beyond all dispute; but that, as a similar case was not to be found in the law-books, it became his duty to act with great caution; he was not perfectly satisfied that the construction urged by the counsel for the crown could be put upon the indictment; and, as the life of a fellow-creature was at stake, he recommended the prisoner to the mercy of the jury, who brought in their verdict "Not Guilty."

Wild was then arraigned on the second indictment, which alleged an offence committed during his confinement in Newgate. The indictment being opened by the counsel for the crown, the following clause in an act

passed in the fourth year of the reign of George the First was ordered to be read:

“And whereas there are divers persons who have secret acquaintance with felons, and who make it their business to help persons to their stolen goods, and by that means gain money from them, which is divided between them and the felons, whereby they greatly encourage such offenders; be it therefore enacted by the authority aforesaid, that whenever any person taketh money or reward, directly or indirectly, under the pretence or upon account of helping any person or persons to any stolen goods or chattels, every such person so taking money or reward as aforesaid (unless such person do apprehend or cause to be apprehended, such felon who stole the same, and give evidence against him) shall be guilty of felony, according to the nature of the felony committed in stealing such goods, and in such and the same manner as if such offender had stolen such goods and chattels in the manner, and with such circumstances as the same were stolen.”

Mrs. Stretham then, having repeated the evidence which she had before given, went on to state that on the evening of the robbery she went to the house of the prisoner in order to employ him in recovering the goods, but that not finding him at home, she advertised them, offering a reward of fifteen guineas for their return, and promising that no questions should be asked. The advertisement proved ineffectual, and she therefore again went to the house of the prisoner, and seeing him, by his desire she gave an account of the transaction and of the appearance of the thieves. He promised to inquire after her property, and desired her to call again in a few days. She did so, and at this second visit he informed her that he had gained some information respecting her goods, and expected more; and a man who was present said that he thought that Kelly, who had been tried for passing plated shillings, was the offender. The witness again went to the prisoner on the day on which he was apprehended, and said that she would give twenty-five guineas rather than not have her lace back; on which he told her not to be in too great a hurry, for that the people who had stolen the lace were out of town, and that he should soon cause a disagreement between them, by which he should secure the property on more easy terms. On the 10th of March, she received a message, that if she would go to the prisoner in Newgate, and take ten guineas with her, her lace would be returned to her. She went to him accordingly, and a porter being called, he gave her a letter, saying it was addressed to the person to whom he was directed to apply for the lace, and the porter would accompany her to carry the box home. She declined going herself, and then the prisoner desired her to give the money to the porter, who would go for her and fetch the goods, but said that he could not go without it, for that the people who had the lace would not give it up without

being paid. She gave the money and the man went away, but in a short time he returned with a box which she had lost. On opening it, she found that it contained all her lace except one piece. She asked the prisoner what satisfaction he expected, when he answered: "Not a farthing; I have no interested views in matters of this kind, but act from a principle of serving people under misfortune. I hope I shall soon be able to recover the other piece of lace, and to return you the ten guineas, and perhaps cause the thief to be apprehended. For the service I can render you I should only expect your prayers. I have many enemies, and know not what will be the consequence of this imprisonment."

The prisoner's counsel argued, that as Murphy had deposed that Wild, Kelly, and she, were concerned in the felony, the former could by no means be considered as coming within the description of the act on which the indictment was founded; for the act in question was not meant to operate against the actual perpetrators of felony, but to subject such persons to punishment as held a correspondence with felons.

The counsel for the crown observed, that from the evidence adduced, no doubt could remain of the prisoner's coming under the meaning of the act, since it had been proved that he had engaged in combinations with felons, and had not discovered them.

The judge was of opinion that the case of the prisoner was clearly within the meaning of the act; for it was plain that he had maintained a secret correspondence with felons, and received money for restoring stolen goods to the owners, which money was divided between him and the felons, whom he did not prosecute. The jury pronounced him guilty, and he was sentenced to be executed at Tyburn, on Monday, the 24th of May, 1725.

When he was under sentence of death, he frequently declared that he thought the services he had rendered the public in returning the stolen goods to the owners, and apprehending felons, was so great, as justly to entitle him to the royal mercy. He said that had he considered his case as being desperate, he should have taken timely measures for inducing some powerful friends at Wolverhampton to intercede in his favour; and that he thought it not unreasonable to entertain hopes of obtaining a pardon through the interest of some of the dukes, earls, and other persons of high distinction, who had recovered their property through his means.

He was observed to be in an unsettled state of mind; and being asked whether he knew the cause thereof, he said he attributed his disorder to the many wounds he had received in apprehending felons; and particularly mentioned two fractures of his skull, and his throat being cut by Blueskin.

He declined attending divine service in the chapel, excusing himself on account of his infirmities, and saying that there were many people highly

exasperated against him, and therefore he could not expect but that his devotions would be interrupted by their insulting behaviour. He said he had fasted four days, which had greatly increased his weakness. He asked the Ordinary the meaning of the words, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree"; and what was the state of the soul immediately after its departure from the body? He was advised to direct his attention to matters of more importance, and sincerely to repent of the crimes he had committed.

By his desire the Ordinary administered the sacrament to him; and during the ceremony he appeared to be somewhat attentive and devout. The evening preceding the day on which he suffered, he inquired of the Ordinary whether suicide could be deemed a crime, and after some conversation, he pretended to be convinced that self-murder was a most impious offence against the Almighty, but about two in the morning, he endeavoured to put an end to his life by drinking laudanum. On account of the largeness of the dose, and his having fasted for a considerable time, no other effect was produced than drowsiness, or a kind of stupefaction. The situation of Wild being observed by two of his fellow prisoners, they advised him to rouse his spirits, that he might be able to attend to the devotional exercises; and taking him by the arms, they obliged him to walk, which he could not have done alone, being much afflicted with the gout. The exercise revived him a little; but he presently became exceedingly pale; then grew faint; a profuse sweating ensued; and soon afterwards his stomach discharged the greatest part of the laudanum. Though he was somewhat recovered, he was nearly in a state of insensibility; and in this situation he was put into the cart and conveyed to Tyburn. On his way to the place of execution the populace treated him with remarkable severity, incessantly pelting him with stones and dirt.

Upon his arrival at Tyburn he appeared to be much recovered from the effects of the poison; and the executioner informed him that a reasonable time would be allowed him for preparing himself for the important change that he must soon experience. He continued sitting some time in the cart; but the populace were at length so enraged at the indulgence shown him, that they outrageously called to the executioner to perform the duties of his office, violently threatening him with instant death if he presumed any longer to delay. He judged it prudent to comply with their demands; and when he began to prepare for the execution, the popular clamour ceased.

About two o'clock on the following morning the remains of Wild were interred in St. Pancras churchyard; but a few nights afterwards the body was taken up (for the use of the surgeons, as it was supposed). At midnight a hearse-and-six was waiting at the end of Fig Lane, where the coffin was found the next day.

Wild had by the woman he married at Wolverhampton a son about nineteen years old who came to London a short time before the execution of his father. He was a youth of so violent and ungovernable a disposition, that it was judged right to confine him during the time of the execution, lest he should excite the people to some tumult. He subsequently went to one of the West India colonies.

The adventures of Wild are of a nature to attract great attention, from the multiplicity and variety of the offences of which he was guilty. It has been hinted that his career of crime having been suffered to continue so long was in some degree attributable to the services which he performed for the government, in arresting and gaining information against the disaffected, during the troubles which characterized the early part of the reign of George I, but whatever may have been the cause of his being so long unmolested, whatever supineness on the part of the authorities, whether willful or not, may have procured for him so continued a reign of uninterrupted wickedness, it cannot be doubted that the fact of his long safety tended so much to the demoralization of society, as that many years passed before it could assume that tone which the exertions of a felon like Wild were so calculated to destroy. The existing generation cannot but congratulate itself upon the excellence of the improvements which have been made in our laws, and the admirable effect which they have produced; as well as upon the exceedingly active vigilance of the existing police, by whom crime, instead of its being supported and fostered, is checked and prevented.

[1] From "The Chronicles of Crime," Vol. I, London, 1891.

VI

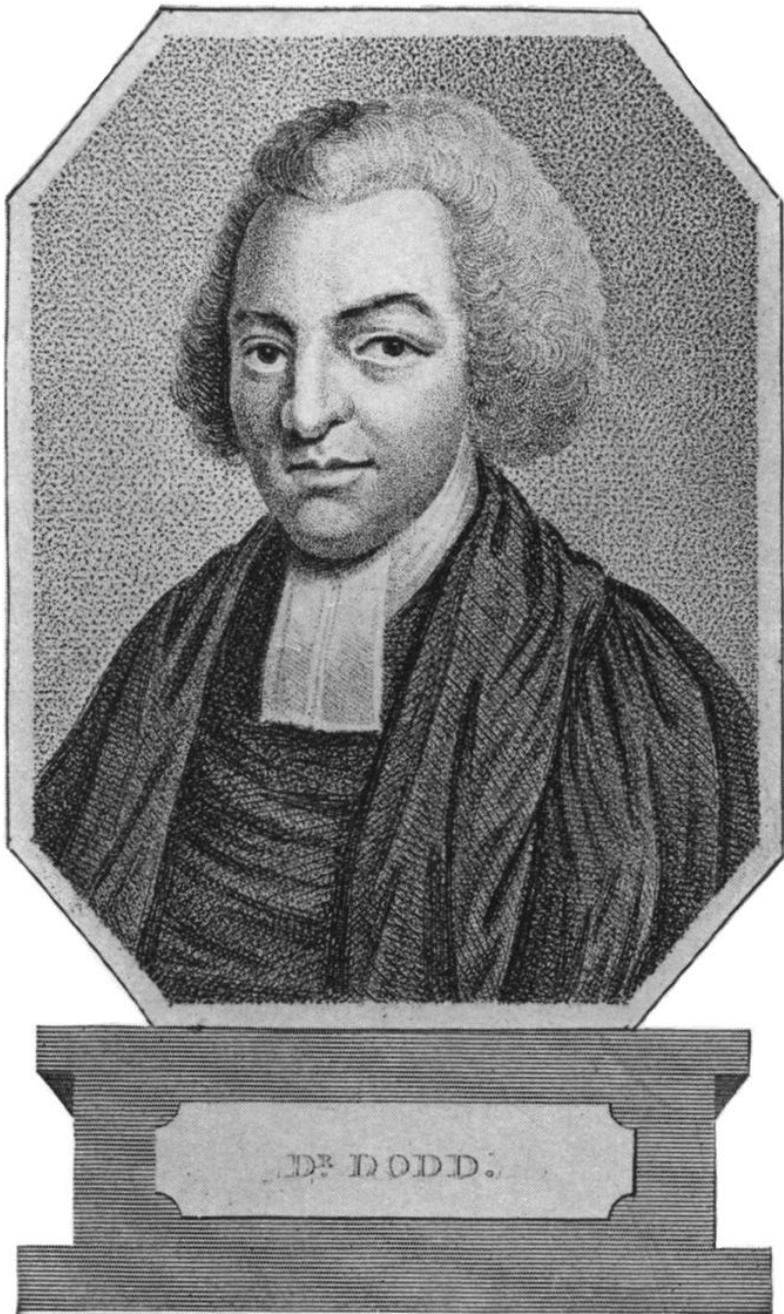
DR. WILLIAM DODD

Clergyman-Forgery

CAMDEN PELHAM^[1]

The character and the offence of this unfortunate divine are too well known to render it necessary that any introduction to the recital of the circumstances of his case should be attempted.

Dr. Dodd was the eldest son of a clergyman who held the vicarage Bourne, in the county of Lincoln, and was born at Bourne on the 29th of May, 1729; and after finishing his school education, was admitted a sizar of Clare Hall, Cambridge, in the year 1745, under the tuition of Mr. John Courtail, afterwards Archdeacon of Lewes. At the university he acquired the approbation of his superiors by his close attention to his studies, and at the close of the year 1749 he took his first degree of Bachelor of Arts with considerable reputation, his name being included in the list of wranglers. It was not only in his academical pursuits, however, that he was emulous of distinction. Having a pleasing manner, a genteel address, and a lively imagination, he was equally celebrated for his accomplishments and his learning. In particular he was fond of the elegances of dress, and became, as he ludicrously expressed it, “a zealous votary of the god of dancing,” to whose service he dedicated much of that time which he could borrow from his more important avocations.



DR. WILLIAM DODD

The talent which he possessed was very early displayed to the public; and by the time he had attained the age of eighteen years, prompted by the

desire of fame, and perhaps also to increase his income, he commenced authorship, in which character he began to obtain some degree of reputation. At this period of his life, young, thoughtless, volatile and inexperienced, he precipitately quitted the university, and, relying entirely on his pen, removed to the metropolis, where he entered largely into the gaieties of the town, and followed every species of amusement with the most dangerous avidity. In this course, however, he did not continue long. To the surprise of his friends, who least suspected him of taking such a step, without fortune, and destitute of all means of supporting a family, he hastily united himself, on the 15th of April, 1751, in marriage with Miss Mary Perkins, daughter of one of the domestics of Sir John Dolben, a young lady then residing in Frith Street, Soho, who, though endowed with personal attractions, was deficient in those of birth and fortune. To a person circumstanced as Mr. Dodd then was, no measure could be more imprudent, or apparently more ruinous and destructive to his future prospects in life. He did not, however, seem to view it in that light, but furnished a house in Wardour Street. His friends now began to be alarmed at his situation, and his father came to town in great distress upon the occasion; and in consequence of the advice which he gave him, his son quitted his house before the commencement of winter, and, urged by the same preceptor, he was induced to adopt a new plan for his future subsistence. On the 19th of October, in the same year, he was ordained a deacon by the Bishop of Ely, at Caius College, Cambridge; and, with more prudence than he had ever shown before, he now devoted himself with great assiduity to the study and duties of his profession. In these pursuits he appeared so sincere, that he even renounced all his attention to his favourite objects—polite letters. At the end of his preface to the “*Beauties of Shakespeare*,” published in this year, he says: “For my own part, better and more important things henceforth demand my attention and I here with no small pleasure take leave of Shakespeare and the critics. As this work was begun and finished before I entered upon the sacred function in which I am now happily employed, let me trust this juvenile performance will prove no objection, since graver, and some very eminent, members of the Church have thought it no improper employ to comment upon, explain, and publish the works of their own country poets.”

The first service in which he was engaged as a clergyman was to assist the Rev. Mr. Wyatt, vicar of West Ham, as his curate: thither he removed, and there he spent the happiest and more honourable moments of his life. His behaviour was proper, decent and exemplary. It acquired for him the respect and secured for him the favour of his parishioners so far, that on the death of their lecturer, in 1752, he was chosen to succeed him. His ability had at this time every opportunity of being shown to advantage; and his

exertions were so properly directed, that he soon became a favourite and popular preacher. Those who were at this period of life acquainted with his character and his talents, bear testimony to the indefatigable zeal which he exhibited in his ministry, and the success with which his efforts were crowned. The follies of his youth seemed entirely past, and his friends viewed the alteration in his conduct with the greatest satisfaction; while the world promised itself an example to hold out for the imitation of others. At this early session of his life, he entertained sentiments favourable towards the opinions of Mr. Hutchinson, and he was suspected to incline towards Methodism; but subsequent consideration confirmed his belief in the doctrines of the Established Church. In 1752 he was selected lecturer of St. James, Garlick Hill, which, two years afterwards, he exchanged for the same post at St. Olave, Hart Street; and about the same time he was appointed to preach Lady Moyer's lectures at St. Paul's, where, from the visit of the three angels to Abraham, and other similar passages in the Old Testament, he endeavoured to prove the commonly-received doctrine of the Trinity. On the establishment of the Magdalen House, in 1758, he was amongst the first and most active promoters of that excellent charitable institution, which derived great advantages from his zeal for its prosperity, and which even up to the unhappy termination of his life, continued to be materially benefited by the exercise of his talents in its behalf. His exertions, however, were not confined to this hospital, but he was also one of the promoters of the Society for the Relief of Poor Debtors, and of the Humane Society for the recovery of persons apparently drowned.

From the time that he entered upon the services of the Church, Dr. Dodd had resided at West Ham, and made up the deficiency in his income by superintending the education of a few young gentlemen who were placed under his care; an occupation for which he was well fitted. In 1759 he took the degree of Master of Arts, and in 1763 he was appointed chaplain in ordinary to the King; and about the same time he became acquainted with Dr. Squire, the Bishop of St. David's, who received him into his patronage, presented him to the prebend of Brecon, and recommended him to the Earl of Chesterfield as a proper person to be entrusted with the tuition of his successor in the title. The following year saw him chaplain to the King, and in 1766 he took the degree of Doctor of Laws at Cambridge.

The expectations which he had long entertained of succeeding to the rectory of West Ham now appeared hopeless; and having given up all prospect of their being realized, after having been twice disappointed, he resigned his lectureship both there and in the city, and quitted the place—"a place," said he to Lord Chesterfield, in a dedication to a sermon entitled, "Popery Inconsistent with the Natural Rights of Men in General, and

Englishmen in Particular,” published in 1768, “ever dear, and ever regretted by me, the loss of which, truly affecting to my mind (for there I was useful, and there I trust I was loved), nothing but your lordship’s friendship and connexion could have counterbalanced.” The *Thoughts in Prison* of the unfortunate gentleman contain a passage of a similar tendency from which it may be inferred that he was compelled to quit this his favourite residence; a circumstance which he pathetically laments, and probably with great reason, as the first step to that change in his situation which led him insensibly to his last fatal catastrophe.

On his quitting West Ham, he removed to a house in Southampton Row, and at the same time he launched out into seas of expense, which his income, although now by no means a small one, was inadequate to support. He provided himself with a country house at Ealing, and exchanged his chariot for a coach, and began to associate with those who were in general persons of family and fortune. About the same time it was his misfortune to obtain a prize of £1000 in the state lottery; and elated with his success, he engaged with a builder in a plan to erect a chapel near the palace of the queen, from whom it took its name. He entered also into a like partnership at Charlotte Chapel, Bloomsbury, and both these schemes were for some time very beneficial to him, though their proceeds were much inferior to his expensive habits of living. His expectations from the former of these undertakings were extremely sanguine. It is reported that in fitting up his chapel near the palace, he flattered himself with the hopes of having some young royal auditors, and in that expectation assigned a particular pew or gallery for the heir-apparent. But in this, as in many other of his views, he was disappointed.

In the year 1772 he obtained the rectory of Hockliffe in Bedfordshire, the first cure of souls he ever had. With this also he held the vicarage of Chalgrove; and the two were soon after consolidated. An accident happened about this time, from which he narrowly escaped with his life. Returning from Barnet, he was stopped near St. Pancras by a highwayman, who discharged a pistol into the carriage, which, happily, only broke the glass. For this fact the delinquent was tried, and, on Mrs. Dodd’s evidence, convicted and hanged. Early in the next year Lord Chesterfield died, and was succeeded by Dr. Dodd’s pupil, who appointed his preceptor to be his chaplain.

At this period Dr. Dodd appears to have been in the zenith of his popularity and reputation. Beloved and respected by all orders of people, he would have reached, in all probability, the situation which was the object of his wishes, had he possessed patience enough to have waited for it and prudence sufficient to keep himself out of those difficulties which might

prove fatal to his integrity. But the habits of dissipation and expense had acquired too great an influence over him; and he had by their means involved himself in considerable debts. To extricate himself from them, he was tempted to an act which entirely cut off every hope which he could entertain of rising in his profession, and totally ruined him in the opinion of the world. On the translation of Bishop Moss, in February, 1774, to the See of Bath and Wells, the valuable rectory of St. George, Hanover Square, fell to the disposal of the Crown, by virtue of the King's prerogative. Whether from the suggestion of his own mind, or from the persuasion of some friend, is uncertain; but on this occasion he took a step of all others the most wild and extravagant, and the least likely to be attended with success. He caused an anonymous letter to be sent to Lady Apsley, offering the sum of three thousand pounds if by her means he could be presented to the living. The letter was immediately communicated to the chancellor, and, after being traced to the writer, was laid before His Majesty. The insult offered to so high an officer by the proposal was followed by instant punishment. Dr. Dodd's name was ordered to be struck out of the list of chaplains. The press teemed with satire and invective; he was abused and ridiculed in the papers of the day; and to crown the whole, the transaction became a subject of entertainment in one of Mr. Foote's pieces at the Haymarket.

As no explanation could justify so absurd a measure, so no apology could palliate it. An evasive letter in the newspapers, promising a justification at a future day, was treated with universal contempt; and stung with remorse, and feelingly alive to the disgrace he had brought on himself, he hastily quitted the place where neglect and insult only attended him, and going to Geneva, to his late pupil, he was presented by him with the living of Winge in Buckinghamshire, which he held with that of Hockliffe, by virtue of a dispensation. Though encumbered with debts, he might still have retrieved his circumstances, if not his character, had he attended to the dictates of prudence; but his extravagance continued undiminished and drove him to pursue schemes which overwhelmed him with additional infamy. He became the editor of a newspaper; and it is said that he even attempted, by means of a commission of bankruptcy, to clear himself from his debts; an attempt in which, however, he failed. From this period it would appear that every step which he took led to complete his ruin. In the summer of 1776, he went to France, and there, with little regard to decency or the observances proper to be maintained by a minister of religion, he paraded himself in a phaeton at the races on the plains of Sablons, dressed in all the foppery of the kingdom in which he was temporarily resident. At the beginning of winter he returned to London, and continued there to exercise the duties of his profession until the very moment of his committing the

offence for which his life was subsequently forfeited to the offended laws of his country. On the 2d of February, 1777, he preached his last sermon at the Magdalen Chapel, where he was still heard with approbation and pleasure; and on the 4th of the same month he forged a bond, purporting to be that of his late pupil, the Earl of Chesterfield, for £4200. Pressed by creditors, and unable any longer to meet their demands or soothe their importunities, he was driven to commit this crime, as the only expedient to which he could have recourse to aid him in his escape from his difficulties. The method which he adopted in completing the forgery was very remarkable. He pretended that the noble earl had urgent occasion to borrow £4000, but that he did not choose to be his own agent, and he begged that the matter therefore might be secretly and expeditiously conducted. A person named Lewis Robertson was the person whom he employed as broker to negotiate the transaction; and he presented to him a bond, not filled up or signed, that he might find a person ready to advance the sum required, as he directed him to say, to a young nobleman who had lately come of age. Several applications were made by Robertson without success, the persons refusing because they were not to be present when the bond was executed; but at length the agent, confiding in the honour and integrity of his employer, went to Messrs. Fletcher and Peach, who agreed to advance the money. Mr. Robertson then carried the bond back to the doctor, in order that it might be filled up and executed; and on the following day it was returned, bearing the signature of the Earl of Chesterfield, and attested by the doctor himself. Mr. Robertson, knowing that Mr. Fletcher was a man who required all legal observances to be attended to, and that he would therefore object to the bond as bearing the name of one witness only, put his name under that of Dr. Dodd, and in that state he carried the bond to him, and received from him the sum of £4000 in return, which he paid over to his employer.

The bond was subsequently produced to the Earl of Chesterfield; but immediately on his seeing it, he disowned it, and expressed himself at a loss to know by whom such a forgery upon him could have been committed. It was evident, however, that the supposed attesting witnesses must, if their signatures were genuine, be acquainted with its author; and Mr. Manly, his lordship's agent, went directly to consult Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Innis, and Mr. Manly proceeded to Guildhall to prefer an information with regard to the forgery against Dr. Dodd and Mr. Robertson. Mr. Robertson was, without difficulty, secured; and then Fletcher, Innis, and Manly, accompanied by two of the Lord Mayor's officers, went to the house of the doctor in Argyle Street, whither he had recently removed.

Upon their explaining to him the nature of the offence, he appeared much struck and affected, and declared his willingness to make any

reparation in his power. Mr. Manly told him that his instantly returning the money was the only mode which remained for him to save himself; and he immediately gave up six notes of £500, each, making £3000, and he drew on his banker for £500 more. The broker then returned £100, and the doctor gave a second draft on his banker for £200, and a judgment on his goods for the remaining £400. All this was done by the doctor in full reliance on the honour of the parties that the bond should be returned to him cancelled; but, notwithstanding this restriction, he was taken before the Lord Mayor, and charged with the forgery. The doctor declared that he had no intention to defraud Lord Chesterfield or the gentlemen who advanced the money, and hoped that the satisfaction he had made in returning it would atone for his offence. He was pressed, he said, exceedingly for £300 to pay some bills due to tradesmen, and took this step as a temporary resource, and would have repaid the money in half a year. "My Lord Chesterfield," added he, "cannot but have some tenderness for me as my pupil. I love him, and he knows it. There is nobody wishes to prosecute. I am sure my Lord Chesterfield don't want my life,—I hope he will show clemency to me. Mercy should triumph over justice." Clemency, however, was denied; and the doctor was committed to the Compter in preparation for his trial. On the 19th of February, Dr. Dodd, being put to the bar at the Old Bailey, addressed the court in the following words:

"My lords,—I am informed that the bill of indictment against me has been found on the evidence of Mr. Robertson, who was taken out of Newgate, without any authority or leave from your lordships, for the purpose of procuring the bill to be found. Mr. Robertson is a subscribing witness to the bond, and, as I conceive, would be swearing to exculpate himself if he should be admitted as a witness against me; and as the bill has been found upon his evidence, which was surreptitiously obtained, I submit to your lordships that I ought not to be compelled to plead on this indictment; and upon this question I beg to be heard by my counsel. I beg leave also further to observe to your lordships, that the gentlemen on the other side of the question are bound over to prosecute Mr. Robertson."

Previously to the arguments of the counsel, an order which had been surreptitiously obtained from an officer of the court, dated Wednesday, February 19, and directed to the keeper of Newgate, commanding him to carry Lewis Robertson to Hick's Hall, in order to his giving evidence before the grand inquest on the present bill of indictment—as well as a resolution of the Court, reprobating the said order—and also the recognizance entered into by Mr. Manly, Mr. Peach, Mr. Innis, and the Right Hon. the Earl of Chesterfield to prosecute and give evidence against Dr. Dodd and Lewis Robertson for forgery—were ordered to be read; and the clerk of the

arraigns was directed to inform the Court whether the name “Lewis Robertson” was indorsed as a witness on the back of the indictment, which was answered in the affirmative.

The counsel now proceeded in their arguments for and against the prisoner. Mr. Howarth, one of Dr. Dodd’s advocates, contended that no person ought to plead or answer to an indictment, if it appeared upon the face of that indictment that the evidence upon which the bill was found was not legal, or competent to have been adduced before the Grand Jury.

Mr. Cooper and Mr. Buller, on the same side, pursued the same line of argument with equal ingenuity, and expressed a hope that Dr. Dodd would not be called upon to plead to an indictment found upon such evidence as had been pointed out, but that the indictment would be ordered to be quashed.

The counsel for the prosecution advanced various arguments in opposition to those employed on the other side, and the learned judge, having taken a note of the objection, it was agreed that the trial should proceed, the question of the competency of Mr. Robertson as a witness being reserved for the consideration of the twelve judges.

The doctor was then arraigned upon the indictment, which charged him in the usual terms with the forgery upon the Earl of Chesterfield; and the evidence in proof of the facts above stated having been given, the Court called upon the prisoner for his defence. He addressed the Court and jury in the following terms:

“My lords and gentlemen of the jury,—Upon the evidence which has this day been produced against me, I find it very difficult to address your lordships. There is no man in the world who has a deeper sense of the heinous nature of the crime for which I stand indicted than myself: I view it, my lords, in all its extent of malignancy, but, my lords, I humbly apprehend, though no lawyer, that the moral turpitude and malignancy of the crime always, both in the eye of the law and of religion, consists in the intention. I am informed, my lords, that the act of Parliament on this head runs perpetually in this style, with an intention to defraud. Such an intention, my lords and gentlemen of the jury, I believe, has not been attempted to be proved upon me, and the consequences that have happened, which have appeared before you, sufficiently prove that a perfect and ample restitution has been made. I leave it, my lords, to you and the gentlemen of the jury to consider, that if an unhappy man ever deviates from the law of right, yet if in the single first moment of recollection he does all that he can to make a full and perfect amends, what, my lords and gentlemen of the jury, can God and man desire further? My lords, there are a variety of little circumstances too tedious to trouble you with, with respect to this matter. Were I to give loose

to my feelings, I have many things to say which I am sure you would feel with respect to me; but as it appears on all hands, that no injury, intentional or real, has been done to any man living, I hope that you will consider the case in its true state of clemency. I must observe to your lordships, that though I have met with all candour in this court, yet I have been pursued with excessive cruelty. I have been prosecuted after the most express engagements, after the most solemn assurances, after the most delusive, soothing arguments of Mr. Manly; I have been prosecuted with a cruelty scarcely to be paralleled. A person avowedly criminal in the same indictment with myself has been unexampled. My lords, oppressed as I am with infamy, loaded as I am with distress, sunk under this cruel prosecution, your lordships and the gentlemen of the jury cannot think life a matter of any value to me. No, my lords, I solemnly protest, that death of all blessings would be the most pleasant to me after this pain. I have yet, my lords, ties which call upon me—ties which render me desirous even to continue this miserable existence. I have a wife, my lords, who, for twenty-seven years, has lived an unparalleled example of conjugal attachment and fidelity, and whose behaviour during this trying scene would draw tears of approbation, I am sure, even from the most inhuman. My lords, I have creditors, honest men, who will lose much by my death. I hope, for the sake of justice towards them, some mercy will be shown to me. If, upon the whole, these considerations at all avail with you—if, upon the most impartial survey of matters, not the slightest intention of injury can appear to any one—(and I solemnly declare it was in my power to replace it in three months—of this I assured Mr. Robertson frequently, and had his solemn assurances that no man should be privy to it but Mr. Fletcher and himself)—and if no injury was done to any man upon earth, I then hope, I trust, I fully confide myself in the tenderness, humanity, and protection of my country.”

The jury retired for about ten minutes, and then returned with a verdict that “the prisoner was guilty”; but at the same time presented a petition, humbly recommending the doctor to the royal mercy.

It was afterwards declared that upon the reserved point, the opinion of the judges was, that he had been legally convicted. On the last day of the sessions Dr. Dodd was again put to the bar to receive judgment. The clerk of the arraigns then addressed him, saying:

“Dr. William Dodd, you stand convicted of forgery, what have you to say why this court should not give you judgment to die, according to the law?”

In reply Dr. Dodd addressed the court as follows:

“My Lord,—I now stand before you a dreadful example of human infirmity. I entered upon public life with the expectations common to young men whose education has been liberal, and whose abilities have been

flattered; and, when I became a clergyman, I considered myself as not impairing the dignity of the order. I was not an idle, nor, I hope, a useless minister: I taught the truths of Christianity with the zeal of conviction and the authority of innocence.

“My labours were approved, my pulpit became popular, and I have reason to believe that, of those who heard me, some have been preserved from sin, and some have been reclaimed. Condescend, my lord, to think, if these considerations aggravate my crime, how much they must embitter my punishment! Being distinguished and elevated by the confidence of mankind, I had too much confidence in myself; and, thinking my integrity—what others thought it—established in sincerity, and fortified by religion, I did not consider the danger of vanity, nor suspect the deceitfulness of mine own heart. The day of conflict came, in which temptation seized and overwhelmed me! I committed the crime, which I entreat your lordship to believe that my conscience hourly represents to me in its full bulk of mischief and malignity. Many have been overpowered by temptation, who are now among the penitent in heaven! To an act now waiting the decision of vindictive justice I will now presume to oppose the counterbalance of almost thirty years (a great part of the life of man) passed in exciting and exercising charity—in relieving such distresses as I now feel—in administering those consolations which I now want. I will not otherwise extenuate my offence than by declaring, what I hope will appear to many, and what many circumstances make probable, that I did not intend finally to defraud: nor will it become me to apportion my own punishment, by alleging that my sufferings have been not much less than my guilt; I have fallen from reputation which ought to have made me cautious, and from a fortune which ought to have given me content. I am sunk at once into poverty and scorn; my name and my crime fill the ballads in the streets; the sport of the thoughtless, and the triumph of the wicked! It may seem strange, my lord, that, remembering what I have lately been, I should still wish to continue what I am! but contempt of death, how speciously soever it may mingle with heathen virtues, has nothing in it suitable to Christian penitence. Many motives impel me to beg earnestly for life. I feel the natural horror of a violent death, the universal dread of untimely dissolution. I am desirous to recompense the injury I have done to the clergy, to the world, and to religion, and to efface the scandal of my crime, by the example of my repentance: but, above all, I wish to die with thoughts more composed, and calmer preparation. The gloom and confusion of a prison, the anxiety of a trial, the horrors of suspense, and the inevitable vicissitudes of passion, leave not the mind in a due disposition for the holy exercises of prayer and self-examination. Let not a little life be denied me, in which I may, by

meditation and contrition, prepare myself to stand at the tribunal of Omnipotence, and support the presence of that Judge who shall distribute to all according to their works: who will receive and pardon the repenting sinner, and from whom the merciful shall obtain mercy! For these reasons, my lord, amidst shame and misery, I yet wish to live; and most humbly implore that I may be recommended by your lordship to the clemency of His Majesty.”

Here he sank down, overcome with mental agony, and some time elapsed before he was sufficiently recovered to hear the dreadful sentence of the law, which the Recorder pronounced upon him in the following words:

“Dr. William Dodd,

“You have been convicted of the offence of publishing a forged and counterfeit bond, knowing it to be forged and counterfeited; and you have had the advantage which the laws of this country afford to every man in your situation, a fair, an impartial, and an attentive trial. The jury, to whose justice you appealed, have found you guilty; their verdict has undergone the consideration of the learned judges, and they found no ground to impeach the justice of that verdict; you yourself have admitted the justice of it; and now the very painful duty that the necessity of the law imposes upon the court, to pronounce the sentence of that law against you, remains only to be performed. You appear to entertain a very proper sense of the enormity of the offence which you have committed; you appear, too, in a state of contrition of mind, and, I doubt not, have duly reflected how far the dangerous tendency of the offence you have been guilty of is increased by the influence of example, in being committed by a person of your character, and of the sacred function of which you are a member. These sentiments seem to be yours; I would wish to cultivate such sentiments; but I would not wish to add to the anguish of your mind by dwelling upon your situation. Your application for mercy must be made elsewhere; it would be cruel in the court to flatter you; there is a power of dispensing mercy, where you may apply. Your own good sense, and the contrition you express, will induce you to lessen the influence of the example by publishing your hearty and sincere detestation of the offence of which you are convicted; and will show you that to attempt to palliate or extenuate it, would indeed add to the influence of a crime of this kind being committed by a person of your character and known abilities. I would, therefore, warn you against anything of that kind. Now, having said this, I am obliged to pronounce the sentence of the law, which is—that you, Doctor William Dodd, be carried from hence to the place of execution, and that there you be hanged by the neck until you are dead.” To this Dr. Dodd replied: “Lord Jesus, receive my soul!” and was immediately conveyed from the bar.

Great exertions were now made to save Dr. Dodd. The newspapers were filled with letters and paragraphs in his favour; individuals of all ranks exerted themselves in his behalf; the members of several charities which had been benefited by him joined in application to the throne for mercy; parish officers went in mourning from house to house, to procure names of nearly thirty thousand persons, and a petition which filled twenty-three sheets of parchment, was actually presented. Even the Lord Mayor and Common Council went in a body to St. James's, to solicit mercy for the convict. These were, however, of no avail. On the 15th of June the Privy Council assembled, and deliberated on the cases of the several prisoners then under condemnation; and in the end a warrant was ordered to be made out for the execution of Dr. Dodd, with two others (one of whom was afterwards reprieved), on the 27th of the same month.

Having been flattered with the hopes of a pardon, he appeared to be much shocked at the intimation of his approaching destiny; but resumed in a short time a degree of fortitude sufficient to enable him to pass through the last scene of his life with firmness and decency. On the 26th he took leave of his wife and some friends, and he afterwards declared himself ready to atone for the offence he had given to the world. His deportment was meek, humble, and devout, expressive of resignation and contrition, and calculated to inspire sentiments of respect for his person, and concern for his unhappy fate.

He was attended to the fatal spot, in a mourning-coach, by the Rev. Mr. Villette, Ordinary of Newgate, and the Rev. Mr. Doby. Another criminal, named John Harris, was executed at the same time. It is impossible to give an idea of the immense crowds of people that thronged the streets from Newgate to Tyburn. When the prisoners arrived at the fatal tree, and were placed in the cart, Dr. Dodd exhorted his fellow sufferer in so generous a manner as testified that he had not forgotten his duty as a clergyman; and he was also very fervent in the exercise of his own devotion. Just before he was turned off, he was observed to whisper to the executioner; and, although we have not the means of ascertaining the precise purport of his remark, it is pretty obvious from the fact, that as soon as the cart had been drawn away from the gibbet, he ran immediately under the scaffold and took hold of the doctor's legs as if to steady his body, and the unfortunate gentleman appeared to die without pain.

Of his behaviour before execution a particular account was given by Mr. Villette, Ordinary of Newgate, in the following terms:

“On the morning of his death I went to him, with the Rev. Mr. Doby, Chaplain of the Magdalen, whom he desired to attend him to the place of execution. He appeared composed; and when I asked him how he had been

supported, he said that he had had some comfortable sleep, by which he should be the better enabled to perform his duty.

“As we went from his room, in our way to the chapel, we were joined by his friend, who had spent the foregoing evening with him, and also by another clergyman. When we were in the Vestry adjoining the chapel, he exhorted his fellow sufferer, who had attempted to destroy himself, but had been prevented by the vigilance of the keeper. He spoke to him with great tenderness and emotion of heart, entreating him to consider that he had but a short time to live, and that it was highly necessary that he, as well as himself, made good use of their time, implored pardon of God under a deep sense of sin, and looked to that Lord by whose merits alone sinners can be saved. He desired me to call in the other gentlemen, who likewise assisted him to move the heart of the poor youth; but the Doctor’s words were the most pathetic and effectual. He lifted up his hands, and cried out: ‘O Lord Jesus, have mercy upon us! and give, oh! give unto him, my fellow sinner, that, as we suffer together, we may go together to Heaven!’ His conversation to this poor youth was so moving, that tears flowed from the eyes of all present.

“When we went into the chapel to prayer and the holy communion, true contrition and warmth of devotion appeared evident in him throughout the whole service. After it was ended, he again addressed himself to Harris in the most moving and persuasive manner, and not without effect; for he declared that he was glad that he had not made away with himself, and said he was easier, and hoped he should now go to heaven. The doctor told him how Christ had suffered for them; and that he himself was a greater sinner than he, as he had sinned more against light and conviction, and therefore his guilt was greater; and that as he was confident that mercy was shown to his soul, so he should look to Christ and trust in his merits.

“He prayed God to bless his friends who were present with him, and to give his blessing to all his brethren the clergy; that he would pour out his spirit upon them, and make them true ministers of Jesus Christ, and that they might follow the divine precepts of their heavenly Master. Turning to one who stood near him, he stretched out his hand, and said, ‘Now, my dear friend, speculation is at an end; all must be real! What poor ignorant beings we are!’ He prayed for the Magdalens, and wished they were there, to sing for him the 23d Psalm.

“After he had waited some time for the officers, he asked what o’clock it was; and, being told that it was half an hour after eight, he said: ‘I wish they were ready, for I long to be gone.’ He requested of his friends, who were in tears about him, to pray for him; to which he was answered, by two of them, ‘We pray more than language can utter.’ He replied, ‘I believe it.’

“At length he was summoned to go down into a part of the yard which is enclosed from the rest of the gaol, where the two unhappy convicts and the friends of the doctor were alone. On his seeing two prisoners looking out of the windows, he went to them, and exhorted them so pathetically, that they both wept abundantly. He said once, ‘I am now a spectacle to men, and shall soon be a spectacle to angels.’

“Just before the sheriff’s officers came with the halters, one who was walking with him told him that there was yet a little ceremony he must pass through before he went out. He asked, ‘What is that?’ ‘You will be bound.’ He looked up, and said, ‘Yet I am free; my freedom is there,’ pointing upwards. He bore it with Christian patience, and beyond what might have been expected; and, when the men offered to excuse tying his hands, he desired them to do their duty, and thanked them for their kindness. After he was bound, I offered to assist him with my arm in conducting him through the yard, where several people were assembled to see him; but he replied, with seeming pleasure, ‘No, I am as firm as a rock.’ As he passed along the yard, the spectators and prisoners wept and bemoaned him; and he, in return, prayed God to bless them.

“On the way to execution he consoled himself in reflecting and speaking on what Christ had suffered for him; lamented the depravity of human nature, which made sanguinary laws necessary; and said he could gladly have died in the prison-yard, as being led out to public execution tended greatly to distress him. He desired me to read to him the 51st Psalm, and also pointed out an admirable penitential prayer from ‘Rossell’s Prisoner’s Director.’ He prayed again for the king, and likewise for the people.

“When he came near the street where he formerly dwelt he was much affected, and wept. He said, probably his tears would seem to be the first effect of cowardice, but it was a weakness he could not well help; and added, he hoped he was going to a better home.

“When he arrived at the gallows he ascended the cart, and spoke to his fellow sufferer. He then prayed, not only for himself, but also for his wife, and the unfortunate youth that suffered with him; and, declaring that he died in the true faith of the Gospel of Christ, in perfect love and charity with all mankind, and with thankfulness to his friends, he was launched into eternity, imploring mercy for his soul for the sake of his blessed Redeemer.”

A paper, of which the following is a copy, had been delivered by Dr. Dodd to Mr. Villette to be read at the place of execution, but was omitted as it seemed impossible to make all present aware of its contents.

“To the words of dying men regard has always been paid. I am brought hither to suffer for an act of fraud, of which I confess

myself guilty with shame, such as my former state of life naturally produces, and I hope with such sorrow as He, to whom the heart is known, will not disregard. I repent that I have violated the laws by which peace and confidence are established among men; I repent that I have attempted to injure my fellow-creatures; and I repent that I have brought disgrace upon my order, and discredit upon religion: but my offences against God are without number, and can admit only of general confession and general repentance. Grant, Almighty God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, that my repentance, however late, however imperfect, may not be in vain!

“The little good that now remains in my power is to warn others against those temptations by which I have been seduced. I have always sinned against conviction; my principles have never been shaken; I have always considered the Christian religion as a revelation from God, and its divine Author as the Saviour of the world; but the laws of God, though never disowned by me, have often been forgotten. I was led astray from religious strictness by the delusion of show and the delights of voluptuousness. I never knew or attended to the calls of frugality, or the needful minuteness of painful economy. Vanity and pleasure, into which I plunged, required expense disproportionate to my income; expense brought distress upon me; and distress, importunate distress, urged me to temporary fraud.

“For this fraud I am to die; and I die declaring, in the most solemn manner, that however I have deviated from my own precepts, I have taught others, to the best of my knowledge, and with all sincerity, the true way to eternal happiness. My life, for some few unhappy years past, has been dreadfully erroneous; but my ministry has been always sincere. I have constantly believed; and I now leave the world solemnly avowing my conviction, that there is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved but only the name of the Lord Jesus; and I entreat all who are here to join with me in my last petition, that, for the sake of that Lord Jesus Christ, my sins may be forgiven, and my soul received into his everlasting kingdom.

“June 27, 1777.

“WILLIAM DODD.”

The body of the doctor was on the Monday following carried to Cowley, in Buckinghamshire, and deposited in the church there.

During the Doctor's confinement in Newgate (a period of several months) he chiefly employed himself in writing various pieces, which show at once his piety and talent. The principal of these were his *Thoughts in Prison*, in five parts, from which we cannot doubt but that our readers, in finishing our life of so eminent, yet unfortunate, a man, will be gratified by the insertion of a few short extracts. "I began these Thoughts," says the unhappy man, writing in Newgate, under date of the 23d of April, 1777, after his condemnation, "merely from the impression in my mind, without plan, purpose, or motive, more than the situation of my soul.

"I continued thence on a thoughtful and regular plan; and I have been enabled wonderfully, in a state which in better days I should have supposed would have destroyed all power of reflection, to bring them nearly to a conclusion. I dedicate them to God, and the reflecting serious among my fellow-creatures; and I bless the Almighty for the ability to go through them amidst the terrors of this dire place (Newgate), and the bitter anguish of my disconsolate mind! The thinking will easily pardon all inaccuracies, as I am neither able nor willing to read over these melancholy lines with a curious or critical eye. They are imperfect, but in the language of the heart; and had I time and inclination, might, and should be improved.—But——

(Signed) "W. D."

The unfortunate author's *Thoughts on his Imprisonment* are thus introduced:

“My friends are gone! harsh on its sullen hinge
Grates the dread door: the massy bolts respond
Tremendous to the surly keeper’s touch:
The dire keys clang, with movement dull and slow,
While their behest the ponderous locks perform:
And, fasten’d firm, the object of their care
Is left to solitude—to sorrow left.

“But wherefore fasten’d? Oh! still stronger bonds
Than bolts, or locks, or doors of molten brass,
To solitude and sorrow could consign
His anguish’d soul, and prison him, though free!
For whither should he fly, or where produce
In open day, and to the golden sun,
His hapless head! whence every laurel torn,
On his bald brow sits grinning infamy:
And all in sportive triumph twines around
The keen, the stinging arrows of disgrace.”

After dwelling on his miseries of that dreary confinement, at sight of which he formerly started back with horror, he adds,

“O dismal change! now not in friendly sort
A Christian visitor, to pour the balm
Of Christian comfort in some wretch’s ear—
I am that wretch myself! and want, much want,
That Christian consolation I bestow’d;
So cheerfully bestow’d! Want, want, my God,
From thee the mercy, which, thou know’st my gladsome soul
Ever sprang forth with transport to impart.

“Why then, mysterious Providence, pursued
With such unfeeling ardour? Why pursued
To death’s dread bourn, by men to me unknown!
Why—stop the deep question; it o’erwhelms my soul;
It reels, it staggers! Earth turns around! My brain
Whirls in confusion! My impetuous heart
Throbs with pulsation not to be restrain’d;
“Why?—Where?—O Chesterfield, my son, my son!”

The unfortunate divine afterwards thus proceeds:—

“Nay, talk not of composure! I had thought
In older time, that my weak heart was soft,
And pity’s self might break it. I had thought
That marble-eyed Severity would crack
The slender nerves which guide my reins of sense,
And give me up to madness! ’Tis not so;
My heart is callous, and my nerves are tough;
It will not break; they will not crack; or else
What more, just heaven! was wanting to the deed,
Then to behold—Oh! that eternal night
Had in that moment screened from myself
My Stanhope to behold! Ah! piercing sight!
Forget it; ’tis distraction: speak who can!
But I am lost! a criminal adjudged!”

It is not a little singular that Dr. Dodd, a few years before his death, published a Sermon, entitled, “The frequency of capital punishments inconsistent with justice, sound policy, and religion.” This, he says, was intended to have been preached at the Chapel Royal, at St. James’s; but omitted on account of the absence of the court, during the author’s month of waiting.

The following extract will show the unfortunate man’s opinion on this subject, although there is no reason to suppose that he then contemplated the commission of the crime for which he suffered. He says:

“It would be easy to show the injustice of those laws which demand blood for the slightest offences; the superior justice and propriety of inflicting perpetual and laborious servitude; the greater utility hereof to the sufferer, as well as to the state, especially wherein we have a variety of necessary occupations, peculiarly noxious and prejudicial to the lives of the honest and industrious, and in which they might be employed, who had forfeited their lives and their liberties to society.”

[1] From “The Chronicles of Crime,” London, 1891.

VII

BARRY LYNDON

Prince of Adventurers—Card-Sharp

W. M. THACKERAY^[1]

I presume that there is no gentleman in Europe that has not heard of the house of Barry Barryogue, of the kingdom of Ireland, than which a more famous name is not to be found in Gwillim or D’Hozier; and though, as a man of the world, I have learned to despise heartily the claims of some *pretenders* to high birth who have no more genealogy than the lacquey who cleans my boots, and though I laugh to utter scorn the boasting of many of my countrymen, who are all for descending from kings of Ireland, and talk of a domain no bigger than would feed a pig as if it were a principality; yet truth compels me to assert that my family was the noblest of the island, and, perhaps, of the universal world; while their possessions, now insignificant, and torn from us by war, by treachery, by the loss of time, by ancestral extravagance, by adhesion to the old faith and monarch, were formerly prodigious, and embraced many counties, at a time when Ireland was vastly more prosperous than now. I would assume the Irish crown over my coat-of-arms, but that there are so many silly pretenders to that distinction who bear it and render it common.

My father was well known to the best circles in this kingdom as in that of Ireland, under the name of Roaring Harry Barry. He was bred like many other young sons of genteel families to the profession of the law, being articulated to a celebrated attorney of Sackville Street in the city of Dublin; and, from his great genius and aptitude for learning, there is no doubt he would have made an eminent figure in his profession, had not his social qualities, love of field-sports, and extraordinary graces of manner, marked him out for a higher sphere. While he was attorney’s clerk he kept seven race-horses, and hunted regularly both with the Kildare and Wicklow hunts; and rode on his grey horse Endymion that famous match against Captain Punter, which is still remembered by lovers of the sport, and of which I caused a splendid picture to be made and hung over my dining-hall mantelpiece at Castle Lyndon. A year afterwards he had the honour of riding

that very horse Endymion before his late Majesty King George II at Newmarket, and won the plate there and the attention of the august sovereign.

Although he was only the second son of our family, my dear father came naturally into the estate (now miserably reduced to 400*l.* a year); for my grandfather's eldest son, Cornelius Barry (called the Chevalier Borgne, from a wound which he received in Germany), remained constant to the old religion in which our family was educated, and not only served abroad with credit, but against his most sacred Majesty George II in the unhappy Scotch disturbances in '45. We shall hear more of the Chevalier hereafter.

For the conversion of my father I have to thank my dear mother, Miss Bell Brady, daughter of Ulysses Brady of Castle Brady, county Kerry, Esquire and J. P. She was the most beautiful woman of her day in Dublin, and universally called the Dasher there. They were married at the Savoy in London—a runaway match—and my grandfather dying very soon, Harry Barry, Esquire, took possession of his paternal property and supported our illustrious name with credit in London. He pinked the famous Count Tiercelin behind Montague House, he was a member of “White's,” and a frequenter of all the chocolate-houses; and my mother, likewise, made no small figure. At length, after his great day of triumph before his sacred Majesty at Newmarket, Harry's fortune was just on the point of being made, for the gracious monarch promised to provide for him. But, alas! he was taken in charge by another monarch, whose will will have no delay or denial,—by Death, namely, who seized upon my father at Chester races, leaving me a helpless orphan. Peace be to his ashes! He was not faultless, and dissipated all our princely family property; but he was as brave a fellow as ever tossed a bumper or called a main, and he drove his coach-and-six like a man of fashion.

* * * * *

When we left Castle Brady where my mother and myself had lived under the protection of my uncle, her brother, Michael Brady, since the death of my father, we came to occupy a house in Brady's Town, which mamma christened Barryville. I confess it was but a small place, but, indeed, we made the most of it. I have mentioned the family pedigree which hung up in the drawing-room, which mamma called the yellow saloon, and my bedroom was called the pink bedroom, and hers the orange-tawny apartment (how well I remember them all!); and at dinner-time Tim regularly rang a great bell, and we each had a silver tankard to drink from, and mother boasted with justice that I had as good a bottle of claret by my side as any

squire of the land. So indeed I had, but I was not, of course, allowed at my tender years to drink any of the wine; which thus attained a considerable age, even in the decanter.

Uncle Brady (in spite of the family quarrel) found out the above fact one day by calling at Barryville at dinner-time, and unluckily tasting the liquor. You should have seen how he sputtered and made faces! But the honest gentleman was not particular about his wine, nor the company in which he drank it. He would get drunk, indeed, with the parson or the priest indifferently; with the latter, much to my mother's indignation, for, as a true blue Nassauite, she heartily despised all those of the old faith, and would scarcely sit down in the room with a benighted Papist. But the squire had no such scruples; he was, indeed, one of the easiest, idlest, and best-natured fellows that ever lived, and many an hour would he pass with the lonely widow when he was tired of Madam Brady at home. He liked me, he said, as much as one of his own sons, and at length, after the widow had held out for a couple of years, she agreed to allow me to return to the castle; though, for herself, she resolutely kept the oath which she had made with regard to her sister-in-law.

The very first day I returned to Castle Brady my trials may be said, in a manner, to have begun. My cousin, Master Mick, a huge monster of nineteen (who hated me, and I promise you I returned the compliment), insulted me at dinner about my mother's poverty, and made all the girls of the family titter. So when we went to the stables, whither Mick always went for his pipe of tobacco after dinner, I told him a piece of my mind, and there was a fight for at least ten minutes, during which I stood to him like a man, and blacked his left eye, though I was myself only twelve years old at the time. Of course he beat me, but a beating makes only a small impression on a lad of that tender age, as I had proved many times in battles with the ragged Brady's Town boys before, not one of whom, at my time of life, was my match. My uncle was very much pleased when he heard of my gallantry; my cousin Nora brought brown paper and vinegar for my nose, and I went home that night with a pint of claret under my girdle, not a little proud, let me tell you, at having held my own against Mick so long.

And though he persisted in his bad treatment of me, and used to cane me whenever I fell in his way, yet I was very happy now at Castle Brady with the company there, and my cousins, or some of them, and the kindness of my uncle, with whom I became a prodigious favourite. He bought a colt for me, and taught me to ride. He took me out coursing and fowling, and instructed me to shoot flying. And at length I was released from Mick's persecution, for his brother, Master Ulick, returning from Trinity College, and hating his elder brother, as is mostly the way in families of fashion, took

me under his protection; and from that time, as Ulick was a deal bigger and stronger than Mick, I, English Redmond, as I was called, was left alone; except when the former thought fit to thrash me, which he did whenever he thought proper.

Nor was my learning neglected in the ornamental parts, for I had an uncommon natural genius for many things, and soon topped in accomplishments most of the persons around me. I had a quick ear and a fine voice, which my mother cultivated to the best of her power, and she taught me to step a minuet gravely and gracefully, and thus laid the foundation of my future success in life. The common dances I learned (as, perhaps, I ought not to confess) in the servants' hall, which, you may be sure, was never without a piper, and where I was considered unrivalled both at a hornpipe and a jig.

In the matter of book-learning, I had always an uncommon taste for reading plays and novels, as the best part of a gentleman's polite education, and never let a pedlar pass the village, if I had a penny, without having a ballad or two from him. As for your dull grammar, and Greek and Latin and stuff, I have always hated them from my youth upwards, and said, very unmistakably, I would have none of them.

This I proved pretty clearly at the age of thirteen, when my aunt Biddy Brady's legacy of 100*l.* came in to mamma, who thought to employ the sum on my education, and sent me to Doctor Tobias Tickler's famous academy at Ballywhacket—Backwhacket, as my uncle used to call it. But six weeks after I had been consigned to his reverence, I suddenly made my appearance again at Castle Brady, having walked forty miles from the odious place, and left the doctor in a state near upon apoplexy. The fact was, that at taw, prison-bars, or boxing, I was at the head of the school, but could not be brought to excel in the classics; and after having been flogged seven times without its doing me the least good in my Latin, I refused to submit altogether (finding it useless) to an eighth application of the rod. "Try some other way, sir," said I, when he was for horseing me once more; but he wouldn't; whereon, and to defend myself, I flung a slate at him, and knocked down a Scotch usher with a leaden inkstand. All the lads huzzaed at this, and some of the servants wanted to stop me, but taking out a large clasp-knife that my cousin Nora had given me, I swore I would plunge it into the waistcoat of the first man who dared to baulk me, and faith they let me pass on. I slept that night twenty miles off Ballywhacket, at the house of a cottier, who gave me potatoes and milk, and to whom I gave a hundred guineas after, when I came to visit Ireland in my days of greatness. I wish I had the money now. But what's the use of regret? I have had many a harder bed than that I shall sleep on to-night, and many a scantier meal than honest

Phil Murphy gave me on the evening I ran away from school. So six weeks' was all the schooling I ever got. And I say this to let parents know the value of it; for though I have met more learned bookworms in the world, especially a great hulking, clumsy, blear-eyed old doctor, whom they called Johnson, and who lived in a court off Fleet Street, in London, yet I pretty soon silenced him in an argument (at "Button's Coffee-house"); and in that, and in poetry, and what I call natural philosophy, or the science of life, and in riding, music, leaping, the small-sword, the knowledge of a horse, or a main of cocks, and the manners of an accomplished gentleman and a man of fashion, I may say for myself that Redmond Barry has seldom found his equal. "Sir," said I to Mr. Johnson, on the occasion I allude to—he was accompanied by a Mr. Buswell of Scotland, and I was presented to the club by a Mr. Goldsmith, a countryman of my own,—“Sir,” said I, in reply to the schoolmaster's great thundering quotation in Greek, “you fancy you know a great deal more than me, because you quote your Aristotle and your Pluto, but can you tell me which horse will win at Epsom Downs next week?—Can you run six miles without breathing?—Can you shoot the ace of spades ten times without missing? If so, talk about Aristotle and Pluto to me.”

“D'ye know who ye're speaking to?” roared out the Scotch gentleman, Mr. Buswell, at this.

“Hold your tongue, Mr. Boswell,” said the old schoolmaster. “I had no right to brag of my Greek to the gentleman, and he has answered me very well.”

“Doctor,” says I, looking waggishly at him, “do you know ever a rhyme for Aristotle?”

“Port, if you please,” says Mr. Goldsmith, laughing. And we had *six rhymes for Aristotle* before we left the coffee-house that evening. It became a regular joke afterwards when I told the story, and at “White's” or the “Cocoa-tree” you would hear the wags say, “Waiter, bring one of Captain Barry's rhymes for Aristotle.” Once, when I was in liquor at the latter place, young Dick Sheridan called me a great Staggerite, a joke which I could never understand. But I am wandering from my story, and must get back to home, and dear old Ireland again.

I have made acquaintance with the best in the land since, and my manners are such, I have said, as to make me the equal of them all; and, perhaps, you will wonder how a country boy, as I was, educated amongst Irish squires, and their dependants of the stable and farm, should arrive at possessing such elegant manners as I was indisputably allowed to have. I had, the fact is, a very valuable instructor in the person of an old gamekeeper, who had served the French king at Fontenoy, and who taught me the dances and customs, and a smattering of the language of that country,

with the use of the sword, both small and broad. Many and many a long mile I have trudged by his side as a lad, he telling me wonderful stories of the French king, and the Irish brigade, and Marshal Saxe, and the opera-dancers: he knew my uncle, too, the Chevalier Borgne, and indeed had a thousand accomplishments which he taught me in secret. I never knew a man like him for making or throwing a fly, for physicking a horse, or breaking, or choosing one; he taught me manly sports, from bird's-nesting upwards, and I always shall consider Phil Purcell as the very best tutor I could have had. His fault was drink, but for that I have always had a blind eye: and he hated my cousin Mick like poison; but I could excuse him that too.

* * * * *

After a lapse of seven years, during which Barry Lyndon, having suddenly fled from Ireland because he had (supposedly) killed a man of rank in a duel, passed through many adventures, we find him in Berlin after five years' service under Frederick the Great in the Seven Years' War. He had, though still a private, been selected as a confidential servant by Captain Potzdorff.

No man can suppose that to a person of my fashion the waiting in antechambers, the conversation of footmen and hangers-on, was pleasant. But it was not more degrading than the barrack-room, of which I need not say I was heartily sick. My protestations of liking for the army were all intended to throw dust into the eyes of my employer. I sighed to be out of slavery. I knew I was born to make a figure in the world. Had I been one of the Neiss garrison, I would have cut my way to freedom by the side of the gallant Frenchman; but here I had only artifice to enable me to attain my end, and was not I justified in employing it? My plan was this: I may make myself so necessary to M. de Potzdorff, that he will obtain my freedom. Once free, with my fine person and good family, I will do what ten thousand Irish gentlemen have done before, and will marry a lady of fortune and condition. And the proof that I was, if not disinterested, at least actuated by a noble ambition, is this. There was a fat grocer's widow in Berlin with six hundred thalers of rent, and a good business, who gave me to understand that she would purchase my discharge if I would marry her; but I frankly told her that I was not made to be a grocer, and thus absolutely flung away a chance of freedom which she offered me.

And I was grateful to my employers: more grateful than they to me. The captain was in debt, and had dealings with the Jews, to whom he gave notes-of-hand payable on his uncle's death. The old Herr von Potzdorff,^[2] seeing

the confidence his nephew had in me, offered to bribe me to know what the young man's affairs really were. But what did I do? I informed Monsieur George von Potzdorff of the fact and we made out, in concert, a list of little debts, so moderate, that they actually appeased the old uncle instead of irritating, and he paid them, being glad to get off so cheap.

And a pretty return I got for his fidelity. One morning, the old gentleman being closeted with his nephew (he used to come to get any news stirring as to what the young officers of the regiments were doing; whether this or that gambled; who intrigued, and with whom; who was at the ridotto on such a night; who was in debt, and what not; for the king liked to know the business of every officer in his army), I was sent with a letter to the Marquis d'Argens (that afterwards married Mademoiselle Cochois, the actress), and meeting the marquis at a few paces off in the street, gave my message, and returned to the captain's lodging. He and his worthy uncle were making my unworthy self the subject of conversation.

"He is noble," said the captain.

"Bah!" replied the uncle (whom I could have throttled for his insolence). "All the beggarly Irish who ever enlisted tell the same story."

"He was kidnapped by Galgenstein," resumed the other.

"A kidnapped deserter," said M. Potzdorff; "*la belle affaire!*"

"Well, I promised the lad I would ask for his discharge; and I am sure you can make him useful."

"You *have* asked his discharge," answered the elder, laughing. "Bon Dieu! You are a model of probity! You'll never succeed to my place, George, if you are no wiser than you are just now. Make the fellow as useful to you as you please. He has a good manner and a frank countenance. He can lie with an assurance that I never saw surpassed, and fight, you say, on a pinch. The scoundrel does not want for good qualities; but he is vain, a spendthrift, and a *bavard*. As long as you have the regiment in *terrorem* over him, you can do as you like with him. Once let him loose, and the lad is likely to give you the slip. Keep on promising him; promise to make him a general, if you like. What the deuce do I care? There are spies enough to be had in this town without him."

It was thus that the services I rendered to M. Potzdorff were qualified by that ungrateful old gentleman; and I stole away from the room extremely troubled in spirit, to think that another of my fond dreams was thus dispelled; and that my hopes of getting out of the army, by being useful to the captain, were entirely vain. For some time my despair was such, that I thought of marrying the widow; but the marriages of privates are never allowed without the direct permission of the King; and it was a matter of very great doubt whether his Majesty would allow a young fellow of twenty-

two, the handsomest man of his army, to be coupled to a pimple-faced old widow of sixty, who was quite beyond the age when her marriage would be likely to multiply the subjects of his Majesty. This hope of liberty was therefore vain; nor could I hope to purchase my discharge, unless any charitable soul would lend me a large sum of money: for, though I made a good deal, as I have said, yet I have always had through life an incorrigible knack of spending and (such is my generosity of disposition) have been in debt ever since I was born.

My captain, the sly rascal! gave me a very different version of his conversation with his uncle to that which I knew to be the true one; and said smilingly to me, "Redmond, I have spoken to the Minister regarding the service, and thy fortune is made. We shall get thee out of the army, appoint thee to the police bureau, and procure for thee an inspectorship of customs; and, in fine, allow thee to move in a better sphere than that in which Fortune has hitherto placed thee."

Although I did not believe a word of this speech, I affected to be very much moved by it, and of course swore eternal gratitude to the captain for his kindness to the poor Irish castaway.

"Your service at the Dutch Minister's has pleased me very well.^[3] There is another occasion on which you may make yourself useful to us; and if you succeed, depend on it your reward will be secure."

"What is the service, sir?" said I; "I will do anything for so kind a master."

"There is lately come to Berlin," said the captain, "a gentleman in the service of the Empress-queen, who calls himself the Chevalier de Balibari, and wears the red riband and star of the Pope's order of the Spur. He speaks Italian or French indifferently; but we have some reason to fancy this Monsieur de Balibari is a native of your country of Ireland. Did you ever hear such a name as Balibari in Ireland?"

"Balibari! Balyb * *?" A sudden thought flashed across me. "No, sir," said I, "never heard the name."

"You must go into his service. Of course you will not know a word of English; and if the chevalier asks as to the particularity of your accent, say you are a Hungarian. The servant who came with him will be turned away to-day, and the person to whom he has applied for a faithful fellow will recommend you. You are a Hungarian; you served in the Seven Years' War. You left the army on account of weakness of the loins. You served Monsieur de Quellenberg two years; he is now with the army in Silesia, but there is your certificate signed by him. You afterwards lived with Dr. Mopsius, who will give you a character, if need be; and the landlord of the "Star" will of

course certify that you are an honest fellow: but his certificate goes for nothing. As for the rest of your story, you can fashion that as you will, and make it as romantic or as ludicrous as your fancy dictates. Try, however, to win the chevalier's confidence by provoking his compassion. He gambles a great deal, and *wins*. Do you know the cards well?"

"Only a very little, as soldiers do."

"I had thought you more expert. You must find out if the chevalier cheats; if he does we have him. He sees the English and Austrian envoys continually, and the young men of either Ministry sup repeatedly at his house. Find out what they talk of; for how much each plays, especially if any of them play on parole: if you once read his private letters, of course you will; though about those which go to the post, you need not trouble yourself; we look at them there. But never see him write a note without finding out to whom it goes, and by what channel or messenger. He sleeps with the keys of his dispatch-box on a string round his neck. Twenty Fredericks, if you get an impression of the keys. You will of course go in plain clothes. You had best brush the powder out of your hair, and tie it with a riband simply; your moustache you must of course shave off."

With these instructions and a very small gratuity, the captain left me. When I again saw him, he was amused at the change in my appearance. I had, not without a pang (for they were as black as jet, and curled elegantly), shaved off my moustaches; had removed the odious grease and flour, which I always abominated, out of my hair; had mounted a demure French grey coat, black satin breeches, and a maroon plush waistcoat, and a hat without a cockade. I looked as meek and humble as any servant out of place could possibly appear; and I think not my own regiment, which was now at the review at Potsdam, would have known me. Thus accoutred, I went to the "Star Hotel," where this stranger was,—my heart beating with anxiety, and something telling me that this Chevalier de Balibari was no other than Barry of Ballybarry, my father's eldest brother, who had given up his estate in consequence of his obstinate adherence to the Romish superstition. Before I went in to present myself, I went to look in the *remises* at his carriage. Had he the Barry arms? Yes, there they were: argent, a bend gules, with four escallops of the field,—the ancient coat of my house. They were painted in a shield about as big as my hat, on a smart chariot handsomely gilded, surmounted with a coronet, and supported by eight or nine cupids, cornucopias, and flower-baskets, according to the queer heraldic fashion of those days. It must be he! I felt quite faint as I went up the stairs. I was going to present myself before my uncle in the character of a servant.

"You are the young man whom M. de Seebach recommended?"

I bowed, and handed him a letter from that gentleman, with which my captain had taken care to provide me. As he looked at it I had leisure to examine him. My uncle was a man of sixty years of age, dressed superbly in a coat and breeches of apricot-coloured velvet, a white satin waistcoat, embroidered with gold like the coat. Across his breast went the purple riband of his order of the Spur; and the star of the order, an enormous one, sparkled on his breast. He had rings on all his fingers, a couple of watches in his fobs, a rich diamond *solitaire* in the black riband round his neck, and fastened to the bag of his wig; his ruffles and frills were decorated with a profusion of the richest lace. He had pink silk stockings rolled over the knee, and tied with gold garters; and enormous diamond buckles to his red-heeled shoes. A sword mounted in gold, in a white fish-skin scabbard; and a hat richly laced, and lined with white feathers, which were lying on a table beside him, completed the costume of this splendid gentleman. In height he was about my size, that is, six feet and half an inch; his cast of features singularly like mine, and extremely *distingué*. One of his eyes was closed with a black patch, however; he wore a little white and red paint, by no means an unusual ornament in those days; and a pair of moustaches, which fell over his lip and hid a mouth that I afterwards found had rather a disagreeable expression. When his beard was removed, the upper teeth appeared to project very much; and his countenance wore a ghastly fixed smile by no means pleasant.

It was very imprudent of me; but when I saw the splendour of his appearance, the nobleness of his manner, I felt it impossible to keep disguise with him; and when he said, "Ah, you are a Hungarian I see!" I could hold no longer.

"Sir," said I, "I am an Irishman, and my name is Redmond Barry, of Ballybarry." As I spoke, I burst into tears; I can't tell why; but I had seen none of my kith or kin for six years, and my heart longed for some one.

* * * * *

You who have never been out of your country, know little what it is to hear a friendly voice in captivity; and there's many a man that will not understand the cause of the burst of feeling which I have confessed took place on my seeing my uncle. He never for a minute thought to question the truth of what I said. "Mother of God!" cried he, "it's my brother Harry's son." And I think in my heart he was as much affected as I was at thus suddenly finding one of his kindred; for he, too, was an exile from home, and a friendly voice, a look, brought the old country back to his memory again, and the old days of his boyhood. "I'd give five years of my life to see

them again,” said he, after caressing me very warmly. “What?” asked I. “Why,” replied he, “the green fields, and the river, and the old round tower, and the burying-place at Ballybarry. ’Twas a shame for your father to part with the land, Redmond, that went so long with the name.”

He then began to ask me concerning myself, and I gave him my history at some length; at which the worthy gentleman laughed many times, saying that I was a Barry all over. In the middle of my story he would stop me, to make me stand back to back, and measure with him (by which I ascertained that our heights were the same, and that my uncle had a stiff knee, moreover, which made him walk in a peculiar way), and uttered, during the course of the narrative, a hundred exclamations of pity, and kindness, and sympathy. It was “Holy Saints!” and “Mother of Heaven!” and “Blessed Mary!” continually; by which, and with justice, I concluded that he was still devotedly attached to the ancient faith of our family.

It was with some difficulty that I came to explain to him the last part of my history, viz. that I was put into his service as a watch upon his actions, of which I was to give information in a certain quarter. When I told him (with a great deal of hesitation) of this fact, he burst out laughing, and enjoyed the joke amazingly. “The rascals!” said he; “they think to catch me, do they? Why, Redmond, my chief conspiracy is a faro-bank. But the king is so jealous, that he will see a spy in every person who comes to his miserable capital in the great sandy desert here. Ah, my boy, I must show you Paris and Vienna!”

I said there was nothing I longed for more than to see any city but Berlin, and should be delighted to be free of the odious military service. Indeed, I thought, from his splendour of appearance, the knicknacks about the room, the gilded carriage in the *remise*, that my uncle was a man of vast property; and that he would purchase a dozen, nay, a whole regiment of substitutes, in order to restore me to freedom.

But I was mistaken in my calculations regarding him, as his history of himself speedily showed me. “I have been beaten about the world,” said he, “ever since the year 1742, when my brother your father (and heaven forgive him) cut my family estate from under my heels, by turning heretic, in order to marry that scold of a mother of yours. Well, let bygones be bygones. ’Tis probable that I should have run through the little property as he did in my place, and I should have had to begin a year or two later the life I have been leading ever since I was compelled to leave Ireland. My lad, I have been in every service; and between ourselves, owe money in every capital in Europe. I made a campaign or two with the Pandours under Austrian Trenck. I was captain in the Guard of his Holiness the Pope. I made the campaign of Scotland with the Prince of Wales—a bed fellow, my dear, caring more for

his mistress and his brandy-bottle than for the crowns of the three kingdoms. I have served in Spain and in Piedmont; but I have been a rolling stone, my good fellow. Play—play has been my ruin! that and beauty” (here he gave a leer which made him, I must confess, look anything but handsome; besides, his rouged cheeks were all beslobbered with the tears which he had shed on receiving me). “The women have made a fool of me, my dear Redmond. I am a soft-hearted creature, and this minute, at sixty-two, have no more command of myself than when Peggy O’Dwyer made a fool of me at sixteen.”

“Faith, sir,” says I, laughing, “I think it runs in the family!” and described to him, much to his amusement, my romantic passion for my cousin, Nora Brady. He resumed his narrative:

“The cards now are my only livelihood. Sometimes I am in luck, and then I lay out my money in these trinkets you see. It’s property, look you, Redmond; and the only way I have found of keeping a little about me. When the luck goes against me, why, my dear, my diamonds go to the pawnbrokers, and I wear paste. Friend Moses the goldsmith will pay me a visit this very day; for the chances have been against me all the week past, and I must raise money for the bank to-night. Do you understand the cards?”

I replied that I could play as soldiers do, but had no great skill.

“We will practise in the morning, my boy,” said he, “and I’ll put you up to a thing or two worth knowing.”

Of course I was glad to have such an opportunity of acquiring knowledge, and professed myself delighted to receive my uncle’s instruction.

The chevalier’s account of himself rather disagreeably affected me. All his show was on his back, as he said. His carriage, with the fine gilding, was a part of his stock in trade. He *had* a sort of mission from the Austrian court:—it was to discover whether a certain quantity of alloyed ducats, which had been traced to Berlin, were from the king’s treasury. But the real end of Monsieur de Balibari was play. There was a young *attaché* of the English embassy, my Lord Deuceace, afterwards Viscount and Earl of Crabs in the English peerage, who was playing high; and it was after hearing of the passion of this young English nobleman that my uncle, then at Prague, determined to visit Berlin and engage him. For there is a sort of chivalry among the knights of the dice-box: the fame of great players is known all over Europe. I have known the Chevalier de Casanova, for instance, to travel six hundred miles, from Paris to Turin, for the purpose of meeting Mr. Charles Fox, then only my Lord Holland’s dashing son, afterwards the greatest of European orators and statesmen.

It was agreed that I should keep my character of valet; that in the presence of strangers I should not know a word of English; that I should keep a good look-out on the trumps when I was serving the champagne and punch about; and, having a remarkably fine eyesight and a great natural aptitude, I was speedily able to give my dear uncle much assistance against his opponents at the green table. Some prudish persons may affect indignation at the frankness of these confessions, but heaven pity them! Do you suppose that any man who has lost or won a hundred thousand pounds at play will not take the advantages which his neighbour enjoys? They are all the same. But it is only the clumsy fool who *cheats*; who resorts to the vulgar expedients of cogged dice and cut cards. Such a man is sure to go wrong sometime or other, and is not fit to play in the society of gallant gentlemen; and my advice to people who see such a vulgar person at his pranks is, of course, to back him while he plays, but never—never to have anything to do with him. Play grandly, honourably. Be not, of course, cast down at losing; but above all, be not eager at winning, as mean souls are. And, indeed, with all one's skill and advantages winning is often problematical; I have seen a sheer ignoramus that knows no more of play than of Hebrew, blunder you out of five thousand pounds in a few turns of the cards. I have seen a gentleman and his confederate play against another and *his* confederate. One never is secure in these cases: and when one considers the time and labour spent, the genius, the anxiety, the outlay of money required, the multiplicity of bad debts that one meets with (for dishonourable rascals are to be found at the play-table, as everywhere else in the world), I say, for my part, the profession is a bad one; and, indeed, have scarcely ever met a man who, in the end, profited by it. I am writing now with the experience of a man of the world. At the time I speak of I was a lad, dazzled by the idea of wealth, and respecting, certainly too much, my uncle's superior age and station in life.

There is no need to particularize here the little arrangements made between us; the play-men of the present day want no instruction, I take it, and the public have little interest in the matter. But simplicity was our secret. Everything successful is simple. If, for instance, I wiped the dust off a chair with my napkin, it was to show that the enemy was strong in diamonds; if I pushed it, he had ace, king; if I said, "Punch or wine, my lord?" hearts was meant; if "Wine or punch?" clubs. If I blew my nose, it was to indicate that there was another confederate employed by the adversary; and *then*, I warrant you, some pretty trials of skill would take place. My Lord Deuceace, although so young, had a very great skill and cleverness with the cards in every way; and it was only from hearing Frank Punter, who came

with him, yawn three times when the chevalier had the ace of trumps, that I knew we were Greek to Greek, as it were.

My assumed dullness was perfect; and I used to make Monsieur de Potzdorff laugh with it, when I carried my little reports to him at the Garden-house outside the town where he gave me rendezvous. These reports, of course, were arranged between me and my uncle beforehand. I was instructed (and it is always far the best way) to tell as much truth as my story would possibly bear. When, for instance, he would ask me, "What does the chevalier do of a morning?"

"He goes to church regularly" (he was very religious), "and after hearing mass comes home to breakfast. Then he takes an airing in his chariot till dinner, which is served at noon. After dinner he writes his letters, if he have any letters to write; but he has very little to do in this way. His letters are to the Austrian envoy, with whom he corresponds, but who does not acknowledge him; and being written in English, of course I look over his shoulder. He generally writes for money. He says he wants it to bribe the secretaries of the Treasury, in order to find out really where the alloyed ducats come from; but, in fact, he wants it to play of evenings, when he makes his party with Calsabigi, the lottery-contractor, the Russian *attachés*, two from the English embassy, my Lords Deuceace and Punter, who play a *jeu d'enfer*, and a few more. The same set meet every night at supper: there are seldom any ladies; those who come are chiefly French ladies, members of the *corps de ballet*. He wins often, but not always. Lord Deuceace is a very fine player. The Chevalier Elliot, the English Minister, sometimes comes, on which occasion the secretaries do not play. Monsieur de Balibari dines at the missions, but *en petit comité*, not on grand days of reception. Calsabigi, I think, is his confederate at play. He has won lately; but the week before last he pledged his *solitaire* for four hundred ducats."

"Do he and the English *attachés* talk together in their own language?"

"Yes; he and the envoy spoke yesterday for half an hour about the new *danseuse* and the American troubles: chiefly about the new *danseuse*."

It will be seen that the information I gave was very minute and accurate, though not very important. But such as it was, it was carried to the ears of that famous hero and warrior, the Philosopher of Sans Souci; and there was not a stranger who entered the capital, but his actions were similarly spied and related to Frederick the Great.

As long as the play was confined to the young men of the different embassies, his Majesty did not care to prevent it; nay, he encouraged play at all the missions, knowing full well that a man in difficulties can be made to speak, and that a timely *rouleau* of Fredericks would often get him a secret worth many thousands. He got some papers from the French house in this

way: and I have no doubt that my Lord Deuceace would have supplied him with information at a similar rate, had his chief not known the young nobleman's character pretty well, and had (as is usually the case) the work of the mission performed by a steady *roturier*, while the young brilliant bloods of the suite sported their embroidery at the balls, or shook their Mechlin ruffles over the green tables at faro. I have seen many scores of these young sprigs since, of these and their principals, and *mon Dieu!* what fools they are! What dullards, what frubbles, what addle-headed simple coxcombs! This is one of the lies of the world, this diplomacy; or how could we suppose, that were the profession as difficult as the solemn red-box-and-tape men would have us believe, they would invariably choose for it little pink-faced boys from school, with no other claim than mamma's title, and able at most to judge of a curricule, a new dance, or a neat boot?

When it became known, however, to the officers of the garrison that there was a faro-table in town, they were wild to be admitted to the sport; and, in spite of my entreaties to the contrary, my uncle was not averse to allow the young gentlemen their fling, and once or twice cleared a handsome sum out of their purses. It was in vain I told him that I must carry the news to my captain, before whom his comrades would not fail to talk, and who would thus know of the intrigue even without my information.

"Tell him," said my uncle.

"They will send you away," said I; "then what is to become of me?"

"Make your mind easy," said the latter, with a smile; "you shall not be left behind, I warrant you. Go take a last look at your barracks, make your mind easy; say a farewell to your friends in Berlin. The dear souls, how they will weep when they hear you are out of the country; and, as sure as my name is Barry, out of it you shall go!"

"But how, sir!" said I.

"Recollect Mr. Fakenham of Fakenham," said he, knowingly. "'Tis you yourself taught me how. Go get me one of my wigs. Open my dispatch-box yonder, where the great secrets of the Austrian chancery lie; put your hair back off your forehead; clap me on this patch and these moustaches, and now look in the glass!"

"The Chevalier de Balibari," said I, bursting with laughter, and began walking the room in his manner with his stiff knee.

The next day, when I went to make my report to Monsieur de Potzdorff, I told him of the young Prussian officers that had been of late gambling; and he replied, as I expected, that the king had determined to send the chevalier out of the country.

"He is a stingy curmudgeon," I replied; "I have had but three Fredericks from him in two months, and I hope you will remember your promise to

advance me!”

“Why, three Fredericks were too much for the news you have picked up,” said the captain, sneering.

“It is not my fault that there has been no more,” I replied. “When is he to go, sir?”

“The day after to-morrow. You say he drives after breakfast and before dinner. When he comes out to his carriage, a couple of *gendarmes* will mount the box, and the coachman will get his orders to move on.”

“And his baggage, sir?” said I.

“Oh! that will be sent after him. I have a fancy to look into that red box which contains his papers, you say; and at noon, after parade shall be at the inn. You will not say a word to any one there regarding the affair, and will wait for me at the chevalier’s rooms until my arrival. We must force that box. You are a clumsy hound, or you would have got the key long ago!”

I begged the captain to remember me, and so took my leave of him. The next night I placed a couple of pistols under the carriage seat.

Fortune smiling at parting upon Monsieur de Balibari, enabled him to win a handsome sum with his faro-bank.

At ten o’clock the next morning, the carriage of the Chevalier de Balibari drew up as usual at the door of his hotel; and the chevalier, who was at his window, seeing the chariot arrive, came down the stairs in his usual stately manner.

“Where is my rascal Ambrose?” said he, looking around and not finding his servant to open the door.

“I will let down the steps for your honour,” said a *gendarme*, who was standing by the carriage; and no sooner had the chevalier entered, than the officer jumped in after him, another mounted the box by the coachman, and the latter began to drive.

“Good gracious!” said the chevalier, “what is this?”

“You are going to drive to the frontier,” said the *gendarme*, touching his hat.

“It is shameful—infamous! I insist upon being put down at the Austrian ambassador’s house!”

“I have orders to gag your honour if you cry out,” said the *gendarme*.

“All Europe shall hear of this!” said the chevalier, in a fury.

“As you please,” answered the officer, and then both relapsed into silence.

The silence was not broken between Berlin and Potsdam, through which place the chevalier passed as his Majesty was reviewing his guards there, and the regiments of Bülow, Zitwitz, and Henkel de Donnersmark. As the chevalier passed his Majesty, the King raised his hat and said, “Qu’il ne

descende pas: je lui souhaite un bon voyage.” The Chevalier de Balibari acknowledged this courtesy by a profound bow.

They had not got far beyond Potsdam when boom! the alarm cannon began to roar.

“It is a deserter!” said the officer.

“Is it possible?” said the chevalier, and sank back into his carriage again.

Hearing the sound of the guns, the common people came out along the road with fowling-pieces and pitchforks, in hopes to catch the truant. The *gendarmes* looked very anxious to be on the look-out for him too. The price of a deserter was fifty crowns to those who brought him in.

“Confess, sir,” said the chevalier to the police-officer in the carriage with him, “that you long to be rid of me, from whom you can get nothing, and to be on the look-out for the deserter, who may bring you in fifty crowns? Why not tell the postilion to push on? You may land me at the frontier and get back to your hunt all the sooner.” The officer told the postilion to get on; but the way seemed intolerably long to the chevalier. Once or twice he thought he heard the noise of horse galloping behind: his own horses did not seem to go two miles an hour; but they *did* go. The black-and-white barriers came in view at last, hard by Brück, and opposite them the green-and-yellow of Saxony. The Saxon custom-house officers came out.

“I have no luggage,” said the chevalier.

“The gentleman has nothing contraband,” said the Prussian officers, grinning, and took their leave of their prisoner with much respect.

The Chevalier de Balibari gave them a Frederick apiece.

“Gentlemen,” said he, “I wish you a good day. Will you please to go to the house whence we set out this morning, and tell my man there to send on my baggage to the ‘Three Kings’ at Dresden?”

Then ordering fresh horses, the chevalier set off on his journey for the capital. I need not tell you that *I* was the chevalier.

*“From the CHEVALIER DE BALIBARI to REDMOND BARRY, Esquire,
Gentilhomme Anglais, à l’Hôtel des 3 Couronnes, à Dresde, en
Saxe.*

“NEPHEW REDMOND,—This comes to you by a sure hand, no other than Mr. Lumpit of the English Mission, who is acquainted, as all Berlin will be directly, with our wonderful story. They only know half as yet; they only know that a deserter went off in my clothes, and all are in admiration of your cleverness and valour.

“I confess that for two hours after your departure I lay in bed in no small trepidation, thinking whether his Majesty might have a fancy to send me to Spandau, for the freak of which we had both

been guilty. But in that case I had taken my precautions: I have written a statement of the case to my chief, the Austrian Minister, with the full and true story how you had been set to spy upon me, how you turned out to be my very near relative, how you had been kidnapped yourself into the service, and how we both had determined to effect your escape. The laugh would have been so much against the king, that he never would have dared to lay a finger upon me. What would Monsieur de Voltaire have said to such an act of tyranny?

“But it was a lucky day, and everything has turned out to my wish. As I lay in my bed two and a half hours after your departure, in comes your ex-Captain Potzdorff. ‘Redmond!’ says he, in his imperious High Dutch way, ‘are you there?’ No answer. ‘The rogue is gone out,’ said he; and straightway makes for my red box where I keep my love-letters, my glass eye which I used to wear, my favourite lucky dice with which I threw the thirteen mains at Prague, my two sets of Paris teeth, and my other private matters that you know of.

“He first tried a bunch of keys, but none of them would fit the little English lock. Then my gentleman takes out of his pocket a chisel and hammer, and falls to work like a professional burglar, actually bursting open my little box!

“Now was my time to act. I advance towards him armed with an immense water-jug. I come noiselessly up to him just as he had broken the box, and with all my might I deal him such a blow over the head as smashes the water-jug to atoms, and sends my captain with a snort lifeless to the ground. I thought I had killed him.

“Then I ring all the bells in the house: and shout and swear, and scream, ‘Thieves!—thieves!—landlord!—murder!—fire!’ until the whole household come tumbling up the stairs. ‘Where is my servant?’ roar I. ‘Who dares to rob me in open day? Look at the villain whom I find in the act of breaking my chest open! Send for the police, send for his Excellency the Austrian Minister! all Europe shall know of this insult!’

“‘Dear heaven!’ says the landlord, ‘we saw you go away three hours ago!’

“‘*Me!*’ says I; ‘why, man, I have been in bed all the morning. I am ill—I have taken physic—I have not left the house this morning! Where is that scoundrel Ambrose? But, stop! where are my clothes and wig?’ for I was standing before them in my chamber-gown and stockings, with my nightcap on.

“‘I have it—I have it!’ says a little chambermaid; ‘Ambrose is off in your honour’s dress.’

“‘And my money—my money!’ says I; ‘where is my purse with forty-eight Fredericks in it? But we have one of the villains left. Officers, seize him!’

“‘It’s the young Herr von Potzdorff!’ says the landlord, more and more astonished.

“‘What! a gentleman breaking open my trunk with hammer and chisel—impossible!’

“Herr von Potzdorff was returning to life by this time, with a swelling on his skull as big as a saucepan; and the officers carried him off, and the judge who was sent for dressed a *procès verbal* of the matter, and I demanded a copy of it, which I sent forthwith to my ambassador.

“I was kept a prisoner to my room the next day, and a judge, a general, and a host of lawyers, officers, and officials, were set upon me to bully, perplex, threaten, and cajole me. I said it was true you had told me that you had been kidnapped into the service, that I thought you were released from it, and that I had you with the best recommendations. I appealed to my Minister, who was bound to come to my aid; and, to make a long story short, poor Potzdorff is now on his way to Spandau; and his uncle, the elder Potzdorff, has brought me five hundred louis, with a humble request that I would leave Berlin forthwith, and hush up this painful matter.

“I shall be with you at the ‘Three Crowns’ the day after you receive this. Ask Mr. Lumpit to dinner. Do not spare your money—you are my son. Everybody in Dresden knows your loving uncle,

“THE CHEVALIER DE BALIBARI.”

And by these wonderful circumstances I was once more free again; and I kept my resolution then made, never to fall more into the hands of any recruiter, and thenceforth and for ever to be a gentleman.

With this sum of money, and a good run of luck which ensued presently, we were enabled to make no ungenteel figure. My uncle speedily joined me at the inn at Dresden, where, under pretence of illness, I had kept quiet until his arrival; and, as the Chevalier de Balibari was in particular good odour at the court of Dresden (having been an intimate acquaintance of the late monarch, the Elector, King of Poland, the most dissolute and agreeable of

European princes), I was speedily in the very best society of the Saxon capital: where I may say that my own person and manners, and the singularity of the adventures in which I had been a hero, made me especially welcome. There was not a party of the nobility to which the two gentlemen of Balibari were not invited. I had the honour of kissing hands and being graciously received at court by the Elector, and I wrote home to my mother such a flaming description of my prosperity, that the good soul very nearly forgot her celestial welfare and her confessor, the Rev. Joshua Jowls, in order to come after me to Germany; but travelling was very difficult in those days, and so we were spared the arrival of the good lady.

I think the soul of Harry Barry, my father, who was always so genteel in his turn of mind, must have rejoiced to see the position which I now occupied: all the women anxious to receive me, all the men in a fury; hobnobbing with dukes and counts at supper, dancing minuets with high well-born baronesses (as they absurdly call themselves in Germany), with lovely excellencies, nay, with highnesses and transparencies themselves, who could compete with the gallant young Irish noble? who would suppose that seven weeks before I had been a common—bah! I am ashamed to think of it! One of the pleasantest moments of my life was at a grand gala at the Electoral Palace, where I had the honour of walking a polonaise with no other than the Margravine of Bayreuth, old Fritz's own sister: old Fritz's, whose hateful blue-baize livery I had worn, whose belts I had pipeclayed, and whose abominable rations of small beer and sauerkraut I had swallowed for five years.

Having won an English chariot from an Italian gentleman at play, my uncle had our arms painted on the panels in a more splendid way than ever, surmounted (as we were descended from the ancient kings) with an Irish crown of the most splendid size and gilding. I had this crown in lieu of a coronet engraved on a large amethyst signet-ring worn on my forefinger; and I don't mind confessing that I used to say the jewel had been in my family for several thousand years, having originally belonged to my direct ancestor, his late Majesty King Brian Boru, or Barry. I warrant the legends of the Heralds' College are not more authentic than mine was.

At first the Minister and the gentlemen at the English hotel used to be rather shy of us two Irish noblemen, and questioned our pretensions to rank. The Minister was a lord's son, it is true, but he was likewise a grocer's grandson; and so I told him at Count Lobkowitz's masquerade. My uncle, like a noble gentleman as he was, knew the pedigree of every considerable family in Europe. He said it was the only knowledge befitting a gentleman; and when we were not at cards, we would pass hours over Gwillim or D'Hozier, reading the genealogies, learning the blazons, and making

ourselves acquainted with the relationships of our class. Alas! the noble science is going into disrepute now; so are cards, without which studies and pastimes I can hardly conceive how a man of honour can exist.

My first affair of honour with a man of undoubted fashion was on the score of my nobility, with young Sir Rumford Bumford of the English embassy; my uncle at the same time sending a cartel to the Minister, who declined to come. I shot Sir Rumford in the leg, amidst the tears of joy of my uncle, who accompanied me to the ground; and I promise you that none of the young gentlemen questioned the authenticity of my pedigree, or laughed at my Irish crown again.

What a delightful life did we now lead! I knew I was born a gentleman, from the kindly way in which I took to the business: as business it certainly is. For though it *seems* all pleasure, yet I assure any low-bred persons who may chance to read this, that we, their betters, have to work as well as they: though I did not rise until noon, yet had I not been up at play until long past midnight? Many a time have we come home to bed as the troops were marching out to early parade; and oh! it did my heart good to hear the bugles blowing the *reveillé* before daybreak, or to see the regiments marching out to exercise, and think that I was no longer bound to that disgusting discipline, but restored to my natural station.

I came into it at once, and as if I had never done anything else all my life. I had a gentleman to wait upon me, a French *friseur* to dress my hair of a morning; I knew the taste of chocolate as by intuition almost, and could distinguish between the right Spanish and the French before I had been a week in my new position; I had rings on all my fingers, watches in both my fobs, canes, trinkets, and snuff-boxes of all sorts, and each outvying the other in elegance. I had the finest natural taste for lace and china of any man I ever knew; I could judge a horse as well as any Jew dealer in Germany; in shooting and athletic exercises I was unrivalled; I could not spell, but I could speak German and French cleverly. I had at the least twelve suits of clothes; three richly embroidered with gold, two laced with silver, a garnet-coloured velvet pelisse lined with sable; one of French grey, silver-laced and lined with chinchilla. I had damask morning-ropes. I took lessons on the guitar, and sang French catches exquisitely. Where, in fact, was there a more accomplished gentleman than Redmond de Balibari?

All the luxuries becoming my station could not, of course, be purchased without credit and money: to procure which, as our patrimony had been wasted by our ancestors, and we were above the vulgarity and slow returns and doubtful chances of trade, my uncle kept a faro-bank. We were in partnership with a Florentine, well known in all the courts of Europe, the Count Alessandro Pippi, as skilful a player as ever was seen; but he turned

out a sad knave latterly, and I have discovered that his countship was a mere imposture. My uncle was maimed, as I have said! Pippi, like all impostors, was a coward; it was my unrivalled skill with the sword, and readiness to use it, that maintained the reputation of the firm, so to speak, and silenced many a timid gambler who might have hesitated to pay his losings. We always played on parole with anybody: any person, that is, of honour and noble lineage. We never pressed for our winnings or declined to receive promissory notes in lieu of gold. But woe to the man who did not pay when the note became due! Redmond de Balibari was sure to wait upon him with his bill, and I promise you there were very few bad debts: on the contrary, gentlemen were grateful to us for our forbearance, and our character for honour stood unimpeached. In later times, a vulgar national prejudice has chosen to cast a slur upon the character of men of honour engaged in the profession of play; but I speak of the good old days in Europe, before the cowardice of the French aristocracy (in the shameful Revolution, which served them right) brought discredit and ruin upon our order. They cry fie now upon men engaged in play; but I should like to know how much more honourable *their* modes of livelihood are than ours. The broker of the Exchange who bulls and bears, and buys and sells and dabbles with lying loans, and trades on state-secrets, what is he but a gamester? The merchant who deals in teas and tallow, is he any better? His bales of dirty indigo are his dice, his cards come up every year instead of every ten minutes, and the sea is his green table. You call the profession of the law an honourable one, where a man will lie for any bidder: lie down poverty for the sake of a fee from wealth, lie down right because wrong is in his brief. You call a doctor an honourable man, a swindling quack, who does not believe in the nostrums which he prescribes, and takes your guinea for whispering in your ear that it is a fine morning; and yet, forsooth, a gallant man who sits him down before the baize and challenges all comers, his money against theirs, his fortune against theirs, is proscribed by your modern moral world. It is a conspiracy of the middle classes against gentlemen: it is only the shopkeeper cant which is to go down nowadays. I say that play was an institution of chivalry: it has been wrecked, along with other privileges of men of birth. When Seingalt engaged a man for six-and-thirty hours without leaving the table, do you think he showed no courage? How have we had the best blood, and the brightest eyes, too, of Europe throbbing round the table, as I and my uncle have held the cards and the bank against some terrible player, who was matching some thousands out of his millions against our all which was there on the baize! When we engaged that daring Alexis Kossloffsky, and won seven thousand louis in a single coup, had we lost, we should have been beggars the next day; when *he* lost, he was only a village and a few hundred

serfs in pawn the worse. When at Toeplitz, the Duke of Courland brought fourteen lacqueys, each with four bags of florins, and challenged our bank to play against the sealed bags, what did we ask? "Sir," said we, "we have but eighty thousand florins in bank, or two hundred thousand at three months. If your highness's bags do not contain more than eighty thousand, we will meet you." And we did, and after eleven hours' play, in which our bank was at one time reduced to two hundred and three ducats, we won seventeen thousand florins of him. Is *this* not something like boldness? does *this* profession not require skill, and perseverance, and bravery? Four crowned heads looked on at the game, and an imperial princess, when I turned up the ace of hearts and made Paroli, burst into tears. No man on the European Continent held a higher position than Redmond Barry then; and when the Duke of Courland lost, he was pleased to say that we had won nobly: and so we had, and spent nobly what we won.

At this period my uncle, who attended mass every day regularly always put ten florins into the box. Wherever we went, the tavern-keepers made us more welcome than royal princes. We used to give away the broken meat from our suppers and dinners to scores of beggars who blessed us. Every man who held my horse or cleaned my boots got a ducat for his pains. I was, I may say, the author of our common good fortune, by putting boldness into our play. Pippi was a fainthearted fellow, who was always cowardly when he began to win. My uncle (I speak with great respect of him) was too much of a devotee and too much of a martinet at play ever to win *greatly*. His moral courage was unquestionable, but his daring was not sufficient. Both of these my seniors very soon acknowledged me to be their chief, and hence the style of splendour I have described.

It will be seen that our life, for all its splendour, was one of extreme danger and difficulty, requiring high talents and courage for success; and often when we were in a full vein of success, we were suddenly driven from our ground on account of some freak of a reigning prince, some intrigue of a disappointed mistress, or some quarrel with the police minister. If the latter personage were not bribed or won over, nothing was more common than for us to receive a sudden order of departure; and so, perforce, we lived a wandering and desultory life.

Though the gains of such a life are, as I have said, very great, yet the expenses are enormous. Our appearance and retinue was too splendid for the narrow mind of Pippi, who was always crying out at my extravagance, though obliged to own that his own meanness and parsimony would never have achieved the great victories which my generosity had won. With all our success, our capital was not very great. That speech to the Duke of Courland, for instance, was a mere boast as far as the two hundred thousand

florins at three months were concerned. We had no credit, and no money beyond that on our table, and should have been forced to fly if his Highness had won and accepted our bills. Sometimes, too, we were hit very hard. A bank is a certainty, *almost*; but now and then a bad day will come; and men who have the courage of good fortune, at least, ought to meet bad luck well: the former, believe me, is the harder task of the two.

One of these evil chances befell us in the Duke of Baden's territory, at Mannheim. Pippi, who was always on the look-out for business, offered to make a bank at the inn where we put up, and where the officers of the duke's cuirassiers supped; and some small play accordingly took place, and some wretched crowns and louis changed hands: I trust, rather to the advantage of these poor gentlemen of the army, who are surely the poorest of all devils under the sun.

But, as ill-luck would have it, a couple of young students from the neighbouring University of Heidelberg, who had come to Mannheim for their quarter's revenue, and so had some hundred of dollars between them, were introduced to the table, and having never played before, began to win (as is always the case). As ill-luck would have it, too, they were tipsy, and against tipsiness I have often found the best calculations of play fail entirely. They played in the most perfectly insane way, and yet won always. Every card they backed turned up in their favour. They had won a hundred louis from us in ten minutes; and, seeing that Pippi was growing angry and the luck against us, I was for shutting up the bank for the night, saying the play was only meant for a joke, and that now we had had enough.

But Pippi, who had quarrelled with me that day, was determined to proceed, and the upshot was, that the students played and won more; then they lent money to the officers, who began to win too; and in this ignoble way, in a tavern room thick with tobacco-smoke, across a deal table besmeared with beer and liquor, and to a parcel of hungry subalterns and a pair of beardless students, three of the most skilful and renowned players in Europe lost seventeen hundred louis! I blush now when I think of it. It was like Charles XII or Richard Cœur de Lion falling before a petty fortress and an unknown hand (as my friend Mr. Johnson wrote), and was, in fact, a most shameful defeat.

Nor was this the only defeat. When our poor conquerors had gone off, bewildered with the treasure which fortune had flung in their way (one of these students was called the Baron de Cloutz, perhaps he who afterwards lost his head at Paris), Pippi resumed the quarrel of the morning, and some exceedingly high words passed between us. Among other things I recollect I knocked him down with a stool, and was for flinging him out of window; but my uncle, who was cool, and had been keeping Lent with his usual

solemnity, interposed between us, and a reconciliation took place, Pippi apologizing and confessing he had been wrong.

I ought to have doubted, however, the sincerity of the treacherous Italian: indeed, as I never before believed a word that he said in his life, I know not why I was so foolish as to credit him now, and go to bed, leaving the keys of our cash-box with him. It contained, after our loss to the cuirassiers, in bills and money, near upon £8000 sterling. Pippi insisted that our reconciliation should be ratified over a bowl of hot wine, and I have no doubt put some soporific drug into the liquor; for my uncle and I both slept till very late the next morning, and woke with violent headaches and fever: we did not quit our beds till noon. He had been gone twelve hours, leaving our treasury empty; and behind him a sort of calculation, by which he strove to make out that this was his share of the profits, and that all the losses had been incurred without his consent.

Thus, after eighteen months, we had to begin the world again. But was I cast down? No. Our wardrobes still were worth a very large sum of money; for gentlemen did not dress like parish-clerks in those days, and a person of fashion would often wear a suit of clothes and a set of ornaments that would be a shop-boy's fortune; so, without repining for one single minute, or saying a single angry word (my uncle's temper in this respect was admirable), or allowing the secret of our loss to be known to a mortal soul, we pawned three-fourths of our jewels and clothes to Moses Löwe the banker, and with the produce of the sale and our private pocket-money, amounting in all to something less than 800 louis, we took the field again.

[1] From "The Memoirs of Barry Lyndon." This character is said to be founded on the celebrated Casanova.

[2] Uncle of Captain Potzdorff who was his heir, and Minister of Police in Berlin.

[3] The service about which Mr. Barry here speaks has, and we suspect purposely, been described by him in very dubious terms. It is most probable that he was employed to wait at the table of strangers in Berlin, and to bring to the Police Minister any news concerning them which might at all interest the Government. The great Frederick never received a guest without taking these hospitable precautions; and as for the duels which Mr. Barry fights, may we be allowed to hint a doubt as to a great number of these combats? It will be observed, in one or two other parts of his memoirs, that whenever he is at an awkward pass, or does what the world does not usually consider respectable, a duel, in which he is victorious, is sure to ensue; from which he argues that he is a man of undoubted honour. [Transcriber's Note: The position of the footnote citation in the text is inferred as no citation was printed on the page.]

VIII

COUNT CAGLIOSTRO

Quack of Quacks

IN TWO FLIGHTS

THOMAS CARLYLE^[1]

FLIGHT FIRST

“The life of every man,” says our friend Herr Sauerteig, “the life even of the meanest man, it were good to remember, is a Poem; perfect in all manner of Aristotelean requisites; with beginning, middle and end; with perplexities, and solutions; with its Will-strength (*Willenkraft*) and warfare against Fate, its elegy and battle-singing, courage marred by crime, everywhere the two tragic elements of Pity and Fear; above all, with supernatural machinery enough,—for was not the man *born* out of NONENTITY; did he not *die*, and miraculously vanishing return thither? The most indubitable Poem! Nay, whoso will, may he not name it a Prophecy, or whatever else is highest in his vocabulary; since only in Reality lies the essence and foundation of all that was ever fabled, visioned, sung, spoken, or babbled by the human species; and the actual Life of Man includes in it all Revelations, true and false, that have been, are, or are to be. Man! I say therefore, *reverence thy fellow-man*. He too issued from Above; is mystical and supernatural (as thou namest it): this know thou of a truth. Seeing also that we ourselves are of so high Authorship, is not that, in very deed, ‘the highest Reverence,’ and most needful for us: ‘Reverence for oneself’?”



JOSEPH BALSAMO
[CAGLIOSTRO]

“Thus, to my view, is every Life, more properly is every Man that has life to lead, a small strophe, or occasional verse, composed by the Supernal Powers; and published, in such type and shape, with such embellishments, emblematic head-piece and tail-piece as thou seest, to the thinking or unthinking Universe. Heroic strophes some few are; full of force and a sacred fire, so that to the latest ages the hearts of those that read therein are made to tingle. Jeremiads others seem; mere weeping laments, harmonious and disharmonious Remonstrances against Destiny; whereat we too may sometimes profitably weep. Again, have we not flesh-and-blood strophes of the idyllic sort,—though in these days rarely, owing to Poor-Laws, Game-Laws, Population-Theories and the like! Farther, of the comic laughter-

loving sort; yet ever with an unfathomable earnestness, as is fit, lying underneath: for, bethink thee, what is the mirthfulest grinning face of any Grimaldi, but a transitory *mask*, behind which quite otherwise grins—the most indubitable *Death's-head*! However, I say farther, there are strophes of the pastoral sort (as in Ettrick, Afghanistaun, and elsewhere); of the farcic-tragic, melodramatic, of all named and a thousand unnameable sorts there are poetic strophes, written, as was said, in Heaven, printed on Earth, and published (bound in woolen cloth, or *clothes*) for the use of the studious. Finally, a small number seem utter Pasquils, mere ribald libels on Humanity: these too, however, are at times worth reading.

“In this wise,” continues our too obscure friend, “out of all imaginable elements, awakening all imaginable moods of heart and soul, ‘barbarous enough to excite, tender enough to assuage,’ ever contradictory yet ever coalescing, is that mighty world-old Rhapsodia of Existence page after page (generation after generation), and chapter (or epoch) after chapter, poetically put together! This is what some one names ‘the grand sacred Epos, or Bible of World-History; infinite in meaning as the Divine Mind it emblems; wherein he is wise that can read here a line, and there a line.’”

“Remark too, under another aspect, whether it is not in this same Bible of World-History that all men, in all times, with or without clear consciousness, have been unwearied to read, what we may call *read*; and again to write, or rather to *be written*! What is all History, and all Poesy, but a deciphering somewhat thereof, out of that mystic heaven-written Sanscrit; and rendering it into the speech of men? *Know thyself*, value thyself, is a moralist's commandment (which I only half approve of); but *Know others*, value others, is the hest of Nature herself. Or again, *Work while it is called To-day*: is not that also the irreversible law of being for mortal man? And now, what is all working, what is all knowing, but a faint interpreting and a faint showing-forth of that same *Mystery of Life*, which ever remains infinite,—heaven-written mystic Sanskrit? View it as we will, to him that lives, Life is a divine matter; felt to be of quite sacred significance. Consider the wretchedest ‘straddling biped that wears breeches’ of thy acquaintance; into whose wool-head, Thought, as thou rashly supposest, never entered; who, in froth-element of business, pleasure, or what else he names it, walks forever in a vain show; asking not Whence, or Why, or Whither; looking up to the Heaven above as if some upholsterer had made it, and down to the Hell beneath as if *he* had neither part nor lot there: yet tell me, does not he too, over and above his five finite senses, acknowledge some sixth *infinite* sense, were it only that of Vanity? For, sate him in the other five as you may, will this sixth sense leave him rest? Does he not rise early and sit late, and study impromptus, and (in constitutional countries) parliamentary motions,

and bursts of eloquence, and gird himself in whalebone, and pad himself and perk himself, and in all ways painfully take heed to his goings; feeling (if we must admit it) that an altogether infinite endowment has been entrusted him also, namely, a Life to lead? Thus does he too, with his whole force, in his own way, proclaim that the world-old Rhapsodia of Existence is divine, and an inspired Bible; and, himself a wondrous *verse* therein (be it heroic, be it pasquillic), study with his whole soul, as we said, both to *read* and to *be written*.

“Here also I will observe, that the *manner* in which men read this same Bible is, like all else, proportionate to their stage of culture, to the circumstances of their environment. First, and among the earnest Oriental nations, it was read wholly like a Sacred Book; most clearly by the most earnest, those wondrous Hebrew Readers; whose reading accordingly was itself sacred, has meaning for all tribes of mortal men; since ever, to the latest generation of the world, a true utterance from the innermost of man’s being will speak significantly to man. But, again, in how different a style was that other Oriental reading of the Magi; of Zerdusht, or whoever it was that first so opened the matter? Gorgeous semi-sensual Grandeurs and Splendours: on infinite darkness, brightest-glowing light and fire;—of which, all defaced by Time, and turned mostly into lies, a quite late reflex, in those Arabian Tales and the like, still leads captive every heart. Look, thirdly, at the earnest West, and that Consecration of the Flesh, which stepped forth life-lusty, radiant, smiling-earnest, in immortal grace, from under the chisel and the stylus of old Greece. Here too was the Infinite intelligibly proclaimed as infinite: and the antique man walked between a Tartarus and an Elysium, his brilliant Paphos-islet of Existence embraced by boundless oceans of sadness and fateful gloom.—Of which three antique manners of reading, our modern manner, you will remark, has been little more than imitation: for always, indeed, the West has been rifer of doers than of speakers. The Hebrew manner has had its echo in our Pulpits and choral aisles; the Ethnic Greek and Arabian in numberless mountains of Fiction, rhymed, rhymeless, published by subscription, by puffery, in periodicals, or by money of your own (*durch eignes Geld*). Till now at last, by dint of iteration and reiteration through some ten centuries, all these manners have grown obsolete, wearisome, meaningless; listened to only as the monotonous moaning wind, while there is nothing else to listen to:—and so now, well-nigh in total oblivion of the Infinitude of Life (except what small *unconscious* recognition the ‘straddling biped’ above argued of may have), we wait, in hope and patience, for some *fourth* manner of anew convincingly announcing it.”

These singular sentences from the *Ästhetische Springwurzeln* we have thought right to translate and quote, by way of proem and apology. We are here about to give some critical account of what Herr Sauerteig would call a “flesh-and-blood Poem of the purest Pasquil sort”; in plain words, to examine the biography of the most perfect scoundrel that in these latter ages has marked the world’s history. “Pasquils, too,” says Sauerteig, “are at times worth reading.” Or quitting that mystic dialect of his, may we not assert in our own way, that the history of an Original Man is always worth knowing? So magnificent a thing is Will incarnated in a creature of like fashion with ourselves, we run to witness *all* manifestations thereof: what man soever has marked out a peculiar path of life for himself, let it lead this way or that way, and successfully travelled the same, of him we specially inquire, How he travelled; What befell him on the journey? Though the man were a knave of the first water, this hinders not the question, How he managed his knavery? Nay, it rather encourages such question; for nothing properly is wholly despicable, at once detestable and forgettable, but your half-knave, he who is neither true nor false; who never in his existence once spoke or did any true thing (for indeed his mind lives in twilight, with cat-vision, incapable of *discerning* truth); and yet had not the manfulness to speak or act any decided lie; but spent his whole life in plastering together the True and the False, and therefrom manufacturing the Plausible. Such a one our Transcendentals have defined as a Moral Hybrid and chimera; therefore, under the moral point of view, as an Impossibility, and mere deceptive Nonentity,—put together for commercial purposes. Of which sort, nevertheless, how many millions, through all manner of gradations, from the wielder of kings’ sceptres to the vender of brimstone-matches, at tea-tables, council-tables, behind shop-counters, in priests’ pulpits, incessantly and everywhere, do now, in this world of ours, in this Isle of ours, offer themselves to view!

From such, at least from this intolerable over-proportion of such, might the merciful Heavens one day deliver us! Glorious, heroic, fruitful for his own Time, and for all Time and all Eternity, is the constant Speaker and Doer of Truth! If no such again, in the present generation, is to be vouchsafed us, let us have at least the melancholy pleasure of beholding a decided Liar. Wretched mortal, who with a single eye to be “respectable” forever sittest cobbling together two Inconsistencies, which stick not for an hour, but require ever new gluten and labour,—will it, by no length of experience, no bounty of Time or Chance, be revealed to thee that Truth is of Heaven, and Falsehood is of Hell; that if thou cast not from thee the one or the other, thy existence is wholly an Illusion and optical and tactual Phantasm; that properly thou existest not at all? Respectable! What, in the Devil’s name, is the use of Respectability, with never so many gigs and

silver spoons, if thou inwardly art the pitifulest of all men? I would thou wert either cold or hot.

One such desirable second-best, perhaps the chief of all such, we have here found in the Count Alessandro di Cagliostro, Pupil of the Sage Althotas, Foster-child of the Scherif of Mecca, probable Son of the last King of Trebisond; named also Acharat, and Unfortunate Child of Nature; by profession healer of diseases, abolisher of wrinkles, friend of the poor and impotent, grand-master of the Egyptian Mason-lodge of High Science, Spirit-summoner, Gold-cook, Grand Cophta, Prophet, Priest, and thaumaturgic moralist and swindler; really a Liar of the first magnitude, thorough-paced in all provinces of lying, what one may call the King of Liars. Mendez Pinto, Baron Münchhausen and others are celebrated in this art, and not without some colour of justice; yet must it in candour remain doubtful whether any of these comparatively were much more than liars from the teeth onwards: a perfect character of the species in question, who lied not in word only, nor in act and word only, but continually, in thought, word and act; and, so to speak, lived wholly in an element of lying, and from birth to death did nothing but lie,—was still a desideratum. Of which desideratum Count Alessandro offers, we say, if not the fulfilment, perhaps as near an approach to it as the limited human faculties permit. Not in the modern ages, probably not in the ancient (though these had their Autolycus, their Apollonius, and enough else), did any completer figure of this sort issue out of Chaos and Old Night: a sublime kind of figure, presenting himself with “the air of calm strength,” of sure perfection in his art: whom the heart opens itself to, with wonder and a sort of welcome. “The only vice I know,” says one, “is Inconsistency.” At lowest, answer we, he that *does* his work shall have his work judged of. Indeed, if Satan himself has in these days become a poetic hero, why should not Cagliostro, for some short hour, be a prose one? “One first question,” says a great Philosopher, “I ask of every man: Has he an aim, which with undivided soul he follows, and advances towards? Whether his aim is a right one or a wrong one, forms but my second question.” Here, then, is a small “human Pasquil,” not without poetic interest.

However, be this as it may, we apprehend the eye of science at least cannot view him with indifference. Doubtful, false as much is in Cagliostro’s manner of being, of this there is no doubt, that starting from the lowest point of Fortune’s wheel, he rose to a height universally notable; that, without external furtherance, money, beauty, bravery, almost without common sense, or any discernible worth whatever, he sumptuously supported, for a long course of years, the wants and digestion of one of the greediest bodies, and one of the greediest minds; outwardly in his five

senses, inwardly in his “sixth sense, that of vanity,” nothing straitened. Clear enough it is, however much may be supposititious, that this japped Chariot, rushing through the world, with dust-clouds and loud noise, at the speed of four swift horses, and topheavy with luggage, has an existence. The six Beef-eaters too, that ride prosperously heralding his advent, honourably escorting, menially waiting on him, are they not realities? Ever must the purse open, paying turnpikes, tavern-bills, drink-moneys, and the thousandfold tear and wear of such a team; yet ever, like a horn-of-plenty, does it pour; and after brief rest, the chariot ceases not to roll. Whereupon rather pressingly arises the scientific question: How? Within that wonderful machinery, of horses, wheels, top-luggage, beef-eaters, sits only a gross, thickset Individual, evincing dullness enough; and by his side a Seraphina, with a look of doubtful reputation: how comes it that means still meet ends, that the whole Engine, like a steam-coach wanting fuel, does not stagnate, go silent, and fall to pieces in the ditch? Such question did the scientific curiosity of the present writer often put; and for many a day in vain.

Neither, indeed, as Book-readers know, was he peculiar herein. The great Schiller, for example, struck both with the poetic and the scientific phases of the matter, admitted the influences of the former to shape themselves anew within him; and strove with his usual impetuosity to burst (since unlocking was impossible) the secrets of the latter: and so his unfinished Novel, the *Geisterseher*, saw the light. Still more renowned is Goethe’s Drama of the *Gross-Kophta*; which, as himself informs us, delivered him from a state of mind that had become alarming to certain friends; so deep was the hold this business, at one of its epochs, had taken of him. A dramatic Fiction, that of his, based on the strictest possible historical study and inquiry; wherein perhaps the faithfulest image of the historical Fact, as yet extant in any shape, lies in artistic miniature curiously unfolded. Nay, mere Newspaper-readers, of a certain age, can bethink them of our London Egyptian Lodges of High Science; of the Countess Seraphina’s dazzling jewelleryes, nocturnal brilliancies, sibyllic ministrations and revelations; of Miss Fry and Milford Scott, and Messrs. Priddle and the other shark *bailiffs*; and Lord Mansfield’s judgment-seat; the Comte d’Adhémar, the Diamond Necklace, and Lord George Gordon. For Cagliostro, hovering through unknown space, twice (perhaps thrice) lighted on our London, and did business in the great chaos there.

Unparalleled Cagliostro! Looking at thy so attractively decorated private theatre, wherein thou actedst and livedst, what hand but itches to draw aside thy curtain; overhaul thy pasteboards, paint-pots, paper mantles, stage-lamps, and turning the whole inside out, find *thee* in the middle thereof! For there of a truth wert thou: though the rest was all foam and sham, there

sattest *thou*, as large as life, and as esurient; warring against the world, and indeed conquering the world, for it remained thy tributary, and yielded daily rations. Innumerable Sheriff's-officers, Exempts, Sbirri, Alguazils, of every European climate, were prowling on thy traces, their intents hostile enough; thyself wert single against them all; in the whole earth thou hadst no friend. What say we, in the whole earth? In the whole universe thou hadst no friend! Heaven knew nothing of thee; *could* in charity know nothing of thee; and as for Beelzebub, *his* friendship, it is ascertained, cannot count for much.

But to proceed with business. The present inquirer, in obstinate investigation of a phenomenon so noteworthy, has searched through the whole not inconsiderable circle which his tether (of circumstances, geographical position, trade, health, extent of money-capital) enables him to describe: and, sad to say, with the most imperfect results. He has read Books in various languages and jargons; feared not to soil his fingers, hunting through ancient dusty Magazines, to sicken his heart in any labyrinth of iniquity and imbecility; nay, he had not grudged to dive even into the infectious *Mémoires de Casanova*, for a hint or two,—could he have found that work, which, however, most British Librarians make a point of denying that they possess. A painful search, as through some spiritual pest-house; and then with such issue! The quantity of discoverable printing about Cagliostro (so much being burnt) is now not great; nevertheless in frightful proportion to the quantity of information given. Except vague Newspaper rumours and surmises, the things found written of this Quack are little more than temporary Manifestos, by himself, by gulled or gulling disciples of his: not true therefore; at best only certain fractions of what he wished or expected the blinder Public to reckon true; misty, embroiled, for most part highly stupid; perplexing, even provoking; which can only be believed—to be, under such and such conditions, Lies. Of this sort emphatically is the English "*Life of the Count Cagliostro*, price three shillings and sixpence"; a Book indeed which one might hold (so fatuous, inane is it) to be some mere dream-vision and unreal eidolon, did it not now stand palpably there, as "Sold by T. Hookham, Bond Street, 1787"; and bear to be handled, spurned at and torn into pipe-matches. Some human creature doubtless was at the writing of it; but of what kind, country, trade, character or gender, you will in vain strive to fancy. Of like fabulous stamp are the *Mémoires pour le Comte de Cagliostro*, emitted, with *Requête à joindre*, from the Bastille, during that sorrowful business of the Diamond Necklace, in 1786; no less the *Lettre du Comte de Cagliostro au Peuple Anglais*, which followed shortly after, at London; from which two indeed, that fatuous inexplicable English *Life* has perhaps been mainly manufactured. Next come the

Mémoires authentiques pour servir à l'Histoire du Comte de Cagliostro, twice printed in the same year 1786, at Strasburg and at Paris; a swaggering, lascivious Novelette, without talent, without truth or worth, happily of small size. So fares it with us: alas, all this but the *outside* decorations of the private theatre, or the sounding of catcalls and applauses from the stupid audience; nowise the interior bare walls and dressroom which we wanted to see! Almost our sole even half-genuine documents are a small barren pamphlet, *Cagliostro démasqué à Varsovie, en 1780*; and a small barren Volume purporting to be his *Life*, written at Rome, of which latter we have a French version, dated 1791. It is on this *Vie de Joseph Balsamo, connu sous le Nom de Comte Cagliostro*, that our main dependence must be placed; of which Work, meanwhile, whether it is wholly or only half genuine, the reader may judge by one fact: that it comes to us through the medium of the Roman Inquisition, and the proofs to substantiate it lie in the Holy Office there. Alas, this reporting Familiar of the Inquisition was too probably something of a Liar; and he reports lying Confessions of one who was not so much a Liar as a Lie! In such enigmatic duskiness, and thrice-folded involution, after all inquiries, does the matter yet hang.

Nevertheless, by dint of meditation and comparison, light-points that stand fixed, and abide scrutiny, do here and there disclose themselves; diffusing a fainter light over what otherwise were dark, so that it is no longer invisible, but only dim. Nay, after all, is there not in this same uncertainty a kind of fitness, of poetic congruity? Much that would offend the eye stands discreetly lapped in shade. Here too Destiny has cared for her favourite: that a powder-nimbus of astonishment, mystification and uncertainty should still encircle the Quack of Quacks, is right and suitable; such was by Nature and Art his chosen uniform and environment. Thus, as formerly in Life, so now in History, it is in huge fluctuating smoke-whirlwinds, partially illumed into a most brazen glory, yet united, coalescing with the region of everlasting Darkness, in miraculous clear-obscure, that he works and rides.

“Stern Accuracy in inquiring, bold Imagination in expounding and filing up; these,” says friend Sauerteig, “are the two pinions on which History soars,”—or flutters and wabbles. To which two pinions let us and the readers of this Magazine now daringly commit ourselves. Or chiefly indeed to the *latter* pinion, of Imagination; which if it be the *larger*, will indeed make an unequal flight! Meanwhile, the style at least shall if possible be equal to the subject.

* * * * *

Know, then, that in the year 1743, in the city of Palermo, in Sicily, the family of Signor Pietro Balsamo, a shopkeeper, were exhilarated by the birth of a Boy. Such occurrences have now become so frequent, that, miraculous as they are, they occasion little astonishment: old Balsamo for a space, indeed, laid down his ellwands and unjust balances; but for the rest, met the event with equanimity. Of the possetings, junketings, gossipings, and other ceremonial rejoicings, transacted according to the custom of the country, for welcome to a Newcomer, not the faintest tradition has survived; enough, that the small Newcomer, hitherto a mere ethnic or heathen, is in a few days made a Christian of, or as we vulgarly say, christened, by the name Giuseppe. A fat, red, globular kind of fellow, not under nine pounds avoirdupois, the bold Imagination can figure him to be: if not proofs, there are indications that sufficiently betoken as much.

Of his teething and swaddling adventures, of his scaldings, squallings, pukings, purgings, the strictest search into History can discover nothing; not so much as the epoch when he passed out of long-clothes stands noted in the fasti of Sicily. That same “larger pinion” of Imagination, nevertheless, conducts him from his native blind-alley, into the adjacent street *Casaro*; descries him, with certain contemporaries now unknown, essaying himself in small games of skill; watching what phenomena, of carriage-transits, dog-battles, street-music, or suchlike, the neighbourhood might offer (intent above all on any windfall of chance *provender*); now, with incipient scientific spirit, puddling in the gutters; now, as small poet (or maker), baking mud-pies. Thus does he tentatively coast along the outskirts of Existence, till once he shall be strong enough to land and make a footing there.

Neither does it seem doubtful that with the earliest exercise of speech, the gifts of simulation and dissimulation began to manifest themselves; Giuseppe, or Beppo as he was now called, could indeed speak the truth,—but only when he saw his advantage in it. Hungry also, as above hinted, he too probably often was: a keen faculty of digestion, a meagre larder within doors; these two circumstances, so frequently conjoined in this world, reduced him to his inventions. As to the thing called Morals, and knowledge of Right and Wrong, it seems pretty certain that such knowledge, the sad fruit of Man’s Fall, had in great part been spared him; if he ever heard the commandment, *Thou shall not steal*, he most probably could not believe in it, therefore could not obey it. For the rest, though of quick temper, and a ready striker where clear prospect of victory showed itself, we fancy him vociferous rather than bellicose, not prone to violence where stratagem will serve; almost pacific, indeed, had not his many wants necessitated him to many conquests. Above all things, a brazen impudence develops itself; the

crowning gift of one born to scoundrelism. In a word, the fat thickset Beppo, as he skulks about there, plundering, playing dog's tricks, with his finger in every mischief, already gains character; shrill housewives of the neighbourhood, whose sausages he has filched, whose weaker sons maltreated, name him Beppo Maldetto, and indignantly prophesy that he will be hanged. A prediction which, as will be seen, the issue has signally falsified.

We hinted that the household larder was in a leanish state; in fact, the outlook of the Balsamo family was getting troubled; old Balsamo had, during these things, been called away on his long journey. Poor man! The future eminence and preëminence of his Beppo he foresaw not, or what a world's-wonder he had thoughtlessly generated; as indeed, which of us, by much calculating, can sum up the net total (Utility or Inutility) of any his most indifferent act,—a seed cast into the seed-field of TIME, to grow there, producing fruits or poisons, for ever! Meanwhile Beppo himself gazed heavily into the matter; hung his thick lips while he saw his mother weeping; and, for the rest, eating what fat or sweet thing he could come at, let Destiny take its course.

The poor widow, ill-named *Felicità*, spinning out a painful livelihood by such means as only the poor and forsaken know, could not but many times cast an impatient eye on her brass-faced, voracious Beppo; and ask him, If he never meant to turn himself to anything? A maternal uncle, of the moneyed sort (for he has uncles not without influence), has already placed him in the Seminary of St. Roch, to gain some tincture of schooling there: but Beppo feels himself misplaced in that sphere; “more than once runs away”; is flogged, snubbed, tyrannically checked on all sides; and finally, with such slender stock of schooling as had pleased to offer itself, returns to the street. The widow, as we said, urges him, the uncles urge: Beppo, wilt thou never turn thyself to anything? Beppo, with such speculative faculty, from such low watch-tower as he commands, is in truth, being forced to it, from time to time, looking abroad into the world; surveying the conditions of mankind, therewith contrasting his own wishes and capabilities. Alas, his wishes are manifold; a most hot Hunger (in all kinds), as above hinted; but on the other hand, his leading capability seemed only the Power to Eat. What profession or condition, then? Choose; for it is time. Of all the terrestrial professions, that of Gentleman, it seemed to Beppo, had, under these circumstances, been most suited to his feelings: but then the outfit? the apprentice-fee? Failing which, he, with perhaps as much sagacity as one could expect, decides for the Ecclesiastical.

Behold him then, once more by the uncle's management, journeying, a chubby brass-faced boy of thirteen, beside the Reverend Father-General of

the Benfratelli, to their neighbouring Convent of Cartegirone, with intent to enter himself novice there. He has donned the novice-habit; is “intrusted to the keeping of the Convent-Apothecary,” on whose gallipots and crucibles he looks round with wonder. Were it by accident that he found himself Apothecary’s Famulus, were it by choice of his own—nay, was it not, in either case, by *design* of Destiny, intent on perfecting her work?—Enough, in this Cartegirone Laboratory there awaited him, though as yet he knew it not, life-guidance and determination; the great want of every genius, even of the scoundrel-genius. He himself confesses that he here learned some (or, as he calls it, *the*) “principles of chemistry and medicine.” Natural enough: new books of the Chemists lay here, old books of the Alchemists; distillations, sublimations visibly went on; discussions there were, oral and written, of gold-making, salve-making, treasure-digging, divining-rods, projections, and the alcahest: besides, had he not among his fingers calxes, acids, Leyden jars? Some first elements of medico-chemical conjurorship, so far as phosphorescent mixtures, aqua toffana, ipecacuanha, cantharides tincture, and suchlike would go, were now attainable; sufficient, when the hour came, to set up any average Quack, much more the Quack of Quacks. It is here, in this unpromising environment, that the seeds, therapeutic, thaumaturgic, of the Grand Cophta’s stupendous workings and renown were sown.

Meanwhile, as observed, the environment looked unpromising enough. Beppo, with his two endowments of Hunger and of Power to Eat, had made the best choice he could; yet, as it soon proved, a rash and disappointing one. To his astonishment, he finds that even here he “is in a conditional world”; and, if he will employ his capability of eating or enjoying, must first, in some measure, work and suffer. Contention enough hereupon: but now dimly arises or reproduces itself, the question, Whether there were not a *shorter* road, that of stealing? Stealing—under which, generically taken, you may include the whole art of scoundrelism; for what is Lying itself but a *theft* of my belief?—stealing, we say, is properly the North-West Passage to Enjoyment: while common Navigators sail painfully along torrid shores, laboriously doubling this or the other Cape of Hope, your adroit Thief-Parry, drawn on smooth dog-sledges, is already there and back again. The misfortune is, that stealing requires a talent; and failure in that North-West voyage is more fatal than in any other. We hear that Beppo was “often punished”: painful experiences of the fate of genius; for all genius, by its nature, comes to disturb *somebody* in his ease, and your thief-genius more so than most!

Readers can now fancy the sensitive skin of Beppo mortified with prickly cilices, wealed by knotted thongs; his soul afflicted by vigils and forced fasts; no eye turned kindly on him; everywhere the bent of his genius

rudely contravened. However, it is the first property of genius to grow in spite of contradiction, and even by means thereof;—as the vital germ pushes itself through the dull soil, and lives by what strove to bury it! Beppo, waxing into strength of bone and character, sets his face stiffly against persecution, and is not a whit disheartened. On *such* chastisements and chastisers he can look with a certain genial disdain. Beyond convent-walls, with their sour stupid shavelings, lies Palermo, lies the world; here too is he, still alive,—though worse off than he wished; and feels that the world is his oyster, which he (by chemical or other means) will one day open. Nay, we find there is a touch of grim Humour unfolds itself in the youth; the surest sign, as is often said, of a character naturally great. Witness, for example, how he acts on this to his ardent temperament so trying occasion. While the monks sit at meat, the impetuous voracious Beppo (that stupid Inquisition-Biographer records it as a thing of course) is set not to eat with them, not to pick up the crumbs that fall from them, but to stand “reading the Martyrology” for their pastime! The brave adjusts himself to the inevitable. Beppo reads that dullest Martyrology of theirs; but reads out of it not what is printed there, but what his own vivid brain on the spur of the moment devises: instead of the names of Saints, all heartily indifferent to him, he reads out the names of the most notable Palermo “unfortunate females,” now beginning to interest him a little. What a “deep-world-irony,” as the Germans call it, lies here! The Monks, of course, felled him to the earth, and flayed him with scourges; but what did it avail? This only became apparent, to himself and them, that he had now outgrown their monk-discipline; as the Psyche does its chrysalis-shell, and bursts it. Giuseppe Balsamo bids farewell to Cartegirone for ever and a day.

So now, by consent or not of the ghostly Benfratelli (Friars of *Mercy*, as they were named!) our Beppo has again returned to the maternal uncle at Palermo. The uncle naturally asked him, What he next meant to do? Beppo, after stammering and hesitating for some length of weeks, makes answer: Try Painting. Well and good! So Beppo gets him colours, brushes, fit tackle, and addicts himself for some space of time to the study of what is innocently called *Design*. Alas, if we consider Beppo’s great Hunger, now that new senses were unfolding in him, how inadequate are the exiguous resources of Design; how necessary to attempt quite another deeper species of Design, of Designs! It is true, he lives with his uncle, has culinary meat; but where is the pocket-money for other costlier sorts of meats to come from? As the Kaiser Joseph was wont to say: From my head alone (*De ma tête seule*)!

The Roman Biographer, though a most wooden man, has incidentally thrown some light on Beppo’s position at this juncture: both on his wants and his resources. As to the first, it appears (using the wooden man’s

phraseology) that he kept the “worst company,” led the “loosest life”; was hand-in-glove with all the swindlers, gamblers, idle apprentices, unfortunate females, of Palermo: in the study and practice of Scoundrelism diligent beyond most. The genius which has burst asunder convent-walls, and other rubbish of impediments, now flames upward towards its mature splendour. Wheresoever a stroke of mischief is to be done, a slush of so-called vicious enjoyment to be swallowed, there with hand and throat is Beppo Balsamo seen. He will be a Master, one day, in his profession. Not indeed that he has yet quitted Painting, or even purposes so much: for the present, it is useful, indispensable, as a stalking-horse to the maternal uncle and neighbours; nay, to himself,—for with all the ebullient impulses of scoundrel-genius restlessly seething in him, irrepressibly bursting through, he has the noble unconsciousness of genius; guesses not, dare not guess, that he is a born scoundrel, much less a born world-scoundrel.

But as for the other question, of his resources, these we perceive were several-fold, and continually extending. Not to mention any pictorial exiguities, which indeed existed chiefly in expectance,—there had almost accidentally arisen for him, in the first place, the resource of Pandering. He has a fair cousin living in the house with him, and she again has a lover; Beppo stations himself as go-between; delivers letters; fails not to drop hints that a lady, to be won or kept, must be generously treated; that such and such a pair of earrings, watch, necklace, or even sum of money, would work wonders; which valuables, adds the wooden Roman Biographer, “he then appropriated furtively.” Like enough! Next, however, as another more lasting resource, he forges; at first in a small way, and trying his apprentice-hand: tickets for the theatre, and such trifles. Erelong, however, we see him fly at higher quarry; by practice he has acquired perfection in the great art of counterfeiting hands; and will exercise it on the large or on the narrow scale, for a consideration. Among his relatives is a Notary, with whom he can insinuate himself; for the purpose of study, or even of practice. In the presses of this Notary lies a Will, which Beppo contrives to come at, and falsify “for the benefit of a certain Religious House.” Much good may it do them! Many years afterwards the fraud was detected; but Beppo’s benefit in it was spent and safe long before. Thus again the stolid Biographer expresses horror or wonder that he should have forged leave-of-absence for a monk, “counterfeiting the signature of the Superior.” Why not? A forger must forge what is wanted of him: the Lion truly preys not on mice; yet shall he refuse such, if they jump into his mouth? Enough, the indefatigable Beppo has here opened a quite boundless mine; wherein through his whole life he will, as occasion calls, dig, at his convenience. Finally, he can predict fortunes and show visions,—by phosphorus and legerdemain. This, however, only as a

dilettantism; to take up the earnest profession of Magician does not yet enter into his views. Thus perfecting himself in all branches of his art, does our Balsamo live and grow. Stupid, pudding-faced as he looks and is, there is a vulpine astucity in him; and then a wholeness, a heartiness, a kind of blubbery impetuosity, an oiliness so plausible-looking: give him only length of life, he will rise to the top of his profession.

Consistent enough with such blubbery impetuosity in Beppo is another fact we find recorded of him, that this time he was found "in most brawls," whether in street or tavern. The way of his business led him into liability to such; neither as yet had he learned prudence by age. Of choleric temper, with all his obesity; a square-built, burly, vociferous fellow; ever ready with his stroke (if victory seemed sure); nay, at bottom, not without a certain pig-like defensive ferocity, perhaps even something more. Thus, when you find him making a point to attack, if possible, "*all* officers of justice," and deforce them; delivering the wretched from their talons: was not this, we say, a kind of dog-faithfulness, and public spirit, either of the mastiff or of the cur species? Perhaps too there was a touch of that old Humour and "world-irony" in it. One still more unquestionable feat he is recorded (we fear, on imperfect evidence) to have done: "assassinated a canon."

Remonstrances from growing maternal uncles could not fail; threats, disdains from ill-affected neighbours; tears from an expostulating widowed mother; these he shakes from him like dew-drops from the lion's mane. Still less could the Police neglect him; him the visibly rising Professor of Swindlery; the swashbuckler, to boot, and deforcer of bailiffs: he has often been captured, haled to their bar; yet hitherto, by defect of evidence, by good luck, intercession of friends, been dismissed with admonition. Two things, nevertheless, might now be growing clear: first, that the die was cast with Beppo, and he a scoundrel for life; second, that such a mixed, composite, crypto-scoundrel life could not endure, but must unfold itself into a pure, declared one. The Tree that is planted stands not still; *must* pass through all its stages and phases, from the state of acorn to that of green leafy oak, of withered leafless oak; to the state of felled timber, finally to that of firewood and ashes. Not less (though less visibly to dull eyes) the Act that is done, the condition that has realized itself; above all things, the Man, with his Fortunes, that has been born. Beppo, every way in vigorous vitality, cannot continue half-painting half-swindling in Palermo; must develop himself into whole swindler; and, unless hanged there, seek his bread elsewhere. What the proximate cause, or signal, of such crisis and development might be, no man could say; yet most men would have confidently guessed, The Police. Nevertheless it proved otherwise; not by

the flaming sword of Justice, but by the rusty dirk of a foolish private individual, is Beppo driven forth.

Walking one day in the fields (as the bold historic Imagination will figure) with a certain ninny of a “Goldsmith named Marano,” as they pass one of those rock-chasms frequent in the fair Island of Sicily, Beppo begins, in his oily, voluble way, to hint, That treasures often lay hid; that a Treasure lay hid *there*, as he knew by some pricking of his thumbs, divining-rod, or other talismanic monition: which Treasure might, by aid of science, courage, secrecy and a small judicious advance of money, be fortunately lifted. The gudgeon takes; advances, by degrees, to the length of “sixty gold Ounces”;^[2] sees magic circles drawn in the wane or in the full of the moon, blue (phosphorus) flames arise, split twigs auspiciously quiver; and at length—demands peremptorily that the Treasure be dug. A night is fixed on; the ninny Goldsmith, trembling with rapture and terror, breaks ground; digs, with thick breath and cold sweat, fiercely down, down, Beppo relieving him: the work advances; when, ah! at a certain stage of it (*before* fruition) hideous yells arise, a jingle like the emptying of Birmingham; six Devils pounce upon the poor sheep Goldsmith, and beat him almost to *mutton*; mercifully sparing Balsamo,—who indeed has himself summoned them thither, and as it were created them (with goatskins and burnt cork). Marano, though a ninny, now knew how it lay; and furthermore, that he had a stiletto. One of the grand drawbacks of swindler-genius! You accomplish the Problem; and then—the Elementary Quantities, Algebraic Symbols you worked on, will fly in your face!

Hearing of stilettos, our Algebraist begins to look around him, and view his empire of Palermo in the concrete. An empire now much exhausted; much infested, too, with sorrows of all kinds, and every day the more; nigh ruinous, in short; not worth being stabbed for. There is a world elsewhere. In any case, the young Raven has now shed his pens, and got fledged for flying. Shall he not spurn the whole from him, and soar off? Resolved, performed! Our Beppo quits Palermo; and, as it proved, on a long voyage; or, as the Inquisition-Biographer has it, “he fled from Palermo, and overran the whole Earth.”

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Here, then, ends the First Act of Count Alessandro Cagliostro’s Life-drama. Let the curtain drop; and hang unrent, before an audience of mixed feeling, till the First of August.

- [1] *Fraser's Magazine*, Nos. 43, 44 (July and August, 1833).
- [2] The Sicilian Ounce (*Onza*) is worth about ten shillings sterling.

FLIGHT LAST

Before entering on the second Section of Count Beppo's History, the Editor will indulge in a philosophical reflection.

This Beppic Hegira, or Flight from Palermo, we have now arrived at, brings us down, in European History, to somewhere about the epoch of the Peace of Paris. Old Feudal Europe, while Beppo flies forth into the whole Earth, has just finished the last of her "tavern-brawls," or wars; and lain down to doze, and yawn, and disconsolately wear off the headaches, bruises, nervous prostration and flaccidity consequent thereon: for the brawl had been a long one, *Seven Years* long; and there had been many such, begotten, as is usual, of intoxication from Pride or other Devil's-drink, and foul humours in the constitution. Alas, it was not so much a disconsolate doze, after ebriety and quarrel, that poor old Feudal Europe had now to undergo, and then on awakening to drink anew, and quarrel anew: old Feudal Europe has fallen a-dozing to die! Her next awakening will be with no tavern-brawl at the *King's Head* or *Prime Minister* tavern; but with the stern Avatar of DEMOCRACY, hymning its world-thrilling birth- and battle-song in the distant West;—therefrom, to go out conquering and to conquer, till it have made the circuit of all the Earth, an old dead Feudal Europe is born again (after infinite pangs!) into a new Industrial one. At Beppo's Hegira, as we said, Europe was in the last languor and stertorous fever-sleep of Dissolution: alas, with us, and with our sons for a generation or two, it is almost still worse,—were it not that in Birth-throes there is ever hope, in Death-throes the final departure of hope.

Now the philosophic reflection we were to indulge in, was no other than this, most germane to our subject: the portentous extent of Quackery, the multitudinous variety of Quacks that, along with our Beppo, and under him each in his degree, overran all Europe during that same period, the latter half of last century. It was the very age of impostors, cutpurses, swindlers, double-goers, enthusiasts, ambiguous persons; quacks simple, quacks compound; crackbrained, or with deceit prepense; quacks and quackeries of all colours and kinds. How many Mesmerists, Magicians, Cabalists, Swedenborgians, Illuminati, Crucified Nuns, and Devils of Loudun! To which the Inquisition-Biographer adds Vampires, Sylphs, Rosicrucians, Freemasons, and an *Etcetera*. Consider your Schröpfers, Cagliostros,

Casanovas, Saint-Germains, Dr. Grahams; the Chevalier d'Eon, Psalmanazar, Abbé Paris and the Ghost of Cock Lane! As if Bedlam had broken loose; as if, rather, in that "spiritual Twelfth-hour of the night," the everlasting Pit had opened itself, and from *its* still blacker bosom had issued Madness and all manner of shapeless Misbirths, to masquerade and chatter there.

But indeed, if we consider, how could it be otherwise? In that stertorous last fever-sleep of our European world, must not Phantasms enough, born of the Pit, as all such *are*, flit past, in ghastly masquerading and chattering? A low scarce-audible moan (in Parliamentary Petitions, Meal-mobs, Popish Riots, Treatises on Atheism) struggles from the moribund sleeper; frees him not from his hellish guests and saturnalia: Phantasms these "of a dying brain." So too, when the old Roman world, the measure of its iniquities being full, was to expire, and (in still bitterer agonies) be born again, had they not Veneficæ, Mathematici, Apolloniuses with the Golden Thigh, Apollonius' Asses, and False Christs enough,—before a REDEEMER arose!

For, in truth, and altogether apart from such half-figurative language, Putrescence is not more naturally the scene of unclean creatures in the world physical, than Social Decay is of quacks in the world moral. Nay, look at it with the eye of the mere Logician, of the Political Economist. In such periods of Social Decay, what is called an overflowing Population, that is a Population which, under the old Captains of Industry (named Higher Classes, *Ricos Hombres*, Aristocracies and the like), can no longer find work and wages, increases the number of Unprofessionals, Lackalls, Social Nondescripts; with appetite of utmost keenness, which there is no known method of satisfying. Nay, more, and perversely enough, ever as Population augments, your Captains of Industry can and do dwindle more and more into Captains of Idleness; whereby the more and more overflowing Population is worse and worse governed (shown *what to do*, for that is the only government): thus is the candle lighted at both ends; and the number of social Nondescripts increases in *double-quick* ratio. Whoso is alive, it is said, "must live"; at all events, will live; a task which daily gets harder, reduces to stranger shifts.

And now furthermore, with general economic distress, in such a Period, there is usually conjoined the utmost decay of moral principle: indeed, so universal is this conjunction, many men have seen it to be a concatenation and causation; justly enough, except that such have very generally, ever since a certain religious-repentant feeling went out of date, committed one sore mistake: what is vulgarly called putting the cart before the horse. Politico-economical benefactor of the species! deceive not thyself with barren sophisms: National suffering *is*, if thou wilt understand the words,

verily a “judgment of God”; has ever been preceded by national crime. “Be it here once more maintained before the world,” cries Sauerteig, in one of his *Springwurzeln*, “that temporal Distress,” that Misery of any kind, is not the *cause* of Immorality, but the effect thereof! Among individuals, it is true, so wide is the empire of Chance, poverty and wealth go all at haphazard; a St. Paul is making tents at Corinth, while a Kaiser Nero fiddles, in ivory palaces, over a burning Rome. Nevertheless here too, if nowise wealth and poverty, yet well-being and ill-being, even in the temporal economic sense, go commonly in respective partnership with Wisdom and with Folly: no man can, for a length of time, be wholly wretched, if there is not a disharmony (a folly and wickedness) within himself; neither can the richest Cræsus and never so eupeptic (for he, too, has his indigestions, and dies at last of surfeit), be other “than discontented, perplexed, unhappy, if he be a Fool.”—This, we apprehend, is true, O Sauerteig, yet not the whole truth: for there is more than day’s work and day’s wages in this world of ours: which, as thou knowest, is itself quite other than a “Workshop and Fancy-Bazaar,” is also a “Mystic Temple and Hall of Doom.” Thus we have heard of such things as good men struggling with adversity, and offering a spectacle for the very gods.

“But with a nation,” continues he, “where the multitude of the chances covers, in great measure, the uncertainty of Chance, it may be said to hold always that general Suffering is the fruit of general Misbehaviour, general Dishonesty. Consider it well; had all men stood faithfully to their posts, the Evil, when it first rose, had been manfully fronted, and abolished, not lazily blinked, and left to grow, with the foul sluggard’s comfort: ‘It will last my time.’ Thou foul sluggard, and even thief (*Faulenzer; ja Dieb!*) For art thou not a thief, to pocket thy day’s wages (be they counted in *groschen* or in gold thousands) for this, if it be for anything, for watching on thy special watch-tower that God’s City (which this His World is, where His children dwell) suffer no damage; and, all the while, to watch only that thy own ease be not invaded,—let otherwise hard come to hard as it will and can? Unhappy! It will last thy time: thy worthless sham of an existence, wherein nothing but the Digestion was real, will have evaporated in the interim; it will last thy time: but will it last thy *Eternity*? Or what if it should *not* last thy time (mark that also, for that also will be the fate of *some* such lying sluggard), but take fire, and explode, and consume thee like the moth!”

The sum of the matter, in any case, is, that national Poverty and national Dishonesty go together; that continually increasing social Nondescripts get ever the hungrier, ever the falser. Now say, have we not here the very making of Quackery; raw material, plastic energy, both in full action? Dishonesty the raw material, Hunger the plastic energy: what will not the

two realize? Nay, observe farther how Dishonesty is the raw material not of Quacks only, but also in great part of Dupes. In Goodness, were it never so simple, there is the surest instinct for the Good; the uneasiest unconquerable repulsion for the False and Bad. The very Devil Mephistopheles cannot deceive poor guileless Margaret: "it stands written on his brow that he never loved a living soul!" The like too has many a human inferior Quack painfully experienced; the like lies in store for our hero Beppo. But now with such abundant raw material not only to make Quacks of, but to feed and occupy them on, if the plastic energy of Hunger fail not, what a world shall we have! The wonder is not that the eighteenth century had very numerous Quacks, but rather that they were not innumerable.

In that same French Revolution alone, which burnt up so much, what unmeasured masses of Quackism were set fire to; nay, as foul mephitic fire-damp in that case, were made to flame in a fierce, sublime *splendour*; coruscating, even illuminating! The Count Saint-Germain, some twenty years later, had found a quite new element, of Fraternization, Sacred right of Insurrection, Oratorship of the Human Species, wherefrom to body himself forth quite otherwise: Schröpfer needed not now, as Blackguard undeterred, have solemnly shot himself in the *Rosenthal*; might have solemnly sacrificed himself, as Jacobin half-heroic, in the *Place de la Révolution*. For your quack-genius is indeed born, but also made; circumstances shape him or stunt him. Beppo Balsamo, born British in these new days, could have conjured fewer Spirits; yet had found a living and glory, as Castlereagh Spy, Irish Associationist, Blacking-Manufacturer, Book-Publisher, Able Editor. Withal too the reader will observe that Quacks, in every time, are of two sorts: the Declared Quack; and the Undeclared, who, if you question him, will deny stormfully, both to others and to himself; of which two quack-species the proportions vary with the varying capacity of the age. If Beppo's was the age of the Declared, therein, after all French Revolutions, we will grant, lay one of its main distinctions from ours; which is it not yet, and for a generation or two, the age of the Undeclared? Alas, almost a still more detestable age;—yet now (by God's grace), with Prophecy, with irreversible Enactment, registered in Heaven's chancery,—where *thou* too, if thou wilt *look*, mayst read and know, That its death-doom shall not linger. Be it speedy, be it sure!—And so herewith were our philosophical reflection, on the nature, causes, prevalence, decline and expected temporary destruction of Quackery, concluded; and now the Beppic poetic Narrative can once more take its course.

Beppo, then like a Noah's Raven, is out upon that watery waste of dissolute, beduped, distracted European Life, to see if there is any carrion there. One unguided little Raven, in the wide-weltering "Mother of dead Dogs": will he not come to harm; will he not be snapt up, drowned, starved and washed to the Devil there? No fear of him,—for a time. His eye (or scientific judgment), it is true, as yet takes in only a small section of it; but then his scent (instinct of genius) is prodigious: several endowments, forgery and others, he has unfolded into talents; the two sources of all quack-talent, Cunning and Impudence, are his in richest measure.

As to his immediate course of action and adventure, the foolish Inquisition-Biographer, it must be owned, shows himself a fool, and can give us next to no insight. Like enough, Beppo "fled to Messina"; simply as to the nearest city, and to get across to the mainland: but as to this "certain Althotas" whom he met there, and voyaged with to Alexandria in Egypt, and how they made hemp into silk, and realized much money, and came to Malta, and studied in the Laboratory there, and then the certain Althotas died,—of all this what shall be said? The foolish Inquisition-Biographer is uncertain whether the certain Althotas was a Greek or a Spaniard: but unhappily the prior question is not settled, whether he *was* at all. Superfluous it seems to put down Beppo's own account of his procedure; he gave multifarious accounts, as the exigencies of the case demanded: this of the "certain Althotas," and hemp made into false silk, is as verisimilar as that other of the "sage Althotas," the heirship-apparent of Trebisond, and the Scherif of Mecca's "Adieu, unfortunate Child of Nature." Nay, the guesses of the ignorant world; how Count Cagliostro had been travelling-tutor to a Prince (name not given), whom he murdered and took the money from; with others of the like,—were perhaps still more absurd. Beppo, we can see, was out and away,—the Devil knew whither. Far, variegated, painful might his roamings be. A plausible-looking shadow of him shows itself hovering over Naples and Calabria; thither, as to a famed high-school of Laziness and Scoundrelism, he may likely enough have gone to graduate. Of the Malta Laboratory, and Alexandrian hemp-silk, the less we say the better. This only is clear: That Beppo dived deep down into the lugubrious-obscure regions of Rascaldom; like a Knight to the palace of his Fairy; remained unseen there, and returned thence armed at all points.

If we fancy, meanwhile, that Beppo already meditated becoming Grand Cophta, and riding at Strasbourg in the Cardinal's carriage, we mistake much. Gift of Prophecy has been wisely denied to man. Did a man *foresee* his life, and not merely *hope* it, and grope it, and so, by Necessity and Freewill, make and fabricate it into a reality, he were no *man*, but some other kind of creature, superhuman or subter-human. No man sees far; the most

see no farther than their noses. From the quite dim uncertain mass of the future, "which lies there," says a Scottish Humorist, "uncombed, uncarded, like a mass of *tarry wool* proverbially *ill to spin*," they spin out, better or worse, their rumply, infirm thread of Existence, and wind it up, up,—till the spool is *full*; seeing but some little half-yard of it at once; exclaiming, as they look into the betarred entangled mass of Futurity, *We shall see!*

The first authentic fact with regard to Beppo is, that his swart, squat figure becomes visible in the Corso and Campo Vaccino of Rome; that he "lodges at the Sign of the Sun in the Rotonda," and sells pen-drawings there. Properly they are not pen-drawings; but printed engravings or etchings, to which Beppo, with a pen and a little Indian ink, has added the degree of scratching to give them the air of such. Thereby mainly does he realize a thin livelihood. From which we infer that his transactions in Naples and Calabria, with Althotas and hemp-silk, or whatever else, had not turned to much.

Forged pen-drawings are no mine of wealth: neither was Beppo Balsamo anything of an Adonis; on the contrary, a most dusky, bull-necked, mastiff-faced, sinister-looking individual: nevertheless, on applying for the favour of the hand of Lorenza Feliciani, a beautiful Roman donzella, "dwelling near the Trinity of the Pilgrims," the unfortunate child of Nature prospers beyond our hopes. Authorities differ as to the rank and status of this fair Lorenza: one account says she was the daughter of a Girdle-maker; but adds erroneously that it was in Calabria. The matter must remain suspended. Certain enough she was a handsome buxom creature; "both pretty and ladylike," it is presumable; but having no offer, in a country too prone to celibacy, took up with the bull-necked forger of pen-drawings, whose suit too was doubtless pressed with the most flowing rhetoric. She gave herself in marriage to him; and the parents admitted him to quarter in their house, till it should appear what was next to be done.

Two kitchen-fires, says the Proverb, burn not on one hearth: here, moreover, might be quite special causes of discord. Pen-drawing, at best a hungry concern, has now exhausted itself, and must be given up; but Beppo's household prospects brighten, on the other side: in the charms of his Lorenza he sees before him what the French call "a Future confused and immense." The hint was given; and, with reluctance, or without reluctance (for the evidence leans *both* ways), was taken and reduced to practice: Signor and Signora Balsamo are forth from the old Girdler's house, into the wide world, seeking and finding adventures.

The foolish Inquisition-Biographer, with painful scientific accuracy, furnishes a descriptive catalogue of all the successive Cullies (Italian Counts, French Envoys, Spanish Marquises, Dukes and Drakes) in various

quarters of the known world, whom this accomplished pair took in; with the sums each yielded, and the methods employed to bewitch him. Into which descriptive catalogue, why should we here so much as cast a glance? Cullies, the easy cushions on which knaves and knavesses repose and fatten, have at all times existed, in considerable profusion: neither can the fact of a clothed animal, Marquis or other, having acted in that capacity to never such lengths, entitle him to mention in History. We pass over these. Beppo, or as we must now learn to call him, the Count, appears at Venice, at Marseilles, at Madrid, Cadiz, Lisbon, Brussels; makes scientific pilgrimage to Quack Saint-Germain in Westphalia, religious-commercial to Saint James in Compostella, to Our Lady in Loretto: south, north, east, west, he shows himself; finds everywhere Lubricity and Stupidity (better or worse provided with cash), the two elements on which he thaumaturgically can work and live. Practice makes perfection; Beppo, too, was an apt scholar. By all methods he can awaken the stagnant imagination; cast maddening powder in the eyes.

Already in Rome he has cultivated whiskers, and put on the uniform of a Prussian Colonel: dame Lorenza is fair to look upon; but how much fairer, if by the air of distance and dignity you lend enchantment to her! In other places, the Count appears as real Count; as Marquis Pellegrini (lately from foreign parts); as Count this and Count that, Count Proteus-Incognito; finally as Count Alessandro Cagliostro.^[1] Figure him shooting through the world with utmost rapidity; ducking-under here, when the swordfishes of Justice make a dart at him; ducking-up yonder, in new shape, at the distance of a thousand miles; not unprovided with forged vouchers of respectability; above all, with that best voucher of respectability, a four-horse carriage, beef-eaters, and open purse, for Count Cagliostro has ready money and pays his way. At some Hotel of the Sun, Hotel of the Angel, Gold Lion, or Green Goose, or whatever hotel it is, in whatever world-famous capital City, his chariot-wheels have rested; sleep and food have refreshed his live-stock, chiefly the pearl and soul thereof, his indispensable Lorenza, now no longer Dame Lorenza, but Countess Seraphina, looking seraphic enough! Moneyed Do-nothings, whereof in this vexed Earth there are many, ever lounging about such places, scan and comment on the foreign coat-of-arms; ogle the fair foreign woman; who timidly recoils from their gaze, timidly responds to their reverences, as in halls and passages, they obsequiously throw themselves in her way: erelong one moneyed Do-nothing, from amid his tags and tassels, sword-belts, fop-tackle, frizzled hair without brains beneath it, is heard speaking to another: "Seen the Countess?—Divine creature that!"—and so the game is begun.

Let not the too sanguine reader, meanwhile, fancy that it is all holiday and heyday with his Lordship. The course of scoundrelism, and more than that of true love, never did run smooth. Seasons there may be when Count Proteus-Incognito has his epaulettes torn from his shoulders; his garment-skirts clipt close by the buttocks; and is bid sternly tarry at Jericho till his beard be grown. Harpies of Law defile his solemn feasts; his light burns languid; for a space seems utterly snuffed out, and dead in malodorous vapour. Dead only to blaze up the brighter! There is scoundrel-life in Beppo Cagliostro; cast him among the mud, tread him out of sight there, the miasmata do but stimulate and refresh him, he rises sneezing, is strong and young again.

Behold him, for example, again in Palermo, after having seen many men and many lands; and how he again escapes thence. Why did he return to Palermo? Perhaps to astonish old friends by new grandeur; or for temporary shelter, if the Continent were getting hot for him; or perhaps in the mere way of general trade. He is seized there, and clapt in prison, for those foolish old businesses of the treasure-digging Goldsmith, of the forged Will.

“The manner of his escape,” says one, whose few words on the obscure matter are so many light-points for us, “deserves to be described. The Son of one of the first Sicilian Princes, and great landed Proprietors (who moreover had filled important stations at the Neapolitan Court), was a person that united with a strong body and ungovernable temper all the tyrannical caprice which the rich and great, without cultivation, think themselves entitled to exhibit.

“Dona Lorenza had contrived to gain this man; and on him the fictitious Marchese Pellegrini founded his security. The Prince testified openly that he was the protector of this stranger-pair: but what was his fury when Joseph Balsamo, at the instance of those whom he had cheated, was cast into prison! He tried various means to deliver him; and as these would not prosper, he publicly, in the President’s ante-chamber, threatened the plaintiffs’ Advocate with the frightfullest misuseage if the suit were not dropt, and Balsamo forthwith set at liberty. As the Advocate declined such proposal, he clutched him, beat him, threw him on the floor, trampled him with his feet, and could hardly be restrained from still farther outrages, when the President himself came running out at the tumult, and commanded peace.

“This latter, a weak, dependent man, made no attempt to punish the injurer; the plaintiffs and their Advocate grew fainthearted; and Balsamo was let go; not so much as a

registration in the Court-Books specifying his dismissal, who occasioned it, or how it took place.”^[2]

Thus sometimes, a friend in the court is better than a penny in the purse! Marchese Pellegrini “quickly thereafter left Palermo, and performed various travels, whereof my author could impart no clear information.” Whether, or how far, the Game-chicken Prince went with him is not hinted.

So it might, at times, be quite otherwise than in coach-and-four that our Cagliostro journeyed. Occasionally we find him as outrider journeying on horseback; only Seraphina and her sop (whom she is to suck and eat) lolling on carriage-cushions; the hardy Count glad that hereby he can have the shot paid. Nay, sometimes he looks utterly poverty-struck, and has to journey one knows not how. Thus one briefest but authentic-looking glimpse of him presents itself in England, in the year 1772: no Count is he here, but mere Signor Balsamo again; engaged in house-painting, for which he has a most peculiar talent. Was it true that he painted the country house of “a Doctor Benemore”; and having not painted, but only smeared it, was refused payment, and got a lawsuit with expenses instead? If Doctor Benemore have left any representatives in this Earth, they are desired to speak out. We add only, that if young Beppo had one of the prettiest wives, old Benemore had one of the ugliest daughters; and so, putting one thing to another, matters might not be so bad.

For it is to be observed that the Count, on his own side, even in his days of highest splendour, is not idle. Faded dames of quality have many wants: the Count has not studied in the convent Laboratory, or pilgrimed to the Count Saint-Germain, in Westphalia, to no purpose. With loftiest condescension he stoops to impart somewhat of his supernatural secrets,—for a consideration. Rowland’s Kalydor is valuable; but what to the Beautifying-water of Count Alessandro! He that will undertake to smooth wrinkles, and make withered green parchment into a fair carnation skin, is he not one whom faded dames of quality will delight to honour? Or again, let the Beautifying-water succeed or not, have not such dames, if calumny may be in aught believed, *another* want? This want, too, the indefatigable Cagliostro will supply,—for a consideration. For faded gentlemen of quality the Count likewise has help. Not a charming Countess alone; but a “Wine of Egypt” (cantharides not being unknown to him), sold in drops, more precious than nectar; which what faded gentleman of quality would not purchase with anything short of life? Consider now what may be done with potions, washes, charms, love-philtres, among a class of mortals, idle from the mother’s womb; rejoicing to be taught the Ionic dances, and meditating of love from their tender nails!

Thus waxing, waning, broad-shining, or extinct, an inconstant but unwearied Moon, rides on its course the Cagliostic star. Thus are Count and Countess busy in their vocation; thus do they spend the golden season of their youth,—shall we say, “for the Greatest Happiness of the greatest number?” Happy enough, had there been no sumptuary or adultery or swindlery Law-acts; no Heaven above, no Hell beneath; no flight of Time, and gloomy land of Eld and Destitution and Desperation, towards which, by law of Fate, they see themselves, at all moments, with frightful regularity, unaidably drifting.

The prudent man provides against the inevitable. Already Count Cagliostro, with his love-philtres, his cantharidic Wine of Egypt; nay, far earlier, by his blue-flames and divining-rods, as with the poor sheep Goldsmith of Palermo; and ever since, by many a significant hint thrown out where the scene suited,—has dabbled in the Supernatural. As his seraphic Countess gives signs of withering, and one luxuriant branch of industry will die and drop off, others must be pushed into budding. Whether it was in England during what he called his “first visit” in the year 1776 (for the before-first, house-smearing visit was, reason or none, to go for nothing) that he first thought of Prophecy as a trade, is unknown: certain enough, he had begun to practise it then; and this indeed not without a glimpse of insight into the English national character. Various, truly, are the pursuits of mankind; whereon they would fain, unfolding the future, take Destiny by surprise: with us, however, as a nation of shopkeepers, they may be all said to centre in this one, *Put money in thy purse!* O for a Fortunatus’-Pocket, with its ever-new coined gold:—if, indeed, the true prayer were not rather: O for a Crassus’-Drink, of *liquid* gold, that so the accursed throat of Avarice might for once have enough and to spare! Meanwhile whoso should engage, keeping clear of the gallows, to teach men the secret of making money, were not he a Professor sure of audience? Strong were the general Scepticism; still stronger the general Need and Greed. Count Cagliostro, from his residence in Whitcombe Street, it is clear, had looked into the mysteries of the Little-go; by occult science knew the lucky number. Bish as yet was not; but Lotteries were; gulls also were. The Count has his Language-master, his Portuguese Jew, his nondescript Ex-Jesuits, whom he puts forth as antennæ, into coffee-houses, to stir up the minds of men. “Lord” Scott (a swindler swindled), and Miss Fry, and many others, were they here, could tell what it cost them: nay, the very Law-books, and Lord Mansfield and Mr. Howarth speak of hundreds, and jewel-boxes, and quite handsome booties. Thus can the bustard pluck geese, and, if Law do get the carcass, live upon their giblets;—now and then, however, finds a vulture too tough to pluck.

The attentive reader is no doubt curious to understand all the What and the How of Cagliostro's procedure while England was the scene. As we too are, and have been; but unhappily all in vain. To that English *Life* of uncertain gender none, as was said, need in their utmost extremity repair. Scarcely the very lodging of Cagliostro can be ascertained; except incidentally that it was once in Whitcombe Street; for a few days, in Warwick Court, Holborn; finally, for some space, in the King's Bench Jail. Vain were it, meanwhile, for any reverencer of genius to pilgrim thither, seeking memorials of a great man. Cagliostro is clean gone: on the strictest search, no token never so faint discloses itself. He went and left nothing behind him;—except perhaps a few cast-clothes, and other inevitable exuviæ, long since, not indeed annihilated (this nothing can be), yet beaten into mud, and spread as new soil over the general surface of Middlesex and Surrey; floated by the Thames into old Ocean; or flitting, the gaseous parts of them, in the universal Atmosphere, borne thereby to remotest corners of the Earth, or beyond the limits of the Solar System! So fleeting is the track and habitation of man; so wondrous the stuff he builds of; his house, his very house of houses (what we call his body), were he the first of geniuses, will evaporate in the strangest manner, and vanish even whither we have said.

To us on our side, however, it is cheering to discover, for one thing, that Cagliostro found antagonists worthy of him: the bustard plucking geese, and living on their giblets, found not our whole Island peopled with geese, but here and there, as above hinted, with vultures, with hawks of still sharper quality than his. Priddle, Aylett, Saunders, O'Reilly: let these stand forth as the vindicators of English national character. By whom Count Alessandro Cagliostro, as in dim fluctuating outline indubitably appears, was bewritt, arrested, fleeced, hatchelled, bewildered and bedevilled, till the very Jail of King's Bench seemed a refuge from them. A wholly obscure contest, as was natural; wherein, however, to all candid eyes the vulturous and falconish character of our Isle fully asserts itself; and the foreign Quack of Quacks, with all his thaumaturgic Hemp-silks, Lottery-numbers, Beauty-waters, Seductions, Phosphorus-boxes, and Wines of Egypt, is seen matched, and nigh throttled, by the natural unassisted cunning of English Attorneys. Whereupon the bustard, feeling himself so pecked and plucked, takes wing, and flies to foreign parts.

One good thing he has carried with him, notwithstanding: initiation into some primary arcana of Freemasonry. The Quack of Quacks, with his primitive bias towards the supernatural-mystificatory, must long have had his eye on Masonry; which, with its blazonry and mummary, sashes, drawn sabres, brothers Terrible, brothers Venerable (the whole so imposing by

candlelight), offered the choicest element for him. All men profit by *Union* with men; the quack as much as another; nay, in these two words, *Sworn Secrecy*, alone has he not found a very talisman! Cagliostro, then, determines on Masonship. It was afterwards urged that the Lodge to which he and his Seraphina got admission, for she also was made a Mason, or Masoness, and had a riband-garter solemnly bound on, with order to sleep in it for a night,—was a Lodge of low rank in the social scale; numbering not a few of the pastry-cook and hairdresser species. To which it could only be replied, that these alone spoke French; that a man and mason, though he cooked pastry, was still a man and mason. Be this as it might, the apt Recipiendary is rapidly promoted through the three grades of Apprentice, Companion, Master; at the cost of five guineas. That of his being first raised into the air by means of a rope and pulley fixed in the ceiling, “during which the heavy mass of his body must assuredly have caused him a dolorous sensation”; and then being forced blindfold to shoot himself (though with privily *disloaded* pistol), in sign of courage and obedience: all this we can esteem an apocrypha,—palmed on the Roman Inquisition, otherwise prone to delusion. Five guineas, and some foolish froth-speeches, delivered over liquor and otherwise, was the cost. If you ask now, In *what* London Lodge was it? Alas, we know not, and shall never know. Certainly only that Count Alessandro *is* a master-mason; that having once crossed the threshold, his plastic genius will not stop there. Behold, accordingly, he has bought from a “Bookseller” certain manuscripts belonging to “one George Cofton, a man absolutely unknown to him” and to us, which treat of the “Egyptian Masonry”! In other words, Count Alessandro will *blow* with his new five-guinea bellows; having always occasion to raise the wind.

With regard specially to that huge soap-bubble of an Egyptian Masonry which he blew, and as conjuror caught many flies with, it is our painful duty to say a little; not much. The Inquisition-Biographer, with deadly fear of heretical and democratical and black-magical Freemasons before his eyes, has gone into the matter to boundless depths; commenting, elucidating, even confuting: a certain expository masonic Order-Book of Cagliostro’s, which he has laid hand on, opens the whole mystery to him. The ideas he declares to be Cagliostro’s; the composition all a Disciple’s, for the Count had no gift that way. What, then, does the Disciple set forth,—or, at lowest, the Inquisition-Biographer say that he sets forth? Much, much that is not to the point.

Understand, however, that once inspired, by the absolutely unknown George Cofton, with the notion of Egyptian Masonry, wherein as yet lay much “magic and superstition,” Count Alessandro resolves to free it of these impious ingredients, and make it a kind of Last Evangel, or Renovator of the

Universe,—which so needed renovation. “As he did not believe anything in matter of Faith,” says our wooden Familiar, “nothing could arrest him.” True enough: how did he move along, then; to what length did he go?

“In his system he promises his followers to conduct them to *perfection*, by means of a *physical and moral regeneration*; to enable them by the former (or physical) to find the *prime matter*, or Philosopher’s Stone, and the *acacia* which consolidates in man the forces of the most vigorous youth, and renders him immortal; and by the latter (or moral) to procure them a Pentagon, which shall restore man to his primitive state of innocence, lost by original sin. The Founder supposes that this Egyptian Masonry was instituted by Enoch and Elias, who propagated it in different parts of the world: however, in time it lost much of its purity and splendour. And so, by degrees, the Masonry of men had been reduced to pure buffoonery; and that of women being almost entirely destroyed, having now for most part no place in common Masonry. Till at last, the zeal of the *Grand Cophta* (so are the High-priests of Egypt named) had signalized itself by restoring the Masonry of both sexes to its pristine lustre.”

With regard to the great question of constructing this invaluable Pentagon, which is to abolish Original Sin: how you have to choose a solitary mountain, and call it Sinai; and build a Pavilion on it to be named Sion, with twelve sides, in every side a window, and three stories, one of which is named Ararat; and there, with Twelve Masters, each at a window, yourself in the middle of them, to go through unspeakable formalities, vigils, removals, fasts, toils, distresses, and hardly get your Pentagon after all,—with regard to this great question and construction, we shall say nothing. As little concerning the still grander and painfuller process of Physical Regeneration, or growing young again; a thing not to be accomplished without a forty-days course of medicine, purgations, sweating-baths, fainting-fits, root-diet, phlebotomy, starvation and desperation, more perhaps than it is all worth. Leaving these interior solemnities, and many high moral precepts of union, virtue, wisdom, and doctrines of immortality and what not, will the reader care to cast an indifferent glance on certain esoteric ceremonial parts of this Egyptian Masonry,—as the Inquisition-Biographer, if we miscellaneously cull from him, may enable us?

“In all these ceremonial parts,” huskily avers the wooden Biographer, “you find as much sacrilege, profanation, superstition

and idolatry, as in common Masonry: invocations of the holy Name, prostrations, adorations lavished on the Venerable, or head of the Lodge; aspirations, insufflations, incense-burnings, fumigations, exorcisms of the Candidates and the garments they are to take; emblems of the sacrosanct Triad, of the Moon, of the Sun, of the Compass, Square, and a thousand-thousand other iniquities and ineptitudes, which are now well known in the world.”

“We above made mention of the Grand Cophta. By this title has been designated the founder or restorer of Egyptian Masonry. Cagliostro made no difficulty in admitting” (to me the Inquisitor) “that under such name he was himself meant: now in this system the Grand Cophta is compared to the Highest: the most solemn acts of worship are paid him; he has authority over the Angels; he is invoked on all occasions; everything is done in virtue of his power; which you are assured he derives immediately from God. Nay, more: among the various rites observed in this exercise of Masonry, you are ordered to recite the *Veni Creator spiritus*, the *Te Deum*, and some Psalms of David: to such an excess is impudence and audacity carried, that in the Psalm, *Memento, Domine, David et omnis mansuetudinis ejus*, every time the name David occurs, that of the Grand Cophta is to be substituted.”

“No religion is excluded from the Egyptian Society: the Jew, the Calvinist, the Lutheran, can be admitted equally well with the Catholic, if so be they admit the existence of God and the immortality of the soul.” “The men elevated to the rank of master take the names of the ancient Prophets; the women those of the Sibyls.”

* * “Then the grand Mistress blows on the face of the female Recipiendary, all along from brow to chin, and says: ‘I give you this breath, to cause to germinate and become alive in your heart the Truth, which we possess; to fortify in you the etc. etc. Guardian of the new Knowledge which we prepare to make you partake of, by the sacred names of *Helios, Mene, Tetragrammaton.*’”

“In the *Essai sur les Illuminés*, printed at Paris in 1789, I read that these latter words were suggested to Cagliostro as Arabic or Sacred ones by a Sleight-of-hand Man, who said that he was assisted by a spirit, and added that this spirit was the Soul of a Cabalist Jew, who by art-magic had killed his pig before the Christian Advent.”

* * “They take a young lad, or a girl who is in the state of innocence, such they call the *Pupil* or the *Columb*; the Venerable communicates to him the power he would have had before the Fall of Man; which power consists mainly in commanding the pure Spirits; these Spirits are to the number of seven: it is said they surround the Throne; and that they govern the Seven Planets: their names are Anael, Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, Uriel, Zobiachel, Anachiel.”

Or would the reader wish to see this *Columb* in action? She can act in two ways; either behind a curtain, behind a hieroglyphically painted Screen with “table and three candles”; or as here “before the Caraffe,” and showing face. If the miracle fail, it can only be because she is not “in the state of innocence,”—an accident much to be guarded against. This scene is at Mittau in Courland;—we find, indeed, that it is a *Pupil* affair, not a *Columb* one; but for the rest, that is perfectly indifferent:

“Cagliostro accordingly (it is his own story still) brought a little Boy into the Lodge; son of a nobleman there. He placed him on his knees before a table, whereon stood a Bottle of pure water, and behind this some lighted candles: he made an exorcism round the Boy, put his hand on his head: and both, in this attitude, addressed their prayers to God for the happy accomplishment of the work. Having then bid the child look into the Bottle, directly the child cried that he saw a garden. Knowing hereby that Heaven assisted him, Cagliostro took courage, and bade the child ask of God the grace to see the Angel Michael. At first the child said: ‘I see something white; I know not what it is.’ Then he began jumping, stamping like a possessed creature, and cried: ‘There now! I see a child, like myself, that seems to have something angelical.’ All the assembly, and Cagliostro himself, remained speechless with emotion. * * * The child being anew exorcised, with the hands of the Venerable on his head, and the customary prayers addressed to Heaven, he looked into the Bottle, and said, he saw his Sister at that moment coming down stairs, and embracing one of her brothers. That appeared impossible, the brother in question being then hundreds of miles off: however, Cagliostro felt not disconcerted; said they might send to the country house where the sister was, and see.”^[3]

Wonderful enough. Here, however, a fact rather suddenly transpires, which, as the Inquisition-Biographer well urges, must serve to undeceive all believers in Cagliostro; at least, call a blush into their cheeks. It seems: “The Grand Cophta, the restorer, the propagator of Egyptian Masonry, Count Cagliostro himself, testifies, in most part of his System, the profoundest respect for the Patriarch Moses: *and yet* this same Cagliostro affirmed before his judges that he had always felt the insurmountable antipathy to Moses; and attributes this hatred to his constant opinion, that Moses was a thief for having carried off the Egyptian vessels; which opinion, in spite of all the luminous arguments that were opposed to him to show how erroneous it was, he has continued to hold with an invincible obstinacy!” How reconcile these two inconsistencies? Ay, how?

But to finish off this Egyptian Masonic business, and bring it all to a focus, we shall now, for the first and for the last time, peep one moment through the spyglass of Monsieur de Luchet, in that *Essai sur les Illuminés* of his. The whole matter being so much of a chimera, how can it be painted otherwise than chimerically? Of the following passage one thing is true, that a creature of the seed of Adam believed it to be true. List, list, then; O list!

“The Recipiendary is led by a darksome path into an immense hall, the ceiling, the walls, the floor of which are covered by a black cloth, sprinkled over with red flames and menacing serpents: three sepulchral lamps emit, from time to time, a dying glimmer; and the eye half distinguishes, in this lugubrious den, certain wrecks of mortality suspended by funereal crapes: a heap of skeletons forms in the centre a sort of altar; on both sides of it are piled books; some contain menaces against the perjured; others the deadly narrative of the vengeance which the Invisible Spirit has exacted; of the infernal evocations for a long time pronounced in vain.

“Eight hours elapse. Then Phantoms, trailing mortuary veils, slowly cross the hall, and sink in caverns, without audible noise of trap-doors or of falling. You notice only that they are gone, by a fetid odour exhaled from them.

“The Novice remains four-and-twenty hours in this gloomy abode, in the midst of a freezing silence. A rigorous fast has already weakened his thinking faculties. Liquors, prepared for the purpose, first weary, and at length wear out his senses. At his feet are placed three cups, filled with a drink of greenish colour. Necessity lifts them towards his lips; involuntary fear repels them.

“At last appear two men; looked upon as the ministers of death. These gird the pale brow of the Recipientary with an auroral-coloured riband, dipt in blood, and full of silvered characters mixed with the figure of Our Lady of Loretto. He receives a copper crucifix, of two inches length; to his neck are hung a sort of amulets, wrapped in violet cloth. He is stript of his clothes; which two ministering brethren deposit on a funeral pile, erected at the other end of the hall. With blood, on his naked body, are traced crosses. In this state of suffering and humiliation, he sees approaching with large strides five Phantoms, armed with swords, and clad in garments dropping blood. Their faces are veiled: they spread a carpet on the floor; kneel there; pray; and remain with outstretched hands crossed on their breast, and face fixed on the ground, in deep silence. An hour passes in this painful attitude. After which fatiguing trial, plaintive cries are heard; the funeral pile takes fire, yet casts only a pale light; the garments are thrown on it and burnt. A colossal and almost transparent Figure rises from the very bosom of the pile. At sight of it, the five prostrated men fall into convulsions insupportable to look on; the too faithful image of those foaming struggles wherein a mortal, at handgrips with a sudden pain, ends by sinking under it.

“Then a trembling voice pierces the vault, and articulates the formula of those execrable oaths that are to be sworn: my pen falters; I think myself almost guilty to retrace them.”

O Luchet, what a taking! Is there no hope left, thinkest thou? Thy brain is all gone to addled albumen; help seems none, if not in that last mother’s bosom of all the ruined; Brandy and water!—An unfeeling world may laugh; but ought to recollect that, forty years ago, these things were sad realities,—in the heads of many men.

As to the execrable oaths, this seems the mean one. “Honour and respect *Aqua Toffana*, as a sure, prompt and necessary means of purging the Globe, by the death or the hebetation of such as endeavour to debase the Truth, or snatch it from our hands.” And so the catastrophe ends by bathing our poor half-dead Recipientary first in blood, then, after some genuflexions, in water; and “serving him a repast composed of roots,”—we grieve to say, mere potatoes-and-point!

* * * * *

Figure now all this boundless cunningly-devised Agglomerate of royal arches, death's-heads, hieroglyphically painted screens, *Columbs* in the state of innocence; with spacious masonic halls, dark, or in the favourablest theatrical light-and-dark; Kircher's magic-lantern, Belshazzar handwritings, of phosphorus: "Plaintiff tones," gong-beatings; hoary beard of a supernatural Grand Cophta emerging from the gloom;—and how it acts, not only indirectly through the foolish senses of men, but directly on their Imagination; connecting itself with Enoch and Elias, with Philanthropy, Immortality, Eleutheromania, and Adam Weisshaupt's Illuminati, and so downwards to the infinite Deep: figure all this; and in the centre of it, sitting eager and alert, the skilfulest Panourgos, working the mighty chaos into a creation—of ready money. In such a wide plastic ocean of sham and foam had the Arch-quack now happily begun to envelop himself.

Accordingly he goes forth prospering and to prosper. Arrived in any City, he has but by Masonic grip to accredit himself with the Venerable of the place: and, not by degrees as formerly, but in a single night, is introduced in Grand Lodge to all that is fattest and foolishest far or near; and in the fittest arena, a gilt-pasteboard Masonic hall. There, between the two pillars of Jachin and Boaz, can the great Sheep-stealer see his whole flock of Dupeables assembled in one penfold; affectionately blatant, licking the hand they are to bleed by. Victorious Acharat-Beppo! The genius of Amazement, moreover, has now shed her glory round him; he is radiant-headed, a supernatural by his very gait. Behold him everywhere welcomed with vivats, or in awestruck silence: gilt-pasteboard Freemasons receive him under the Steel Arch of crossed sabres; he mounts to the Seat of the Venerable; holds high discourse hours long, on Masonry, Morality, Universal Science, Divinity, and Things in general, with "a sublimity, an emphasis and unction," proceeding, it appears, "from the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost." Then there are Egyptian Lodges to be founded, corresponded with,—a thing involving expense; elementary fractions of many a priceless arcanum, nay, if the place will stand it, of the Pentagon itself, can be given to the purified in life: how gladly would he *give* them, but they have to be brought from the uttermost ends of the world, and cost money. Now too, with what tenfold impetuosity do all the old trades of Egyptian Drops, Beauty-waters, Secret-favours, expand themselves, and rise in price! Life-weary moneyed Do-nothing, this seraphic Countess is Grand Priestess of the Egyptian Female Lodges; has a touch of the supramundane Undine in her: among all thy intrigues, hadst thou ever yet, Endymion-like, an intrigue with the lunar Diana,—called also Hecate? And thou, O antique, much-loving faded Dowager, *this* Squire-of-dames can, it appears probable, command the Seven Angels, Uriel, Anachiel and Company; at lowest, has the eyes of all

Europe fixed on him!—The dog pockets money enough, and can seem to despise money.

To us, much meditating on the matter, it seemed perhaps strangest of all, how Count Cagliostro, received under the Steel Arch, could hold Discourses, of from one to three hours long, on Universal Science, of such unction, we do not say as to seem inspired by the Holy Spirit, but as not to get him lugged out of doors directly, after his first head of method, and drowned in whole oceans of salt-and-water. The man could not speak; only babble in long-winded diffusions, chaotic circumvolutions tending nowhither. He had no thought for speaking with; he had not even a language. His Sicilian Italian, and Laquais-de-place French, garnished with shreds from all European dialects, was wholly intelligible to no mortal; a Tower-of-Babel jargon, which made many think him a kind of Jew. But indeed, with the language of Greeks, or of Angels, what better were it? The man, once for all, has no articulate utterance; that tongue of his emits noises enough, but no speech. Let him begin the plainest story, his stream stagnates at the first stage; chafes, “ahem! ahem!” loses itself in the earth; or, bursting over, flies abroad without bank or channel,—into separate plashes. Not a stream, but a lake, a widespread indefinite marsh. His whole thought is confused, inextricable; what thought, what resemblance of thought he has, cannot deliver itself, except in gasps, blustering gushes, spasmodic refluxes, which makes bad worse. Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble: how thou bubblest, foolish “Bubblyjock”! Hear him once, and on a dead-lift occasion, as the Inquisition Gurney reports it:

“‘I mean and I wish to mean, that even as those who honour their father and mother, and respect the sovereign Pontiff are blessed of God; even so all that I did, I did it by the order of God, with the power which he vouchsafed to me, and to the advantage of God and of Holy Church; and I mean to give the proofs of all that I have done and said, not only physically but morally, by showing that as I have served God for God and by the power of God, he has given me at last the counter-poison to confound and combat Hell; for I know no other enemies than those that are in Hell, and if I am wrong, the Holy Father will punish me; if I am right, he will reward me; and if the Holy Father could get into his hands to-night these answers of mine, I predict to all brethren, believers and unbelievers, that I should be at liberty to-morrow morning.’ Being desired to give these proofs then, he answered: ‘To prove that I have been chosen of God as an apostle to defend and propagate religion, I say that as the Holy Church has instituted

pastors to demonstrate in face of the world that she is the true Catholic faith, even so, having operated with approbation and by the counsel of pastors of the Holy Church, I am, as I said, fully justified in regard to all my operation; and these pastors have assured me that my Egyptian Order was divine, and deserved to be formed into an Order sanctioned by the Holy Father, as I said in another interrogatory.’ ”

How then, in the name of wonder, said we, could such a babbling, bubbling Turkey-cock speak “with unction”?

Two things here are to be taken into account. First, the difference between speaking and public speaking; a difference altogether generic. Secondly, the wonderful power of a certain audacity, often named impudence. Was it never thy hard fortune, good Reader, to attend any Meeting convened for Public purposes; any Bible-Society, Reform, Conservative, Thatched-Tavern, Hogg Dinner, or other such Meeting? Thou hast seen some full-fed Long-ear, by free determination or on sweet constraint, start to his legs, and give voice. Well aware wert thou that there was not, had not been, could not be, in that entire ass-cranium of his any fraction of an idea: nevertheless mark him. If at first an ominous haze flit round, and nothing, not even nonsense, dwell in his recollection,—heed it not; let him but plunge desperately on, the spell is broken. Commonplaces enough are at hand: “labour of love,” “right of suffering millions,” “throne and altar,” “divine gift of song,” or what else it may be; the Meeting, by its very *name*, has environed itself in a given element of Commonplace. But anon, behold how his talking-organs get heated, and the friction vanishes; cheers, applauses, with the previous dinner and strong drink, raise him to height of noblest temper. And now, as for your vociferous Dullard, is easiest of all, let him keep on the soft, safe *parallel* course; parallel to the Truth, or nearly so; for Heaven’s sake, not in *contact* with it: no obstacle will meet him; on the favouring given element of Commonplace he triumphantly careers.

He is as the ass, whom you took and cast headlong into the water: the water at first threatens to swallow him; but he finds, to his astonishment, that he can *swim* therein, that it is buoyant and bears him along. One sole condition is indispensable: audacity, vulgarly called impudence. Our ass must *commit* himself to his watery “element”; in free daring, strike forth his four limbs from him: then shall he not drown and sink, but shoot gloriously forward, and swim, to the admiration of bystanders. The ass, safe landed on the other bank, shakes his rough hide, wonder-struck himself at the faculty that lay in him, and waves joyfully his long ears: so too the public speaker.

Cagliostro, as we know him of old, is not without a certain blubbery oiliness of soul as of body, with vehemence lying under it; has the volublest, noisiest tongue; and in the audacity vulgarly called impudence is without a fellow. The Commonplaces of such Steel-Arch Meetings are soon at his finger-ends: that same blubbery oiliness, and vehemence lying under it, once give them an element and stimulus, are the very gift of a fluent public speaker—to Dupeables.

Here too let us mention a circumstance, not insignificant, if true, which it may readily enough be. In younger years, Beppo Balsamo once, it is recorded, took some pains to procure, “from a country vicar,” under quite false pretences, “a bit of cotton steeped in holy oils.” What could such bit of cotton steeped in holy oils do for him? An Unbeliever from any basis of conviction the unbelieving Beppo could never be; but solely from stupidity and bad morals. Might there not lie in that chaotic blubbery nature of his, at the bottom of all, a certain musk-grain of real Superstitious Belief? How wonderfully such a musk-grain of Belief will flavour, and impregnate with seductive odour, a whole inward world of Quackery, so that every fibre thereof shall smell *musk*, is well known. No Quack can persuade like him who has himself some persuasion. Nay, so wondrous is the act of Believing, Deception and Self-deception must, rigorously speaking, coexist in all Quacks; and he perhaps were definable as the best Quack, in whom the smallest musk-grain of the latter would sufficiently flavour the largest mass of the former.

But indeed, as we know otherwise, was there not in Cagliostro a certain pinchbeck counterfeit of all that is golden and good in man, of somewhat even that is best? Cheers, and illuminated hieroglyphs, and the ravishment of thronging audiences, can make him maudlin; his very wickedness of practice will render him louder in eloquence of theory; and “philanthropy,” “divine science,” “depth of unknown worlds,” “finer feelings of the heart,” and suchlike shall draw tears from most asses of sensibility. Neither, indeed, is it of moment how *few* his elementary Commonplaces are, how empty his head is, so he but agitate it well: thus a lead-drop or two, put into the emptiest dry-bladder, and jingled to and fro, will make noise enough; and even, if skilfully jingled, a kind of martial music.

Such is the Cagliostic palaver, that bewitches all manner of believing souls. If the ancient Father was named Chrysostom, or Mouth-of-Gold, be the modern Quack named Pinchbeckostom, or Mouth-of-Pinchbeck; in an Age of Bronze such metal finds elective affinities. On the whole, too, it is worth considering what element your Quack specially works in: the element of Wonder! The Genuine, be he artist or artisan, works in the finitude of the Known; the Quack in the infinitude of the Unknown. And then how, in

rapide progression, he grows and advances, once start him! Your name is up, says the adage; you may lie in bed. A nimbus of renown and preternatural astonishment envelops Cagliostro; enchants the general eye. The few reasoning mortals scattered here and there who see through him, deafened in the universal hubbub, shut their lips in sorrowful disdain; confident in the grand remedy, Time. The Enchanter meanwhile rolls on his way; what boundless materials of Deceptibility, what greediness and ignorance, especially what prurient brute-mindedness, exist over Europe in this the most deceivable of modern ages, are stirred up, fermenting in his behoof. He careers onward as a Comet; his nucleus, of paying and praising Dupes, embraces, in long radius, what city and province he rests over; his thinner tail, of wondering and curious Dupes, stretches into remotest lands. Good Lavater, from amid his Swiss Mountains, could say of him: "Cagliostro, a man; and a man such as few are; in whom, however, I am not a believer. O that he were simple of heart and humble, like a child; that he had feeling for the simplicity of the Gospel, and the majesty of the Lord (*Hoheit des Herrn*)! Who were so great as he? Cagliostro often tells what is not true, and promises what he does not perform. Yet do I nowise hold his operations as deception, though they are not what he calls them."^[4] If good Lavater could so say of him, what must others have been saying!

Comet-wise, progressing with loud flourish of kettle-drums, everywhere under the Steel Arch, evoking spirits, transmuting metals (to such as could stand it), the Arch-quack has traversed Saxony; at Leipzig has run athwart the hawser of a brother quack (poor Schröpfer, here scarcely recognizable as "*Scieffert*"), and wrecked him. Through Eastern Germany, Prussian Poland, he progresses; and so now at length, in the spring of 1780, has arrived at Petersburg. His pavilion is erected here, his flag prosperously hoisted: Mason-lodges have long ears; he is distributing, as has now become his wont, Spagiric Food, medicine for the poor; a train-oil Prince, Potemkin or something like him, for accounts are dubious, feels his chops water over a seraphic Seraphina: all goes merry, and promises the best. But in those despotic countries, the Police is so arbitrary! Cagliostro's thaumaturgy must be overhauled by the Empress's Physician (Mouncey, a hard Annandale Scot); is found nought, the Spagiric Food unfit for a dog: and so, the whole particulars of his Lordship's conduct being put together, the result is, that he must leave Petersburg, in a given brief term of hours. Happy for him that it was so brief: scarcely is he gone, till the Prussian Ambassador appears with a complaint, that he has falsely assumed the Prussian uniform at Rome; the Spanish Ambassador with a still graver complaint, that he has forged bills at Cadiz. However, he is safe over the marches: let them complain their fill.

In Courland, and in Poland, great things await him; yet not unalloyed by two small reverses. The famed Countess von der Recke, a born Fair Saint, what the Germans call *Schöne Seele*, as yet quite young in heart and experience, but broken down with grief for departed friends,—seeks to question the world-famous Spirit-summoner on the secrets of the Invisible Kingdoms; whither, with fond strained eyes, she is incessantly looking. The *galimathias* of Pinchbeckostom cannot impose on this pure-minded simple woman: she recognizes the Quack in him, and in a printed Book makes known the same: Mephisto's mortifying experience with Margaret, as above foretold, renews itself for Cagliostro.^[5] At Warsaw, too, though he discourses on Egyptian Masonry, on Medical Philosophy, and the ignorance of Doctors, and performs successfully with *Pupil* and *Columb*, a certain "Count M." cherishes more than doubt; which ends in certainty, in a written *Cagliostro Unmasked*. The Arch-quack, triumphant, sumptuously feasted in the city, has retired with a chosen set of believers, with whom, however, was this unbelieving "M.," into the country; to transmute metals, to prepare perhaps the Pentagon itself. All that night, before leaving Warsaw, "our dear Master" had spent conversing with spirits. Spirits? cries "M.": Not he; but melting ducats: he has a melted mass of them in this crucible, which now, by sleight-of-hand, he would fain substitute for that other, filled, as you all saw, with red-lead, carefully luted down, smelted, set to cool, smuggled from among our hands, and now (look at it, ye asses!)—found broken and hidden among these bushes!

Neither does the Pentagon, or Elixir of Life, or whatever it was, prosper better. "Our sweet Master enters into expostulation": "swears by his great God, and his honour, that he will finish the work and make us happy. He carries his modesty so far as to propose that he shall work with chains on his feet; and consents to lose his life, by the hands of his disciples, if before the end of the *fourth passage*, his word be not made good. He lays his hand on the ground, and kisses it; holds it up to Heaven, and again takes God to witness that he speaks true; calls on Him to exterminate him if he lies." A vision of the hoary-bearded Grand Cophta himself makes night solemn. In vain! The sherds of that broken red-lead crucible, which pretends to stand here unbroken half-full of silver, lie *there* before your eyes: that "resemblance of a sleeping child," grown visible in the magic cooking of our Elixir, proves to be an inserted rosemary-leaf; the Grand Cophta cannot be gone too soon.

Count "M.," balancing towards the opposite extreme, even thinks him inadequate as a Quack:

“Far from being modest,” says this Unmasker, “he brags beyond expression, in anybody’s presence, especially in women’s, of the grand faculties he possesses. Every word is an exaggeration, or a statement you feel to be improbable. The smallest contradiction puts him in fury: his vanity breaks through on all sides; he lets you give him a festival that sets the whole city talking. Most impostors are supple, and endeavour to gain friends. This one, you might say, studies to appear arrogant, to make all men enemies, by his rude injurious speeches, by the squabbles and grudges he introduces among friends.” “He quarrels with his coadjutors for trifles; fancies that a simple giving of the lie will persuade the public that they are liars.” “Schröpfer at Leipzig was far cleverer.” “He should get some ventriloquist for assistant: should read some Books of Chemistry; study the Tricks of Philadelphia and Comus.”^[6]

Fair advices, good “M.”; but do not you yourself admit that he has a “natural genius for deception”; above all things “a forehead of brass (*front d’airain*), which nothing can disconcert”? To such a genius, and such a brow, Comus and Philadelphia, and all the ventriloquists in Nature, can add little. Give the Arch-quack his due. These arrogancies of his prove only that he is mounted on his high horse, and has now the world under him.

Such reverses, which will occur in the lot of every man, are, for our Cagliostro, but as specks in the blaze of the meridian Sun. With undimmed lustre he is, as heretofore, handed over from this “Prince P.” to that Prince Q.; among which high believing potentates, what is an incredulous “Count M.”? His pockets are distended with ducats and diamonds: he is off to Vienna, to Frankfort, to Strasburg, by extra post; and there also will work miracles. “The train he commonly took with him,” says the Inquisition-Biographer, “corresponded to the rest; he always travelled post, with a considerable suite: couriers, lackeys, body-servants, domestics of all sorts, sumptuously dressed, gave an air of reality to the high birth he vaunted. The very liveries he got made at Paris cost twenty louis each. Apartments furnished in the height of the mode; a magnificent table, open to numerous guests; rich dresses for himself and his wife, corresponded to this luxurious way of life. His feigned generosity, likewise made a great noise. Often he gratuitously doctored the poor, and even gave them alms.”^[7]

In the inside of all this splendid travelling and lodging economy are to be seen, as we know, two suspicious-looking rouged or unrouged figures, of a Count and a Countess; lolling on their cushions there, with a jaded,

haggard kind of aspect; they eye one another sullenly, in silence, with a scarce-suppressed indignation; for each thinks the other does not work enough and eats too much. Whether Dame Lorenza followed her peculiar side of the business with reluctance or with free alacrity, is a moot point among Biographers; not so that, with her choleric adipose Arch-quack, she had a sour life of it, and brawling abounded. If we look still farther inwards, and try to penetrate the inmost self-consciousness, what in another man would be called the conscience, of the Arch-quack himself, the view gets most uncertain; little or nothing to be seen but a thick fallacious haze. Which indeed *was* the main thing extant there. Much in the Count Front-d'airain remains dubious; yet hardly this: his want of clear insight into anything, most of all into his own inner man. Cunning in the supreme degree he has; intellect next to none. Nay, is not cunning (couple it with an esurient character) the natural consequence of *defective* intellect? It is properly the vehement exercise of a short, poor vision; of an intellect sunk, bemired; which can attain to no free vision, otherwise it would lead the esurient man to be honest.

Meanwhile gleams of muddy light will occasionally visit all mortals; every living creature (according to Milton, the very Devil) has some more or less faint resemblance of a Conscience; must make inwardly certain auricular confessions, absolutions, professions of faith,—were it only that he does not yet quite loathe, and so proceed to hang himself. What such a Porcus as Cagliostro might specially feel, and think, and *be*, were difficult in any case to say; much more when contradiction and mystification, designed and unavoidable, so involve the matter. One of the most authentic documents preserved of him is the Picture of his Visage. An Effigies once universally diffused; in oil-paint, aquatint, marble, stucco, and perhaps gingerbread, decorating millions of apartments: of which remarkable Effigies one copy, engraved in the line-manner, happily still lies here. Fittest of visages; worthy to be worn by the Quack of Quacks! A most portentous face of scoundrelism: a fat, snub, abominable face; dew-lapped, flat-nosed, greasy, full of greediness, sensuality, ox-like obstinacy; a forehead impudent, refusing to be ashamed; and then two eyes turned up seraphically languishing, as in divine contemplation and adoration; a touch of quiz too: on the whole, perhaps the most perfect quack-face produced by the eighteenth century. There he sits, and seraphically languishes, with this epigraph:

*De l'Ami des Humains reconnaissez les traits:
Tous ses jours sont marqués par de nouveaux bienfaits,
Il prolonge la vie, il secourt l'indigence;
Le plaisir d'être utile est seul sa récompense.*

A probable conjecture were, that this same Theosophy, Theophilanthropy, Solacement of the Poor, to which our Arch-quack now more and more betook himself, might serve not only as birdlime for external game, but also half-unconsciously as salve for assuaging his own spiritual sores. Am not I a charitable man? could the Arch-quack say: if I have erred myself, have I not, by theosophic unctuous discourses, removed much cause of error? The lying, the quackery, what are these but the method of accommodating yourself to the temper of men; of getting their ear, their dull long ear, which Honesty had no chance to catch? Nay, at worst, is not this an unjust world; full of nothing but beasts of prey, four-footed or two-footed? Nature has commanded, saying; Man, help thyself. Ought not the man of my genius, since he was not born a Prince, since in these scandalous times he has not been elected a Prince, to make himself one? If not by open violence, for which he wants military force, then surely by superior science,—exercised in a private way. Heal the diseases of the Poor, the far deeper diseases of the Ignorant; in a word, found Egyptian Lodges, and get the means of founding them. By such soliloquies can Count Front-of-brass Pinchbeckostom, in rare atrabiliar hours of self-questioning, compose himself. For the rest, such hours are rare: the Count is a man of action and digestion, not of self-questioning; usually the day brings its abundant task; there is no time for abstractions,—of the metaphysical sort.

Be this as it may, the Count has arrived at Strasburg; is working higher wonders than ever. At Strasburg, indeed, in the year 1783, occurs his apotheosis; what we can call the culmination and Fourth Act of his Life-drama. He was here for a number of months; in full blossom and radiance, the envy and admiration of the world. In large hired hospitals, he with open drug-box containing “Extract of Saturn,” and even with open purse, relieves the suffering poor; unfolds himself lamb-like, angelic to a believing few, of the rich classes; turns a silent minatory lion-face to unbelievers, were they of the richest. Medical miracles have in all times been common: but what miracle is this of an Oriental or Occidental Serene-Excellence, who, “regardless of expense,” employs himself not in preserving game, but in curing sickness, in illuminating ignorance? Behold how he dives, at noon-day, into the infectious hovels of the mean; and on the equipages, haughtinesses, and even dinner-invitations of the great, turns only his negatory front-of-brass! The Prince Cardinal de Rohan, Archbishop of

Strasburg, first-class peer of France, of the Blood-royal of Brittany, intimates a wish to see him; he answers: "If the Monseigneur the Cardinal is sick, let him come, and I will cure him; if he is well, he has no need of me, I none of him."^[8]

Heaven meanwhile has sent him a few disciples: by a nice tact, he knows his man; to one speaks only of Spagiric Medicine, Downfall of Tyranny, and the Egyptian Lodge; to another, of quite high matters, beyond the diurnal sphere, of visits from the Angel of Light, visits from him of Darkness; passing a Statue of Christ, he will pause with a wondrously-accented plaintive "Ha!" as of recognition, as of thousand-years remembrance; and when questioned, sink into mysterious silence. *Is* he the Wandering Jew, then? Heaven knows! At Strasburg, in a word, Fortune not only smiles but laughs upon him: as crowning favour, he finds here the richest, inflammablest, most open-handed Dupe ever yet vouchsafed him; no other than that same many-titled Louis de Rohan; strong in whose favour, he can laugh again at Fortune.

Let the curious reader look at him, for an instant or two, through the eyes of two eye-witnesses: the Abbé Georgel, Prince Louis's diplomatic Factotum, and Herr Meiners, the Göttingen Professor:

"Admitted at length," says our too-prosing Jesuit Abbé, "to the sanctuary of this Æsculapius, Prince Louis saw, according to his own account, in the incommunicative man's physiognomy, something so dignified, so imposing, that he felt penetrated with a religious awe, and reverence dictated his address. Their interview, which was brief, excited more keenly than ever his desire of further acquaintance. He attained it at length: and the crafty empiric graduated so cunningly his words and procedure, that he gained, without appearing to court it, the Cardinal's entire confidence, and the greatest ascendancy over his will. 'Your soul,' said he one day to the Prince, 'is worthy of mine; you deserve to be made participator of all my secrets.' Such an avowal captivated the whole faculties, intellectual and moral, of a man who at all times had hunted after secrets of alchymy and botany. From this moment their union became intimate and public: Cagliostro went and established himself at Saverne, while his Eminency was residing there; their solitary interviews were long and frequent."

* * "I remember once, having learnt, by a sure way, that Baron de Planta (his Eminency's man of affairs) had frequent, most expensive orgies, in the Archiepiscopal Palace, where Tokay wine ran like water, to regale Cagliostro and his pretended wife, I

thought it my duty to inform the Cardinal: his answer was, 'I know it; I have even authorized him to commit abuses if he judge fit.' * * * "He came at last to have no other will than Cagliostro's: and to such a length had it gone, that this sham Egyptian, finding it good to quit Strasburg for a time, and retire into Switzerland, the Cardinal, apprised thereof, dispatched his Secretary, as well to attend him, as to obtain Predictions from him: such were transmitted in cipher to the Cardinal on every point he needed to consult of."^[9]

* * * * *

"Before ever I arrived in Strasburg" (hear now the as prosing Protestant Professor), "I knew almost to a certainty that I should not see Count Cagliostro; at least, not get to speak with him. From many persons I had heard that he, on no account, received visits from curious Travellers, in a state of health; that such as, without being sick, appeared in his audiences were sure to be treated by him, in the brutalest way, as spies." * * * "Nevertheless, though I saw not this new god of Physic near at hand and deliberately, but only for a moment as he rolled on in a rapid carriage, I fancy myself to be better acquainted with him than many that have lived in his society for months." "My unavoidable conviction is, that Count Cagliostro, from of old, has been more of a cheat than an enthusiast; and also that he continues a cheat to this day.

"As to his country I have ascertained nothing. Some make him a Spaniard, others a Jew, or an Italian, or a Ragusan; or even an Arab, who had persuaded some Asiatic Prince to send his son to travel in Europe, and then murdered the youth, and taken possession of his treasures. As the self-styled Count speaks badly all the languages you hear from him, and has most likely spent the greater part of his life under feigned names far from home, it is probable enough no sure trace of his origin may ever be discovered."

"On his first appearance in Strasburg he connected himself with the Freemasons; but only till he felt strong enough to stand on his own feet: he soon gained the favour of the Prætor and the Cardinal; and through these the favour of the Court, to such a degree that his adversaries cannot so much as think of overthrowing him. With the Prætor and Cardinal he is said to demean himself as with persons who were under boundless

obligation to him, to whom he was under none: the equipage of the Cardinal he seems to use as freely as his own. He pretends that he can recognize Atheists or Blasphemers by the smell; that the vapour from such throws him into epileptic fits; into which sacred disorder he, like a true juggler, has the art of falling when he likes. In public he no longer vaunts of rule over spirits, or other magical arts; but I know, even as certainly, that he still pretends to evoke spirits, and by their help and apparition to heal diseases, as I know this other fact, that he understands no more of the human system, or the nature of its diseases, or the use of the commonest therapeutic methods, than any other quack.”

“According to the crediblest accounts of persons who have long observed him, he is a man to an inconceivable degree choleric (*heftig*), heedless, inconstant; and therefore doubtless it was the happiest idea he ever in his whole life came upon, this of making himself inaccessible; of raising the most obstinate reserve as a bulwark round him; without which precaution he must long ago have been caught at fault.

“For his own labour he takes neither payment nor presents: when presents are made him of such a sort as cannot without offence be refused, he forthwith returns some counter-present, of equal or still higher value. Nay, he not only takes nothing from his patients, but frequently admits them, months long, to his house and his table, and will not consent to the smallest recompense. With all this disinterestedness (conspicuous enough, as you may suppose), he lives in an expensive way, plays deep, loses almost constantly to ladies; so that, according to the very lowest estimates, he must require at least 20,000 livres a year. The darkness which Cagliostro has, on purpose, spread over the sources of his income and outlay, contributes even more than his munificence and miraculous cures to the notion that he is a divine extraordinary man, who has watched Nature in her deepest operations, and among other secrets stolen that of Gold-making from her.” * * “With a mixture of sorrow and indignation over our age, I have to record that this man has found acceptance, not only among the great, who from of old have been the easiest bewitched by such, but also with many of the learned, and even physicians and naturalists.”^[10]

Halcyon days; only too good to continue! All glory runs its course; has its culmination, and then its often precipitous decline. Eminency Rohan,

with fervid temper and small instruction, perhaps of dissolute, certainly of dishonest manners, in whom the faculty of Wonder had attained such prodigious development, was indeed the very stranded whale for jackals to feed on: unhappily, however, no one jackal could long be left in solitary possession of him. A sharper-toothed she-jackal now strikes in; bites infinitely deeper; stranded whale and he-jackal both are like to become her prey. A young French Mantua-maker, "Countess de La Motte-Valois, descended from Henri II, by the bastard line," without Extract of Saturn, Egyptian Masonry, or any *verbal* conference with Dark Angels,—has genius enough to get her finger in the Arch-quack's rich Hermetic Projection, appropriate the golden proceeds, and even finally break the crucible. Prince Cardinal Louis de Rohan is off to Paris, under her guidance, to see the long-visible Queen, or Queen's *Apparition*; to pick up the Rose in the Garden of Trianon, dropt by her fair sham-royal hand; and then—descend rapidly to the Devil, and drag Cagliostro along with him.

The intelligent reader observes, we have now arrived at that stupendous business of the *Diamond Necklace*: into the dark complexities of which we need not here do more than glance: who knows but, next month, our Historical Chapter, written specially on this subject, may itself see the light? Enough, for the present, if we fancy vividly the poor whale Cardinal, so deep in the adventure that Grand-Cophtic "predictions transmitted in cipher" will no longer illuminate him; but the Grand Cophta must leave all Masonic or other business, happily begun in Naples, Bordeaux, Lyons, and come personally to Paris with predictions at first hand. "The new Calchas," says poor Abbé Georgel, "must have read the entrails of his victim ill; for, on issuing from these communications with the Angel of Light and Darkness, he prophesied to the Cardinal that this happy correspondence, with the Queen's Similitude, would place him at the highest point of favour; that his influence in the Government would soon become paramount; that he would use it for the propagation of good principles, the glory of the Supreme Being, and the happiness of Frenchmen." The new Calchas was indeed at fault: but how could he be otherwise? Let these high Queen's-favours, and all terrestrial shiftings of the wind, turn as they will, *his* reign, he can well see, is appointed to be temporary; in the meanwhile, Tokay flows like water; prophecies of good, not of evil, are the method to keep it flowing. Thus if, for Circe de La Motte-Valois, the Egyptian Masonry is but a foolish enchanted cup wherewith to turn her fat Cardinal into a quadruped, she herself converse-wise, for the Grand Cophta, is one who must ever fodder said quadruped with Court hopes, and stall-feed him fatter and fatter,—it is expected, for the knife of *both* parties. They are mutually useful; live in peace, and Tokay festivity, though mutually suspicious, mutually

contemptuous. So stand matters through the spring and summer months of the year 1785.

But fancy next that,—while Tokay is flowing within doors, and abroad Egyptian Lodges are getting founded, and gold and glory, from Paris as from other cities, supernaturally coming in,—the latter end of August has arrived, and with it Commissary Chesnon, to lodge the whole unholy Brotherhood, from Cardinal down to Sham-queen, in separate cells of the Bastille! There, for nine long months, let them howl and wail, in bass or in treble; and emit the falsest of false *Mémoires*; among which that *Mémoire pour le Comte de Cagliostro, en présence des autres Co-Accusés*, with its Trebisond Acharats, Scherifs of Mecca, and Nature's unfortunate Child, all gravely printed with French types in the year 1786, may well bear the palm. Fancy that Necklace or Diamonds will nowhere unearth themselves; that the Tuileries Palace sits struck with astonishment and speechless chagrin; that Paris, that all Europe is ringing with the wonder. That Count Front-of-brass Pinchbeckostom, confronted, at the judgment-bar, with the shrill glib Circe de La Motte, has need of all his eloquence; that nevertheless the Front-of-brass prevails, and exasperated Circe “throws a candlestick at him.” Finally, that on the 31st of May, 1786, the assembled Parliament of Paris, “at nine in the evening, after a sitting of eighteen hours,” has solemnly pronounced judgment: and now that Cardinal Louis is gone “to his estates”; Countess de La Motte is shaven on the head, branded, with red-hot iron, “V” (*Voleuse*) on both shoulders, and confined for life to the Salpêtrière; her Count wandering uncertain, with diamonds for sale, over the British Empire; that the Sieur de Villette, for handling a queen's pen, is banished for ever; the too-queenlike Demoiselle Gay d'Oliva (with her unfathered infant) “put out of Court”;—and Grand Cophta Cagliostro liberated indeed, but pillaged, and ordered forthwith to take himself away. His disciples illuminate their windows; but what does that avail? Commissary Chesnon, Bastille-Governor De Launay cannot recollect the least particular of those priceless effects, those gold-rouleaus, repeating watches of his: he must even retire to Passy that very night; and two days afterwards, sees nothing for it but Boulogne and England. Thus does the miserable pickle-herring tragedy of the Diamond Necklace wind itself up, and wind Cagliostro once more to inhospitable shores.

Arrived here, and lodged tolerably in “Sloan Street, Knightsbridge,” by the aid of a certain Mr. Swinton, whilom broken Wine-merchant, now Apothecary, to whom he carries introductions, he can drive a small trade in Egyptian pills, such as one “sells *in Paris* at thirty shillings the dram”; in unctuously discoursing to Egyptian Lodges; in “giving public audiences as at Strasburg,”—if so be any one will bite. At all events, he can, by the aid of amanuensis-disciples, compose and publish his *Lettre au Peuple Anglais*;

setting forth his unheard-of generousities, unheard-of injustices suffered, in a world not worthy of him, at the hands of English Lawyers, Bastille-Governors, French Counts, and others; his *Lettre aux Français*, singing to the same tune, predicting too, what many inspired Editors had already boded, that “the Bastille would be destroyed,” and “a King would come who should govern by States-General.” But, alas, the shafts of Criticism are busy with him; so many hostile eyes look towards him: the world, in short, is getting too hot for him. Mark, nevertheless, how the brow of brass quails not; nay, a touch of his old poetic Humour, even in this sad crisis, unexpectedly unfolds itself.

One De Morande, Editor of a *Courrier de l'Europe*, published here at that period, has for some time made it his distinction to be the foremost of Cagliostro's enemies. Cagliostro, enduring much in silence, happens once, in some “public audience,” to mention a practice he had witnessed in Arabia the Stony: the people there, it seems, are in the habit of fattening a few pigs annually, on provender mixed with arsenic, whereby the whole pig-carcass by and by becomes, so to speak, arsenical; the arsenical pigs are then let loose into the woods; eaten by lions, leopards and other ferocious creatures; which latter naturally all die in consequence, and so the woods are cleared of them. This adroit practice the Sieur Morande thought a proper subject for banter; and accordingly, in his Seventeenth and two following Numbers, made merry enough with it. Whereupon Count Front-of-brass, whose patience has limits, writes as Advertisement (still to be read in old files of the *Public Advertiser*, under date September 3, 1786), a French Letter, not without causticity and aristocratic disdain; challenging the witty Sieur to breakfast with him, for the 9th of November next, in the face of the world, on an actual Sucking Pig, fattened by Cagliostro, but cooked, carved and selected from by the Sieur Morande,—under bet of Five Thousand Guineas sterling that, next morning thereafter, he the Sieur Morande shall be dead, and Count Cagliostro be alive! The poor Sieur durst not cry, Done; and backed out of the transaction, making wry faces. Thus does a kind of red coppery splendour encircle our Arch-quack's decline; thus with brow of brass, grim-smiling, does he meet his destiny.

But suppose we should now, from these foreign scenes, turn homewards, for a moment, into the native alley in Palermo! Palermo, with its dinginess, its mud or dust, the old black Balsamo House, the very beds and chairs, all are still standing there; and Beppo has altered so strangely, has wandered so far away. Let us look; for happily we have the fairest opportunity.

In April, 1787, Palermo contained a Traveller of a thousand; no other than the great Goethe from Weimar. At his Table-d'hôte he heard much of Cagliostro; at length also of a certain Palermo Lawyer, who had been

engaged by the French Government to draw up an authentic genealogy and memoir of him. This Lawyer, and even the rude draft of his Memoir, he with little difficulty gets to see; inquires next whether it were not possible to see the actual Balsamo Family, whereof it appears the mother and a widowed sister still survive. For this matter, however, the Lawyer can do nothing; only refer him to his Clerk; who again starts difficulties: To get at those genealogic Documents he has been obliged to invent some story of a Government Pension being in the wind for those poor Balsamos; and now that the whole matter is finished, and the Paper sent off to France, has nothing so much at heart as to keep out of their way:

“So said the Clerk. However, as I could not abandon my purpose, we after some study concerted that I should give myself out for an Englishman, and bring the family news of Cagliostro, who had lately got out of the Bastille, and gone to London.

“At the appointed hour, it might be three in the afternoon, we set forth. The house lay in the corner of an Alley, not far from the main street named *Il Casaro*. We ascended a miserable staircase, and came straight into the kitchen. A woman of middle stature, broad and stout, yet not corpulent, stood busy washing the kitchen-dishes. She was decently dressed; and, on our entrance, turned up the one end of her apron, to hide the soiled side from us. She joyfully recognized my conductor, and said: ‘Signor Giovanni, do you bring us good news? Have you made out anything?’

“He answered: ‘In our affair, nothing yet; but here is a Stranger that brings a salutation from your Brother, and can tell you how he is at present.’

“The salutation I was to bring stood not in our agreement: meanwhile, one way or other, the introduction was accomplished. ‘You know my Brother?’ inquired she.—‘All Europe knows him,’ answered I; ‘and I fancied it would gratify you to hear that he is now in safety and well; as, of late, no doubt you have been anxious about him.’—‘Step in,’ said she; ‘I will follow you directly’; and with the Clerk I entered the room.

“It was large and high; and might, with us, have passed for a saloon; it seemed, indeed, to be almost the sole lodging of the family. A single window lighted the large walls, which had once had colour; and on which were black pictures of saints, in gilt frames, hanging round. Two large beds, without curtains, stood at one wall; a brown press, in the form of a writing-desk, at the other.

Old rush-bottomed chairs, the backs of which had once been gilt, stood by; and the tiles of the floor were in many places worn deep into hollows. For the rest, all was cleanly, and we approached the family, which sat assembled at the one window, in the other end of the apartment.

“Whilst my guide was explaining, to the old Widow Balsamo, the purpose of our visit, and by reason of her deafness had to repeat his words several times aloud, I had time to observe the chamber and the other persons in it. A girl of about sixteen, well-formed, whose features had become uncertain by small-pox, stood at the window; beside her a young man, whose disagreeable look, deformed by the same disease, also struck me. In an easy-chair, right before the window, sat or rather lay a sick, much misshapen person, who appeared to labour under a sort of lethargy.

“My guide having made himself understood, we were invited to take seats. The old woman put some questions to me; which, however, I had to get interpreted before I could answer them, the Sicilian dialect not being quite at my command.

“Meanwhile I looked at the aged widow with satisfaction. She was of middle stature, but well shaped; over her regular features, which age had not deformed, lay that sort of peace usual with people that have lost their hearing; the tone of her voice was soft and agreeable.

“I answered her questions; and my answers also had again to be interpreted for her.

“The slowness of our conversation gave me leisure to measure my words. I told her that her son had been acquitted in France, and was at present in England, where he met with good reception. Her joy, which she testified at these tidings, was mixed with expressions of a heartfelt piety; and as she now spoke a little louder and slower, I could the better understand her.

“In the mean time the daughter had entered; and taken her seat beside my conductor, who repeated to her faithfully what I had been narrating. She had put on a clean apron; had set her hair in order under the net-cap. The more I looked at her, and compared her with her mother, the more striking became the difference of the two figures.

“A vivacious, healthy Sensualism (*Sinnlichkeit*) beamed forth from the whole structure of the daughter: she might be a woman of about forty. With brisk blue eyes, she looked sharply round; yet in her look I could trace no suspicion. When she sat, her figure

promised more height than it showed when she rose: her posture was determinate, she sat with her body leaned forwards, the hands resting on the knees. For the rest, her physiognomy, more of the snubby than the sharp sort, reminded me of her Brother's Portrait, familiar to us in engravings. She asked me several things about my journey, my purpose to see Sicily; and was sure I would come back, and celebrate the Feast of Saint Rosalia with them.

“As the grandmother, meanwhile, had again put some questions to me, and I was busy answering her, the daughter kept speaking to my companion half-aloud, yet so that I could take occasion to ask what it was. He answered: Signora Capittummino was telling him that her Brother owed her fourteen gold Ounces; on his sudden departure from Palermo, she had redeemed several things for him that were in pawn; but never since that day had either heard from him, or got money or any other help, though it was said he had great riches, and made a princely outlay. Now would not I perhaps undertake on my return, to remind him, in a handsome way, of the debt, and procure some assistance for her; nay, would I not carry a Letter with me, or at all events get it carried? I offered to do so. She asked where I lodged, whither she must send the Letter to me? I avoided naming my abode, and offered to call next day towards night, and receive the Letter myself.

“She thereupon described to me her untoward situation: how she was a widow with three children, of whom the one girl was getting educated in a convent, the other was here present, and her son had just gone out to his lesson. How, besides these three children, she had her mother to maintain; and moreover out of Christian love had taken the unhappy sick person there to her house, whereby the burden was heavier: how all her industry would scarcely suffice to get necessaries for herself and hers. She knew indeed that God did not leave good works unrewarded; yet must sigh very sore under the load she had long borne.

“The young people mixed in the dialogue, and our conversation grew livelier. While speaking with the others, I could hear the good old widow ask her daughter: If I belonged, then, to their holy Religion? I remarked also that the daughter strove, in a prudent way, to avoid an answer; signifying to her mother, so far as I could take it up: That the Stranger seemed to have a kind feeling towards them; and that it was not well-bred to question any one straightway on that point.

“As they heard that I was soon to leave Palermo, they became more pressing, and importuned me to come back; especially vaunting the paradisaic days of the Rosalia Festival, the like of which was not to be seen and tasted in all the world.

“My attendant, who had long been anxious to get off, at last put an end to the interview by his gestures; and I promised to return on the morrow evening, and take the Letter. My attendant expressed his joy that all had gone off so well, and we parted mutually content.

“You may fancy the impression this poor and pious, well-dispositioned family had made on me. My curiosity was satisfied; but their natural and worthy bearing had raised an interest in me, which reflection did but increase.

“Forthwith, however, there arose for me anxieties about the following day. It was natural that this appearance of mine, which, at the first moment, had taken them by surprise, should, after my departure, awaken many reflections. By the Genealogy I knew that several others of the family were in life: it was natural that they should call their friends together, and in the presence of all, get those things repeated which, the day before, they had heard from me with admiration. My object was attained; there remained nothing more than, in some good fashion, to end the adventure. I accordingly repaired next day, directly after dinner, alone to their house. They expressed surprise as I entered. The Letter was not ready yet, they said; and some of their relations wished to make my acquaintance, who towards night would be there.

“I answered, that having to set off to-morrow morning, and visits still to pay, and packing to transact, I had thought it better to come early than not at all.

“Meanwhile the son entered, whom yesterday I had not seen. He resembled his sister in size and figure. He brought the Letter they were to give me; he had, as is common in those parts, got it written out of doors, by one of their Notaries that sit publicly to do such things. The young man had a still, melancholy and modest aspect; inquired after his Uncle, asked about his riches and outlays, and added sorrowfully, Why had he so forgotten his kindred? ‘It were our greatest fortune,’ continued he, ‘should he once return hither, and take notice of us: but,’ continued he, ‘how came he to let you know that he had relatives in Palermo? It is said, he everywhere denies us, and gives himself out for a man of great birth.’ I answered this question, which had now arisen by the

imprudence of my Guide at our first entrance, in such sort as to make it seem that the Uncle, though he might have reason for concealing his birth from the public, did yet, towards his friends and acquaintance, keep it no secret.

“The sister, who had come up during this dialogue, and by the presence of her brother, perhaps also by the absence of her yesterday’s friend, had got more courage, began also to speak with much grace and liveliness. They begged me earnestly to recommend them to their Uncle, if I wrote to him; and not less earnestly, when once I should have made this journey through the island, to come back and pass the Rosalia Festival with them.

“The mother spoke in accordance with her children. ‘Sir,’ said she, ‘though it is not seemly, as I have a grown daughter, to see stranger-gentlemen in my house, and one has cause to guard against both danger and evil-speaking, yet shall you ever be welcome to us, when you return to this city.’

“‘Oh, yes,’ answered the young ones, ‘we will lead the Gentleman all round the Festival; we will show him everything, get a place on the scaffolds, where the grand sights are seen best. What will he say to the great Chariot, and more than all, to the glorious Illumination!’

“Meanwhile the Grandmother had read the Letter and again read it. Hearing that I was about to take leave, she arose, and gave me the folded sheet. ‘Tell my son,’ began she with a noble vivacity, nay, with a sort of inspiration, ‘tell my son how happy the news have made me, which you brought from him! Tell him that I clasp him to my heart’—here she stretched out her arms asunder, and pressed them again together on her breast—‘that I daily beseech God and our Holy Virgin for him in prayer; that I give him and his wife my blessing; and that I wish before my end to see him again with these eyes, which have shed so many tears for him.’

“The peculiar grace of the Italian tongue favoured the choice and noble arrangement of these words, which moreover were accompanied with lively gestures, wherewith that nation can add such a charm to spoken words.

“I took my leave, not without emotion. They all gave me their hands; the children showed me out; and as I went down stairs, they jumped to the balcony of the kitchen-window, which projected over the street; called after me, threw me salutes, and

repeated, that I must in no wise forget to come back. I saw them still on the balcony, when I turned the corner.”^[11]

Poor old Felicità, and must thy pious prayers, thy motherly blessings, and so many tears shed by those old eyes, be all in vain! To thyself, in any case, they were blessed. As for the Signora Capitummino, with her three fatherless children, shall we not hope, at least, that the fourteen gold Ounces were paid, by a sure hand, and so her heavy burden, for some space, lightened a little? Alas, no, it would seem; owing to accidents, not even that!

[12]

Count Cagliostro, all this while, is rapidly proceeding with his Fifth Act; the red coppery splendour darkens more and more into final gloom. Some boiling muddleheads of a dupeable sort there still are in England: Popish-Riot Lord George, for instance, will walk with him to Count Barthélemy's or D'Adhémar's; and, in bad French and worse rhetoric, abuse the Queen of France: but what does this profit? Lord George must one day (after noise enough) revisit Newgate for it; and in the meanwhile, hard words pay no scores. Apothecary Swinton begins to get wearisome; French spies look ominously in: Egyptian Pills are slack of sale; the old vulturous Attorney-host anew scents carrion, is bestirring itself anew: Count Cagliostro, in the May of 1787, must once more leave England. But whither? Ah, whither! At Bâle, at Bienne, over Switzerland, the game is up. At Aix in Savoy, there are baths, but no gudgeons in them: at Turin, his Majesty of Sardinia meets you with an order to begone on the instant. A like fate from the Emperor Joseph at Roveredo;—before the *Liber memorialis de Caleostro dum esset Roboretti* could extend to many pages! Count Front-of-brass begins confessing himself to priests: yet “at Trent paints a new hieroglyphic Screen,”—touching last flicker of a light that once burnt so high! He pawns diamond buckles; wanders necessitous hither and thither; repents, unrepents; knows not what to do. For Destiny has her nets round him; they are straitening, straitening; too soon he will be *ginned!*

Driven out from Trent, what shall he make of the new hieroglyphic Screen, what of himself? The wayworn Grand-Cophtess has begun to blab family secrets; she longs to be in Rome, by her mother's hearth, by her mother's grave; in any nook, where so much as the shadow of refuge waits her. To the desperate Count Front-of-brass all places are nearly alike: urged by female babble, he will go to Rome, then; why not? On a May-day, of the year 1789 (when such glorious work had just begun in France, to him all forbidden!), he enters the Eternal City; it was his doom-summons that called him thither. On the 29th of next December, the Holy Inquisition, long

watchful enough, detects him founding some feeble moneyless ghost of an Egyptian Lodge; “picks him off,” as the military say, and locks him hard and fast in the Castle of St. Angelo:

Lasciate ogni speranza, voi che 'ntrate!

Count Cagliostro did not lose all hope: nevertheless a few words will now suffice for him. In vain, with his mouth of pinchbeck and his front of brass, does he heap chimera on chimera; demand religious Books (which are freely given him); demand clean Linen, and an interview with his Wife (which are refused him); assert now that the Egyptian Masonry is a divine system, accommodated to erring and gullible men, which the Holy Father, when he knows it, will patronize; anon that there are some four millions of Freemasons, spread over Europe, all sworn to exterminate Priest and King, wherever met with: in vain! they will not acquit him, as misunderstood Theophilanthropist; will not emit him, in Pope’s pay, as renegade Masonic Spy: “he can’t get out.” Donna Lorenza languishes, invisible to him, in a neighbouring cell; begins at length to *confess!* Whereupon he, too, in torrents, will emit confessions and forestall her: these the Inquisition pocket and sift (whence this *Life of Balsamo*); but will not let him out. In fine, after some eighteen months of the weariest hounding, doubling, worrying, and standing at bay, His Holiness gives sentence: The Manuscript of Egyptian Masonry is to be burnt by hand of the common Hangman, and all that intermeddle with such Masonry are accursed; Giuseppe Balsamo, justly forfeited of life for being a Freemason, shall nevertheless in mercy be forgiven; instructed in the duties of penitence, and even kept safe thenceforth and till death,—in ward of Holy Church. Ill-starred Acharat, must it so end with thee? This was in April 1791.

He addressed (how vainly!) an appeal to the French Constituent Assembly. As was said, in Heaven, in Earth, or in Hell there was no Assembly that could well take his part. For four years more, spent one knows not how,—most probably in the furor of edacity, with insufficient cookery, and the stupor of indigestion,—the curtain lazily falls. There rotted and gave way the cordage of a tough heart. One summer morning of the year 1795, the Body of Cagliostro is still found in the prison of St. Leo; but Cagliostro’s Self has escaped,—*whither* no man yet knows. The brow of brass, behold how it has got all unlacquered; these pinchbeck lips can lie no more: Cagliostro’s work is ended, and now only his *account* to present. As the Scherif of Mecca said, “Nature’s unfortunate child, adieu!”

Such, according to our comprehension thereof, is the rise, progress, grandeur and decadence of the Quack of Quacks. Does the reader ask, What good was in it; Why occupy his time and ours with the biography of such a miscreant? We answer, It was stated on the very threshold of this matter, in the loftiest terms, by Herr Sauerteig, that the Lives of all Eminent Persons, miscreant or creant, ought to be written. Thus had not the very Devil his *Life*, deservedly written not by Daniel Defoe only, but by quite other hands than Daniel's? For the rest, the Thing represented on these pages is no Sham, but a Reality; thou hast it, O reader, as we have it: Nature was pleased to produce even such a man, even so, not otherwise; and the Editor of this Magazine is here mainly to record, in an adequate manner, what *she*, of her thousandfold mysterious richness and greatness, produces.

But the moral lesson? Where is the moral lesson? Foolish reader, in every Reality, nay, in every genuine Shadow of a Reality (what we call Poem), there lie a hundred such, or a million such, according as thou hast the *eye* to read them! Of which hundred or million lying *here* in the present Reality, couldst not thou, for example, be advised to take this one, to thee worth all the rest: "Behold, I, too, have attained that immeasurable, mysterious glory of being *alive*; to me also a Capability has been entrusted; shall I strive to work it out, manlike, into Faithfulness, and Doing; or, quacklike, into Eatableness, and Similitude of Doing? Or why not rather, gigman-like, and following the 'respectable' countless multitude,—into *both*?" The decision is of quite *infinite* moment; see thou make it aright.

But in fine, look at this matter of Cagliostro, as at all matters, with thy heart, with thy whole mind; no longer merely squint at it with the poor side-glance of thy calculative faculty. Look at it not *logically* only, but *mystically*. Thou shalt in sober truth see it (as Sauerteig asserted) to be a Pasquillant verse, of most inspired writing in its kind, in that same "Grand Bible of Universal History"; wondrously and even indispensably connected with the Heroic portions that stand there; even as the all-showing Light is with the Darkness wherein nothing can be seen; as the hideous taloned *roots* are with the fair *boughs*, and their leaves and flowers and fruit; both of which, and not one of which, make the Tree. Think also whether thou hast known no Public Quacks, on far higher scale than this, whom a Castle of St. Angelo never could get hold of; and how, as Emperors, Chancellors (having found much fitter machinery), they could run their Quack-career; and make whole kingdoms, whole continents, into one huge Egyptian Lodge, and squeeze supplies of money or of blood from it at discretion? Also, whether thou even now knowest not Private Quacks, innumerable as the sea-sands, toiling as mere *Half-Cagliostros*; imperfect, hybrid-quacks, of whom Cagliostro is as the unattainable ideal and type-specimen? Such is the world. Understand it,

despise it, love it; cheerfully hold on thy way through it, with thy eye on higher loadstars!

- [1] Not altogether an *invention* this last; for his grand-uncle (a bell-founder at Messina?) was actually surnamed *Cagliostro*, as well as named *Giuseppe*.—O. Y.
- [2] Goethe's *Werke*, b. xxviii. 132.
- [3] *Vie de Joseph Balsamo, traduite d'après l'original Italien*, ch. ii. iii. (Paris, 1791).
- [4] *Lettre du Comte Mirabeau sur Cagliostro et Lavater*, p. 42 (Berl. 1786).
- [5] *Zeitgenossen*, No. 15. § *Frau von der Recke*.
- [6] *Cagliostro démasqué à Varsovie en 1780*, pp. 35 et seq. (Paris, 1786).
- [7] *Vie de Joseph Balsamo*, p. 41.
- [8] *Mémoires de l'Abbé Georgel*, ii. 48.
- [9] Georgel, *ubi supra*.
- [10] Meiners, *Briefe über die Schweiz* (as quoted in Mirabeau).
- [11] Goethe's *Werke (Italienische Reise)*, xxviii. 146.
- [12] Goethe's *Werke (Italienische Reise)*, xxviii. 146.

IX

MARY YOUNG, ALIAS JENNY DIVER

Queen of Sharpers

CAMDEN PELHAM^[1]

The name of this woman will long be celebrated in the annals of crime, as being that of a person who was the most ingenious of her class.

Mary Young was the daughter of poor parents in the north of Ireland, and at the age of ten years entered the service of a gentlewoman, by whose directions she was instructed in reading, writing, and needlework in the latter of which she attained a proficiency unusual in girls of her age. Soon after she arrived at her fifteenth year, a young man, who lived in the vicinity, made strong pretensions of love to her, and having formed a desire to visit London, she determined to quit her benefactress, and make the passion of her lover, for whom she cared little, subservient to her purpose. She therefore promised to marry him on condition of his taking her to London, and he joyfully accepted her proposal, and immediately took a passage to Liverpool. In order, however, to enable him to undertake the journey, he robbed his master of a gold watch and eighty guineas, and then he joined his intended wife on board the ship. Arrived at Liverpool, they determined to remain a short time to get over the effects of the voyage, and they lived together as man and wife; but when they were on the point of starting to London by the wagon, the bridegroom was seized by a messenger dispatched in search of him from Ireland, and conveyed before the Mayor, whither his companion accompanied him. He there confessed the crime of which he had been guilty, but did not implicate Young, and she, in consequence, was permitted to take her departure for London, having ten guineas in her pocket, which she had recently received from her paramour. In a short time the latter was sent to Ireland, where he was tried, and condemned to suffer death; but his sentence was eventually changed to that of transportation.

Upon her arrival in London, our heroine contracted an acquaintance with one of her countrywomen, named Ann Murphy, by whom she was invited to partake of a lodging in Long Acre. She endeavoured for a while to obtain a

liveliness by her needle; but, not being able to procure sufficient employment, her situation became truly deplorable. Murphy then intimated to her that she could introduce her to a mode of life that would prove exceedingly lucrative, adding that the most profound secrecy was required; and the other, expressing an anxious desire to learn the means of extricating herself from the difficulties under which she laboured, made a solemn declaration that she would never divulge what Murphy should communicate. In the evening, Murphy introduced her to a number of men and women, assembled in a kind of club, near St. Giles's, who gained their living by cutting off women's pockets, and stealing watches, etc., from men, in the avenues of the theatres, and at other places of public resort; and, on the recommendation of Murphy, they admitted Mary a member of the society. After her installation they dispersed, in order to pursue their illegal occupation; and the booty obtained that night consisted of eighty pounds in cash and a valuable gold watch. As Mary was not yet acquainted with the art of thieving, she was not admitted to an equal share of the night's produce; but it was agreed that she should have two guineas. She now regularly applied two hours every day in qualifying herself for an expert thief, by attending to the instructions of experienced practitioners; and, in a short time, she was distinguished as the most ingenious and successful adventurer of the whole gang. A young fellow of genteel appearance, who was a member of the club, was singled out by her as the partner of her bed; and they cohabited for a considerable time as husband and wife.

In a few months our heroine became so expert in her profession as to acquire great consequence among her associates, who distinguished her by the appellation of Jenny Diver, on account of her remarkable dexterity; and as that is the name by which she is more generally recognized in the anecdotes of her life which follow, we shall so designate her.

Accompanied by one of her female accomplices, Jenny joined the crowd at the entrance of a place of worship in the Old Jewry, where a popular divine was to preach, and observing a young gentleman with a diamond ring on his finger she held out her hand, which he kindly received in order to assist her. At this juncture she contrived to get possession of the ring without the knowledge of the owner, after which she slipped behind her companion, and heard the gentleman say, that, as there was no probability of gaining admittance, he would return. Upon his leaving the meeting he missed his ring, and mentioned his loss to the persons who were near him, adding that he suspected it to be stolen by a woman whom he had endeavoured to assist in the crowd; but as the thief was unknown she escaped. This proof of her dexterity was considered so remarkable that her associates determined to allow her an equal share of all their booties, even though she should not be

present when they were obtained. In a short time after this exploit she procured a pair of false hands and arms to be made, and concealing her real ones under her clothes, she put something beneath her stays so as to make herself appear as if in a state of pregnancy, and repaired on a Sunday evening to the place of worship above-mentioned in a sedan chair, one of the gang going before to procure a seat for her among the genteeler part of the congregation, and another attending in the character of a footman. Jenny being seated between two elderly ladies, each of whom had a gold watch by her side, she conducted herself with great seeming devotion; but, the service being nearly concluded, she seized the opportunity, when the ladies were standing up, of stealing their watches, which she delivered to an accomplice in an adjoining pew. The devotions being ended, the congregation were preparing to depart, when the ladies discovered their loss, and a violent clamour ensued. One of the parties exclaimed "That her watch must have been taken either by the devil or the pregnant woman!" on which the other said, "She could vindicate the pregnant lady, whose hands she was sure had not been removed from her lap during the whole time of her being in the pew."

Flushed with the success of the adventure, our heroine determined to pursue her good fortune; and as another sermon was to be preached the same evening, she adjourned to an adjacent public-house, where, without either pain or difficulty, she soon reduced the protuberance of her waist, and having entirely changed her dress, she returned to the meeting, where she had not remained long before she picked a gentleman's pocket of a gold watch, with which she escaped unsuspected. Her accomplices also were industrious and successful; for, on a division of the booty obtained this evening, they each received thirty guineas. These acts procured for her universal respect among her fellows, and in all their future transactions they yielded an exact obedience to her wishes.

The game which she had played having been found so successful, Jenny again assumed the appearance of a pregnant woman, and, attended by an accomplice as a footman, went towards St. James's Park on a day when the king was going to the House of Lords; and, there being a great number of persons between the Park and Spring Gardens, she purposely slipped down, and was instantly surrounded by many of both sexes, who were emulous to afford her assistance; but, affecting to be in violent pain, she intimated to them that she was desirous of remaining on the ground till she should be somewhat recovered. As she expected, the crowd increased, and her pretended footman, and a female accomplice, were so industrious as to obtain two diamond girdle-buckles, a gold watch, a gold snuff-box, and two purses, containing together upwards of forty guineas. The girdle-buckles,

watch, and snuff-box were the following day advertised, a considerable reward was offered, and a promise given that no questions should be asked of the party who should return them; but our heroine declaring that their restoration would entirely break down the principles upon which their association was conducted, they were sold to the Jews in Duke's Place.

Ever fertile in inventions, she proceeded with her supposed servant to the east end of the town, and observing a genteel house, the latter knocked and begged that his mistress, who had been taken suddenly ill, might be permitted to enter to rest herself a few minutes. The request was complied with; and while the mistress of the house and the servant were upstairs seeking such things as might be supposed to afford relief to their visitor, she opened a drawer and stole sixty guineas; and afterwards, while the lady was holding a smelling-bottle to her nose, she picked her pocket of a purse, containing, however, only a small sum. Her supposed servant, in the meanwhile, was not idle, and having been ordered into the kitchen, he pocketed six silver tablespoons, a pepper-box, and a salt-cellar. All the available booty having now been secured, the servant was sent for a coach, and Jenny, pretending to be somewhat recovered, went away, saying that she was the wife of a respectable merchant in Thames Street, and pressing her entertainer to dine with her on a certain day, which she appointed. The impudence of these frauds, however, soon attracted public attention, and it was found that some new plan must be determined upon, by which the public might be gulled.

Until some novel method of robbing should be devised, however, it was determined that the gang should go to Bristol, to seek adventures and profit during the fair; and in order to render their proceedings the more likely to be successful, they admitted into their society a man who had long subsisted there as a thief. Jenny and Murphy now assumed the character of merchants' wives, while the new member and another of the gang appeared as country farmers, and the footman was continued in the same character. They took lodgings in different parts of the city; and they agreed, that in case of any of them being apprehended, the rest should appear to speak to the character of the prisoners, and representing them to be persons of reputation in London, endeavour to procure their release.

Being one day in the fair, they observed a west-country clothier giving a sum of money to his servant, and heard him direct the man to deposit it in a bureau. They followed the servant, and one of them fell down before him, expecting that he would also fall, and that, as there was a great crowd, the money might be easily secured; but though the man fell into the snare, they were not able to obtain their expected booty, and therefore had recourse to the following stratagem:—One of the gang asked the man whether his

master had not lately ordered him to carry home a sum of money; to which the other replied in the affirmative; and the sharper then told him that he must return to his master, who had purchased some goods, and waited to pay for them. The countryman followed him to Jenny's lodgings, and, being introduced to her, she desired him to be seated, saying his master was gone on some business in the neighbourhood, but had left orders for him to wait till his return. She urged him to drink a glass of wine, but the poor fellow declined her offers with awkward simplicity, the pretended footman having taught him to believe her a woman of great wealth and consequence. Her encouraging solicitations, however, conquered his bashfulness, and he drank till he became intoxicated. Being conducted into another apartment, he soon fell asleep, and, while in that situation, he was robbed of the money he had received from his master, which proved to be a hundred pounds. They were no sooner in possession of the cash, than they discharged the demand of the innkeeper, and set out in the first stage for London.

Soon after their return to town Jenny and her associates went to London Bridge in the dusk of the evening, and, observing a lady standing at a door to avoid the carriages, a number of which were passing, one of the men went up to her, and, under pretence of giving her assistance, seized both her hands, which he held till his accomplices had rifled her pockets of a gold snuff-box, a silver case containing a set of instruments, and thirty guineas in cash.

On the following day, as Jenny, and an accomplice, in the character of a footman, were walking through Change Alley, she picked a gentleman's pocket of a bank-note for two hundred pounds, for which she received one hundred and thirty from a Jew, with whom the gang had very extensive connexions.

Our heroine now hired a real footman; and her favourite, who had long acted in that character, assumed the appearance of a gentleman; and they hired lodgings in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden, that they might more conveniently attend the theatres. She dressed herself in an elegant manner, and went to the theatre one evening when the king was to be present; and, during the performance, she attracted the particular attention of a young gentleman of fortune from Yorkshire, who declared, in the most passionate terms, that she had made an absolute conquest, and earnestly solicited that he might be permitted to attend her home. She at first refused to comply with his request, saying that she was newly married, but she at length yielded to his entreaties, and he accompanied her to her door in a hackney-coach, and quitted her only on her promising to admit him on a future evening, when, she said, her husband would be out of town. The day of appointment being arrived, two of the gang were equipped in elegant

liveries; and Ann Murphy appearing as waiting-maid. The gentleman soon made his appearance, having a gold-headed cane in his hand, a sword by his side with a gold hilt, and wearing a gold watch and a diamond ring. Being introduced to the bed-chamber, he was soon deprived of his ring; and he had not undressed many minutes before the lady's maid knocked violently at the door, exclaiming that her master was suddenly returned. Jenny affected to be labouring under the most violent agitation, and begged that the gentleman would cover himself with the bed-clothes, saying that she would convey his apparel into the other room, so that, if her husband came there, nothing would appear to awaken his suspicion; and adding that, under pretence of indisposition, she would prevail upon her husband to sleep in another bed, and then return to the arms of her lover. The gull acquiesced, and the clothes being removed, a short consultation was held among the thieves, the result of which was that they immediately decamped, carrying their booty with them, which, exclusive of the cane, etc., was worth a hundred guineas.

The amorous youth meanwhile waited with anxious impatience for the coming of his *Dulcinea*; but morning having arrived, he rang the bell, and the people of the house coming to him, found that he was locked in, the fair fugitive having carried off the key with her. The door was, however, burst open, an *éclaircissement* ensued, when the gentleman explained the manner in which he had been treated; but the people of the house, deaf to his expostulations, threatened to publish the adventure through the town, unless he would make up the loss which they had sustained. Rather than risk the safety of his reputation, he sent for money and some clothes and discharged the debt which Jenny had contracted, quitting the house, bitterly repenting that his amorous qualities should have led him into such a scrape.

The continuance of the system under which this gang pursued its labours became now impossible, and they found it necessary to leave the metropolis; but having committed numerous depredations in the country, they returned, and Jenny was unfortunately apprehended on a charge of picking a gentleman's pocket, for which she was sentenced to be transported.

She remained nearly four months in Newgate, during which time she employed a considerable sum in the purchase of stolen effects; and when she went on board the transport vessel, she shipped a quantity of goods nearly sufficient to load a wagon. The property she possessed ensured her great respect, and every possible convenience and accommodation during the voyage; and on her arrival in Virginia, she disposed of her goods, and for some time lived in great splendour and elegance. She soon found, however, that America was a country where she could expect but little emolument from the practices she had so successfully followed in England, and she therefore employed every art she was mistress of to ingratiate herself with a

young gentleman, who was preparing to embark on board a vessel bound for the port of London. He became much enamoured of her, and brought her to England; but while the ship lay at Gravesend, she robbed him of all the property she could get into her possession, and pretending indisposition, intimated a desire of going on shore, in which her admirer acquiesced; but she was no sooner on land than she made a precipitate retreat.

She now travelled through various parts of the country; and having by her usual wicked practices obtained many considerable sums, she at length returned to London, but was not able to find her former accomplices. She frequented the Royal Exchange, the theatres, London Bridge, and other places of public resort, and committed innumerable depredations on the public; but being again detected in picking a gentleman's pocket on London Bridge, she was taken before a magistrate, to whom she declared that her name was Jane Webb, and by that appellation she was committed to Newgate.

On her trial, a gentleman who had detected her in the very act of picking the prosecutor's pocket, deposed that a person had applied to him, offering fifty pounds, on a condition that he should not appear in support of the prosecution; and a lady swore that on the day the prisoner committed the offence for which she stood indicted, she saw her pick the pockets of more than twenty different people. The record of her former conviction was not produced in court, and therefore she was arraigned for privately stealing only, and, on the clearest evidence, the jury pronounced her guilty. The property being valued at less than one shilling, she was sentenced to transportation.

Twelve months had not elapsed before she returned from exile a second time; and on her arrival in London she renewed her former practices. A lady going from Sherborne Lane to Walbrook was accosted by a man, who took her hand, seemingly as if to assist her in crossing some planks which were placed over the gutter for the convenience of passengers; but he squeezed her fingers with so much force as to give her great pain, and in the meantime Jenny picked her pocket of thirteen shillings and a penny. The gentlewoman, conscious of being robbed, seized the thief by the gown, and she was immediately conducted to the Compter. She was examined the next day by the Lord Mayor, who committed her to Newgate for trial.

At the ensuing sessions at the Old Bailey, she was tried on an indictment charging her with privately stealing; and a verdict of guilty having been brought in, she was sentenced to death.

After conviction she appeared to have a due sense of the awful situation in which she was placed; and employing a great part of her time in devotion, she repented sincerely of the course of iniquity in which she had so long

persisted. On the day preceding that of her execution, she sent for the woman who nursed her child, which was then about three years old, and saying that there was a person who would pay for its maintenance, she earnestly entreated that it might be carefully instructed in the duties of religion. On the following morning she appeared to be in a serene state of mind. The preparations in the press-yard for a moment shook her fortitude, but her spirits were soon again tolerably composed. She was conveyed to Tyburn in a mourning-coach, being attended by a clergyman, to whom she declared her firm belief in the principles of the Protestant Church. Her remains were, at her own desire, buried in St. Pancras churchyard.

Her execution took place on the 18th of March, 1740.

[1] From “The Chronicle of Crime,” vol. i, London, 1891.

WILLIAM IRELAND

Greatest of Literary Forgers^[1]

About six months previous to my attempting the Shaksperian papers, when I had not the smallest idea of embarking in that most arduous undertaking, I happened to purchase a small quarto tract, written by a gentleman of Lincoln's Inn, and dedicated by him to Queen Elizabeth. The work in question contained a set of prayers, and was adorned round the margin of each page with a very spirited wood-cut border, in the style of Queen Elizabeth's prayer-book—a work well known to all collectors of curious volumes of that nature. These borders were carefully emblazoned, and the tract bound in vellum, with Elizabeth's arms stamped in gold on the cover, together with various other ornaments.

As the work was dedicated to the queen, and as from the appearance of the internal emblazoning, covers, etc., it had very probably once belonged to the library of that queen, I determined on endeavouring to establish it as the presentation copy from the author, whose name has now altogether escaped my recollection. In order to compass this, I weakened some common ink with water; and on a piece of old paper wrote a dedicatory epistle, as if from the author, to Elizabeth, requesting her gracious acceptance and countenance of his work. This letter I thrust between the vellum cover and the paper, which had originally stuck to it but had then given way: but previous to my presentation of it to Mr. Ireland, I went to a bookbinder of the name of Laurie, who had bound many books for me, and resided in New Inn Passage, within two minutes' walk of the gentleman's chambers under whom I was articled to study the law as a chancery conveyancer. To this Mr. Laurie I produced the letter in question; and, as a proof that I had no very bad intention in having penned it, I unequivocally told him, with a smile, that I had just executed it, and was desirous of seeing how far Mr. Ireland would accredit it.—(I should have mentioned that two journeymen were present, and heard my unreserved conversation on the subject)—Having requested to know what he thought of its appearance, Mr. Laurie stated, that it certainly seemed to him as if written many years back; when one of the journeymen, looking at the manuscript, informed me that he could give me a mixture that

would resemble old ink much more than that which I had used; and, in consequence of my request, he immediately mixed together in a phial three different liquids used by bookbinders in marbling the covers of their calf bindings. These ingredients being shaken up produced a fermentation; when, the froth having subsided, the liquid was of a dark brown colour. The young man then wrote his name with this mixture, but it was very faint on the paper; however, on holding it for a few seconds before the fire, the ink gradually assumed a very dark brown appearance.

Having paid him for his trouble, I wrote the dedicatory letter, and then presented it with the book to Mr. Ireland, who had no doubt as to its authenticity. It was with the same ink I afterwards wrote the Shaksperian manuscripts. Their scorched appearance originated in my being compelled to hold them to the fire, as before stated; and as I was constantly fearful of interruption, I sometimes placed them so near the bars as to injure the paper, which was done in order to complete and conceal them as speedily as possible from any unexpected person who might come suddenly into the chambers.

[1] From his "Confessions," London, 1803.

THE DILEMMA

At a period when the public mind was occupied with the Shaksperian papers, and the daily newspapers teemed with paragraphs on the subject; when I was in the middle of my career, my ink failed me; and although hazardous the procedure, I positively applied to the very same journeyman in Mr. Laurie's shop, who for a shilling prepared a second bottle of the before-mentioned ink; which circumstance was never mentioned either by Mr. Laurie or his workman, although the fame of the manuscripts was perfectly well known to them, and that I was the person supposed to have discovered them. I scarcely need remark, that the circumstance of the dedicatory letter to Queen Elizabeth, with the having twice procured the same liquid preparation, would in themselves have been quite sufficient to overturn the whole Shaksperian mass, and display to the world the naked truth; in the research after which so much labour and criticism were expended.

RELIEVO OF OLIVER CROMWELL

A very short time previous to the commencement of the supposititious manuscripts, I found at an old broker's shop a very spirited head of Oliver Cromwell, modelled in *terra cotta*, which I was given to understand was the workmanship of a young man who had been bred up as a statuary, but had early fallen victim to a putrid fever, which terminated his existence. To the back of this relievo, which was about the size of two hands when open, I affixed a piece of paper; whereon I wrote, with some of the ink before described, a label, intimating that the head in question had belonged to Cromwell, and was a gift from himself to Bradshaw, whose signature I affixed to the superscription.

On producing this plaster head to Mr. S. Ireland, it was shown to several persons eminent for their knowledge in sculpture, who pronounced it as their firm opinion that the head in question *must have been modelled by Simon*, the justly celebrated artist who lived during the protectorship.

One very extraordinary circumstance attending this transaction was, that the name of Bradshaw, which I had affixed at random to the label on the back of the bust, when compared with the autograph engraved from the original death-warrant of Charles the First, proved to be as similar as possible.

I need scarcely add that the relievo was deemed a very great curiosity; and coming, as was supposed, from such hands as Cromwell's and Bradshaw's, was naturally conjectured to be a very striking resemblance of the original.



W. H. IRELAND

AN OPINION HAZARDED

Your rigid critics will undoubtedly be prompted to smile at the above statement, and ever after be led to deride the opinion of sculptors as to ancient performances. I certainly will so far coincide with that opinion as to assert, that, if the model had been produced as the performance of the young man who really modelled it, a slight commendation would have been passed upon his merits by those very persons who attributed it to Simon, and there the matter would have terminated.

Now let me submit a simple proposition. The workmanship was produced as from the hands of Simon. Either it possessed merit, or it did not.

If it did possess merit sufficient to entitle it to the name of that sculptor, the young artist was certainly a rising genius as a modeller: if it did not possess sufficient spirit, it was the name of Simon being annexed which made it pass current. I am myself no modeller; but, as far as nature goes, I can certainly form a judgment as the execution of a relieve; and, in my humble opinion, the hand of Simon could not have executed a more masterly and spirited head than that before mentioned of the protector Cromwell.

So purblind, so unfeeling, is mankind,
That living genius vainly boasts its mind;
But, 'ray'd in Time's *rug*, sages praise,
And give a modern Simon, SIMON's bays.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE TOUR

On Mr. S. Ireland's return from his tour down the Warwickshire Avon, the circumstances before related had taken such root in my mind, that I was more partial than ever to the pursuit after antiquities of every description, and more particularly to everything that bore the smallest affinity to our bard. Mr. S. Ireland's predilection for the name of Shakspeare seemed also to have increased by this visit to the birthplace of our mighty dramatist: his encomiums were unceasing; and he would frequently assert, that such was his veneration for the bard that he would willingly give half his library to become possessed even of his signature alone.

A FRUITLESS HUNT

These conversations, so frequently repeated, led me to search all the old deeds at the gentleman's chambers where I was articed, in order to see whether chance might not throw some instrument in my way bearing the autograph of Shakspeare. This step proved abortive; in consequence of which I frequented the stalls of several venders of old paper and parchment, but all to no effect; till, wearied at length, I relaxed in my pursuit, and for a short period thought no more of the business.

FIRST STEP

I cannot recollect upon what particular occasion, but I rather think I had been occupied in the perusal of the mortgage-deed formerly in the possession of David Garrick, esq., which is to be found printed in Johnson and Steevens's Shakspeare, when the idea first struck me of imitating the signature of our bard, in order to gratify Mr. Ireland. In consequence of this,

I made a tracing of the *facsimiles* of Shakspeare's signature, both to his will in the Commons and the deed before mentioned, which are to be found in the aforesaid edition of Shakspeare's works. I also hastily noted down the heads of this deed; and thus fortified I repaired to chambers, in order to produce the instrument which speedily followed.

WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE AND MICHAEL FRASER

Having cut off a piece of parchment from the end of an old rent-roll at chambers, I placed a deed before me of the period of James the First, and then proceeded to imitate the style of the penmanship as well as possible, forming a lease as between William Shakspeare and John Heminge with one Michael Fraser and Elizabeth, his wife, whereto I affixed the signature of Shakspeare, keeping the transcript of his original autographs before me; while the superscription of Michael Fraser was executed with my left hand, in order the better to conceal it as being from the same pen.

FORMATION OF SEALS

The contents of the lease being finished, and the signatures subscribed, I found much difficulty in annexing the seals, which, at the period of James the First, were not similar to those of the present day, being formed of malleable wax, and stamped upon narrow pieces of parchment hanging from the deed directly under the signatures. Having affixed the strips of parchment according to the method adopted in the reign of James, I in the first instance endeavoured to heat in a shovel the wax of some old seals which I had cut from deeds; but this proved impracticable, as the wax, from age, having lost its moisture in a great degree, instead of melting rather crumbled over the heat. At length I adopted the expedient of heating a knife, with which I cut an old seal in two without its cracking; and having with a penknife carefully scooped a cavity on the opposite side to that bearing the impression, I therein placed the strip of parchment pendent from the deed; and having heated some wax of a less ancient date, I placed it when hot within the remaining part of the cavity, and thus formed a back to the seal; but as the fore and hind part of the seal, on account of the different ages of the wax, varied in colour, I again moistened the seal before the fire, and in that state rubbed soot and coal-ashes over it, which thereby became incorporated with the seal, and in a great measure screened the colour from observation.

Having with much labour and contrivance accomplished the two seals, I determined on presenting this first specimen to Mr. S. Ireland.

I should not omit stating the reason why a deed was produced in preference to any loose paper which I might have formed without so much pains. The fact is, that I had no idea whatsoever of imitating the handwriting of Shakspeare further than the autograph in question; neither had I then the vanity of attempting any imposition in imitation of his style. In addition to these circumstances, a law instrument was assuredly the most calculated to stamp validity on the signature produced.

PRESENTATION OF THE DEED

It was about eight o'clock, being after my evening's attendance at chambers, that I presented the deed in question. Mr. S. Ireland's family were present; and, if I mistake not, another person;—the fact being precisely as follows:—I had placed the deed within my bosom; when, after informing Mr. Ireland that I had a very great curiosity to show him, I drew it forth and presented it, saying—“There, sir! what do you think of that?” Mr. Ireland, opening the parchment, regarded it for a length of time with the strictest scrutiny: he then examined the seals; and afterwards proceeded to fold up the instrument; and on presenting it to me he replied—“I certainly believe it to be a genuine deed of the time.” Returning it immediately into Mr. Ireland's hand, I then made answer—“If you think it so, I beg your acceptance of it.” Mr. Ireland, immediately taking the keys of his library from his pocket, presented them to me, saying—“It is impossible for me to express the pleasure you have given me by the presentation of this deed: there are the keys of my book-case; go and take from it whatsoever you please; I shall refuse you nothing.” I instantly returned the keys into Mr. Ireland's hand, saying—“I thank you, sir; but I shall accept of nothing.” Mr. Ireland, rising from his chair, selected from his books a scarce tract, with engraved plates, called “Stokes the Vaulting Master,” which he peremptorily insisted I should accept. And such was the precise manner of my presentation of the fictitious deed between Shakspeare and Fraser, that being the first document produced.

THE QUINTIN

The morning after my presentation of the lease, the first person sent to by Mr. Samuel Ireland was sir Fr*d*r**k Ed*n, who after a very strict examination of the deed, gave it as his decided opinion that the instrument was valid; and on looking at the impressions on the seals, that under the signature of Shakspeare he affirmed was a representation of a machine called the Quintin; for an account of which Stow the historian was referred

to; who states that the Quintin was used by the young men, in order to instruct them in the art of tilting on horseback with the lance; the machine being constructed as follows:—An upright beam was firmly fixed in the earth, at the top of which was a bar placed horizontally, moving on a pivot. To a hook at one end of the bar was hung a large iron ring; while from the other extremity was suspended a large bag filled with sand. The object of the tilter was to unhook the ring, and bear it off upon the point of his lance when at full gallop, which if he failed to accomplish with dexterity, the bar moving swiftly on the pivot swung round the bag, which, coming in contact with the rider's back, was almost certain of unhorsing him. As this amusement seemed to bear so great an analogy to the name *Shake-spear*, it was immediately conjectured that the seal must have belonged to our bard; and from that moment the Quintin was gravely affirmed to be the seal always used by our monarch of the drama.

I shall merely state, that, on cutting the seal in question from an old deed at chambers, I never even looked at the impression; and, if such had been the case, I should not have known that the stamp on the wax represented the Quintin—a machine of which I had never heard until after the delivery of the deed as before stated.

ORIGINAL MORTGAGE-DEED

Upon the full discovery of every circumstance being made to Albany Wallis, esq., and my informing him, that, with the alteration of the names only, I had nearly worded my lease from the mortgage-deed formerly in the possession of David Garrick, esq. (which has been so frequently printed, and the words I had taken down, as before stated), Mr. Wallis in consequence referred to a copy of that deed; and, on comparing it with Mr. Ireland's publication of the Miscellaneous Papers, wherein the spurious deed of Shakspeare and Fraser is printed, he was astonished on finding the similarity that existed between them; and expressed his wonder, that, out of so many persons conversant with everything relating to Shakspeare, and who had examined the papers, no one should have remarked the obvious plagiarism throughout the deed in question.

INCITEMENTS

Numerous persons flocked to Mr. Ireland's house in order to inspect the deed, who all coincided with sir F. Ed*n in believing the instrument valid; and, after the lapse of some few days, it was hinted, that in all probability many papers of Shakspeare's might be found by referring to the same source

from whence the deed had been drawn. This suggestion was frequently uttered in my presence: and being thus urged forward to produce what really was not in existence, I then determined on essaying some composition in imitation of the language of Shakspeare. I must, however, solemnly affirm, that had not such incitements been used, I never should have attempted a second document—my real object having been to give Mr. S. Ireland satisfaction: that wish accomplished, my purpose was fully answered.

JOHN SHAKSPEARE'S PROFESSION OF FAITH

Having frequently heard of the bigoted profession of faith found at the birthplace of Shakspeare, and said to have been written by John Shakspeare, our poet's father, wherein the effusions of the most determined Catholic are expressed, I had recourse to the plan of writing a profession of faith for our bard, which I executed accordingly.

A SHEET OF OLD PAPER

The sheet of paper on which the profession of faith was written was the outside of several others, on some of which accounts had been kept in the reign of Charles the First; and being at that time wholly unacquainted with the water-marks used in the reign of queen Elizabeth, I carefully selected two half sheets not having any mark whatsoever, on which I penned my first effusion; keeping the *facsimiles* of Shakspeare's original autographs before me.

SHAKSPEARE A CATHOLIC

Having the most rooted antipathy to everything like superstition and bigotry, and having heard it very frequently surmised that our great poet, like his father, was no Protestant, but of the catholic persuasion (particularly on account of the language made use of by the Ghost in Hamlet as to purgatory,^[1] &c.), I determined if possible to decide the point on the other hand, by making the profession of faith appear to be written by a sincere votary of the Protestant religion.

[1] *Ghost.* I am thy father's spirit,
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confin'd to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burn'd and purg'd away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
Thy knotty and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand on end
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.

Act. I., Sc. v.

A COMPOSITION UNSTUDIED

As many encomiums were passed upon the following composition, I have thought it necessary to state, that the effusion was altogether unstudied, being committed to paper, in the disguised hand and redundancy of letters in the spelling, just as the thoughts arose in my own mind, without any previous transcript or subsequent alteration whatsoever.

The word *leffee*, which appears in this article, and which was so much the subject of cavil, was intended to be *leafless*; and to the perturbation of the moment only is to be attributed that literal error, which was afterwards swelled into a flagrant proof of the invalidity of the composition as coming from the pen of Shakspeare.

WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE'S PROFESSION OF FAITH

I beynge nowe offe sounds Mynde doe hope thatte thys mye wyshe wille atte mye deathe bee acceded toe as I nowe lyve in Londonne ande as mye soule maye perchance soone quitte thys poore Bodye it is mye desire thatte inne suche case I maye bee carryed toe mye native place ande thatte mye Bodye bee there quietlye interred wythe as little pompe as canne bee, ande I doe nowe inne these mye seyriouse moments make thys mye professione of fayth and which I doe moste solemnlye believe I doe fyrste looke toe oune lovyng and greate God and toe hys gloriouse sonne Jesus I doe alsoe beleyve thatte thys mye weake ande frayle Bodye wille retturne toe duste butte forre mye soule

lette God judge thatte as toe hymselfe shalle seeme meete O
omnipotent and greate God I am full offe Synne I doe notte
thykne myselfe worthy offe thye grace ande yette wille I hope
forre evene the poore prysonerre whenne bounde with gallyng
Irons evenne hee wille hope for Pittye ande whenne the teares offe
sweete repentance bathe hys wretched pillowe he then looks ande
hopes forre pardonne thenne rouse mye Soule and lette hope thatte
sweete cherysher offe alle afforde thee comforte alsoe O Manne
whatte arte thou whye considereste thou thyselfe thus grateleye
where are thye greate thye boasted attribytes buryed loste forre
everre inne colde Deathe O Manne whye attemptest thou toe
serche the greatnesse offe the Almyghtye thou doste butte loose
thye labourre more thou attempteste more arte thou loste tille thye
poore weake thoughtes arre elevated toe theyre summite ande
thenne as snowe fromme the leffee tree droppe ande dystylle
themselves tille theye are noe more O God manne as I am frayle
bye nature fulle offe Synne yette greate God receyve me toe thye
bosomme where alle is sweete contente ande happynesse alle is
blysse where dyscontente isse neverre hearde butte where oune
Bonde offe freyndshippe unytes alle Menne forgyve O Lorde alle
oure Synnes ande withe thye greate goodnesse take usse alle to
thye Breaste O cheryshe usse like the sweete Chickenne thatte
under the coverte offe herre spreadyng Wings Receyves herre
lyttle Broode ande hoveryng overre themme keepes themme
harmlesse ande in safetye

Wm Shakspeare

FORMATION OF LETTERS

In penning this profession of faith I formed the twelve different letters contained in the Christian and sir names of Wm. Shakspeare as much as possible to resemble the tracings of his original autographs; and I was also particular in introducing as many capital *doubleyous* and *esses* as possible. The other letters were ideal, and written to correspond as nearly as might be with the general style of the twelve letters used in Shakspeare's names as written by himself.

VARIETY IN THE PENMANSHIP

As the penmanship of the profession of faith was my first essay beyond a simple autograph, it was written with some caution: but had any person

minutely compared the style of writing therein produced with those manuscripts which were penned after I had acquired a facility in committing to paper the disguised hand, he must instantly have discovered the difference; which was, indeed, so obvious, that the hand producing the profession of faith, would scarcely be thought, upon examination, to have been the same that committed to paper the great bulk of the manuscripts.

GENERAL OPINIONS

The opinions delivered as to the language of the profession of faith were unanimous—every person allowing the genuine feeling that breathed throughout the whole composition; which, it was stated, fully evinced it to be from the pen of our great dramatist: nor was my satisfaction a little heightened on finding that this effusion banished at once every idea of Shakspeare's Catholicism from the minds of those whom I had frequently heard hazarding that opinion as to his religious tenets.

“THUS BAD BEGINS, AND WORSE REMAINS BEHIND”

After the production of the profession of faith, I was much questioned as to the source from whence the manuscripts were drawn; and it was then for the first time I began to discover the unpleasant predicament in which I had involved myself by the production of the papers; for to screen a falsehood, it was absolutely necessary to have recourse to a second duplicity: in consequence of which the following story was framed, which was invariably told to every individual who requested satisfaction on that head.

STORY OF THE UNKNOWN GENTLEMAN

I informed the public, that, having made an acquaintance at a coffee-house with a gentleman of fortune, who was from my conversation given to understand that I had a great predilection for everything like antiquity, he had in consequence requested that I would pay him a visit; stating at the same time that he had many old papers, which had descended to him from his ancestors, who had practised the law, among which some might in all probability be found worthy my notice, in which case he would willingly make me a present of them. I further added that a morning was appointed for my waiting upon him, but that, conceiving he might have only stated the above in order to turn me into ridicule, I did not pay any attention to the day specified; but happening, some mornings after, to pass near his chambers, the circumstance came to my recollection, and I in consequence determined on paying my friend a visit. I then observed, that on my entrance into the

apartment the gentleman appeared rather hurt at my remissness in not having kept my appointment with him; when, after a suitable apology, he desired me to go into an adjoining apartment, where I observed a vast collection of old deeds and papers tied up in bundles and numbered, which I instantly began to inspect, when, after having looked over some parcels, I discovered, to my utter astonishment, the deed between our bard and Michael Fraser, bearing the signature of Shakspeare. I then proceeded to state, that, my first surprise having subsided, I took the above-mentioned deed to my friend, who also appeared much astonished, not conceiving any such document had been in his possession; that he remarked it was certainly a very curious instrument, but that having promised me everything I should find worthy my notice, he would not be worse than his word, and, desiring only that I would make him a fair transcript in my own handwriting, he told me the deed was at my service.

Such was the manner in which I accounted for my having become possessed of the manuscripts, till further questioning produced the following additional tale.

ANSWER TO FURTHER DOUBTS

As the manuscripts became rather voluminous, great stress was laid upon their value, and it was thought a matter of astonishment how any man in his proper senses could think of giving away such a treasure. In order to reconcile inquirers to this objection, I stated that during my research among the deeds of my friend I had discovered one which established his right to certain property that had long been a subject of litigation; on which account he conceived the giving me the Shaksperian manuscripts no other than a just recompense for the service I had thus rendered him.

CONCEALMENT OF THE SUPPOSED DONOR'S NAME

As every individual inspecting the papers remarked that it would have been his pride to be known as the original possessor of the documents produced, I was in consequence questioned as to the name of the donor: my reply to which was to the following effect; that the gentleman being possessed of a large fortune, and being well aware of the inquiries which must take place on the production of the papers, did not think fit to subject himself to the impertinent questionings of every individual who conceived himself licensed to demand an explanation concerning them; that he in consequence gave me the documents as mere curiosities, exacting from me

at the same time a most solemn asseveration that I would keep his name for ever concealed.

And such was the method adopted to preclude every future inquiry as to the name and residence of the supposed original donor of the manuscripts.

DRS. P*RR AND WH*RT*N ON THE PROFESSION OF FAITH

Of the persons who visited Mr. Samuel Ireland when the manuscripts were not very voluminous, the above gentlemen were among the most conspicuous. On their arrival, Mr. Ireland was alone in his study to receive them; but, by the desire of the visitants, I was shortly after summoned before them, to answer interrogatories. I confess I had never before felt so much terror, and would almost have bartered my life to have evaded the meeting: there was, however, no alternative, and I was under the necessity of appearing before them. Having replied to their several questionings as to the discovery of the manuscripts and the secretion of the gentleman's name, one of these two inspectors of the manuscripts addressed me, saying,

“Well, young man; the public will have just cause to admire you for the research you have made, which will afford so much gratification to the literary world.”

To this panegyric I bowed my head, and remained silent.

PERUSAL OF THE PROFESSION OF FAITH

While Mr. Ireland read aloud the profession of faith, Drs. P*rr and Wh*rt*n remained silent, paying infinite attention to every syllable that was pronounced; while I continued immovable, awaiting to hear their dreaded opinion. This effusion being ended, one of the above gentlemen (who, as far as my recollection can recall the circumstance, I believe to have been Dr. P*rr) thus addressed himself to Mr. Ireland:

“Sir, we have very fine passages in our church service, and our litany abounds with beauties; but here, sir, here is a man who has distanced us all!”

When I heard these words pronounced I could scarcely credit my own senses; and such was the effect they produced upon me, that I knew not whether to smile or not. I was, however, very forcibly struck with the encomium; and shortly after left the study, ruminating on the praise which had been unconsciously lavished, by a person so avowedly erudite, on the unstudied production of one so green in years as myself.

INCITEMENT OF VANITY

On entering the back dining-room, which was contiguous to Mr. Ireland's study, I reclined my head against the window-frame, still ruminating on the words I had heard; when vanity first took possession of my mind, to which every other consideration yielded: fired with the idea of possessing genius to which I had never aspired, and full of the conviction that my style had so far imitated Shakspeare's as to deceive two persons of such allowed classical learning as Drs. P*rr and Wh*rt*n, I paid little attention to the sober dictates of reason, and thus implicitly yielded myself to the gilded snare which afterwards proved to me the source of indescribable pain and unhappiness.

MR. P*WS*N AND THE PROFESSION OF FAITH

For the accuracy of the following statement I cannot avouch, not having been present upon the occasion; but, from what was frequently stated, I was given to understand that the above gentleman, after inspecting all the manuscripts then in Mr. Ireland's possession, appeared so perfectly well satisfied respecting them that Mr. Ireland was emboldened to demand of him whether he felt reluctance to subscribing his name among the list of believers in the validity of the manuscripts; upon which occasion Mr. P*ws*n very drily made answer:

“I thank you, sir; but I never subscribe my name to professions of faith of any nature whatsoever.”

PURCHASE OF OLD PAPER

Being thus urged forward to the production of more manuscripts, it became necessary that I should possess a sufficient quantity of old paper to enable me to proceed: in consequence of which I applied to a bookseller named Verey, in Great May's Buildings, St. Martin's Lane, who, for the sum of five shillings, suffered me to take from all the folio and quarto volumes in his shop the fly-leaves which they contained. By this means I was amply stored with that commodity: nor did I fear any mention of the circumstance by Mr. Verey, whose quiet unsuspecting disposition I was well convinced would never lead him to make the transaction public; in addition to which, he was not likely even to know anything concerning the supposed Shaksperian discovery by myself; and even if he had, I do not imagine that my purchase of the old paper in question would have excited in him the smallest degree of suspicion.

THE JUG WATER-MARK

As I was fully aware, from the variety of water-marks which are in existence at the present day, that they must have constantly been altered since the period of Elizabeth, and being for some time wholly unacquainted with the water-marks of that age, I very carefully produced my first specimens of the writing on such sheets of old paper as had no mark whatsoever.—Having heard it frequently stated that the appearance of such marks on the papers would have greatly tended to establish their validity, I listened attentively to every remark which was made upon the subject, and from thence I at length gleaned the intelligence that a *jug* was the prevalent water-mark of the reign of Elizabeth: in consequence of which I inspected all the sheets of old paper then in my possession; and having selected such as had the jug upon them, I produced the succeeding manuscripts upon these; being careful, however, to mingle with them a certain number of blank leaves, that the production on a sudden of so many water-marks might not excite suspicion in the breasts of those persons who were most conversant with the manuscripts.

THE WITTY CONUNDRUM

Previous to the execution of the letter as from Shakspeare to Cowley the player, I had delineated the curious sketch of his head, with its appurtenances, which I produced it to my father, who seemed inclined to turn it into ridicule as an inexplicable paper and of no consequence. Finding such to be the case, I had recourse to the expedient of writing a letter as from Shakspeare to maister Cowley the player, which I pretended to have found during my research of the ensuing day, and which epistle instantly reflected a degree of consequence on the *witty conundrum* in question.

DISQUISITIONS ON THE WITTY CONUNDRUM

As it was supposed that nothing could possibly come from the hand of Shakspeare which did not possess some sterling good, the witty conundrum became an object of learned investigation; but all to no effect: for although many sapient opinions were hazarded as to its real meaning, nothing conclusive was decided upon: which is, indeed, not at all to be wondered at, as when it was by me committed to paper I had no particular end in view, neither was there any meaning whatsoever annexed to the drawing of the supposed witty conundrum.

IMPROMPTU

How oft we find the wisest doat,
And deem mere nought a treasure!
Age still admires a petticoat,
As toys give infants pleasure.
By this we must confess, however loth,
Men are but babies of a larger growth.

LETTER TO MAISTER COWLEY

By the very familiar style I adopted in the letter from our bard to Richard Cowley, supposed to have enclosed the witty conundrum, it was by all inspectors of the manuscripts asserted that Shakspeare must have been a kind good-natured character, and of a very playful disposition: nor can I omit making mention of the superscription to this epistle, which frequently excited risibility: it ran as follows.—

THE SUPERScription

Toe Masterre Richard Cowley
dwellinge atte oune Masterre
Hollis a draperre inne
the Wattlynge Streete
Londoune.

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S LETTER

During the frequent conversations that took place after the production of the first documents, I heard peculiar stress laid by the honourable Mr. B***g on a letter supposed to have been written by James the First to Shakspeare, and which it was stated might be found among the papers; but as so many conversations were held upon that subject, I thought the production of such a letter would be too obvious: in addition to which I was totally unacquainted with the writing and autograph of that monarch. I therefore determined on fabricating a letter from Queen Elizabeth to our bard: in the execution of which I was greatly facilitated by an original autograph of that princess in Mr. S. Ireland's possession, which I could always procure without his knowledge, and from which I made a hasty tracing when alone. From the same *facsimile* I also formed the letters throughout my spurious epistle from that queen to Shakspeare.

My principal object in the production of this letter was to make our bard appear of so much consequence in his own time as to be personally noticed

by so great and politic a princess as our Elizabeth.—As to the verses alluded to in *my gracious* epistle, they certainly never had existence, to the best of my knowledge; at any rate I may safely assert they could not have been one half so despicable as the wretched attempts at *te he* versification so facetiously introduced in Mr. Malone's Inquiry—*vide* page 100.—

“Each titled dame deserts her rolls and tea,
And all the maids of honour cry *te he!*”

However, for the sake of proving how far commentatorship is of utility, I refer the public to pages 101 and 102 of Mr. Malone's Inquiry, which are literally filled with notes upon twenty-two lines of Grub-street poetry, of which the above couplet is a part. These lines are meant to convey sarcasm; in which the writer has as well succeeded as in his attempt at poetry.

THE LAUNDRESS

It is a very curious fact, that the female who attended at the chambers where I was articed was present during the whole of my fabrication of Elizabeth's supposed letter; which, when completed, I gave into her hands, and requested to know whether she would not have conceived it very odd; to which she replied in the affirmative; adding, with a laugh, *that it was very odd I could do such unaccountable strange things.*

Had this circumstance been generally known, it would unquestionably have led to the development of the whole Shaksperian forgery. Indeed the same effect might have been produced by the disclosure of my fabrication of the dedicatory letter to the religious tract in the time of Elizabeth; or of my procurement of ink from the bookbinder's man: not to mention the quantity of old paper purchased by me: all which were facts known to individuals who would have come forward had not their pursuits been so diametrically opposite to everything like literature and a Shaksperian controversy.

A SECOND HINT

To the same gentleman who gave me the first idea of writing a letter as from Queen Elizabeth to our bard, by his frequent mention of the letter said to have been written by James (her successor) to Shakspeare, I am also indebted for the idea of writing a letter to Lord Southampton, with its answer, which originated in that gentleman's so frequently laying a stress on the supposed bounty of that nobleman to our bard, and the light which would be thrown on the fact should any document be discovered denoting

the sum so given by his lordship. Profiting by this information, I took a fit opportunity, and then produced

COPY OF MY LETTER TO HIS GRACE OF SOUTHAMPTON

On writing this letter, as in the case of the profession of faith, I kept the tracings from Shakspeare's original autographs before me, and so penned the epistle, without making any studied transcript, but merely committing my thoughts to paper in the disguised hand as they occurred to my mind. As I was, however, fearful that some document might afterwards be discovered tending to prove the exact sum sent by Lord Southampton to Shakspeare, I thought it most expedient not to make mention of any specific donation, and therefore said, in the letter in question,

“Doe notte esteeme me a sluggarde nor tardye for thus havyng delayed to answeare or rather toe thank you for youre greate Bountye,” &c.

Having completed the letter in question, I was on the point of folding it up, and directing it to Lord Southampton, when suddenly the following idea struck me.—

A SECOND THOUGHT

As this letter of thanks was supposed to be sent by Shakspeare to Lord Southampton, how could it possibly revert back into the possession of our bard?—After some cogitation, I had recourse to the expedient of writing at the top of the letter “Coype of mye Letter toe hys Grace offe Southampton”: to which transcript (supposed to have been kept by William Shakspeare) from the epistle believed to have been sent to his lordship, I affixed lord Southampton's spurious answer.

LORD SOUTHAMPTON'S ANSWER

As I had not the smallest conception that any correspondence or autographs of Lord Southampton were in existence, and being indeed at that time totally unaware of the immense collections of ancient papers that are extant throughout the kingdom, I conceived that I might with impunity give the letter in question in any style of writing I thought fit, and therefore penned his lordship's gracious communication with my left hand, that no similitude might appear between it and the copy of Shakspeare's epistle accompanying it. The mode of writing adopted by me in his lordship's letter

will not, however, upon examination, be found so very dissimilar to the signature of Fraser on the spurious lease written with the same hand. Every person viewing the manuscripts was surprised at his lordship's miserable penmanship: and indeed, when compared with the *facsimile* of his original autograph given by Mr. Malone in his Inquiry, nothing can be more opposite, as Lord Southampton in reality did write a very neat intelligible hand.

GENERAL OPINION

The letters in question were deemed highly curious and valuable, and the style of Shakspeare's was applauded beyond measure: but it was on all hands lamented that the exact sum so beneficently given by his lordship to Shakspeare was not therein specified, as in that case all doubts upon the subject would have been ended.

LOVE-LETTER AND VERSES TO ANNE HATHAWAY

As our great dramatist was married very early in life to one Anne Hathaway of the village of Shotery (at no great distance from Stratford-on-Avon), I became desirous of introducing to the world one of his love effusions of that early period: on which account was penned his epistle to that lady, including five stanzas of poetry and a braid of hair supposed to have been sent to her as a token of his unalterable affection.

LOCK OF HAIR

As the engraving of Shakspeare prefixed to the folio edition of his plays, and executed by Droeshout, represents our bard as having short, straight, and wiry hair, I selected a lock of a similar kind, then in my possession (which in my boyish days had been given me as a *gage d'amour*), conceiving it very appropriate to my purpose.

SILK TWIST

Having purchased of one Yardley, a vender of old parchments in Clare Market, some patents of the reigns of Henry VIII, Mary, and Elizabeth, with the great seals of England pendent thereto (being affixed to the parchment with thick woven silk, as was usually the custom at those periods, and being about four inches in length), the idea struck me that the use of one of the pieces of woven silk in question would give an imposing air of genuineness to the lock of hair. After putting this expedient into effect I wrote the letter

to Anne Hathaway, wherein I laid great stress on the workmanship of the silk, as if executed by the hand of Shakspeare: the words ran as follow:

“I doe assure thee no rude hande hathe knottedde itte, thye Willys alone hathe done the worke neytherre the gyldedde bauble thatte envyronnes the heade of Magestye noe norre honourres moste weyghtye woude give mee halfe the joye as didde thysse mye lyttle worke forre thee.” &c. &c.

I must confess that when I call to my recollection the numerous persons who inspected the papers, and of course the lock of hair with its silken appendage, and who were in the daily habit of inspecting grants, charters, patents, &c., most of them having a similar twist in order to affix the great seal to the parchments, I am much astonished that the silk in question should have never been remarked by any one frequenting Mr. Ireland's house.

RINGS

Small quantities of the hair being carefully taken from the original lock, were distributed into several rings; but I shall refrain from making mention of their wearers: it is sufficient for me that they were believers in the authenticity of the manuscripts.

MR. COLLET AND EDWARD THE FOURTH

A short time after the letter and the lock of hair had appeared, it was by some persons most ridiculously asserted that human hair could not have resisted the lapse of time from Shakspeare's days to the present æra: and in order to ridicule the affair, it was stated that one Mr. Collet, a hair merchant, was to come in all the pomp of his trade and scrutinize the Shaksperian *curl*. However, to terminate the dispute in question, it is well known that human hair has been discovered in abundance on the heads of embalmed bodies which have remained centuries in the earth; and in many instances it has even been found to grow after death: one proof of this is to be adduced, which was witnessed by many persons still living; for when the vault of Edward IV., who died in the year 1483, was discovered by chance in the chapel at Windsor, the hair of the head and the beard were found flowing, and as strong as hair cut from the head of a living person. I myself saw a piece of the hair taken from the beard of that monarch, which was very strong, and of a reddish colour.

PROMISSORY NOTE OF HAND TO JOHN HEMINGES

One of the earliest documents produced to strengthen the validity of the fabricated mass, was a promissory note of hand appearing to have been given to John Heminges by William Shakspeare as a compensation for business done at the Globe theatre, and for his great trouble in going down for him to Stratford-on-Avon. The note of hand was payable at one month, and was for the sum of *five pounds and five shillings English money*.

JOHN HEMINGES' RECEIPT

To this curious note I affixed a receipt with some wax, as from John Heminges, specifying the payment of the money on the very day the month expired; from which it was generally conjectured that Shakspeare, in addition to his other good qualities, was very punctual in all pecuniary transactions. This document was signed with my left hand and, however trivial it may be esteemed, proved in the end of infinite consequences, as will appear from the ensuing statements.

JOHN HEMINGES' ORIGINAL SIGNATURE

When the manuscripts became voluminous and had excited general attention, having one day returned to Mr. Samuel Ireland's house at three o'clock (the period of my leaving chambers), I was, to my no small astonishment, informed as follows:—That Mr. Albany Wallis had been with Mr. Ireland about half an hour before, and had stated, with a smile, that he came to overturn at once all the Shaksperian discovery: that he (Mr. Wallis) then produced a deed signed by John Heminges, in a hand altogether different from that of the signature affixed to my receipt; which signature, as before stated, had been committed to paper with my left hand, for at the period when it was fabricated I did not conjecture that any document bearing the autograph of John Heminges would ever appear to invalidate the supposititious one annexed by me to the receipt.

On learning this circumstance I was terror-struck, and immediately requested Mr. Ireland to accompany me down to Mr. Wallis's, in order that I might inspect the instrument in question, which had been discovered among the numerous law documents in Mr. Wallis's possession; to whom the public is also indebted for the mortgage-deed bearing the autograph of Shakspeare, which was discovered among the papers of the Featherstonehaugh family, and presented to the late David Garrick, esquire, who bequeathed it to the British Museum.

A DAMNING PROOF

On our arrival at Mr. Albany Wallis's he instantly produced the document so recently discovered, which he kept in his own hand, showing the signature of John Heminges to myself and Mr. Samuel Ireland. From the appearance of the instrument I was fully assured that there could not be a doubt as to its authenticity; and from the style of the handwriting I also knew that the meanest capacity would have at once decided that the autograph affixed to the deed was not from the same hand as had subscribed that which was to the receipt, so totally different was the penmanship in every respect. Having examined the autograph with infinite attention, I quitted Mr. Ireland and Mr. Wallis, stating that I would see the supposed gentleman during the morning, and acquaint him with the whole event.

A BOLD EXPEDIENT

From Norfolk Street I instantly repaired to chambers, retaining in my recollection the form of the original autograph of John Heminges which I had just inspected; and on my arrival there I committed the signature to paper in a form as similar to the original as my memory would enable me to give to it. After which I penned a receipt with the Shaksperian ink, and upon old paper, as for theatrical disbursements, forming the letters as similarly as possible to those in the name I had thus noted from recollection. With this document I hurried back to Mr. Albany Wallis, to whom I produced it with the following statement.

THE TALL AND SHORT JOHN HEMINGES

Mr. A. Wallis, having compared the signature to my receipt, thus hastily formed, with the original autograph subscribed to the deed, was immediately struck with the similarity; when I gave the following relation: that on quitting him I had immediately hastened to the supposed gentleman, whom I very luckily found at home: that I expressed to him my astonishment at the discovery which had been made by Mr. Wallis, of a deed signed by John Heminges in a hand not resembling in the least the signature subscribed to the receipt: that upon witnessing my embarrassment he smiled, and opening the drawer of his writing-table, drew from thence this second receipt, which was found correspondent to the signature on the deed, saying, "Take that to Mr. Wallis's, and see if it does not correspond with the handwriting to his deed": that my friend then further informed me, that, although not known to the world, there were two John Heminges in the time of Shakspeare; the one connected with Shakspeare and the Globe theatre, and the other being

concerned for the Curtain theatre, which was another playhouse of the period of James I: that the signatures of John Heminges to Mr. Wallis's deed and to the second receipt thus given me by the gentleman, were the autographs of Shakspeare's friend; while the name affixed to the first receipt, which bore no resemblance to that on the deed, was the signature of John Heminges of the Curtain theatre, who was in some measure connected with Shakspeare and the Globe theatre. I also further added, that the gentleman acquainted me that it would appear, from further documents to be produced, that these two John Heminges were distinguished by the appellations of the *tall* John Heminges of the Globe and the *short* John Heminges of the Curtain theatres.

FABRICATION NEWLY FABRICATED

However apt I might have been in carrying this signature in my recollection, and thus speedily producing a document at chambers to resemble the signature on Mr. Wallis's deed, I nevertheless, upon this further examination of the original autograph to the deed, did imagine that I could execute a fresh receipt that would more strikingly resemble the genuine signature of John Heminges. In consequence of which, having fully satisfied Mr. Wallis's mind at this trying juncture, I again hastened back to chambers; where I once more penned the receipt *verbatim* which I had so lately written: and bearing the recollection of the original signature more strongly in my mind, this duplicate fabrication proved a very strong resemblance to the authentic autograph on the deed: of course the first, which I had taken to Mr. Wallis, was destroyed, and the second, thus executed, was substituted in its stead: such being the method adopted in order to reconcile the difference between the name written with my left hand and that which appeared on the deed newly discovered by Mr. Albany Wallis of Norfolk Street.

REMARKABLE EXPEDITION

It is a circumstance perhaps not unworthy remark, that the whole period of time taken up in first seeing the deed at Mr. Wallis's, hastening to chambers in order to form the receipt, returning back to Mr. Wallis's with the receipt so fabricated and there framing and telling the story of the *tall* and *short* John Heminges, and finally the second return to chambers and re-execution (if I may be allowed the expression) of the receipt, did not actually occupy more than the space of one hour and a quarter. It will here be necessary to note, that Mr. Wallis's dwelling was at the bottom of Norfolk Street in the Strand, and the chambers to which I went were in New Inn.—

This remarkable expedition was afterwards alleged as a convincing proof that the documents could not be other than original, as it was affirmed to be out of all human probability that such a succession of events could have taken place in so limited a space of time.

MORE AUTOGRAPHS OF JOHN HEMINGES

After the production of this first receipt, to resemble the autograph affixed to Mr. Wallis's deed, I within a few days executed several others, and annexed a similar signature to some of the books which I produced, as a further proof that the documents were genuine.

In order, however, to give some idea of the opinions excited by this transaction, the following head, taken from Mr. Chalmers's *Apology for the Believers* (being a note in pages 18 and 19), will at once display his thoughts upon the subject.

MR. CHALMERS ON JOHN HEMINGES' SIGNATURE

“I was present when the genuine deed of John Heminges, which is printed by Mr. Malone in the *Inquiry* (page 409), was produced in evidence; when there was produced at the same time a black-letter pamphlet having the name ‘John Heminges’ written at the top of the title-page, *so like as to be a perfect facsimile*; and at the bottom of the same page was written the name ‘Wm. Shakspeare.’ On the back of the title-page was written ‘This was the book of John Heminges, which he gave unto me, Wm. Shakspeare.’ Now had there been *an issue*, on an action at law, whether these were the signatures of Heminges and of Shakspeare, the genuine deed of Heminges would have been given in evidence, as the *certainty* from which the *uncertainty* would have been inferred. Here is legal or admissible proof; and the jury who had been sworn to try that issue ‘according to the evidence given them,’ must have delivered their verdict for the genuineness of the signatures of Heminges and Shakspeare on the black-letter pamphlet before mentioned. This example proves how difficult it is to detect some forgeries by fair discussion. First, I believe that the deed of Heminges is genuine: Secondly, I believe that the signature of Heminges, on the black-letter pamphlet, was copied by the pen of a forger from the real signature on the deed; and that the signature of Shakspeare was copied by the same pen from fancy in some measure: yet am I of opinion that these forgeries cannot be detected by fair discussion.”

MR. JAMES BOSWELL

As the circumstances attending Mr. James Boswell's inspection of the manuscripts have been variously represented, and as I was present on that occasion, I shall state the facts as they really occurred.

On the arrival of Mr. Boswell, the papers were as usual placed before him: when he commenced his examination of them; and being satisfied as to their antiquity, as far as the external appearance would attest, he proceeded to examine the style of the language from the fair transcripts made from the disguised handwriting. In this research Mr. Boswell continued for a considerable length of time, constantly speaking in favour of the internal as well as external proofs of the validity of the manuscripts. At length, finding himself rather thirsty, he requested a tumbler of warm brandy and water; which having nearly finished, he then redoubled his praises of the manuscripts; and at length, arising from his chair, he made use of the following expression: "Well! I shall now die contented, since I have lived to witness the present day." Mr. Boswell then, kneeling down before the volume containing a portion of the papers, continued, "I now kiss the invaluable relics of our bard: and thanks to God that I have lived to see them!" Having kissed the volume with every token of reverence, Mr. Boswell shortly after quitted Mr. Ireland's house: and although I believe he revisited the papers on some future occasions, yet that was the only time I was honoured with a sight of Mr. James Boswell.

XI

GRIFFITHS WAINEWRIGHT

Man of Letters—Forger—Poisoner

OSCAR WILDE^[1]

It has constantly been made a subject of reproach against artists and men of letters that they are lacking in wholeness and completeness of nature. As a rule this must necessarily be so. That very concentration of vision and intensity of purpose which is the characteristic of the artistic temperament is in itself a mode of limitation. To those who are pre-occupied with the beauty of form nothing else seems of much importance. Yet there are many exceptions to this rule. Rubens served as ambassador, and Goethe as state councillor, and Milton as Latin secretary to Cromwell. Sophocles held civic office in his own city; the humourists, essayists, and novelists of modern America seem to desire nothing better than to become the diplomatic representatives of their country; and Charles Lamb's friend, Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, the subject of this brief memoir, though of an extremely artistic temperament, followed many masters other than art, being not merely a poet and a painter and an art-critic, an antiquarian, and a writer of prose, an amateur of beautiful things, and a dilettante of things delightful, but also a forger of no mean or ordinary capabilities, and as a subtle and secret poisoner almost without rival in this or any age.

This remarkable man, so powerful with "pen, pencil, and poison," as a great poet of our own day has finely said of him, was born at Chiswick, in 1794. His father was the son of a distinguished solicitor of Gray's Inn and Hatton Garden. His mother was the daughter of the celebrated Dr. Griffiths, the editor and founder of the *Monthly Review*, the partner in another literary speculation of Thomas Davies, that famous bookseller of whom Johnson said that he was not a bookseller, but "a gentleman who dealt in books," the friend of Goldsmith and Wedgwood, and one of the most well-known men of his day. Mrs. Wainewright died, in giving him birth, at the early age of twenty-one, and an obituary notice in the *Gentleman's Magazine* tells us of her "amiable disposition and numerous accomplishments," and adds somewhat quaintly that "she is supposed to have understood the writings of

Mr. Locke as well as perhaps any person of either sex now living.” His father did not long survive his young wife, and the little child seems to have been brought up by his grandfather, and, on the death of the latter in 1803, by his uncle George Edward Griffiths, whom he subsequently poisoned. His boyhood was passed at Linden House, Turnham Green, one of those many fine Georgian mansions that have unfortunately disappeared before the inroads of the suburban builder, and to its lovely gardens and well-timbered park he owed that simple and impassioned love of nature which never left him all through his life, and which made him so peculiarly susceptible to the spiritual influences of Wordsworth’s poetry. He went to school at Charles Burney’s academy at Hammersmith. Mr. Burney was the son of the historian of music, and the near kinsman of the artistic lad who was destined to turn out his most remarkable pupil. He seems to have been a man of a good deal of culture, and in after years Mr. Wainwright often spoke of him with much affection as a philosopher, an archæologist, and an admirable teacher who, while he valued the intellectual side of education, did not forget the importance of early moral training. It was under Mr. Burney that he first developed his talent as an artist, and Mr. Hazlitt tells us that a drawing book which he used at school is still extant, and displays great talent and natural feeling. Indeed, painting was the first art that fascinated him. It was not till much later that he sought to find expression by pen or poison.

Before this, however, he seems to have been carried away by boyish dreams of the romance and chivalry of a soldier’s life, and to have become a young guardsman. But the reckless dissipated life of his companions failed to satisfy the refined artistic temperament of one who was made for other things. In a short time he wearied of the service. “Art,” he tells us, in words that still move many by their ardent sincerity and strange fervour, “Art touched her renegade; by her pure and high influences the noisome mists were purged; my feelings, parched, hot, and tarnished, were renovated with cool, fresh bloom, simple, beautiful to the simple-hearted.” But Art was not the only cause of the change. “The writings of Wordsworth,” he goes on to say, “did much towards calming the confusing whirl necessarily incident to sudden mutations. I wept over them tears of happiness and gratitude.” He accordingly left the army, with its rough barrack-life and coarse mess-room tittle-tattle, and returned to Linden House, full of this newborn enthusiasm for culture. A severe illness, in which, to use his own words, he was “broken like a vessel of clay,” prostrated him for a time. His delicately strung organization, however indifferent it might have been to inflicting pain on others, was itself most keenly sensitive to pain. He shrank from suffering as a thing that mars and maims human life, and seems to have wandered through that terrible valley of melancholia from which so many great,

perhaps, greater, spirits have never emerged. But he was young—only twenty-five years of age—and he soon passed out of the “dead black waters,” as he called them, into the larger air of humanistic culture. As he was recovering from the illness that had led him almost to the gates of death, he conceived the idea of taking up literature as an art. “I said with John Woodvill,” he cries, “it were a life of gods to dwell in such an element,” to see, and hear, and write brave things:—

“These high and gusty relishes of life
Have no allayings of mortality.”

It is impossible not to feel that in this passage we have the utterance of a man who had a true passion for letters. “To see, and hear, and write brave things,” this was his aim.

Scott, the editor of the *London Magazine*, struck by the young man’s genius, or under the influence of the strange fascination that he exercised on everyone who knew him, invited him to write a series of articles on artistic subjects, and under a series of fanciful pseudonyms he began to contribute to the literature of his day. *Janus Weathercock*, *Egomet Bonmot*, and *Van Vinkvrooms* were some of the grotesque masks under which he chose to hide his seriousness, or to reveal his levity. A mask tells us more than a face. These disguises intensified his personality. In an incredibly short time he seems to have made his mark. Charles Lamb speaks of “kind, light-hearted Wainwright,” whose prose is “capital.” We hear of him entertaining Macready, John Forster, Maginn, Talfourd, Sir Wentworth Dilke, the poet John Clare, and others, at a *petit-dîner*. Like Disraeli, he determined to startle the town as a dandy, and his beautiful rings, his antique cameo breast-pin, and his pale lemon-coloured kid gloves, were well known, and indeed were regarded by Hazlitt as being the signs of a new manner in literature: while his rich curly hair, fine eyes, and exquisite white hands gave him the dangerous and delightful distinction of being different from others. There was something in him of Balzac’s Lucien de Rubempré. At times he reminds us of Julien Sorel. De Quincey saw him once. It was at a dinner at Charles Lamb’s. “Amongst the company, all literary men, sat a murderer,” he tells us, and he goes on to describe how on that day he had been ill, and had hated the face of man and woman, and yet found himself looking with intellectual interest across the table at the young writer beneath whose affectations of manner there seemed to him to lie so much unaffected sensibility, and speculates on “what sudden growth of another interest” would have changed his mood, had he known of what terrible sin the guest to whom Lamb paid so much attention was even then guilty.

His life-work falls naturally under the three heads suggested by Mr. Swinburne, and it may be partly admitted that, if we set aside his achievements in the sphere of poison, what he has actually left to us hardly justifies his reputation.

But then it is only the Philistine who seeks to estimate a personality by the vulgar test of production. This young dandy sought to be somebody, rather than to do something. He recognized that Life itself is an art, and has its modes of styles no less than the arts that seek to express it. Nor is his work without interest. We hear of William Blake stopping in the Royal Academy before one of his pictures and pronouncing it to be "very fine." His essays are prefigurings of much that has since been realized. He seems to have anticipated some of those accidents of modern culture that are regarded by many as true essentials. He writes about La Gioconda, and early French poets and the Italian Renaissance. He loves Greek gems, and Persian carpets, and Elizabethan translations of *Cupid and Psyche*, and the *Hypnerotomachia*, and bookbindings, and early editions, and wide-margined proofs. He is keenly sensitive to the value of beautiful surroundings, and never wearies of describing to us the rooms in which he lived, or would have liked to live. He had that curious love of green, which in individuals is always the sign of a subtle artistic temperament, and in nations is said to denote a laxity, if not a decadence of morals. Like Baudelaire, he was extremely fond of casts, and with Gautier, he was fascinated by that "sweet marble monster" of both sexes that we can still see at Florence and in the Louvre.

There is of course much in his descriptions, and his suggestions for decoration, that shows that he did not entirely free himself from the false taste of his time. But it is clear that he was one of the first to recognize what is, indeed, the very keynote of æsthetic eclecticism, I mean the true harmony of all really beautiful things irrespective of age or place, of school or manner. He saw that in decorating a room, which is to be, not a room for show, but a room to live in, we should never aim at any archæological reconstruction of the past, nor burden ourselves with any fanciful necessity for historical accuracy. In this artistic perception he was perfectly right. All beautiful things belong to the same age.

And so, in his own library, as he describes it, we find the delicate fictile vase of the Greek, with its exquisitely painted figures and the faint ΚΑΛΟΣ finely traced upon its side, and behind it hangs an engraving of the "Delphic Sibyl" of Michael Angelo, or of the "Pastoral" of Giorgione. Here is a bit of Florentine majolica, and here a rude lamp from some old Roman tomb. On the table lies a book of Hours "cased in a cover of solid silver gilt, wrought with quaint devices and studded with small brilliants and rubies," and close

by it “squats a little ugly monster, a Lar, perhaps, dug up in the sunny fields of corn-bearing Sicily.” Some dark antique bronzes contrast “with the pale gleam of two noble *Christi Crucifixi*, one carved in ivory, the other moulded in wax.” He has his trays of Tassie’s gems, his tiny Louis-Quatorze *bonbonnière* with a miniature by Petitot, his highly prized “brown-biscuit teapots, filagree-worked,” his citron morocco letter-case, and his “pomona-green” chair.

One can fancy him lying there in the midst of his books and casts and engravings; a true virtuoso, a subtle connoisseur, turning over his fine collection of Marc Antonios, and his Turner’s “*Liber Studiorum*,” of which he was a warm admirer, or examining with a magnifier some of his antique gems and cameos, “the head of Alexander on an onyx of two strata,” or that “superb *altissimo rilievo* on cornelian, Jupiter Ægiochus.” He was always a great amateur of engravings, and gives some very useful suggestions as to the best means of forming a collection. Indeed, while fully appreciating modern art, he never lost sight of the importance of reproductions of the great masterpieces of the past, and all that he says about the value of plaster casts is quite admirable.

As an art-critic he concerned himself primarily with the complex impressions produced by a work of art, and certainly the first step in æsthetic criticism is to realize one’s own impressions. He cared nothing for abstract discussions on the nature of the Beautiful, and the historical method, which has since yielded such rich fruit, did not belong to his day, but he never lost sight of the great truth that Art’s first appeal is neither to the intellect nor to the emotions, but purely to the artistic temperament, and he more than once points out that this temperament, this “taste,” as he calls it, being unconsciously guided and made perfect by frequent contact with the best work, becomes in the end a form of right judgment. Of course there are fashions in art just as there are fashions in dress, and perhaps none of us can ever quite free ourselves from the influence of custom and the influence of novelty. He certainly could not, and he frankly acknowledges how difficult it is to form any fair estimate of contemporary work. But, on the whole, his taste was good and sound. He admired Turner and Constable at a time when they were not so much thought of as they are now, and saw that for the highest landscape art we require more than “mere industry and accurate transcription.” Of Crome’s “Heath Scene near Norwich” he remarks that it shows “how much a subtle observation of the elements, in their wild moods, does for a most uninteresting flat,” and of the popular type of landscape of his day he says that is “simply an enumeration of hill and dale, stumps of trees, shrubs, water, meadows, cottages, and houses; little more than topography, a kind of pictorial map-work; in which rainbows,

showers, mists, haloes, large beams shooting through rifted clouds, storms, starlight, all the most valued materials of the real painter, are not." He had a thorough dislike of what is obvious or commonplace in art, and while he was charmed to entertain Wilkie at dinner, he cared as little for Sir David's pictures as he did for Mr. Crabbe's poems. With the initiative and realistic tendencies of his day he had no sympathy, and he tells us frankly that his great admiration for Fuseli was largely due to the fact that the little Swiss did not consider it necessary that an artist should only paint what he sees. The qualities that he sought for in a picture were composition, beauty and dignity of line, richness of colour, and imaginative power. Upon the other hand, he was not a doctrinaire. "I hold that no work of art can be tried otherwise than by laws deduced from itself: whether or not it be consistent with itself is the question." This is one of his excellent aphorisms. And in criticising painters so different as Landseer and Martin, Stothard and Etty, he shows that, to use a phrase now classical, he is trying "to see the object as in itself it really is."

However, as I pointed out before, he never feels quite at his ease in his criticisms of contemporary work. "The present," he says, "is about as agreeable a confusion to me as Ariosto on the first perusal. . . . Modern things dazzle me. I must look at them through Time's telescope. Elia complains that to him the merit of a MS. poem is uncertain; 'print,' as he excellently says, 'settles it.' Fifty years' toning does the same thing to a picture." He is happier when he is writing about Watteau and Lancret, about Rubens and Giorgione, about Rembrandt, Correggio and Michael Angelo; happiest of all when he is writing about Greek things. What is Gothic touched him very little, but classical art and the art of the Renaissance were always dear to him. He saw what our English school could gain from a study of Greek models, and never wearies of pointing out to the young student the artistic possibilities that lie dormant in Hellenic marbles and Hellenic methods of work. In his judgments on the great Italian Masters, says De Quincey, "there seemed a tone of sincerity and of native sensibility, as in one who spoke for himself, and was not merely a copier from books." The highest praise that we can give to him is that he tried to revive style as a conscious tradition. But he saw that no amount of art-lectures or art congresses, or "plans for advancing the fine arts," will ever produce this result. The people, he says very wisely, and in the true spirit of Toynbee Hall, must always have "the best models constantly before their eyes."

As is to be expected from one who was a painter, he is often extremely technical in his art criticisms. Of Tintoret's "St. George delivering the Egyptian Princess from the Dragon" he remarks:—

“The robe of Sabra, warmly glazed with Prussian blue, is relieved from the pale greenish background by a vermilion scarf; and the full hues of both are beautifully echoed, as it were, in a lower key by the purple-lake coloured stuffs and bluish iron armour of the saint, besides an ample balance to the vivid azure drapery on the foreground in the indigo shades of the wild wood surrounding the castle.”

And elsewhere he talks learnedly of “a delicate Schiavone, various as a tulip-bed, with rich broken tints,” of “a glowing portrait, remarkable for *morbidezza*, by the scarce Moroni,” and of another picture being “pulpy in the carnations.”

But, as a rule, he deals with his impressions of the work as an artistic whole, and tries to translate those impressions into words, to give, as it were, the literary equivalent for the imaginative and mental effect. He was one of the first to develop what has been called the art-literature of the nineteenth century, that form of literature which has found in Mr. Ruskin and Mr. Browning its two most perfect exponents. His description of Lancret’s *Repas Italien*, in which “a dark-haired girl, ‘amorous of mischief,’ lies on the daisy-powdered grass,” is in some respects very charming. Here is his account of “The Crucifixion,” by Rembrandt. It is extremely characteristic of his style:—

“Darkness—sooty, portentous darkness—shrouds the whole scene: only above the accursed wood, as if through a horrid rift in the murky ceiling, a rainy deluge—‘sleety-flaw, discoloured water’—streams down amain, spreading a grisly spectral light, even more horrible than that palpable night. Already the Earth pants thick and fast! the darkened Cross trembles! the winds are dropt—the air is stagnant—a muttering rumble growls underneath their feet, and some of that miserable crowd begin to fly down the hill. The horses snuff the coming terror, and become unmanageable through fear. The moment rapidly approaches when, nearly torn asunder by His own weight, fainting with loss of blood, which now runs in narrower rivulets from His slit veins, His temples and breast drowned in sweat, and His black tongue parched with the fiery death-fever, Jesus cries, ‘I thirst.’ The deadly vinegar is elevated to Him.

“His head sinks, and the sacred corpse ‘swings senseless of the cross.’ A sheet of vermilion flame shoots sheer through the air and vanishes; the rocks of Carmel and Lebanon cleave asunder; the sea

rolls on high from the sands its black weltering waves. Earth yawns, and the graves give up their dwellers. The dead and the living are mingled together in unnatural conjunction and hurry through the holy city. New prodigies await them there. The veil of the temple—the unpierceable veil—is rent asunder from top to bottom, and that dreaded recess containing the Hebrew mysteries—the fatal ark with the tables and seven-branched candelabrum—is disclosed by the light of unearthly flames to the God-deserted multitude.

“Rembrandt never *painted* this sketch, and he was quite right. It would have lost nearly all its charms in losing that perplexing veil of indistinctness which affords such ample range wherein the doubting imagination may speculate. At present it is like a thing in another world. A dark gulf is betwixt us. It is not tangible by the body. We can only approach it in the spirit.”

In this passage, written, the author tells us, “in awe and reverence,” there is much that is terrible, and very much that is quite horrible, but it is not without a certain crude form of power, or, at any rate, a certain crude violence of words, a quality which this age should highly appreciate, as it is its chief defect. It is pleasanter, however, to pass to this description of Giulio Romano’s “Cephalus and Procris”:—

“We should read Moschus’s lament for Bion, the sweet shepherd, before looking at this picture, or study the picture as a preparation for the lament. We have nearly the same images in both. For either victim the high groves and forest dells murmur; the flowers exhale sad perfume from their buds; the nightingale mourns on the craggy lands, and the swallow in the long-winding vales; ‘the satyrs, too, and fauns dark-veiled groan,’ and the fountain nymphs within the wood melt into tearful waters. The sheep and goats leave their pasture, and oreads, ‘who love to scale the most inaccessible tops of all uprightest rocks,’ hurry down from the song of their wind-courting pines; while the dryads bend from the branches of the meeting trees, and the rivers moan for white Procris, ‘with many-sobbing streams,’

“Filling the far-seen ocean with a voice.”

The golden bees are silent on the thymy Hymettus; and the knelling horn of Aurora’s love no more shall scatter away the cold

twilight on the top of Hymettus. The foreground of our subject is a grassy sunburnt bank, broken into swells and hollows like waves (a sort of land-breakers), rendered more uneven by many foot-tripping roots and stumps of trees stocked untimely by the axe, which are again throwing out light green shoots. This bank rises rather suddenly on the right to a clustering grove, penetrable to no star, at the entrance of which sits the stunned Thessalian king, holding between his knees that ivory-bright body which was, but an instant ago, parting the rough boughs with her smooth forehead, and treading alike on thorns and flowers with jealousy-stung foot—now helpless, heavy, void of all motion, save when the breeze lifts her thick hair in mockery.

“From between the closely-neighbour'd boles astonished nymphs press forward with loud cries—

“And deerskin-vested satyrs, crowned with ivy twists, advance;
And put strange pity in their horned countenance.”

“Lælaps lies beneath, and shows by his panting the rapid pace of death. On the other side of the group, Virtuous Love with ‘vans dejected’ holds forth the arrow to an approaching troop of sylvan people, fauns, rams, goats, satyrs, and satyr-mothers, pressing their children tighter with their fearful hands, who hurry along from the left in a sunken path between the foreground and a rocky wall, on whose lowest ridge a brook-guardian pours from her urn her grief-telling waters. Above and more remote than the Ephidryad, another female, rending her locks, appears among the vine-festooned pillars of an unshorn grove. The centre of the picture is filled by shady meadows, sinking down to a river-mouth; beyond is ‘the vast strength of the ocean stream,’ from whose floor the extinguisher of stars, rosy Aurora, drives furiously up her brine-washed steeds to behold the death-pangs of her rival.”

Were this description carefully rewritten, it would be quite admirable. The conception of making a prose-poem out of paint is excellent. Much of the best modern literature springs from the same aim. In a very ugly and sensible age, the arts borrow, not from life, but from each other.

His sympathies, too, were wonderfully varied. In everything connected with the stage, for instance, he was always extremely interested, and strongly upheld the necessity for archæological accuracy in costume and

scene-painting. "In art," he says in one of his essays, "whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well"; and he points out that once we allow the intrusion of anachronisms, it becomes difficult to say where the line is to be drawn. In literature, again, like Lord Beaconsfield on a famous occasion, he was "on the side of the angels." He was one of the first to admire Keats and Shelley—"the tremulously-sensitive and poetical Shelley," as he calls him. His admiration for Wordsworth was sincere and profound. He thoroughly appreciated William Blake. One of the best copies of the "Songs of Innocence and Experience" that is now in existence was wrought specially for him. He loved Alain Chartier, and Ronsard, and the Elizabethan dramatists, and Chaucer and Chapman, and Petrarch. And to him all the arts were one. "Our critics," he remarks with much wisdom, "seem hardly aware of the identity of the primal seeds of poetry and painting, nor that any true advancement in the serious study of one art cogenerates a proportionate perfection in the other"; and he says elsewhere that if a man who does not admire Michael Angelo talks of his love for Milton, he is deceiving either himself or his listeners. To his fellow-contributors in the *London Magazine* he was always most generous, and praises Barry Cornwall, Allan Cunningham, Hazlitt, Elton and Leigh Hunt without anything of the malice of a friend. Some of his sketches of Charles Lamb are admirable in their way, and, with the art of the true comedian, borrow their style from their subject:—

"What can I say of thee more than all know? that thou hadst the gaiety of a boy with the knowledge of a man: as gentle a heart as ever sent tears to the eyes.

"How wittily would he mistake your meaning, and put in a conceit most seasonably out of season. His talk without affectation was compressed, like his beloved Elizabethans, even unto obscurity. Like grains of fine gold, his sentences would beat out into whole sheets. He had small mercy on spurious fame, and a caustic observation on the *fashion for men of genius* was a standing dish. Sir Thomas Browne was a 'bosom cronie' of his; so was Burton, and old Fuller. In his amorous vein he dallied with that peerless Duchess of many-folio odour; and with the heyday comedies of Beaumont and Fletcher he induced light dreams. He would deliver critical touches on these, like one inspired, but it was good to let him choose his own game; if another began even on the acknowledged pets he was liable to interrupt, or rather append, in a mode difficult to define whether as misapprehensive or mischievous. One night at C——'s, the above dramatic partners

were the temporary subject of chat. Mr. X. commended the passion and haughty style of a tragedy (I don't know which of them), but was instantly taken up by Elia, who told him '*That* was nothing; the lyrics were the high things—the lyrics!'

One side of his literary career deserves especial notice. Modern journalism may be said to owe almost as much to him as to any man of the early part of this century. He was the pioneer of Asiatic prose, and delighted in pictorial epithets and pompous exaggerations. To have a style so gorgeous that it conceals the subject is one of the highest achievements of an important and much-admired school of Fleet Street leader-writers, and this school *Janus Weathercock* may be said to have invented. He also saw that it was quite easy by continued reiteration to make the public interested in his own personality, and in his purely journalistic articles this extraordinary young man tells the world what he had for dinner, where he gets his clothes, what wines he likes, and in what state of health he is, just as if he were writing weekly notes for some popular newspaper of our own time. This being the least valuable side of his work, is the one that has had the most obvious influence. A publicist, nowadays, is a man who bores the community with the details of the illegalities of his private life.

Like most artificial people he had a great love of nature. "I hold three things in high estimation," he says somewhere: "to sit lazily on an eminence that commands a rich prospect; to be shadowed by thick trees while the sun shines around me; and to enjoy solitude with the consciousness of neighbourhood. The country gives them all to me." He writes about his wandering over fragrant furze and heath repeating Collin's "Ode to Evening," just to catch the fine quality of the moment; about smothering his face "in a watery bed of cowslips, wet with May dews"; and about the pleasure of seeing the sweet-breathed kine "pass slowly homeward through the twilight," and hearing "the distant clank of the sheep-bell." One phrase of his, "the polyanthus glowed in its cold bed of earth, like a solitary picture of Giorgione on a dark oaken panel," is curiously characteristic of his temperament, and this passage is rather pretty in its way—

"The short tender grass was covered with marguerites—'such that men called *daisies* in our town'—thick as stars on a summer's night. The harsh caw of the busy rooks came pleasantly mellowed from a high dusky grove of elms at some distance off, and at intervals was heard the voice of a boy scaring away the birds from the newly-sown seeds. The blue depths were the colour of the darkest ultramarine; not a cloud streaked the calm æther; only

round the horizon's edge streamed a light, warm film of misty vapour, against which the near village with its ancient stone church showed sharply out with blinding whiteness. I thought of Wordsworth's 'Lines written in March.' ”

However, we must not forget that the cultivated young man who penned these lines, and who was so susceptible to Wordsworthian influences, was also, as I said at the beginning of this memoir, one of the most subtle and secret poisoners of this or any age. How he first became fascinated by this strange sin he does not tell us, and the diary in which he carefully noted the results of his terrible experiments and the methods that he adopted, has unfortunately been lost to us. Even in later days, too, he was always reticent on the matter, and preferred to speak about “The Excursion,” and the “Poems founded on the Affections.” There is no doubt, however, that the poison that he used was strychnine. In one of the beautiful rings of which he was so proud, and which served to show off the fine modelling of his delicate ivory hands, he used to carry crystals of the Indian *nux vomica*, a poison, one of his biographers tells us, “nearly tasteless, difficult of discovery, and capable of almost infinite dilution.” His murders, says De Quincey, were more than were ever made known judicially. This is no doubt so, and some of them are worthy of mention. His first victim was his uncle, Mr. Thomas Griffiths. He poisoned him in 1829 to gain possession of Linden House, a place to which he had always been very much attached. In the August of the next year he poisoned Mrs. Abercrombie, his wife's mother, and in the following December he poisoned the lovely Helen Abercrombie, his sister-in-law. Why he murdered Mrs. Abercrombie is not ascertained. It may have been for a caprice, or to quicken some hideous sense of power that was in him, or because she suspected something, or for no reason. But the murder of Helen Abercrombie was carried out by himself and his wife for the sake of a sum of about £18,000 for which they had insured her life in various offices. The circumstances were as follows. On the 12th of December, he and his wife and child came up to London from Linden House, and took lodgings at No. 12, Conduit Street, Regent Street. With them were the two sisters, Helen and Madeleine Abercrombie. On the evening of the 14th they all went to the play, and at supper that night Helen sickened. The next day she was extremely ill, and Dr. Locock, of Hanover Square, was called in to attend her. She lived till Monday, the 20th, when, after the doctor's morning visit, Mr. and Mrs. Wainwright brought her some poisoned jelly, and then went out for a walk. When they returned Helen Abercrombie was dead. She was about twenty years of age, a tall graceful girl with fair hair. A very charming red-chalk drawing of her by her brother-

in-law is still in existence, and shows how much his style as an artist was influenced by Sir Thomas Lawrence, a painter for whose work he had always entertained a great admiration. De Quincey says that Mrs. Wainewright was not really privy to the murder. Let us hope that she was not. Sin should be solitary, and have no accomplices.

The insurance companies, suspecting the real facts of the case, declined to pay the policy on the technical ground of misrepresentation and want of interest, and, with curious courage, the poisoner entered an action in the Court of Chancery against the Imperial, it being agreed that one decision should govern all the cases. The trial, however, did not come on for five years, when, after one disagreement, a verdict was ultimately given in the companies' favour. The judge on the occasion was Lord Abinger. *Egomet Bonmot* was represented by Mr. Erle and Sir William Follet, and the Attorney-General and Sir Frederick Pollock appeared for the other side. The plaintiff, unfortunately, was unable to be present at either of the trials. The refusal of the companies to give him the £18,000 had placed him in a position of most painful pecuniary embarrassment. Indeed, a few months after the murder of Helen Abercrombie, he had been actually arrested for debt in the streets of London while he was serenading the pretty daughter of one of his friends. This difficulty was got over at the time, but shortly afterwards he thought it better to go abroad till he could come to some practical arrangement with his creditors. He accordingly went to Boulogne on a visit to the father of the young lady in question, and while he was there induced him to insure his life with the Pelican Company for £3000. As soon as the necessary formalities had been gone through and the policy executed, he dropped some crystals of strychnine into his coffee as they sat together one evening after dinner. He himself did not gain any monetary advantage by doing this. His aim was simply to revenge himself on the first office that had refused to pay him the price of his sin. His friend died the next day in his presence, and he left Boulogne at once for a sketching tour through the most picturesque parts of Brittany, and was for some time the guest of an old French gentleman, who had a beautiful country house at St. Omer. From this he moved to Paris, where he remained for several years, living in luxury, some say, while others talk of his "skulking with poison in his pockets, and being dreaded by all who knew him." In 1837 he returned to England privately. Some strange mad fascination brought him back. He followed a woman whom he loved.

It was the month of June, and he was staying at one of the hotels in Covent Garden. His sitting-room was on the ground floor, and he prudently kept the blinds down for fear of being seen. Thirteen years before, when he was making his fine collection of majolica and Marc Antonios, he had

forged the names of his trustees to a power of attorney, which enabled him to get possession of some of the money which he had inherited from his mother, and had brought into marriage settlement. He knew that this forgery had been discovered, and that by returning to England he was imperilling his life. Yet he returned. Should one wonder? It was said that the woman was very beautiful. Besides, she did not love him.

It was by a mere accident that he was discovered. A noise in the street attracted his attention, and, in his artistic interest in modern life, he pushed aside the blind for a moment. Some one outside called out "That's Wainewright, the Bank-forgery." It was Forrester, the Bow Street runner.

On the 5th of July he was brought up at the Old Bailey. The following report of the proceedings appeared in the *Times*:—

"Before Mr. Justice Vaughan and Mr. Baron Alderson, Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, aged forty-two, a man of gentlemanly appearance, wearing mustachios, was indicted for forging and uttering a certain power of attorney for £2259, with intent to defraud the Governor and Company of the Bank of England.

"There were five indictments against the prisoner, to all of which he pleaded not guilty, when he was arraigned before Mr. Serjeant Arabin in the course of the morning. On being brought before the judges, however, he begged to be allowed to withdraw the former plea, and then pleaded guilty to two of the indictments which were not of a capital nature.

"The counsel for the Bank having explained that there were three other indictments, but that the Bank did not desire to shed blood, the plea of guilty on the two minor charges was recorded, and the prisoner at the close of the session sentenced by the Recorder to transportation for life."

He was taken back to Newgate, preparatory to his removal to the colonies. In a fanciful passage in one of his early essays he had fancied himself "lying in Horsemonger Gaol under sentence of death" for having been unable to resist the temptation of stealing some Marc Antonios from the British Museum in order to complete his collection. The sentence now passed on him was to a man of his culture a form of death. He complained bitterly of it to his friends, and pointed out, with a good deal of reason, some people may fancy, that the money was practically his own, having come to him from his mother, and that the forgery, such as it was, had been committed thirteen years before, which, to use his own phrase, was at least a *circumstance attenuante*. The permanence of personality is a very subtle

metaphysical problem, and certainly the English law solves the question in an extremely rough-and-ready manner. There is, however, something dramatic in the fact that this heavy punishment was inflicted on him for what, if we remember his fatal influence on the prose of modern journalism, was certainly not the worst of all his sins.

While he was in gaol, Dickens, Macready, and Hablot Browne came across him by chance. They had been going over the prisons of London, searching for artistic effects, and in Newgate they suddenly caught sight of Wainwright. He met them with a defiant stare, Forster tells us, but Macready was "horrified to recognize a man familiarly known to him in former years, and at whose table he had dined."

Others had more curiosity, and his cell was for some time a kind of fashionable lounge. Many men of letters went down to visit their old literary comrade. But he was no longer the kind light-hearted Janus whom Charles Lamb admired. He seems to have grown quite cynical.

To the agent of an insurance company who was visiting him one afternoon, and thought he would improve the occasion by pointing out that, after all crime was a bad speculation, he replied: "Sir, you City men enter on your speculations and take the chances of them. Some of your speculations succeed, some fail. Mine happen to have failed, yours happen to have succeeded. That is the only difference, sir, between my visitor and me. But, sir, I will tell you one thing in which I have succeeded, to the last. I have been determined through life to hold the position of a gentleman. I have always done so. I do so still. It is the custom of this place that each of the inmates of a cell shall take his morning's turn of sweeping it out. I occupy a cell with a bricklayer and a sweep, but they never offer me the broom!" When a friend reproached him with the murder of Helen Abercrombie he shrugged his shoulders and said, "Yes; it was a dreadful thing to do, but she had very thick ankles."

From Newgate he was brought to the hulks at Portsmouth, and sent from there in the *Susan* to Van Diemen's Land along with three hundred other convicts. The voyage seems to have been most distasteful to him, and in a letter written to a friend he spoke bitterly about the ignominy of "the companion of poets and artists" being compelled to associate with "country bumpkins." The phrase that he applies to his companions need not surprise us. Crime in England is rarely the result of sin. It is nearly always the result of starvation. There was probably no one on board in whom he would have found a sympathetic listener, or even a psychologically interesting nature.

His love of art, however, never deserted him. At Hobart Town he started a studio, and returned to sketching and portrait-painting, and his conversation and manners seem not to have lost their charm. Nor did he give

up his habit of poisoning, and there are two cases on record in which he tried to make away with people who had offended him. But his hand seems to have lost its cunning. Both of his attempts were complete failures, and in 1844, being thoroughly dissatisfied with Tasmanian society, he presented a memorial to the governor of the settlement, Sir John Eardley Wilmot, praying for a ticket-of-leave. In it he speaks of himself as being “tormented by ideas struggling for outward form and realization, barred up from increase of knowledge, and deprived of the exercise of profitable or even of decorous speech.” His request, however, was refused, and the associate of Coleridge consoled himself by making those marvellous *Paradis Artificiels* whose secret is only known to the eaters of opium. In 1852 he died of apoplexy, his sole living companion being a cat, for which he had evinced an extraordinary affection.

His crimes seem to have had an important effect upon his art. They gave a strong personality to his style, a quality that his early work certainly lacked. In a note to the *Life of Dickens*, Forster mentions that in 1847 Lady Blessington received from her brother, Major Power, who held a military appointment at Hobart Town, an oil portrait of a young lady from his clever brush; and it is said that “he had contrived to put the expression of his own wickedness into the portrait of a nice, kind-hearted girl.” M. Zola, in one of his novels, tells us of a young man who, having committed a murder, takes to art, and paints greenish impressionist portraits of perfectly respectable people, all of which bear a curious resemblance to his victim. The development of Mr. Wainwright’s style seems to me far more subtle and suggestive. One can fancy an intense personality being created out of sin.

This strange and fascinating figure that for a few years dazzled literary London, and made so brilliant a *début* in life and letters, is undoubtedly a most interesting study. Mr. W. Carew Hazlitt, his latest biographer, to whom I am indebted for many of the facts contained in this memoir, and whose little book is, indeed, quite invaluable in its way, is of opinion that his love of art and nature was a mere pretence and assumption, and others have denied to him all literary power. This seems to me a shallow, or at least a mistaken, view. The fact of a man being a poisoner is nothing against his prose. The domestic virtues are not the true basis of art, though they may serve as an excellent advertisement for second-rate artists. It is possible that De Quincey exaggerated his critical powers, and I cannot help saying again that there is much in his published works that is too familiar, too common, too journalistic, in the bad sense of that bad word. Here and there he is distinctly vulgar in expression, and he is always lacking in the self-restraint of the true artist. But for some of his faults we must blame the time in which he lived, and, after all, prose that Charles Lamb thought “capital” has no

small historic interest. That he had a sincere love of art and nature seems to me quite certain. There is no essential incongruity between crime and culture. We cannot rewrite the whole of history for the purpose of gratifying our moral sense of what should be.

Of course, he is far too close to our own time for us to be able to form any purely artistic judgment about him. It is impossible not to feel a strong prejudice against a man who might have poisoned Lord Tennyson, or Mr. Gladstone, or the Master of Balliol. But had the man worn a costume and spoken a language different from our own, had he lived in imperial Rome, or at the time of the Italian Renaissance, or in Spain in the seventeenth century, or in any land or any century but this century and this land, we would be quite able to arrive at a perfectly unprejudiced estimate of his position and value. I know that there are many historians, or at least writers on historical subjects, who still think it necessary to apply moral judgments to history, and who distribute their praise or blame with the solemn complacency of a successful schoolmaster. This, however, is a foolish habit, and merely shows that the moral instinct can be brought to such a pitch of perfection that it will make its appearance wherever it is not required. Nobody with the true historical sense ever dreams of blaming Nero, or scolding Tiberius or censuring Cæsar Borgia. These personages have become like the puppets of a play. They may fill us with terror, or horror, or wonder, but they do not harm us. They are not in immediate relation to us. We have nothing to fear from them. They have passed into the sphere of art and science, and neither art nor science knows anything of moral approval or disapproval. And so it may be some day with Charles Lamb's friend. At present I feel that he is just a little too modern to be treated in that fine spirit of disinterested curiosity to which we owe so many charming studies of the great criminals of the Italian Renaissance from the pens of Mr. John Addington Symonds, Miss A. Mary F. Robinson, Miss Vernon Lee, and other distinguished writers. However, Art has not forgotten him. He is the hero of Dickens's *Hunted Down*, the Varney of Bulwer's *Lucretia*; and it is gratifying to note that fiction has paid some homage to one who was so powerful with "pen, pencil, and poison." To be suggestive for fiction is to be of more importance than a fact.

[1] Originally published under the title "Pen, Pencil and Poison."

XII

VAUTRIN THE TERRIBLE

Arch-Criminal

HONORÉ DE BALZAC^[1]

Mme. Vauquer (*née* de Conflans) is an elderly person, who for the past forty years has kept a lodging-house in the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève, in the district that lies between the Latin Quarter and the Faubourg Saint-Marcel. Her house (known in the neighbourhood as the *Maison Vauquer*) receives men and women, old and young, and no word has ever been breathed against her respectable establishment; but, at the same time, it must be said that as a matter of fact no young woman has been under her roof for thirty years, and that if a young man stays there for any length of time it is a sure sign that his allowance must be of the slenderest. In 1819, however, the time when this drama opens, there was an almost penniless young girl among Mme. Vauquer's boarders.

The best rooms in the house were on the first story, Mme. Vauquer herself occupying the least important, while the rest were let to a Mme. Couture, the widow of a commissary-general in the service of the Republic. With her lived Victorine Taillefer, a schoolgirl, to whom she filled the place of mother. These two ladies paid eighteen hundred francs a year.

The two sets of rooms on the second floor were respectively occupied by an old man named Poiret and a man of forty or thereabouts, the wearer of a black wig and dyed whiskers, who gave out that he was a retired merchant, and was addressed as M. Vautrin. Two of the four rooms on the third floor were also let—one to an elderly spinster, a Mlle. Michonneau, and the other to a retired manufacturer of vermicelli, Italian paste and starch, who allowed the others to address him as "Old Goriot." The remaining rooms were allotted to various birds of passage, to impecunious students, who, like "Old Goriot" and Mlle. Michonneau, could only muster forty-five francs a month to pay for their board and lodging. Mme. Vauquer had little desire for lodgers of this sort; they ate too much bread, and she only took them in default of better.

At that time one of the rooms was tenanted by a law student, a young man from the neighbourhood of Angoulême, one of a large family who pinched and starved themselves to spare twelve hundred francs a year for him. Misfortune had accustomed Eugène de Rastignac, for that was his name, to work. He belonged to the number of young men who know as children that their parents' hopes are centred on them, and deliberately prepare themselves for a great career, subordinating their studies from the first to this end, carefully watching the indications of the course of events, calculating the probable turn that affairs will take, that they may be the first to profit by them. But for his observant curiosity, and the skill with which he managed to introduce himself into the salons of Paris, this story would not have been coloured by the tones of truth which it certainly owes to him, for they are entirely due to his penetrating sagacity and desire to fathom the mysteries of an appalling condition of things, which was concealed as carefully by the victim as by those who had brought it to pass.

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Mlle. Michonneau, that elderly young lady, screened her weak eyes from the daylight by a soiled green silk shade with a rim of brass, an object fit to scare away the Angel of Pity himself. Her shawl, with its scanty, draggled fringe, might have covered a skeleton, so meagre and angular was the form beneath it. Yet she must have been pretty and shapely once. What corrosive had destroyed the feminine outlines? Was it trouble, or vice, or greed? Had she loved too well? Had she been a second-hand clothes dealer, a frequenter of the back-stairs of great houses, or had she been merely a courtesan? Was she expiating the flaunting triumphs of a youth overcrowded with pleasures by an old age in which she was shunned by every passer-by? Her vacant gaze sent a chill through you; her shrivelled face seemed like a menace. Her voice was like the shrill, thin note of the grasshopper sounding from the thicket when winter is at hand. She said that she had nursed an old gentleman, ill of catarrh of the bladder, and left to die by his children, who thought that he had nothing left. His bequest to her, a life annuity of a thousand francs, was periodically disputed by his heirs, who mingled slander with their persecutions. In spite of the ravages of conflicting passions, her face retained some traces of its former fairness and fineness of tissue, some vestiges of the physical charms of her youth still survived.

M. Poiret was a sort of automaton. He might be seen any day sailing like a grey shadow along the walks of the Jardin des Plantes, on his head a shabby cap, a cane with an old yellow ivory handle in the tips of his thin fingers; the outspread skirts of his threadbare overcoat failed to conceal his

meagre figure; his breeches hung loosely on his shrunken limbs; the thin, blue-stockinged legs trembled like those of a drunken man; there was a notable breach of continuity between the dingy white waistcoat and crumpled shirt frills and the cravat twisted about a throat like a turkey gobbler's; altogether, his appearance set people wondering whether this outlandish ghost belonged to the audacious race of the sons of Japhet who flutter about on the Boulevard Italien.

Two, however, of Mme. Vauquer's boarders formed a striking contrast to the rest. There was a sickly pallor, such as is often seen in anæmic girls, in Mlle. Victorine Taillefer's face; and her unvarying expression of sadness, like her embarrassed manner and pinched look, was in keeping with the general wretchedness of the establishment in the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève, which forms a background to this picture; but her face was young, there was youthfulness in her voice and elasticity in her movements. This young misfortune was not unlike a shrub, newly planted in an uncongenial soil, where its leaves have already begun to wither. The outlines of her figure, revealed by her dress of the simplest and cheapest materials, were also youthful. There was the same kind of charm about her too slender form, her faintly coloured face and light-brown hair, that modern poets find in the mediæval statuettes; and a sweet expression, a look of Christian resignation in the dark grey eyes. She was pretty by force of contrast; if she had been happy, she would have been charming.

A book might have been made of her story. Her father was persuaded that he had sufficient reason for declining to acknowledge her, and allowed her a bare six hundred francs a year; he had further taken measures to disinherit his daughter, and had converted all his real estate into personalty, that he might leave it undivided to his son. Victorine's mother had died broken-hearted in Mme. Couture's house; and the latter, who was a near relation, had taken charge of the little orphan. Unluckily, the widow of the commissary-general to the armies of the Republic had nothing in the world but her jointure and her widow's pension, and some day she might be obliged to leave the helpless, inexperienced girl to the mercy of the world. The good soul, therefore, took Victorine to mass every Sunday, and to confession once a fortnight, thinking that, in any case, she would bring up her ward to be devout. She was right; religion offered a solution of the problem of the young girl's future. The poor child loved the father who refused to acknowledge her. Once every year she tried to see him to deliver her mother's message of forgiveness, but every year hitherto she had knocked at that door in vain; her father was inexorable. Her brother, her only means of communication, had not come to see her for four years, and had sent her no assistance; yet she prayed to God to unseal her father's eyes and

to soften her brother's heart, and no accusations mingled with her prayers. Mme. Couture and Mme. Vauquer exhausted the vocabulary of abuse, and failed to find words that did justice to the banker's iniquitous conduct; but while they heaped execrations on the millionaire, Victorine's words were as gentle as the moan of the wounded dove, and affection found expression even in the cry drawn from her by pain.

Eugène de Rastignac was a thoroughly southern type; he had a fair complexion, blue eyes, black hair. In his figure, manner, and his whole bearing it was easy to see that he either came of a noble family, or that, from his earliest childhood, he had been gently bred. If he was careful of his wardrobe, only taking last year's clothes into daily wear, still upon occasion he could issue forth as a young man of fashion. Ordinarily he wore a shabby coat and waistcoat, the limp black cravat, untidily knotted, that students affect, trousers that matched the rest of his costume, and boots that had been re-soled.

Vautrin (the man of forty with the dyed whiskers) marked a transition stage between these two young people and the others. He was the kind of man that calls forth the remark: "He looks a jovial sort!" He had broad shoulders, a well-developed chest, muscular arms, and strong square-fisted hands; the joints of his fingers were covered with tufts of fiery red hair. His face was furrowed by premature wrinkles; there was a certain hardness about it in spite of his bland and insinuating manner. His bass voice was by no means unpleasant, and was in keeping with his boisterous laughter. He was always obliging, always in good spirits; if anything went wrong with one of the locks, he would soon unscrew it, take it to pieces, file it, oil and clean and set it in order and put it back in its place again: "I am an old hand at it," he used to say. Not only so, he knew all about ships, the sea, France, foreign countries, men, business, law, great houses and prisons,—there was nothing that he did not know. If anyone complained rather more than usual, he would offer his services at once. He had several times lent money to Mme. Vauquer, or to the boarders; but, somehow, those whom he obliged felt that they would sooner face death than fail to repay him; a certain resolute look, sometimes seen on his face, inspired fear of him, for all his appearance of easy good-nature. In the way he spat there was an imperturbable coolness which seemed to indicate that this was a man who would not stick at a crime to extricate himself from a false position. His eyes, like those of a pitiless judge, seemed to go to the very bottom of all questions, to read all natures, all feelings, and thoughts. His habit of life was very regular; he usually went out after breakfast, returning in time for dinner, and disappeared for the rest of the evening, letting himself in about midnight with a latch-key, a privilege that Mme. Vauquer accorded to no

other boarder. But then he was on very good terms with the widow; he used to call her "mama," and put his arm round her waist, a piece of flattery perhaps not appreciated to the full! The worthy woman might imagine this to be an easy feat; but, as a matter of fact, no arm but Vautrin's was long enough to encircle her.

It was a characteristic trait of his generously to pay fifteen francs a month for the cup of coffee with a dash of brandy in it, which he took after dinner. Less superficial observers than young men engulfed by the whirlpool of Parisian life, or old men, who took no interest in anything that did not directly concern them, would not have stopped short at the vaguely unsatisfactory impression that Vautrin made upon them. He knew or guessed the concerns of every one about him; but none of them had been able to penetrate his thoughts, or to discover his occupation. He had deliberately made his apparent good-nature, his unfailing readiness to oblige, and his high spirits into a barrier between himself and the rest of them, but not seldom he gave glimpses of appalling depths of character. He seemed to delight in scourging the upper classes of society with the lash of his tongue, to take pleasure in convicting it of inconsistency, in mocking at law and order with some grim jest worthy of Juvenal, as if some grudge against the social system rankled in him, as if there were some mystery carefully hidden away in his life.

Mlle. Victorine Taillefer felt attracted, perhaps unconsciously, by the strength of the one man, and the good looks of the other; her stolen glances and secret thoughts were divided between them; but neither of them seemed to take any notice of her, although some day a chance might alter her position, and she would be a wealthy heiress. For that matter, there was not a soul in the house who took any trouble to investigate the various chronicles of misfortunes, real or imaginary, related by the rest. Each one regarded the others with indifference, tempered by suspicion; it was a natural result of their relative positions.

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It was five o'clock, and Eugène de Rastignac was hungry; he was afraid lest he should not be in time for dinner, a misgiving which made him feel that it was pleasant to be borne so quickly across Paris. This sensation of physical comfort left his mind free to grapple with the thoughts that assailed him. A mortification usually sends a young man of his age into a furious rage; he shakes his fists at society, and vows vengeance when his belief in himself is shaken. Just then Rastignac was overwhelmed by the words, "You have shut the Countess's door against you."

“I shall call!” he said to himself, “and if Mme. de Beauséant is right, if I never find her at home—I . . . well, Mme. de Restaud shall meet me in every salon in Paris. I will learn to fence, and have some pistol-practice, and kill that Maxime of hers!”

“And money?” cried an inward monitor. “How about money, where is that to come from?” And all at once the wealth displayed in the Comtesse de Restaud’s drawing-room rose before his eyes. That was the luxury which Goriot’s daughter had loved too well; the gilding, the ostentatious splendour, the unintelligent luxury of the parvenu, the riotous extravagance of a courtesan. Then the attractive vision suddenly went under an eclipse as he remembered the stately grandeur of the Hôtel de Beauséant. As his fancy wandered among these lofty regions in the great world of Paris, innumerable dark thoughts gathered in his heart; his ideas widened, and his conscience grew more elastic. He saw the world as it is; saw how the rich lived beyond the jurisdiction of law and public opinion, and found in success the *ultima ratio mundi*.

“Vautrin is right, success is virtue!” he said to himself.

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“You are very dull, my lord Marquis,” said Vautrin, at dinner, with one of the shrewd glances that seem to read the innermost secrets of another mind.

“I am not in the humour to stand jokes from people who call me ‘my lord Marquis,’ ” answered Eugène. “A marquis here in Paris, if he is not the veriest sham, ought to have a hundred thousand livres a year at least; and a lodger in the Maison Vauquer is not exactly Fortune’s favourite.”

Vautrin’s glance at Rastignac was half-paternal, half-contemptuous. “Puppy!” it seemed to say; “I should make one mouthful of him!” Then he answered—

“You are in a bad humour; perhaps your visit to the beautiful Comtesse de Restaud was not a success.”

“She has shut her door against me because I told her that her father dined at our table,” cried Rastignac.

Glances were exchanged all round the room; old Goriot looked down.

“You have sent some snuff into my eye,” he said to his neighbour, turning a little aside to rub his hand over his face.

“Any one who molests Father Goriot will have henceforward to reckon with me,” said Eugène, looking at the old man’s neighbour; “he is worth all the rest of us put together.—I am not speaking of the ladies,” he added, turning in the direction of Mlle. Taillefer.

Eugène's remarks produced a sensation, and his tone silenced the dinner-table. Vautrin alone spoke. "If you are going to champion Father Goriot, and set up for his responsible editor into the bargain, you had need be a crack shot and know how to handle the foils," he said banteringly.

"So I intend," said Eugène.

"Then are you taking the field to-day?"

"Perhaps," Rastignac answered. "But I owe no account of myself to any one, especially as I do not try to find out what other people do of a night."

Vautrin looked askance at Rastignac.

"If you do not mean to be deceived by the puppets, my boy, you must go behind and see the whole show, and not peep through holes in the curtain. That is enough," he added, seeing that Eugène was about to fly into a passion. "We can have a little talk whenever you like."

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In the past month Eugène's good qualities and defects had rapidly developed with his character. Intercourse with the world and the endeavour to satisfy his growing desires had brought out his defects. But Rastignac came from the south side of the Loire, and had the good qualities of his countrymen. He had the impetuous courage of the South, that rushes to the attack of a difficulty, as well as the Southern impatience of delay or suspense. These traits are held to be defects in the North; they made the fortune of Murat, but they likewise cut short his career. The moral would appear to be that when the dash and boldness of the south side of the Loire meets, in a Southern temperament, with the guile of the North, the character is complete, and such a man will gain (and keep) the crown of Sweden.

Rastignac, therefore, could not stand the fire from Vautrin's batteries for long without discovering whether this was a friend or a foe. He felt as if this strange being was reading his inmost soul, and dissecting his feelings, while Vautrin himself was so close and secretive that he seemed to have something of the profound and unmoved serenity of a sphinx, seeing and hearing all things and saying nothing. Eugène, conscious of much money in his pocket, grew rebellious.

"Be so good as to wait a moment," he said to Vautrin, as the latter rose, after slowly emptying his coffee-cup, sip by sip.

"What for?" inquired the older man, as he put on his large-brimmed hat and took up the sword-cane that he was wont to twirl like a man who will face three or four footpads without flinching.

"I will repay you in a minute," returned Eugène. He unsealed one of the bags as he spoke, counted out a hundred and forty francs, and pushed them

towards Mme. Vauquer. "Short reckonings make good friends," he added, turning to the widow; "that clears our accounts till the end of the year. Can you give me change for a five-franc piece?"

"Good friends make short reckonings," echoed Poiret, with a glance at Vautrin.

"Here is your franc," said Rastignac, holding out the coin to the sphinx in the black wig.

"Any one might think that you were afraid to owe me a trifle," exclaimed this latter, with a searching glance that seemed to read the young man's inmost thoughts; there was a satirical and cynical smile on Vautrin's face such as Eugène had seen scores of times already; every time he saw it, it exasperated him almost beyond endurance.

"Well . . . so I am," he answered. He held both the bags in his hand, and had risen to go up to his room.

Vautrin made as if he were going out through the sitting-room, and the student turned to go through the second door that opened into the square lobby at the foot of the staircase.

"Do you know, Monsieur le Marquis de Rastignacorama, that what you were saying just now was not exactly polite?" Vautrin remarked, as he rattled his sword-cane across the panels of the sitting-room door, and came up to the student.

Rastignac looked coolly at Vautrin, drew him to the foot of the staircase, and shut the dining-room door. They were standing in the little square lobby between the kitchen and the dining-room; the place was lighted by an iron-barred fanlight above a door that gave access into the garden. Sylvie came out of her kitchen, and Eugène chose that moment to say—

"*Monsieur* Vautrin, I am not a marquis, and my name is not Rastignacorama."

"They will fight," said Mlle. Michonneau, in an indifferent tone.

"Fight!" echoed Poiret.

"Not they," replied Mme. Vauquer, lovingly fingering her pile of coins.

"But there they are under the lime-trees," cried Mlle. Victorine, who had risen so that she might see out into the garden. "Poor young man! he was in the right, after all."

"We must go upstairs, my pet," said Mme. Couture; "it is no business of ours."

At the door, however, Mme. Couture and Victorine found their progress barred by the portly form of Sylvie the cook.

"What ever can have happened?" she said. "M. Vautrin said to M. Eugène, 'Let us have an explanation!' then he took him by the arm, and there they are, out among the artichokes."

Vautrin came in while she was speaking. "Mama Vauquer," he said, smiling, "don't frighten yourself at all. I am only going to try my pistols under the lime-trees."

"Oh! monsieur," cried Victorine, clasping her hands as she spoke, "why do you want to kill M. Eugène?"

Vautrin stepped back a pace or two, and gazed at Victorine.

"Oh! this is something fresh!" he exclaimed in a bantering tone, that brought the colour into the poor girl's face. "That young fellow yonder is very nice, isn't he?" he went on. "You have given me a notion, my pretty child; I will make you both happy."

Mme. Couture laid her hand on the arm of her ward, and drew the girl away, as she said in her ear—

"Why, Victorine, I cannot imagine what has come over you this morning."

"I don't want any shots fired in my garden," said Mme. Vauquer. "You will frighten the neighbourhood and bring the police up here all in a moment."

"Come, keep cool, Mama Vauquer," answered Vautrin. "There, there; it's all right; we will go to the shooting-gallery."

He went back to Rastignac, laying his hand familiarly on the young man's arm.

"When I have given you ocular demonstration of the fact that I can put a bullet through the ace on a card five times running at thirty-five paces," he said, "that won't take away your appetite, I suppose? You look to me to be inclined to be a trifle quarrelsome this morning, and as if you would rush on your death like a blockhead."

"Do you draw back?" asked Eugène.

"Don't try to raise my temperature," answered Vautrin; "it is not cold this morning. Let us go and sit over there," he added, pointing to the green-painted garden seats; "no one can overhear us. I want a little talk with you. You are not a bad sort of youngster, and I have no quarrel with you. I like you, take Tromp—(confound it!)—take Vautrin's word for it. What makes me like you? I will tell you by and by. Meantime, I can tell you that I know you as well as if I had made you myself, as I will prove to you in a minute. Put down your bags," he continued, pointing to the round table.

Rastignac deposited his money on the table, and sat down. He was consumed with curiosity, which the sudden change in the manner of the man before him had excited to the highest pitch. Here was a strange being who, a moment ago, had talked of killing him, and now posed as his protector.

"You would like to know who I really am, what I was, and what I do now," Vautrin went on. "You want to know too much, youngster. Come!

come! keep cool! You will hear more astonishing things than that. I have had my misfortunes. Just hear me out first, and you shall have your turn afterwards. Here is my past in three words. Who am I? Vautrin. What do I do? Just what I please. Let us change the subject. You want to know my character. I am good-natured to those who do me a good turn, or to those whose hearts speak to mine. These last may do anything they like with me; they may bruise my shins, and I shall not tell them to ‘mind what they are about’; but, *nom d’une pipe*, the devil himself is not an uglier customer than I can be if people annoy me, or if I don’t happen to take to them; and you may just as well know at once that I think no more of killing a man than of that,” and he spat before him as he spoke. “Only when it is absolutely necessary to do so, I do my best to kill him properly. I am what you call an artist. I have read Benvenuto Cellini’s *Memoirs*, such as you see me; and, what is more, in Italian! A fine-spirited fellow he was! From him I learned to follow the example set us by Providence, who strikes us down at random, and to admire the beautiful whenever and wherever it is found. And, setting other questions aside, is it not a glorious part to play, when you pit yourself against mankind, and the luck is on your side? I have thought a good deal about the constitution of your present social Dis-order. A duel is downright childish, my boy! utter nonsense and folly! When one of two living men must be got out of the way, none but an idiot would leave chance to decide which it is to be; and in a duel it is a toss-up—heads or tails—and there you are! Now I, for instance, can hit the ace in the middle of a card five times running, send one bullet after another through the same hole, and at thirty-five paces, moreover! With that little accomplishment you might think yourself certain of killing your man, mightn’t you? Well, I have fired, at twenty paces, and missed, and the rogue who had never handled a pistol in his life—look here!”—(he unbuttoned his waistcoat and exposed his chest, covered like a bear’s back, with a shaggy fell; the student gave a startled shudder)—“he was a raw lad, but he made his mark on me,” the extraordinary man went on, drawing Rastignac’s fingers over a deep scar on his breast. “But that happened when I myself was a mere boy; I was one-and-twenty then (your age), and I had some beliefs left—in a woman’s love, and in a pack of rubbish that you will be over head and ears in directly. You and I were to have fought just now, weren’t we? You might have killed me. Suppose that I were put under the earth, where would you be? You would have to clear out of this, go to Switzerland, draw on papa’s purse—and he has none too much in it as it is. I mean to open your eyes to your real position, that is what I am going to do; but I shall do it from the point of view of a man who, after studying the world very closely, sees that there are but two alternatives—stupid obedience or revolt. I obey nobody; is that

clear? Now, do you know how much you will want at the pace you are going? A million; and promptly, too, or that little head of ours will be swaying to and fro in the drag-nets at Saint-Cloud, while we are gone to find out whether or no there is a Supreme Being. I will put you in the way of that million."

He stopped for a moment and looked at Eugène.

"Aha! you do not look so sourly at papa Vautrin now! At the mention of the million you look like a young girl when somebody has said, "I will come for you this evening!" and she betakes herself to her toilet as a cat licks its whiskers over a saucer of milk. All right. Come, now, let us go into the question, young man; all between ourselves, you know. We have a papa and mamma down yonder, a great-aunt, two sisters (aged eighteen and seventeen), two young brothers (one fifteen, and the other ten), that is about the roll-call of the crew. The aunt brings up the two sisters; the curé comes and teaches the boys Latin. Boiled chestnuts are oftener on the table than white bread. Papa makes a suit of clothes last a long while; if mamma has a different dress winter and summer, it is about as much as she has; the sisters manage as best they can. I know all about it; I have lived in the South.

"That is how things are at home. They send you twelve hundred francs a year, and the whole property only brings in three thousand francs all told. We have a cook and a man-servant; papa is a baron, and we must keep up appearances. Then we have our ambitions; we are connected with the Beauséants, and we go afoot through the streets; we want to be rich, and we have not a penny; we eat Mme. Vauquer's messes, and we like grand dinners in the Faubourg Saint-Germain; we sleep on a truckle-bed, and dream of a mansion! I do not blame you for wanting these things. It is not given to every one to have ambition, my little trump. What sort of men do the women run after? Men of ambition. Men of ambition have stronger frames, their blood is richer in iron, their hearts are warmer than those of ordinary men. Women feel that when their power is greatest they look their best, and that those are their happiest hours; they like power in men, and prefer the strongest even if it is a power that may be their own destruction. I am going to make an inventory of your desires in order to put the question at issue before you. Here it is—

"We are as hungry as a wolf, and those newly-cut teeth of ours are sharp; what are we to do to keep the pot boiling? In the first place, we have the Code to browse upon; it is not amusing, and we are none the wiser for it, but that cannot be helped. So far so good. We mean to make an advocate of ourselves with a prospect of one day being made President of a Court of Assize, when we shall send poor devils, our betters, to the galleys with a T.

F.^[2] on their shoulders, so that the rich may be convinced that they can sleep in peace. There is no fun in that; and you are a long while coming to it; for, to begin with, there are two years of nauseous drudgery in Paris, we see all the lollipops that we long for out of our reach. It is tiresome to want things and never to have them. If you were a pallid creature of the mollusk order, you would have nothing to fear, but it is different when you have the hot blood of a lion and are ready to get into a score of scrapes every day of your life. This is the ghastliest form of torture known in this inferno of God's making, and you will give in to it. Or suppose that you are a good boy, drink nothing stronger than milk, and bemoan your hard lot; you, with your generous nature, will endure hardships that would drive a dog mad, and make a start, after long waiting, as deputy to some rascal or other in a hole of a place where the Government will fling you a thousand francs a year like the scraps that are thrown to the butcher's dog. Bark at thieves, plead the cause of the rich, send men of heart to the guillotine, that is your work! Many thanks! If you have no influence, you may rot in your provincial tribunal. At thirty you will be a Justice with twelve hundred francs a year (if you have not flung off the gown for good before then). By the time you are forty you may look to marry a miller's daughter, an heiress with some six thousand livres a year. Much obliged! If you have influence, you may possibly be Public Prosecutor by the time you are thirty; with a salary of a thousand crowns, you could look to marry the mayor's daughter. Some petty piece of political trickery, such as mistaking Villèle for Manuel in a bulletin (the names rhyme, and that quiets your conscience), and you will probably be Procureur Général by the time you are forty, with a chance of becoming a deputy. Please to observe, my dear boy, that our conscience will have been a little damaged in the process, and that we shall endure twenty years of drudgery and hidden poverty, and that our sisters are wearing Dian's livery. I have the honour to call your attention to another fact: to wit, that there are but twenty Procureurs Généraux at a time in all France, while there are some twenty thousand of you young men who aspire to that elevated position; that there are some mountebanks among you who would sell their family to screw their fortunes a peg higher. If this sort of thing sickens you, try another course. The Baron de Rastignac thinks of becoming an advocate, does he? There's a nice prospect for you! Ten years of drudgery straight away. You are obliged to live at the rate of a thousand francs a month; you must have a library of law-books, live in chambers, go into society, go down on your knees to ask a solicitor for briefs, lick the dust off the floor of the Palais de Justice. If this kind of business led to anything, I should not say no; but just give me the names of five advocates here in Paris who by the

time that they are fifty are making fifty thousand francs a year! Bah! I would sooner turn pirate on the high seas than have my soul shrivel up inside me like that. How will you find the capital? There is but one way, marry a woman who has money. There is no fun in it. Have you a mind to marry? You hang a stone round your neck; for if you marry money, what becomes of our exalted notions of honour and so forth. You might as well fly in the face of social conventions at once. Is it nothing to crawl like a serpent before your wife, to lick her mother's feet, to descend to dirty actions that would sicken swine—faugh!—never mind, if you at least make your fortune. But you will be as doleful as a drip-stone if you marry for money. It is better to wrestle with men than to wrangle at home with your wife. You are at the crossway of the roads of life, my boy; choose your way.

“But you have chosen already. You have gone to see your cousin of Beauséant and you have had an inkling of luxury; you have been to Mme. de Restaud's house, and in Father Goriot's daughter you have seen a glimpse of the Parisienne for the first time. That day you came back with a word written upon your forehead. I knew it, I could read it—*Success!* Yes, success at any price. ‘Bravo,’ said I to myself, ‘here is the sort of fellow for me.’ You wanted money. Where was it to come from? You have drained your sisters' little hoards (all brothers sponge more or less on their sisters). Those fifteen hundred francs of yours (got together, God knows how! in a country where there are more chestnuts than five-franc pieces) will slip away like soldiers after pillage. And, then, what will you do? Shall you begin to work? Work, or what you understand by work at this moment, means, for a man of Poiret's calibre, an old age in Mama Vauquer's lodging-house. There are fifty thousand young men in your position at this moment, all bent as you are on solving one and the same problem—how to acquire a fortune rapidly. You are but a unit in that aggregate. You can guess, therefore, what efforts you must make, how desperate the struggle is. There are not fifty thousand good positions for you; you must fight and devour one another like spiders in a pot. Do you know how a man makes his way here? By brilliant genius or by skilful corruption. You must either cut your way through these masses of men like a cannon-ball, or steal among them like a plague. Honesty is nothing to the purpose. Men bow before the power of genius; they hate it, and try to slander it, because genius does not divide the spoil; but if genius persists, they bow before it. To sum it all up in a phrase, if they fail to smother genius in the mud, they fall on their knees and worship it. Corruption is a great power in the world, and talent is scarce. So corruption is the weapon of superfluous mediocrity; you will be made to feel the point of it everywhere. You will see women who spend more than ten thousand francs a year on dress, while their husband's salary (his whole income) is six

thousand francs. You will see officials buying estates on twelve hundred francs a year. You will see women who sell themselves body and soul to drive in a carriage belonging to the son of a peer of France, who has a right to drive in the middle rank at Longchamps. You have seen that poor simpleton of a Goriot obliged to meet a bill with his daughter's name at the back of it, though her husband has fifty thousand francs a year. I defy you to walk a couple of yards anywhere in Paris without stumbling on some infernal complication. I'll bet my head to a head of that salad that you will stir up a hornet's nest by taking a fancy to the first young, rich, and pretty woman you meet. They are all dodging the law, all at loggerheads with their husbands. If I were to begin to tell you all that vanity or necessity (virtue is not often mixed up in it, you may be sure), all that vanity and necessity drive them to do for lovers, finery, housekeeping, or children, I should never come to an end. So an honest man is the common enemy.

"But do you know what an honest man is? Here, in Paris, an honest man is the man who keeps his own counsel, and will not divide the plunder. I am not speaking now of those poor bond-slaves who do the work of the world without a reward for their toil—God Almighty's outcasts, I call them. Among them, I grant you, is virtue in all the flower of its stupidity, but poverty is no less their portion. At this moment, I think I see the long faces those good folk would pull if God played a practical joke on them and stayed away at the Last Judgment.

"If you mean to make a fortune quickly, you must be rich to begin with, or make people believe that you are rich. It is no use playing here except for high stakes; once take to low play, it is all up with you. If in the scores of professions that are open to you, there are ten men who rise very rapidly, people are sure to call them thieves. You can draw your own conclusions. Such is life. It is no cleaner than a kitchen; it reeks like a kitchen; and if you mean to cook your dinner, you must expect to soil your hands; the real art is in getting them clean again, and therein lies the whole morality of our epoch. If I take this tone in speaking of the world to you, I have the right to do so; I know it well. Do you think that I am blaming it? Far from it; the world has always been as it is now. Moralists' strictures will never change it. Mankind are not perfect, but one age is more or less hypocritical than another, and then simpletons say that its morality is high or low. I do not think that the rich are any worse than the poor; man is much the same, high or low, or wherever he is. In a million of these human cattle there may be half a score of bold spirits who rise above the rest, above the laws; I am one of them. And you, if you are cleverer than your fellows, make straight to your end, and hold your head high. But you must lay your account with envy and slander and mediocrity, and every man's hand will be against you.

Napoleon met with a Minister of War, Aubry by name, who all but sent him to the colonies.

“Feel your pulse. Think whether you can get up morning after morning, strengthened in yesterday’s purpose. In that case I will make you an offer that no one would decline. Listen attentively. You see, I have an idea of my own. My idea is to live a patriarchal life on a vast estate, say a hundred thousand acres, somewhere in the Southern States of America. I mean to be a planter, to have slaves, to make a few snug millions by selling my cattle, timber, and tobacco; I want to live an absolute monarch, and to do just as I please; to lead such a life as no one here in these squalid dens of lath and plaster ever imagines. I am a great poet; I do not write my poems, I feel them, and act them.

“At this moment I have fifty thousand francs, which might possibly buy forty negroes. I want two hundred thousand francs, because I want to have two hundred negroes to carry out my notions of the patriarchal life properly. Negroes, you see, are like a sort of family ready grown, and there are no inquisitive public prosecutors out there to interfere with you. That investment in ebony ought to mean three or four million francs in ten years’ time. If I am successful, no one will ask me who I am. I shall be Mr. Four Millions, an American citizen. I shall be fifty years old by then, and sound and hearty still; I shall enjoy life after my own fashion. In two words, if I find you an heiress with a million, will you give me two hundred thousand francs? Twenty per cent. commission, eh? Is that too much? Your little wife will be very much in love with you. Once married, you will show signs of uneasiness and remorse; for a couple of weeks you will be depressed. Then, some night after sundry grimacings, comes the confession, between two kisses, ‘Two hundred thousand francs of debts, my darling!’ This sort of farce is played every day in Paris, and by young men of the highest fashion. When a young wife has given her heart, she will not refuse her purse. Perhaps you are thinking that you will lose the money for good? Not you. You will make two hundred thousand francs again by some stroke of business. With your capital and your brains you should be able to accumulate as large a fortune as you could wish. *Ergo*, in six months you will have made your own fortune, and your old friend Vautrin’s, and made an amiable woman very happy, to say nothing of your people at home, who must blow on their fingers to warm them, in the winter, for lack of firewood. You need not be surprised at my proposal, nor at the demand I make. Forty-seven out of every sixty great matches here in Paris are made after just such a bargain as this. The Chamber of Notaries compels my gentleman to——”

“What must I do?” said Rastignac, eagerly interrupting Vautrin’s speech.

“Next to nothing,” returned the other, with a slight involuntary movement, the suppressed exultation of the angler when he feels a bite at the end of his line. “Follow me carefully! The heart of a girl whose life is wretched and unhappy is a sponge that will thirstily absorb love; a dry sponge that swells at the first drop of sentiment. If you pay court to a young girl whose existence is a compound of loneliness, despair, and poverty, and who has no suspicion that she will come into a fortune, good Lord! it is quint and quatorze at piquet; it is knowing the numbers of the lottery beforehand; it is speculating in the funds when you have news from a sure source; it is building up a marriage on an indestructible foundation. The girl may come in for millions, and she will fling them, as if they were so many pebbles, at your feet. ‘Take it, my beloved! Take it, Alfred, Adolphe, Eugène!’ or whoever it was that showed his sense by sacrificing himself for her. And as for sacrificing himself, this is how I understand it. You sell a coat that is getting shabby, so that you can take her to the *Cadran bleu*, treat her to mushrooms on toast, and then go to the *Ambigu-Comique* in the evening; you pawn your watch to buy her a shawl. I need not remind you of the fiddle-faddle sentimentality that goes down so well with all women; you spill a few drops of water on your stationery, for instance; those are the tears you shed while far away from her. You look to me as if you were perfectly acquainted with the argot of the heart. Paris, you see, is like a forest in the New World, where you have to deal with a score of varieties of savages— Illinois and Hurons, who live on the proceeds of their social hunting. You are a hunter of millions; you set your snares; you use lures and nets; there are many ways of hunting. Some hunt heiresses, others a legacy; some fish for souls, yet others sell their clients, bound hand and foot. Every one who comes back from the chase with his game-bag well filled meets with a warm welcome in good society. In justice to this hospitable part of the world, it must be said that you have to do with the most easy and good-natured of great cities. If the proud aristocracies of the rest of Europe refuse admittance among their ranks to a disreputable millionaire, Paris stretches out a hand to him, goes to his banquets, eats his dinners, and hobnobs with his infamy.”

“But where is such a girl to be found?” asked Eugène.

“Under your eyes; she is yours already.”

“Mlle. Victorine?”

“Precisely.”

“And what was that you said?”

“She is in love with you already, your little *Baronne de Rastignac!*”

“She has not a penny,” Eugène continued, much mystified.

“Ah! now we are coming to it! Just another word or two, and it will all be clear enough. Her father, Taillefer, is an old scoundrel; it is said that he

murdered one of his friends at the time of the Revolution. He is one of your comedians that sets up to have opinions of his own. He is a banker—senior partner in the house of Frédéric Taillefer and Company. He has one son, and means to leave all he has to the boy, to the prejudice of Victorine. For my part, I don't like to see injustice of this sort. I am like Don Quixote, I have a fancy for defending the weak against the strong. If it should please God to take that youth away from him, Taillefer would have only his daughter left; he would want to leave his money to some one or other; an absurd notion, but it is only human nature, and he is not likely to have any more children, as I know. Victorine is gentle and amiable; she will soon twist her father round her fingers, and set his head spinning like a German top by playing him with sentiment! She will be too much touched by your devotion to forget you; you will marry her. I mean to play Providence for you, and Providence is to do my will. I have a friend whom I have attached closely to myself, a colonel in the Army of the Loire, who has just been transferred into the *garde royale*. He has taken my advice and turned ultra-royalist; he is not one of those fools who never change their opinions. Of all pieces of advice, my cherub, I would give you this—don't stick to your opinions any more than to your words. If any one asks you for them, let him have them—at a price. A man who prides himself on going in a straight line through life is an idiot who believes in infallibility. There are no such things as principles; there are only events, and there are no laws but those of expediency: a man of talent accepts events and the circumstances in which he finds himself, and turns everything to his own ends. If laws and principles were fixed and invariable, nations would not change them as readily as we change our shirts. The individual is not obliged to be more particular than the nation. A man whose services to France have been of the very slightest is a fetish looked on with superstitious awe because he has always seen everything in red; but he is good, at the most, to be put into the Museum of Arts and Crafts, among the automatic machines, and labelled La Fayette; while the prince at whom everybody flings a stone, the man who despises humanity so much that he spits as many oaths as he is asked for in the face of humanity, saved France from being torn in pieces at the Congress of Vienna; and they who should have given him laurels fling mud at him. Oh! I know something of affairs, I can tell you; I have the secrets of many men! Enough. When I find three minds in agreement as to the application of a principle, I shall have a fixed and immovable opinion—I shall have to wait a long while first. In the Tribunals you will not find three judges of the same opinion on a single point of law. To return to the man I was telling you of. He would crucify Jesus Christ again, if I bade him. At a word from his old chum Vautrin he will pick a quarrel with a scamp that will not send so much

as five francs to his sister, poor girl, and”—(here Vautrin rose to his feet and stood like a fencing-master about to lunge)—“turn him off into the dark!” he added.

“How frightful!” said Eugène. “You do not really mean it? M. Vautrin, you are joking!”

“There! there! Keep cool!” said the other. “Don’t behave like a baby. But if you find any amusement in it, be indignant, flare up! Say that I am a scoundrel, a rascal, a rogue, a bandit; but do not call me a blackleg nor a spy! There, out with it, fire away! I forgive you; it is quite natural at your age. I was like that myself once. Only remember this, you will do worse things yourself some day. You will flirt with some pretty woman, and take her money. You have thought of that, of course,” said Vautrin, “for how are you to succeed unless love is laid under contribution? There are no two ways about virtue, my dear student; it either is, or it is not. Talk of doing penance for your sins! It is a nice system of business, when you pay for your crime by an act of contrition! You seduce a woman that you may set your foot on such and such a rung of the social ladder; you sow dissension among the children of a family; you descend, in short, to every base action that can be committed at home or abroad, to gain your own ends for your own pleasure or your profit; and can you imagine that these are acts of faith, hope, or charity? How is it that a dandy, who in a night has robbed a boy of half his fortune, gets only a couple of months in prison; while a poor devil who steals a bank-note for a thousand francs, with aggravating circumstances, is condemned to penal servitude? Those are your laws. Not a single provision but lands you in some absurdity. That man with yellow gloves and a golden tongue commits many a murder; he sheds no blood, but he drains his victim’s veins as surely; a desperado forces open a door with a crowbar, dark deeds both of them! You yourself will do every one of the things that I suggest to you to-day, bar the bloodshed. Do you believe that there is any absolute standard in this world? Despise mankind and find out the meshes that you can slip through in the net of the Code. The secret of a great success for which you are at a loss to account is a crime that has never been found out, because it was properly executed.”

“Silence, sir! I will not hear any more; you make me doubt myself. At this moment my sentiments are all my science.”

“Just as you please, my fine fellow; I did not think you were so weak-minded,” said Vautrin, “I shall say no more about it. One last word, however,” and he looked hard at the student—“you have my secret,” he said.

“A young man who refuses your offer knows that he must forget it.”

“Quite right, quite right; I am glad to hear you say so. Somebody else might not be so scrupulous, you see. Keep in mind what I want to do for

you. I will give you a fortnight. The offer is still open.”

“What a head of iron the man has!” said Eugène to himself as he watched Vautrin walk unconcernedly away with his cane under his arm. “Yet Mme. de Beauséant said as much more gracefully; he has only stated the case in cruder language. He would tear my heart with claws of steel. What made me think of going to Mme. de Nucingen? He guessed my motives before I knew them myself. To sum it up, that outlaw has told me more about virtue than all I have learned from men and books. If virtue admits of no compromises, I have certainly robbed my sisters,” he said, throwing down the bags on the table.

He sat down again and fell, unconscious of his surroundings, into deep thought.

“To be faithful to an ideal of virtue! A heroic martyrdom! Pshaw! every one believes in virtue, but who is virtuous? Nations have made an idol of Liberty, but what nation on the face of the earth is free? My youth is still like a blue and cloudless sky. If I set myself to obtain wealth or power, does it not mean that I must make up my mind to lie, and fawn, and cringe, and swagger, and flatter, and dissemble? To consent to be the servant of others who have likewise fawned, and lied, and flattered? Must I cringe to them before I can hope to be their accomplice? Well, then, I decline. I mean to work nobly and with a single heart. I will work day and night; I will owe my fortune to nothing but my own exertions. It may be the slowest of all roads to success, but I shall lay my head on the pillow at night untroubled by evil thoughts. Is there a greater or a better thing than this—to look back over your life and know that it is stainless as a lily? I and my life are like a young man and his betrothed. Vautrin has put before me all that comes after ten years of marriage. The devil! my head is swimming. I do not want to think at all; the heart is a sure guide.”

One morning, at breakfast, Rastignac related the story of his success at roulette the night before for the benefit of Old Goriot and the lodgers. Vautrin began to smile in a diabolical fashion.

“And do you suppose,” cried that cold-blooded logician, “that a young man of fashion can live here in the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Genève, in the Maison Vauquer—an exceedingly respectable boarding-house in every way, I grant you, but an establishment that, none the less, falls short of being fashionable? The house is comfortable, it is lordly in its abundance; it is proud to be the temporary abode of a Rastignac; but, after all, it is in the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Genève, and luxury would be out of place here, where we only aim at the purely *patriarchalorama*. If you mean to cut a figure in Paris, my young friend,” Vautrin continued, with half-paternal jocularly, “you must have three horses, a tilbury for the mornings, and a closed

carriage for the evening; you should spend altogether about nine thousand francs on your stables. You would show yourself unworthy of your destiny if you spent no more than three thousand francs with your tailor, six hundred in perfumery, a hundred crowns to your shoemaker, and a hundred more to your hatter. As for your laundress, there goes another thousand francs; a young man of fashion must of necessity make a great point of his linen; if your linen comes up to the required standard, people often do not look any further. Love and the Church demand a fair altar-cloth. That is fourteen thousand francs. I am saying nothing of losses at play, bets, and presents; it is impossible to allow less than two thousand francs for pocket-money. I have led that sort of life, and I know all about these expenses. Add the cost of necessaries next; three hundred louis for provender, a thousand francs for a place to roost in. Well, my boy, for all these little wants of ours we had need to have twenty-five thousand francs every year in our purse, or we shall find ourselves in the kennel, and people laughing at us, and our career is cut short, good-by to success, and good-by to your mistress! I am forgetting your valet and your groom! Is Christophe going to carry your *billets-doux* for you? And do you mean to employ the stationery you use at present? Suicidal policy! Harken to the wisdom of your elders!" he went on, his bass voice growing louder at each syllable. "Either take up your quarters in a garret, live virtuously, and wed your work, or set about the thing in a different way."

Vautrin winked and leered in the direction of Mlle. Taillefer to enforce his remarks by a look which recalled the late tempting proposals by which he had sought to corrupt the student's mind.

Several days went by, and Rastignac lived in a whirl of gaiety. He dined almost every day with Mme. de Nucingen, and went wherever she went, only returning to the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève in the small hours. He rose at midday, and dressed to go to the Bois with Delphine if the day was fine, squandering in this way time that was worth far more than he knew. He turned as eagerly to learn the lessons of luxury, and was as quick to feel its fascination, as the flowers of the date-palm to receive the fertilizing pollen. He played high, lost and won large sums of money, and at last became accustomed to the extravagant life that young men lead in Paris. He sent fifteen hundred francs out of his first winnings to his mother and sisters, sending handsome presents as well as the money. He had given out that he meant to leave the Maison Vauquer; but January came and went, and he was still there, still unprepared to go.

One rule holds good of most young men—whether rich or poor. They never have money for the necessaries of life, but they have always money to spare for their caprices—an anomaly which finds its explanation in their

youth and in the almost frantic eagerness with which youth grasps at pleasure. They are reckless with anything obtained on credit, while everything for which they must pay in ready money is made to last as long as possible; if they cannot have all that they want, they make up for it, it would seem, by squandering what they have. To state the matter simply—a student is far more careful of his hat than of his coat because the latter being a comparatively costly article of dress, it is in the nature of things that a tailor should be a creditor; but it is otherwise with the latter; the sums of money spent with him are so modest, that he is the most independent and unmanageable of his tribe, and it is almost impossible to bring him to terms. The young man in the balcony of a theatre who displays a gorgeous waistcoat for the benefit of the fair owners of opera-glasses, has very probably no socks in his wardrobe, for the hosier is another of the genus of weevils that nibble at the purse. This was Rastignac's condition. His purse was always empty for Mme. Vauquer, always full at the demand of vanity; there was a periodical ebb and flow in his fortunes, which was seldom favourable to the payment of just debts. If he was to leave that unsavoury and mean abode, where from time to time his pretensions met with humiliation, the first step was to pay his hostess for a month's board and lodging, and the second to purchase furniture worthy of the new lodgings he must take in his quality of dandy, a course that remained impossible. Rastignac, out of his winnings at cards, would pay his jeweller exorbitant prices for gold watches and chains, and then, to meet the exigencies of play, would carry them to the pawnbroker, that discreet and forbidding-looking friend of youth; but when it was a question of paying for board or lodging, or for the necessary implements for the cultivation of his Elysian fields, his imagination and pluck alike deserted him. There was no inspiration to be found in vulgar necessity, in debts contracted for past requirements. Like most of those who trust to their luck, he put off till the last moment the payment of debts that among the bourgeoisie are regarded as sacred engagements, acting on the plan of Mirabeau, who never settled his baker's bill until it underwent a formidable transformation into a bill of exchange.

It was about this time, when Rastignac was down on his luck and fell into debt, that it became clear to the law student's mind that he must have some more certain source of income if he meant to live as he had been doing. But while he groaned over the thorny problems of his precarious situation, he felt that he could not bring himself to renounce the pleasures of this extravagant life, and decided that he must continue it at all costs.

That evening Vautrin had noticed Eugène's abstractedness, and stayed in the room, though he had seemed to be in a hurry to finish his dinner and go. All through the talk afterwards he had kept out of sight of the law student,

who quite believed that Vautrin had left the room. He now took up his position cunningly in the sitting-room instead of going when the last boarders went. He had fathomed the young man's thoughts, and felt that a crisis was at hand. Rastignac was, in fact, in a dilemma which many another young man must have known.

There were moments when he had not a *sou* in his pockets, and at such times he thought, in spite of his conscience, of Vautrin's offer and the possibility of fortune by a marriage with Mlle. Taillefer. Poverty would clamour so loudly that more than once he was on the point of yielding to the cunning temptations of the terrible sphinx, whose glance had so often exerted a strange spell over him.

* * * * *

“So there is to be an engagement of marriage between M. le Chevalier Eugène de Rastignac and Mlle. Victorine Taillefer, is there?” The words were uttered in Vautrin's deep voice.

“Oh! how you startled me!” Mme. Couture and Mme. Vauquer exclaimed together.

“I might make a worse choice,” said Rastignac, laughing. Vautrin's voice had thrown him into the most painful agitation that he had yet known.

“No bad jokes, gentlemen!” said Mme. Couture. “My dear, let us go upstairs.”

Mme. Vauquer followed the two ladies, meaning to pass the evening in their room, an arrangement that economized fire and candlelight. Eugène and Vautrin were left alone.

“I felt sure you would come round to it,” said the elder man with the coolness that nothing seemed to shake. “But stay a moment! I have as much delicacy as anybody else. Don't make up your mind on the spur of the moment; you are a little thrown off your balance just now. You are in debt, and I want you to come over to my way of thinking after sober reflection, and not in a fit of passion or desperation. Perhaps you want a thousand crowns. There, you can have them if you like.”

The tempter took out a pocket-book, and drew thence three bank-notes, which he fluttered before the student's eyes. Eugène was in a most painful dilemma. He had debts, debts of honour. He owed a hundred louis to the Marquis d'Ajuda and to the Comte de Trailles; he had not the money, and for this reason had not dared to go to Mme. de Restaud's house, where he was expected that evening. It was one of those informal gatherings where tea and little cakes are handed round, but where it is possible to lose six thousand francs at whist in the course of a night.

“You must see,” said Eugène, struggling to hide a convulsive tremor, “that after what has passed between us, I cannot possibly lay myself under any obligation to you.”

“Quite right; I should be sorry to hear you speak otherwise,” answered the tempter. “You are a fine young fellow, honourable, brave as a lion, and as gentle as a young girl. You would be a fine haul for the devil! I like youngsters of your sort. Get rid of one or two more prejudices, and you will see the world as it is. Make a little scene now and then, and act a virtuous part in it, and a man with a head on his shoulders can do exactly as he likes amid deafening applause from the fools in the gallery. Ah! a few days yet, and you will be with us; and if you would only be tutored by me, I would put you in the way of achieving all your ambitions. You should no sooner form a wish than it should be realized to the full; you should have all your desires—honours, wealth, or women. Civilization should flow with milk and honey for you. You should be our pet and favourite, our Benjamin. We would all work ourselves to death for you with pleasure; every obstacle should be removed from your path. You have a few prejudices left; so you think that I am a scoundrel, do you? Well, M. de Turenne, quite as honourable a man as you take yourself to be, had some little private transactions with bandits, and did not feel that his honour was tarnished. You would rather not lie under any obligation to me, eh? You need not draw back on that account,” Vautrin went on, and a smile stole over his lips. “Take those bits of paper and write across this,” he added, producing a piece of stamped paper, “*Accepted the sum of three thousand five hundred francs due this day twelvemonth*, and fill in the date. The rate of interest is stiff enough to silence any scruples on your part; it gives you the right to call me a Jew. You can call quits with me on the score of gratitude. I am quite willing that you should despise me to-day, because I am sure that you will have a kindlier feeling towards me later on. You will find out fathomless depths in my nature, enormous and concentrated forces that weaklings call vices, but you will never find me base or ungrateful. In short, I am neither a pawn nor a bishop, but a castle, a tower of strength, my boy.”

“What manner of man are you?” cried Eugène. “Were you created to torment me?”

“Why, no; I am a good-natured fellow, who is willing to do a dirty piece of work to put you high and dry above the mire for the rest of your days. Do you ask the reason of this devotion? All right; I will tell you that some of these days. A word or two in your ear will explain it. I have begun by shocking you, by showing you the way to ring the changes, and giving you a sight of the mechanism of the social machine; but your first fright will go off like a conscript’s terror on the battlefield. You will grow used to regarding

men as common soldiers who have made up their minds to lose their lives for some self-constituted king. Times have altered strangely. Once you could say to a bravo, 'Here are a hundred crowns; go and kill Monsieur So-and-So for me,' and you could sup quietly after turning some one off into the dark for the least thing in the world. But nowadays I propose to put you in the way of a handsome fortune; you have only to nod your head, it won't compromise you in any way, and you hesitate. 'Tis an effeminate age."

Eugène accepted the draft, and received the bank-notes in exchange for it.

"Well, well. Come, now, let us talk rationally," Vautrin continued. "I mean to leave this country in a few months' time for America, and set about planting tobacco. I will send you the cigars of friendship. If I make money at it, I will help you in your career. If I have no children—which will probably be the case, for I have no anxiety to raise slips of myself here—you shall inherit my fortune. That is what you may call standing by a man; but I myself have a liking for you. I have a mania, too, for devoting myself to some one else. I have done it before. You see, my boy, I live in a loftier sphere than other men do; I look on all actions as means to an end, and the end is all that I look at. What is a man's life to me? Not *that*," he said, and he snapped his thumb-nail against his teeth. "A man, in short, is everything to me, or just nothing at all. Less than nothing if his name happens to be Poiret: you can crush him like a bug, he is flat and he is offensive. But a man is a god when he is like you; he is not a machine covered with a skin, but a theatre in which the greatest sentiments are displayed—great thoughts and feelings—and for these, and these only, I live. A sentiment—what is that but the whole world in a thought? Well, for my own part, and I have fathomed the depths of life, there is only one real sentiment—comradeship between man and man. Pierre and Jaffier, that is my passion. I know *Venice Preserved* by heart. Have you met many men plucky enough when a comrade says, 'Let us bury a dead body!' to go and do it without a word or plaguing him by taking a high moral tone? I have done it myself. I should not talk like this to just everybody, but you are not like an ordinary man; one can talk to you, you can understand things. You will not dabble about much longer among the tadpoles in these swamps. Well, then, it is all settled. You will marry. Both of us carry our point. Mine is made of iron, and will never soften, he! he!"

Vautrin went out. He would not wait to hear the student's repudiation, he wished to put Eugène at his ease. He seemed to understand the secret springs of the faint resistance still made by the younger man; the struggles in which men seek to preserve their self-respect by justifying their blameworthy actions to themselves.

“He may do as he likes; I shall not marry Mlle. Taillefer, that is certain,” said Eugène to himself.

He regarded this man with abhorrence, and yet the very cynicism of Vautrin’s ideas, and the audacious way in which he used other men for his own ends, raised him in the student’s eyes; but the thought of a compact threw Eugène into a fever of apprehension, and not until he had recovered somewhat did he dress, call for a cab, and go to Mme. de Restaud’s.

For some days the Countess had paid more and more attention to a young man whose every step seemed a triumphal progress in the great world; it seemed to her that he might be a formidable power before long. He paid Messieurs de Trailles and d’Ajuda, played at whist for part of the evening, and made good his losses. Most men who have their way to make are more or less of fatalists, and Eugène was superstitious; he chose to consider that his luck was heaven’s reward for his perseverance in the right way. As soon as possible on the following morning he asked Vautrin whether the bill that he had given was still in the other’s possession; and on receiving a reply in the affirmative, he repaid the three thousand francs with a not unnatural relief.

“Everything is going on well,” said Vautrin.

“But I am not your accomplice,” said Eugène.

“I know, I know,” Vautrin broke in. “You are still acting like a child. You are making mountains out of mole-hills at the outset.”

* * * * *

Two days later, Poiret and Mlle. Michonneau were sitting together on a bench in the sun. They had chosen a little-frequented alley in the Jardin des Plantes, and a gentleman was chatting with them.

“Mademoiselle,” this M. Gondureau was saying, “I do not see any cause for your scruples. His Excellency Monseigneur the Minister of Police——”

“Ah!” echoed Poiret, “His Excellency Monseigneur the Minister of Police!”

“Yes, his Excellency is taking a personal interest in the matter,” said Gondureau.

Who would think it probable that Poiret, a retired clerk, doubtless possessed of some notions of civic virtue, though there might be nothing else in his head—who would think it likely that such a man would continue to lend an ear to this supposed independent gentleman of the Rue de Buffon, when the latter dropped the mask of a decent citizen by that word “police,” and gave a glimpse of the features of a detective from the Rue de Jérusalem? And yet nothing was more natural.

"If his Excellency himself, his Excellency the Minister . . . Ah! that is quite another thing," said Poirot.

"You seem to be guided by this gentleman's opinion, and you hear what he says," said the man of independent means, addressing Mlle. Michonneau. "Very well, his Excellency is at this moment absolutely certain that the so-called Vautrin, who lodges at the Maison Vauquer, is a convict who escaped from penal servitude at Toulon, where he is known by the nickname *Trompe-la-Mort*."

"*Trompe-la-Mort*?" said Poirot. "Dear me, he is very lucky if he deserves that nickname."

"Well, yes," said the detective. "They call him so because he has been so lucky as not to lose his life in the very risky businesses that he has carried through. He is a dangerous man, you see! He has qualities that are out of the common; the thing he is wanted for, in fact, was a matter which gained him no end of credit with his own set——"

"Then is he a man of honour?" asked Poirot.

"Yes, according to his notions. He agreed to take another man's crime upon himself—a forgery committed by a very handsome young fellow that he had taken a great fancy to, a young Italian, a bit of a gambler, who has since gone into the army, where his conduct has been unexceptionable."

"But if his Excellency the Minister of Police is certain that M. Vautrin is this *Trompe-la-Mort*, why should he want me?" asked Mlle. Michonneau.

"Oh, yes," said Poirot, "if the Minister, as you have been so obliging as to tell us, really knows for a certainty——"

"Certainty is not the word; he only suspects. You will soon understand how things are. Jacques Collin, nicknamed *Trompe-la-Mort*, is in the confidence of every convict in the three prisons; he is their man of business and their banker. He makes a very good thing out of managing their affairs, which want a *man of mark* to see about them."

"Ha! ha! do you see the pun, mademoiselle?" asked Poirot. "This gentleman calls him a *man of mark* because he is a *marked man*—branded, you know."

"This so-called Vautrin," said the detective, "receives the money belonging to my lords the convicts, invests it for them, and holds it at the disposal of those who escape, or hands it over to their families if they leave a will, or to their mistresses when they draw upon him for their benefit."

"Their mistresses! You mean their wives," remarked Poirot.

"No, sir. A convict's wife is usually an illegitimate connection. We call them concubines."

"Then they all live in a state of concubinage?"

"Naturally."

“Why, these are abominations that his Excellency ought not to allow. Since you have the honour of seeing his Excellency, you, who seem to have philanthropic ideas, ought really to enlighten him as to their immoral conduct—they are setting a shocking example to the rest of society.”

“But the Government does not hold them up as models of all the virtues, my dear sir.”

“Of course not, sir; but still——”

“Just let the gentleman say what he has to say, dearie,” said Mlle. Michonneau.

“You see how it is, mademoiselle,” Gondureau continued. “The Government may have the strongest reasons for getting this illicit hoard into its hands; it mounts up to something considerable, by all that we can make out. Trompe-la-Mort not only holds very large sums for his friends the convicts, but he has other amounts which are paid over to him by the Society of the Ten Thousand——”

“Ten Thousand Thieves!” cried Poiret in alarm.

“No. The Society of the Ten Thousand is not an association of petty offenders, but of people who set about their work on a large scale—they won’t touch a matter unless there are ten thousand francs in it. It is composed of the most distinguished of the men who are sent straight to the Assize Courts when they come up for trial. They know the Code too well to risk their necks when they are nabbed. Collin is their confidential agent and legal adviser. By means of the large sums of money at his disposal he has established a sort of detective system of his own; it is widespread, and mysterious in its workings. We have had spies all about him for a twelvemonth, and yet we could not manage to fathom his games. His capital and his cleverness are at the service of vice and crime; this money furnishes the necessary funds for a regular army of blackguards in his pay who wage incessant war against society. If we can catch Trompe-la-Mort, and take possession of his funds, we should strike at the root of this evil. So this job is a kind of Government affair—a State secret—and likely to redound to the honour of those who bring the thing to a successful conclusion. You, sir, for instance, might very well be taken into a Government department again; they might make you secretary to a Commissary of Police; you could accept that post without prejudice to your retiring pension.”

Mlle. Michonneau interposed at this point with, “What is there to hinder Trompe-la-Mort from making off with the money?”

“Oh!” said the detective, “a man is told off to follow him everywhere he goes, with orders to kill him if he were to rob the convicts. Then it is not quite as easy to make off with a lot of money as it is to run away with a

young lady of family. Besides, Collin is not the sort of fellow to play such a trick; he would be disgraced, according to his notions.”

“You are quite right, sir,” said Poiret, “utterly disgraced he would be.”

“But none of all this explains why you do not come and take him without more ado,” remarked Mlle. Michonneau.

“Very well, mademoiselle, I will explain—but,” he added in her ear, “keep your companion quiet, or I shall never have done. The old boy ought to pay people handsomely for listening to him. Trompe-la-Mort, when he came back here,” he went on aloud, “slipped into the skin of an honest man; he turned up disguised as a decent Parisian citizen, and took up his quarters in an unpretending lodging-house. He is cunning, that he is! You won’t catch him napping. Then M. Vautrin is a man of consequence, who transacts a good deal of business.”

“Naturally,” said Poiret to himself.

“And suppose that the Minister were to make a mistake and get hold of the real Vautrin, he would put every one’s back up among the business men in Paris, and public opinion would be against him. M. le Préfet de Police is on slippery ground; he has enemies. They would take advantage of any mistake. There would be a fine outcry and fuss made by the Opposition, and he would be sent packing. We must set about this just as we did about the Cogniard affair, the sham Comte de Sainte-Hélène; if he had been the real Comte de Sainte-Hélène, we should have been in the wrong box. We want to be quite sure what we are about.”

“Yes, but what you want is a pretty woman,” said Mlle. Michonneau briskly.

“Trompe-la-Mort would not let a woman come near him,” said the detective. “I will tell you a secret—he does not like them.”

“Still, I do not see what I can do, supposing that I did agree to identify him for two thousand francs.”

“Nothing simpler,” said the stranger. “I will send you a little bottle containing a dose that will send a rush of blood to the head; it will do him no harm whatever, but he will fall down as if he were in a fit. The drug can be put into wine or coffee; either will do equally well. You carry your man to bed at once, and undress him to see that he is not dying. As soon as you are alone, you give him a slap on the shoulder, and, *presto!* the letters will appear.”^[3]

“Why, that is just nothing at all,” said Poiret.

“Well, do you agree?” said Gondureau, addressing the old maid.

“But, my dear sir, suppose there are no letters at all,” said Mlle. Michonneau; “am I to have the two thousand francs all the same?”

“No.”

“What will you give me, then?”

“Five hundred francs.”

“It is such a thing to do for so little! It lies on your conscience just the same, and I must quiet my conscience, sir.”

“I assure you,” said Poiret, “that Mademoiselle has a great deal of conscience, and not only so, she is a very amiable person, and very intelligent.”

“Well, now,” Mlle. Michonneau went on, “make it three thousand francs if he is Trompe-la-Mort, and nothing at all if he is an ordinary man.”

“Done!” said Gondureau, “but on condition that the thing is settled to-morrow.”

“Not quite so soon, my dear sir; I must consult my confessor first.”

“You are a sly one,” said the detective as he rose to his feet. “Good-by till to-morrow, then. And if you should want to see me in a hurry, go to the Petite Rue Sainte-Anne at the bottom of the Cour de la Sainte-Chapelle. There is only one door under the archway. Ask there for M. Gondureau.”

Bianchon, one of Mme. Vauquer’s boarders, on his way back from Cuvier’s lecture, overheard the sufficiently striking nickname of *Trompe-la-Mort*, and caught the celebrated chief detective’s “*Done!*”

“Why didn’t you close with him? It would be three hundred francs a year,” said Poiret to Mlle. Michonneau.

“Why didn’t I?” she asked. “Why, it wants thinking over. Suppose that M. Vautrin is this Trompe-la-Mort, perhaps we might do better for ourselves with him. Still, on the other hand, if you ask him for money, it would put him on his guard, and he is just the man to clear out without paying, and that would be an abominable sell.”

“And suppose you did warn him,” Poiret went on, “didn’t that gentleman say that he was closely watched? You would spoil everything.”

“Anyhow,” thought Mlle. Michonneau, “I can’t abide him. He says nothing but disagreeable things to me.”

“But you can do better than that,” Poiret resumed. “As that gentleman said (and he seemed to me to be a very good sort of man, besides being very well got up), it is an act of obedience to the laws to rid society of a criminal, however virtuous he may be. Once a thief, always a thief. Suppose he were to take it into his head to murder us all? The deuce! We should be guilty of manslaughter, and be the first to fall victims into the bargain!”

Mlle. Michonneau’s musings did not permit her to listen very closely to the remarks that fell one by one from Poiret’s lips like water dripping from a leaky tap. When once this elderly babbler began to talk, he would go on like clockwork unless Mlle. Michonneau stopped him. He started on some

subject or other, and wandered on through parenthesis after parenthesis, till he came to regions as remote as possible from his premises without coming to any conclusions by the way.

By the time they reached the Maison Vauquer he had tacked together a whole string of examples and quotations more or less irrelevant to the subject in hand, which led him to give a full account of his own deposition in the case of the Sieur Ragoulleau *versus* Dame Morin, when he had been summoned as a witness for the defence.

As they entered the dining-room, Eugène de Rastignac was talking apart with Mlle. Taillefer; the conversation appeared to be of such a thrilling interest that the pair never noticed the two older lodgers as they passed through the room.

That morning in his own mind Eugène had completely surrendered himself to Vautrin, and deliberately shut his eyes to the motive for the friendship which that extraordinary man professed for him, nor would he look to the consequences of such an alliance. Nothing short of a miracle could extricate him now out of the gulf into which he had walked an hour ago, when he exchanged vows in the softest whispers with Mlle. Taillefer. To Victorine it seemed as if she heard an angel's voice, that heaven was opening above her; the Maison Vauquer took strange and wonderful hues, like a stage fairy-palace. She loved and she was beloved; at any rate, she believed that she was loved; and what woman would not likewise have believed after seeing Rastignac's face and listening to the tones of his voice during that hour snatched under the Argus eyes of the Maison Vauquer? He had trampled on his conscience; he knew that he was doing wrong, and did it deliberately; he had said to himself that a woman's happiness should atone for this venial sin. The energy of desperation had lent new beauty to his face; the lurid fire that burned in his heart shone from his eyes. Luckily for him, the miracle took place. Vautrin came in in high spirits, and at once read the hearts of these two young creatures whom he had brought together by the combinations of his infernal genius, but his deep voice broke in upon their bliss.

“A charming girl is my Fanchette
In her simplicity,”

he sang mockingly.

Victorine fled. Her heart was more full than it had ever been, but it was full of joy, and not of sorrow. Poor child! A pressure of the hand, the light touch of Rastignac's hair against her cheek, a word whispered in her ear so closely that she felt the student's warm breath on her, the pressure of a

trembling arm about her waist, a kiss upon her throat—such had been her betrothal. The near neighbourhood of the stout Sylvie, who might invade that glorified room at any moment, only made these first tokens of love more ardent, more eloquent, more entrancing than the noblest deeds done for love's sake in the most famous romances. This *plain-song* of love, to use the pretty expression of our forefathers, seemed almost criminal to the devout young girl who went to confession every fortnight. In that one hour she had poured out more of the treasures of her soul than she could give in later days of wealth and happiness, when her whole self followed the gift.

“The thing is arranged,” Vautrin said to Eugène, who remained. “Our two dandies have fallen out. Everything was done in proper form. It is a matter of opinion. Our pigeon has insulted my hawk. They will meet tomorrow in the redoubt at Clignancourt. By half-past eight in the morning Mlle. Taillefer, calmly dipping her bread-and-butter in her coffee-cup, will be sole heiress of her father's fortune and affections. A funny way of putting it, isn't it? Taillefer's youngster is an expert swordsman, and quite cocksure about it, but he will be bled; I have just invented a thrust for his benefit, a way of raising your sword-point and driving it at the forehead. I must show you that thrust; it is an uncommonly handy thing to know.”

Rastignac heard him in dazed bewilderment; he could not find a word in reply. Just then Goriot came in, and Bianchon and a few of the boarders likewise appeared.

“That is just as I intended,” Vautrin said. “You know quite well what you are about. Good, my little eaglet! You are born to command, you are strong, you stand firm on your feet, you are game! I respect you.”

He made as though he would take Eugène's hand, but Rastignac hastily withdrew it, sank into a chair, and turned ghastly pale; it seemed to him that there was a sea of blood before his eyes.

“Oh! so we have still a few dubious tatters of the swaddling-clothes of virtue about us!” murmured Vautrin. “But Papa Doliban has three millions; I know the amount of his fortune. Once have her dowry in your hands, and your character will be as white as the bride's white dress, even in your own eyes.”

Vautrin, old Goriot, and Rastignac came downstairs, in company that evening and, all three of them being late, were obliged to sit together.

Eugène was as distant as possible in his manner to Vautrin during dinner; but the other, so charming in Mme. Vauquer's opinion, had never been so witty. His lively sallies and sparkling talk put the whole table in good humour. His assurance and coolness filled Eugène with consternation.

“Why, what has come to you to-day?” inquired Mme. Vauquer. “You are as merry as a skylark.”

"I am always in spirits after I have made a good bargain."

"Bargain?" said Eugène.

"Well, yes, bargain. I have just delivered a lot of goods, and I shall be paid a handsome commission on them. Mlle. Michonneau," he went on, seeing that the elderly spinster was scrutinizing him intently, "have you any objection to some feature in my face, that you are making those lynx eyes at me? Just let me know, and I will have it changed to oblige you. . . . We shall not fall out about it, Poiret, I daresay?" he added, winking at the superannuated clerk.

"Bless my soul, you ought to stand as a model for a burlesque Hercules," said the young painter.

"I will, upon my word! if Mlle. Michonneau will consent to sit as the Venus of Père-Lachaise," replied Vautrin.

"There's Poiret," suggested Bianchon.

"Oh! Poiret shall pose as Poiret. He can be a garden god!" cried Vautrin; "his name means a pear——"

"A sleepy pear!" Bianchon put in. "You will come in between the pear and the cheese."

"What stuff you are all talking!" said Mme. Vauquer; "you would do better to treat us to your Bordeaux; I see a glimpse of a bottle there. It would keep us all in a good humour, and it is good for the stomach besides."

"Gentlemen," said Vautrin, "the Lady President calls us to order. Mme. Couture and Mlle. Victorine will take your jokes in good part, but respect the innocence of the aged Goriot. I propose a glass or two of Bordeauxrama, rendered twice illustrious by the name of Laffite, no political allusions intended. Come, you Turk!" he added, looking at Christophe, who did not offer to stir. "Christophe! Here! What, you don't answer to your own name? Bring us some liquor, Turk!"

"Here it is, sir," said Christophe, holding out the bottle.

Vautrin filled Eugène's glass and Goriot's likewise, then he deliberately poured out a few drops into his own glass, and sipped it while his two neighbours drank their wine. All at once he made a grimace.

"Corked!" he cried. "The devil! You can drink the rest of this, Christophe, and go and find another bottle; take from the right-hand side, you know. There are sixteen of us; take down eight bottles."

"If you are going to stand treat," said the painter, "I will pay for a hundred chestnuts."

"Oh! oh!"

"Booououh!"

"Prrrr!"

These exclamations came from all parts of the table like squibs from a set firework.

“Come, now, Mama Vauquer, a couple of bottles of champagne,” called Vautrin.

“*Quien!* just like you! Why not ask for the whole house at once? A couple of bottles of champagne; that means twelve francs! I shall never see the money back again, I know! But if M. Eugène has a mind to pay for it, I have some currant cordial.”

“That currant cordial of hers is as bad as a black draught,” muttered the medical student.

“Shut up, Bianchon,” exclaimed Rastignac; “the very mention of black draught makes me feel—— Yes, champagne, by all means; I will pay for it,” he added.

“Sylvie,” called Mme. Vauquer, “bring in some biscuits, and the little cakes.”

“Those little cakes are mouldy greybeards,” said Vautrin. “But trot out the biscuits.”

The Bordeaux wine circulated: the dinner-table became a livelier scene than ever, and the fun grew fast and furious. Imitations of the cries of various animals mingled with the loud laughter; the Muséum official having taken it into his head to mimic a cat-call rather like the caterwauling of the animal in question, eight voices simultaneously struck up with the following variations:—

“Scissors to grind!”

“Chickweed for singing bir-ds!”

“Brandy-snaps, ladies!”

“China to mend!”

“Boat ahoy!”

“Sticks to beat your wives or your clothes!”

“Old clo’!”

“Cherries all ripe!”

But the palm was awarded to Bianchon for the nasal accent with which he rendered the cry of “Umbrellas to me-end!”

A few seconds later, and there was a head-splitting racket in the room, a storm of tomfoolery, a sort of cats’ concert, with Vautrin as conductor of the orchestra, the latter keeping an eye the while on Eugène and old Goriot. The wine seemed to have gone to their heads already. They leaned back in their chairs, looking at the general confusion with an air of gravity, and drank but little; both of them were absorbed in the thought of what lay before them to do that evening, and yet neither of them felt able to rise and go. Vautrin gave a side-glance at them from time to time, and watched the change that came

over their faces, choosing the moment when their eyes drooped and seemed about to close, to bend over Rastignac and to say in his ear—

“My little lad, you are not quite shrewd enough to outwit Papa Vautrin yet, and he is too fond of you to let you make a mess of your affairs. When I have made up my mind to do a thing, no one short of Providence can put me off. Aha! we were for going round to warn old Taillefer, telling tales out of school! The oven is hot, the dough is kneaded, the bread is ready for the oven; to-morrow we will eat it up and whisk away the crumbs; and we are not going to spoil the baking? . . . No, no, it is all as good as done! We may suffer from a few conscientious scruples, but they will be digested along with the bread. While we are having our forty winks, Colonel Count Franchessini will clear the way to Michel Taillefer’s inheritance with the point of his sword. Victorine will come in for her brother’s money, a snug fifteen thousand francs a year. I have made inquiries already, and I know that her late mother’s property amounts to more than three hundred thousand _____”

Eugène heard all this, and could not answer a word; his tongue seemed to be glued to the roof of his mouth, an irresistible drowsiness was creeping over him. He still saw the table and the faces round it, but it was through a bright mist. Soon the noise began to subside, one by one the boarders went. At last, when their numbers had so dwindled that the party consisted of Mme. Vauquer, Mme. Couture, Mlle. Victorine, Vautrin, and old Goriot, Rastignac watched as though in a dream how Mme. Vauquer busied herself by collecting the bottles, and drained the remainder of the wine out of each to fill others.

“Oh! how uproarious they are! what a thing it is to be young!” said the widow.

These were the last words that Eugène heard and understood.

“There is no one like M. Vautrin for a bit of fun like this,” said Sylvie. “There, just hark at Christophe, he is snoring like a top.”

“Good-by, mama,” said Vautrin; “I am going to a theatre on the boulevard to see M. Marty in *Le Mont Sauvage*, a fine play taken from *Le Solitaire*. . . . If you like, I will take you and these two ladies——”

“Thank you; I must decline,” said Mme. Couture.

“What! my good lady!” cried Mme. Vauquer, “decline to see a play founded on the *Le Solitaire*, a work by Atala de Chateaubriand. We were so fond of that book that we cried over it like Magdalens under the *lime-trees* last summer, and then it is an improving work that might edify your young lady.”

“We are forbidden to go to the play,” answered Victorine.

“Just look, those two yonder have dropped off where they sit,” said Vautrin, shaking the heads of the two sleepers in a comical way.

He altered the sleeping student’s position, settled his head more comfortably on the back of his chair, kissed him warmly on the forehead, and began to sing—

“Sleep, little darlings;
I watch while you slumber.”

“I am afraid he may be ill,” said Victorine.

“Then stop and take care of him,” returned Vautrin. “ ‘Tis your duty as a meek and obedient wife,” he whispered in her ear. “The young fellow worships you, and you will be his little wife—there’s your fortune for you. In short,” he added aloud, “they lived happily ever afterwards, were much looked up to in all the countryside, and had a numerous family.” That is how all the romances end.—Now, mama,” he went on, as he turned to Mme. Vauquer and put his arm round her waist, “put on your bonnet, your best flowered silk, and the countess’s scarf, while I go out to call a cab—all my own self.”

And he started out, singing as he went—

“Ah! sun! divine sun!
Ripening the pumpkins every one.”

“My goodness! Well, I’m sure! Mme. Couture, I could live happily in a garret with a man like that. There, now!” she added, looking round for the old vermicelli-maker, “there is that old Goriot half seas over. *He* never thought of taking me anywhere, the old skinflint. But he will measure his length somewhere. My word! it is disgraceful to lose his senses like that, at his age! You will be telling me that he couldn’t lose what he hadn’t got.—Sylvie! just take him up to his room!”

Sylvie took him by the arm, supported him upstairs, and flung him just as he was, like a package, across the bed.

“Poor young fellow!” said Mme. Couture, putting back Eugène’s hair that had fallen over his eyes; “he is like a young girl, he does not know what dissipation is.”

“Well, I can tell you this, I know,” said Mme. Vauquer, “I have taken lodgers these thirty years, and a good many have passed through my hands, as the saying is, but I have never seen a nicer nor a more aristocratic-looking young man than M. Eugène. How handsome he looks sleeping! Just let his head rest on your shoulder, Mme. Couture. Pshaw! he falls over towards

Mlle. Victorine. There's a special providence for young things. A little more, and he would have broken his head against the knob of the chair. They'd make a pretty pair, those two would!"

"Hush, my good neighbour," cried Mme. Couture, "you are saying such things——"

"Pooh!" put in Mme. Vauquer, "he does not hear.—Here, Sylvie! come and help me to dress. I shall put on my best stays."

"What! your best stays just after dinner, madame?" said Sylvie. "No, you can get some one else to lace you. I am not going to be your murderer. It's a rash thing to do, and might cost you your life."

"I don't care, I must do honour to M. Vautrin."

"Are you so fond of your heirs as all that?"

"Come, Sylvie, don't argue," said the widow, as she left the room.

"At her age, too!" said the cook to Victorine, pointing to her mistress as she spoke.

Mme. Couture and her ward were left in the dining-room, and Eugène slept on Victorine's shoulder. The sound of Christophe's snoring echoed through the silent house; Eugène's quiet breathing seemed all the quieter by force of contrast, he was sleeping as peacefully as a child. Victorine was very happy; she was free to perform one of those acts of charity which form an innocent outlet for all the overflowing sentiments of a woman's nature; he was so close to her that she could feel the throbbing of his heart; there was a look of almost maternal protection and a conscious pride in Victorine's face. Among the countless thoughts that crowded up in her young innocent heart, there was a wild flutter of joy at this close contact.

"Poor, dear child!" said Mme. Couture, squeezing her hand.

The old lady looked at the girl. Victorine's innocent, pathetic face, so radiant with the new happiness that had befallen her, called to mind some naïve work of medieval art, when the painter neglected the accessories, reserving all the magic of his brush for the quiet, austere outlines and ivory tints of the face, which seems to have caught something of the golden glory of heaven.

"After all, he only took two glasses, mama," said Victorine, passing her fingers through Eugène's hair.

"Indeed, if he had been a dissipated young man, child, he would have carried his wine like the rest of them. His drowsiness does him credit."

There was a sound of wheels outside in the street.

"There is M. Vautrin, mama," said the girl. "Just take M. Eugène. I would rather not have that man see me like this; there are some ways of looking at you that seem to sully your soul and make you feel as though you had nothing on."

“Oh, no, you are wrong!” said Mme. Couture. “M. Vautrin is a worthy man; he reminds me a little of my late husband, poor dear M. Couture, rough but kind-hearted; his bark is worse than his bite.”

Vautrin came in while she was speaking; he did not make a sound, but looked for a while at the picture of the two young faces—the lamplight falling full upon them seemed to caress them.

“Well,” he remarked, folding his arms, “here is a picture! It would have suggested some pleasing pages to Bernardin de Saint-Pierre (good soul), who wrote *Paul et Virginie*. Youth is very charming, Mme. Couture! Sleep on, poor boy,” he added, looking at Eugène, “luck sometimes comes while we are sleeping. There is something touching and attractive to me about this young man, madame,” he continued; “I know that his nature is in harmony with his face. Just look, the head of a cherub on an angel’s shoulder! He deserves to be loved. If I were a woman, I would die (no—not such a fool), I would live for him.” He bent lower and spoke in the widow’s ear. “When I see those two together, madame, I cannot help thinking that Providence meant them for each other; He works by secret ways, and tries the reins and the heart,” he said in a loud voice. “And when I see you, my children, thus united by a like purity and by all human affections, I say unto myself that it is quite impossible that the future should separate you. God is just.”— He turned to Victorine. “It seems to me,” he said, “that I have seen the line of success in your hand. Let me look at it, Mlle. Victorine; I am well up in palmistry, and I have told fortunes many a time. Come, now, don’t be frightened. Ah! what do I see? Upon my word, you will be one of the richest heiresses in Paris before very long. You will heap riches on the man who loves you. Your father will want you to go and live with him. You will marry a young and handsome man with a title, and he will idolize you.”

The heavy footsteps of the coquettish widow, who was coming down the stairs, interrupted Vautrin’s fortune-telling. “Here is Mama Vauquerre, fair as a starr-r-r, dressed within an inch of her life. Aren’t we a trifle pinched for room?” he inquired, with his arm round the lady; “we are screwed up very tightly about the bust, mama! If we are much agitated, there may be an explosion; but I will pick up the fragments with all the care of an antiquary.”

“There is a man who can talk the language of French gallantry!” said the widow, bending to speak in Mme. Couture’s ear.

“Good-by, little ones!” said Vautrin, turning to Eugène and Victorine. “Bless you both!” and he laid a hand on either head. “Take my word for it, young lady, an honest man’s prayers are worth something; they should bring you happiness, for God hears them.”

“Good-by, dear,” said Madame Vauquer to her lodger. “Do you think that M. Vautrin means to run away with me?” she added, lowering her voice.

“Lack-a-day!” said the widow.

“Oh! mama dear, suppose it should really happen as that kind M. Vautrin said!” said Victorine with a sigh, as she looked at her hands. The two women were alone together.

“Why, it wouldn’t take much to bring it to pass,” said the elder lady; “just a fall from his horse, and your monster of a brother——”

“Oh! mama.”

“Good Lord! Well, perhaps it is a sin to wish bad luck to an enemy,” the widow remarked. “I will do penance for it. Still, I would strew flowers on his grave with the greatest pleasure, and that is the truth. Black-hearted, that he is! The coward couldn’t speak up for his own mother, and cheats you out of your share by deceit and trickery. My cousin had a pretty fortune of her own, but, unluckily for you, nothing was said in the marriage contract about anything that she might come in for.”

“It would be very hard if my good fortune is to cost some one else his life,” said Victorine. “If I cannot be happy unless my brother is to be taken out of the world, I would rather stay here all my life.”

“*Mon Dieu!* it is just as that good M. Vautrin says, and he is full of piety, you see,” Mme. Couture remarked. “I am very glad to find that he is not an unbeliever like the rest of them that talk of the Almighty with less respect than they do of the Devil. Well, as he was saying, who can know the ways by which it may please Providence to lead us?”

With Sylvie’s help the two women at last succeeded in getting Eugène up to his room; they laid him on the bed and the cook unfastened his clothes to make him more comfortable. Before they left the room, Victorine snatched an opportunity when her guardian’s back was turned, and pressed a kiss on Eugène’s forehead, feeling all the joy that this stolen pleasure could give her. Then she looked round the room, and gathering up, as it were, into one single thought all the untold bliss of that day, she made a picture of her memories, and dwelt upon it until she slept, the happiest creature in Paris.

That evening’s merrymaking, in the course of which Vautrin had given the drugged wine to Eugène and old Goriot, was his own ruin. Bianchon, flustered with wine, forgot to open the subject of Trompe-la-Mort with Mlle. Michonneau. The mere mention of the name would have set Vautrin on his guard; for Vautrin, or, to give him his real name, Jacques Collin, was in fact the notorious escaped convict.

But it was the joke about the Venus of Père-Lachaise that finally decided his fate. Mlle. Michonneau had very nearly made up her mind to warn the convict and to throw herself on his generosity, with the idea of making a better bargain for herself by helping him to escape that night; but as it was, she went out escorted by Poiret in search of the famous chief of detectives in

the Petite Rue Saint-Anne, still thinking that it was the district superintendent—one Gondureau—with whom she had to do. The head of the department received his visitors courteously. There was a little talk, and the details were definitely arranged. Mlle. Michonneau asked for the draught that she was to administer in order to set about her investigation. But the great man's evident satisfaction set Mlle. Michonneau thinking; and she began to see that this business involved something more than the mere capture of a runaway convict. She racked her brains while he looked in a drawer in his desk for the little phial, and it dawned upon her that in consequence of treacherous revelations made by the prisoners the police were hoping to lay their hands on a considerable sum of money. But on hinting her suspicions to the old fox of the Petite Rue Saint-Anne, that officer began to smile, and tried to put her off the scent.

"A delusion," he said. "Collin's *sorbonne* is the most dangerous that has yet been found among the dangerous classes. That is all, and the rascals are quite aware of it. They rally round him; he is the backbone of the federation, its Bonaparte, in short; he is very popular with them all. The rogue will never leave his *chump* in the Place de Grève."

As Mlle. Michonneau seemed mystified, Gondureau explained the two slang words for her benefit. *Sorbonne* and *chump* are two forcible expressions borrowed from thieves' Latin, thieves, of all people, being compelled to consider the human head in its two aspects. A *sorbonne* is the head of a living man, his faculty of thinking—his council; a *chump* is a contemptuous epithet that implies how little a human head is worth after the ax has done its work.

"Collin is playing us off," he continued. "When we come across a man like a bar of steel tempered in the English fashion, there is always one resource left—we can kill him if he takes it into his head to make the least resistance. We are reckoning on several methods of killing Collin to-morrow morning. It saves a trial, and society is rid of him without all the expense of guarding and feeding him. What with getting up the case, summoning witnesses, paying their expenses, and carrying out the sentence, it costs a lot to go through all the proper formalities before you can get quit of one of these good-for-nothings, over and above the three thousand francs that you are going to have. There is a saving in time as well. One good thrust of the bayonet into Trompe-la-Mort's paunch will prevent scores of crimes, and save fifty scoundrels from following his example; they will be very careful to keep themselves out of the police courts. That is doing the work of the police thoroughly, and true philanthropists will tell you that it is better to prevent crime than to punish it."

"And you do a service to our country," said Poiret.

“Really, you are talking in a very sensible manner to-night, that you are,” said the head of the department. “Yes, of course, we are serving our country, and we are very hardly used too. We do society very great services that are not recognized. In fact, a superior man must rise above vulgar prejudices, and a Christian must resign himself to the mishaps that doing right entails, when right is done in an out-of-the-way style. Paris is Paris, you see! That is the explanation of my life. I have the honour to wish you a good evening, mademoiselle. I shall bring my men to the Jardin du Roi in the morning. Send Christophe to the Rue du Buffon, tell him to ask for M. Gondureau in the house where you saw me before. Your servant, sir. If you should ever have anything stolen from you, come to me, and I will do my best to get it back for you.”

“Well, now,” Poiret remarked to Mlle. Michonneau, “there are idiots who are scared out of their wits by the word police. That was a very pleasant-spoken gentleman, and what he wants you to do is as easy as saying ‘Good-day.’”

* * * * *

The next day was destined to be one of the most extraordinary in the annals of the Maison Vauquer. Hitherto the most startling occurrence in its tranquil existence had been the portentous, meteor-like apparition of the sham Comtesse de l’Ambermesnil. But the catastrophes of this great day were to cast all previous events into the shade, and supply an inexhaustible topic of conversation for Mme. Vauquer and her boarders so long as she lived.

In the first place, Goriot and Eugène de Rastignac both slept till close upon eleven o’clock. Mme. Vauquer, who came home about midnight from the Gaité, lay abed till half-past ten. Christophe, after a prolonged slumber (he had finished Vautrin’s first bottle of wine), was behindhand with his work, but Poiret and Mlle. Michonneau uttered no complaint, though breakfast was delayed. As for Victorine and Mme. Couture, they also lay late. Vautrin went out before eight o’clock, and only came back just as breakfast was ready. Nobody protested, therefore, when Sylvie and Christophe went up at a quarter past eleven, knocked at all the doors, and announced that breakfast was waiting. While Sylvie and the man were upstairs, Mlle. Michonneau, who came down first, poured the contents of the phial into the silver cup belonging to Vautrin—it was standing with the others in the *bain-marie* that kept the cream hot for the morning coffee. The spinster had reckoned on this custom of the house to do her stroke of

business. The seven lodgers were at last collected together, not without some difficulty.

As Eugène came down to breakfast—"What time is it?" he asked.

"Half-past eleven," said Vautrin, dropping a lump of sugar into his coffee.

The escaped convict cast a glance at Eugène, a cold and fascinating glance; men gifted with this magnetic power can quell furious lunatics in a madhouse by such a glance, it is said. Eugène shook in every limb. There was the sound of wheels in the street, and in another moment a man with a scared face rushed into the room. It was one of M. Taillefer's servants; Mme. Couture recognized the livery at once.

"Mademoiselle," he cried, "your father is asking for you—something terrible has happened! M. Frédéric has had a sword-thrust in the forehead in a duel, and the doctors have given him up. You will scarcely be in time to say good-bye to him! he is unconscious."

"Poor young fellow!" exclaimed Vautrin. "How can people brawl when they have a certain income of thirty thousand livres? Young people have bad manners, and that is a fact."

"Sir!" cried Eugène.

"Well, what then, you big baby!" said Vautrin, swallowing down his coffee imperturbably, an operation which Mlle. Michonneau watched with such close attention that she had no emotion to spare for the amazing news that had struck the others dumb with amazement. "Are there not duels every morning in Paris?" added Vautrin.

"I will go with you, Victorine," said Mme. Couture, and the two women hurried away at once, without either hats or shawls. But before she went, Victorine, with her eyes full of tears, gave Eugène a glance that said—"How little I thought that our happiness should cost me tears!"

"Dear me, you are a prophet, M. Vautrin," said Mme. Vauquer.

"I am all sorts of things," said Vautrin.

"Queer, isn't it?" said Mme. Vauquer, stringing together a succession of commonplaces suited to the occasion. "Death takes us off without asking us about it. The young often go before the old. It is a lucky thing for us women that we are not liable to fight duels, but we have other complaints that men don't suffer from. We bear children, and it takes a long time to get over it. What a windfall for Victorine! Her father will have to acknowledge her now!"

"There!" said Vautrin, looking at Eugène, "yesterday she had not a penny; this morning she has several millions to her fortune."

"I say, M. Eugène!" cried Mme. Vauquer, "you have landed on your feet!"

“Madame, I shall never marry Mlle. Victorine,” said Eugène, turning to Mme. Vauquer with an expression of terror and loathing that surprised the onlookers at this scene.

“Oh, ho!” said Vautrin, “the Italians have a good proverb—*Col tempo*.”

Eugène was in a state of such violent excitement that he could not be prudent.

“What is to be done?” he exclaimed aloud. “There are no proofs!”

Vautrin began to smile. Though the drug he had taken was doing its work, the convict was so vigorous that he rose to his feet, gave Rastignac a look, and said in hollow tones, “Luck comes to us while we sleep, young man,” and fell stiff and stark, as if he were struck dead.

“So there is a Divine Justice!” said Eugène.

“Well, if ever! What has come to that poor dear M. Vautrin?”

“A stroke!” cried Mlle. Michonneau.

“Here, Sylvie! girl, run for the doctor,” called the widow. “Oh, M. Rastignac, just go for M. Bianchon, and be as quick as you can; Sylvie might not be in time to catch our doctor, M. Grimprel.”

Rastignac was glad of an excuse to leave that den of horrors, his hurry for the doctor was nothing but a flight.

“Here, Christophe, go round to the chemist’s and ask her something that’s good for the apoplexy.”

Christophe likewise went.

Vautrin was taken up among them, carried carefully up the narrow staircase, and laid upon his bed.

“Just go and see if you can find some ether,” said Mlle. Michonneau to Mme. Vauquer; the former, with some help from Poiret, had unfastened the sick man’s clothes.

Mme. Vauquer went down to her room, and left Mlle. Michonneau mistress of the situation.

“Now! just pull down his shirt and turn him over, quick! You might be of some use in sparing my modesty,” she said to Poiret, “instead of standing there like a stock.”

Vautrin was turned over; Mlle. Michonneau gave his shoulder a sharp slap, and the two portentous letters appeared, white against the red.

“There, you have earned your three thousand francs very easily,” exclaimed Poiret, supporting Vautrin while Mlle. Michonneau slipped on the shirt again. “Ouf! how heavy he is,” he added, as he laid the convict down.

“Hush! Suppose there is a strongbox here!” said the old maid briskly; her glances seemed to pierce the walls, she scrutinized every article of the furniture with greedy eyes. “Could we find some excuse for opening that desk?”

"It mightn't be quite right," responded Poiret to this.

"Where is the harm? It is money stolen from all sorts of people, so it doesn't belong to any one now. But we haven't time, there is the Vauquer."

"Here is the ether," said that lady. "I must say that this is an eventful day. Lord! that man can't have had a stroke; he is as white as curds."

"White as curds?" echoed Poiret.

"And his pulse is steady," said the widow, laying her hand on his breast.

"Steady?" said the astonished Poiret.

"He is all right."

"Do you think so?" asked Poiret.

"Lord! Yes, he looks as if he were sleeping. Sylvie has gone for a doctor. I say, Mlle. Michonneau, he is sniffing the ether. Pooh! it is only a spasm. His pulse is good. He is as strong as a Turk. Just look, mademoiselle, what a fur tippet he has on his chest; that is the sort of man to live till he is a hundred. His wig holds on tightly, however. Dear me! it is glued on, and his own hair is red; that is why he wears a wig. They always say that red-haired people are either the worst or the best. Is he one of the good ones, I wonder?"

"Good to hang," said Poiret.

"Round a pretty woman's neck, you mean," said Mlle. Michonneau, hastily. "Just go away, M. Poiret. It is a woman's duty to nurse you men when you are ill. Besides, for all the good you are doing, you may as well take yourself off," she added. "Mme. Vauquer and I will take great care of dear M. Vautrin."

Poiret went out on tiptoe without a murmur, like a dog kicked out of the room by his master.

Rastignac had gone out for the sake of physical exertion; he wanted to breathe the air, he felt stifled. Yesterday evening he had meant to prevent the murder arranged for half-past eight that morning. What had happened? What ought he to do now? He trembled to think that he himself might be implicated. Vautrin's coolness still further dismayed him.

"Yet, how if Vautrin should die without saying a word?" Rastignac asked himself.

He hurried along the alleys of the Luxembourg Gardens as if the hounds of justice were after him, and he already heard the baying of the pack.

"Well," shouted Bianchon, "have you seen the *Pilote*?"

The *Pilote* was a Radical sheet, edited by M. Tissot. It came out several hours later than the morning papers, and was meant for the benefit of country subscribers; for it brought the morning's news into provincial districts twenty-four hours sooner than the ordinary local journals.

“There is a wonderful history in it,” said the house student of the Hôpital Cochin. “Young Taillefer called out Count Franchessini, of the Old Guard, and the Count put a couple of inches of steel into his forehead. And here is little Victorine, one of the richest heiresses in Paris! If we had known that, eh? What a game of chance death is! They said Victorine was sweet on you; was there any truth in it?”

“Shut up, Bianchon; I shall never marry her. I am in love with a charming woman, and she is in love with me, so——”

“You said that as if you were screwing yourself up to be faithful to her. I should like to see the woman worth the sacrifice of Master Taillefer’s money!”

“Are all the devils of hell at my heels?” cried Rastignac.

“What is the matter with you? Are you mad? Give us your hand,” said Bianchon, “and let me feel your pulse. You are feverish.”

“Just go to Mother Vauquer’s,” said Rastignac; “that scoundrel Vautrin has dropped down like one dead.”

“Aha!” said Bianchon, leaving Rastignac to his reflections, “you confirm my suspicions, and now I mean to make sure for myself.”

The law student’s long walk was a memorable one for him. He made in some sort a survey of his conscience. After a close scrutiny, after hesitation and self-examination, his honour at any rate came out scatheless from this sharp and terrible ordeal, like a bar of iron tested in the English fashion. He remembered old Goriot’s confidences of the evening before; he recollected the rooms taken for him in the Rue d’Artois, so that he might be near Delphine; and then he thought of his letter, and read it again and kissed it.

“Such a love is my anchor of safety,” he said to himself. “How the old man’s heart must have been wrung! He says nothing about all that he has been through; but who could not guess? Well, then, I will be like a son to him; his life shall be made happy. If she cares for me, she will often come to spend the day with him. That grand Comtesse de Restaud is a heartless thing; she would make her father into her hall-porter. Dear Delphine! she is kinder to the old man; she is worthy to be loved. Ah! this evening I shall be very happy!”

He took out the watch Delphine had given him and admired it.

“I have had nothing but success! If two people mean to love each other for ever, they may help each other, and I can take this. Besides, I shall succeed, and I will repay her a hundredfold. There is nothing criminal in this *liaison*; nothing that could cause the most austere moralist to frown. How many respectable people contract similar unions! We deceive nobody; it is deception that makes a position humiliating. If you lie, you lower yourself at

once. She and her husband have lived apart for a long while. Besides, how if I called upon that Alsatian to resign a wife whom he cannot make happy?"

Rastignac's battle with himself went on for a long while; and though the scruples of youth inevitably gained the day, an irresistible curiosity led him, about half-past four, to return to the Maison Vauquer through the gathering dusk.

Bianchon had given Vautrin an emetic, reserving the contents of the stomach for chemical analysis at the hospital. Mlle. Michonneau's officious alacrity had still further strengthened his suspicions of her. Vautrin, moreover, had recovered so quickly, that it was impossible not to suspect some plot against the leader of all frolics at the lodging-house. Vautrin was standing in front of the stove in the dining-room when Rastignac came in. All the lodgers were assembled sooner than usual by the news of young Taillefer's duel. They were anxious to hear any detail about the affair, and to talk over the probable change in Victorine's prospects. Old Goriot alone was absent, but the rest were chatting. No sooner did Eugène come into the room, than his eyes met the inscrutable gaze of Vautrin. It was the same look that had read his thoughts before—the look that had such power to waken evil thoughts in his heart. He shuddered.

"Well, dear boy," said the escaped convict, "I am likely to cheat death for a good while yet. According to these ladies, I have had a stroke that would have felled an ox, and come off with flying colours."

"A bull you might say," cried the widow.

"You really might be sorry to see me still alive," said Vautrin in Rastignac's ear, thinking that he guessed the student's thoughts. "You must be mighty sure of yourself."

"Mlle. Michonneau was talking the day before yesterday about a gentleman nicknamed *Trompe-la-Mort*," said Bianchon; "and, upon my word, that name would do very well for you."

Vautrin seemed thunderstruck. He turned pale, and staggered back. He turned his magnetic glance, like a ray of vivid light, on Mlle. Michonneau; the old maid shrank and trembled under the influence of that strong will, and collapsed into a chair. The mask of good-nature had dropped from the convict's face; from the unmistakable ferocity of that sinister look, Poiret felt that the old maid was in danger, and hastily stepped between them. None of the lodgers understood this scene in the least, they looked on in mute amazement. There was a pause. Just then there was a sound of tramping feet outside; there were soldiers there, it seemed, for there was a ring of several rifles on the pavement of the street. Collin was mechanically looking round the walls for a way of escape, when four men entered by way of the sitting-room.

“In the name of the King and the Law!” said an officer, but the words were almost lost in a murmur of astonishment.

Silence fell on the room. The lodgers made way for three of the men, who had each a hand on a cocked pistol in a side-pocket. Two policemen, who followed the detectives, kept the entrance to the sitting-room, and two more appeared in the doorway that gave access to the staircase. A sound of footsteps came from the garden, and again the rifles of several soldiers rang on the cobblestones under the window. All chance of salvation by flight was cut off for Trompe-la-Mort, to whom all eyes instinctively turned. The chief walked straight up to him, and commenced operations by giving him a sharp blow on the head, so that the wig fell off, and Collin’s face was revealed in all its ugliness. There was a terrible suggestion of strength mingled with cunning in the short, brick-red crop of hair, the whole head was in harmony with his powerful frame, and at that moment the fires of hell seemed to gleam from his eyes. In that flash the real Vautrin shone forth, revealed at once before them all; they understood his past, his present, and future, his pitiless doctrines, his actions, the religion of his own good pleasure, the majesty with which his cynicism and contempt for mankind invested him, the physical strength of an organization proof against all trials. The blood flew to his face, and his eyes glared like the eyes of a wild cat. He started back with savage energy and a fierce growl that drew exclamations of alarm from the lodgers. At that leonine start the police caught at their pistols under cover of the general clamour. Collin saw the gleaming muzzles of the weapons, saw his danger, and instantly gave proof of a power of the highest order. There was something horrible and majestic in the spectacle of the sudden transformation in his face; he could only be compared to a caldron full of the steam that can send mountains flying, a terrific force dispelled in a moment by a drop of cold water. The drop of water that cooled his wrathful fury was a reflection that flashed across his brain like lightning. He began to smile, and looked down at his wig.

“You are not in the politest of humours to-day,” he remarked to the chief, and he held out his hands to the policemen with a jerk of his head.

“Gentlemen,” he said, “put on the bracelets or the handcuffs. I call on those present to witness that I make no resistance.”

A murmur of admiration ran through the room at the sudden outpouring like fire and lava flood from this human volcano, and its equally sudden cessation.

“There’s a sell for you, master crusher,” the convict added, looking at the famous director of police.

“Come, strip!” said he of the Petite Rue Saint-Anne, contemptuously.

“Why?” asked Collin. “There are ladies present; I deny nothing, and surrender.”

He paused and looked round the room like an orator who is about to overwhelm his audience.

“Take this down, Daddy Lachapelle,” he went on, addressing a little, white-haired old man who had seated himself at the end of the table; and after drawing a printed form from a portfolio, was proceeding to draw up a document. “I acknowledge myself to be Jacques Collin, otherwise known as Trompe-la-Mort, condemned to twenty years’ penal servitude, and I have just proved that I have come fairly by my nickname. If I had as much as raised my hand,” he went on, addressing the other lodgers, “those three sneaking wretches yonder would have drawn claret on Mama Vauquer’s domestic hearth. The rogues have laid their heads together to set a trap for me.”

Mme. Vauquer felt sick and faint at these words.

“Good Lord!” she cried, “this does give one a turn; and me at the Gaîté with him only last night!” she said to Sylvie.

“Summon your philosophy, mama,” Collin resumed. “Is it a misfortune to have sat in my box at the Gaîté yesterday evening? After all, are you better than we are? The brand upon our shoulders is less shameful than the brand set on your hearts, you flabby members of a society rotten to the core. Not the best man among you could stand up to me.” His eyes rested upon Rastignac, to whom he spoke with a pleasant smile that seemed strangely at variance with the savage expression in his eyes. “Our little bargain still holds good, dear boy; you can accept any time you like! Do you understand?” And he sang—

“A charming girl is my Fanchette
In her simplicity.”

“Don’t you trouble yourself,” he went on; “I can get in my money. They are too much afraid of me to swindle me.”

The convicts’ prison, its language and customs, its sudden sharp transitions from the humorous to the horrible, its appalling grandeur, its triviality and its dark depths, were all revealed in turn by the speaker’s discourse; he seemed to be no longer a man, but the type and mouthpiece of a degenerate race, a brutal, supple, clear-headed race of savages. In one moment Collin became the poet of an inferno, wherein all thoughts and passions that move human nature (save repentance) find a place. He looked about him like a fallen archangel who is for war to the end. Rastignac

lowered his eyes, and acknowledged this kinship claimed by crime as an expiation of his own evil thoughts.

“Who betrayed me?” said Collin, and his terrible eyes travelled round the room. Suddenly they rested on Mlle. Michonneau.

“It was you, old cat!” he said. “That sham stroke of apoplexy was your doing, lynx eyes! . . . Two words from me, and your throat would be cut in less than a week, but I forgive you, I am a Christian. You did not sell me either. But who did?—Aha! you may rummage upstairs,” he shouted, hearing the police officers opening his cupboards and taking possession of his effects. “The nest is empty, the birds flew away yesterday, and you will be none the wiser. My ledgers are here,” he said, tapping his forehead. “Now I know who sold me! It could only be that blackguard Fil-de-Soie. That is who it was, old catchpoll, eh?” he said, turning to the chief. “It was timed so neatly to get the bank-notes up above there. There is nothing left for you—spies! As for Fil-de-Soie, he will be under the daisies in less than a fortnight, even if you were to tell off the whole force to protect him. How much did you give the Michonnette?” he asked of the police officers. “A thousand crowns? Oh, you Ninon in decay, Pompadour in tatters, Venus of the graveyard, I was worth more than that! If you had given me warning, you should have had six thousand francs. Ah! you had no suspicion of that, old trafficker in flesh and blood, or I should have had the preference. Yes, I would have given six thousand francs to save myself an inconvenient journey and some loss of money,” he said, as they fastened the handcuffs on his wrists. “These folks will amuse themselves by dragging out this business till the end of time to keep me idle! If they were to send me straight to jail, I should soon be back at my old tricks in spite of the duffers at the Quai des Orfèvres. Down yonder they would all turn themselves inside out to help their general—their good Trompe-la-Mort—to get clear away. Is there a single one among you that can say, as I can, that he has ten thousand brothers ready to do anything for him?” he asked proudly. “There is some good there,” he said, tapping his heart; “I have never betrayed any one! Look you here, you slut,” he said to the old maid, “they are all afraid of me, do you see? but the sight of you turns them sick. Rake in your gains.”

He was silent for a moment, and looked round at the lodgers’ faces.

“What dolts you are, all of you! Have you never seen a convict before? A convict of Collin’s stamp, whom you see before you, is a man less weak-kneed than others; he lifts up his voice against the colossal fraud of the Social Contract, as Jean Jacques did, whose pupil he is proud to declare himself. In short, I stand here single-handed against a Government and a whole subsidized machinery of tribunals and police, and I am a match for them all.”

“Ye gods!” cried the painter, “what a magnificent sketch one might make of him.”

“Look here, you gentleman-in-waiting to his highness the gibbet, master of ceremonies to the widow” (a nickname full of sombre poetry, given by prisoners to the guillotine), “be a good fellow, and tell me if it really was Fil-de-Soie who sold me. I don’t want him to suffer for some one else, that would not be fair.”

But before the chief had time to answer, the rest of the party returned from making their investigations upstairs. Everything had been opened and inventoried. A few words passed between them and the chief, and the official preliminaries were complete.

“Gentlemen,” said Collin, addressing the lodgers, “they will take me away directly. You have all made my stay among you very agreeable, and I shall look back upon it with gratitude. Receive my audieux, and permit me to send you figs from Provence.”

He advanced a step or two, and then turned to look once more at Rastignac.

“Good-by, Eugène,” he said in a sad and gentle tone, a strange transition from his previous rough and stern manner. “If you should be hard up, I have left you a devoted friend,” and in spite of his shackles, he managed to assume a posture of defence, called, “One, two!” like a fencing-master, and lunged. “If anything goes wrong apply in that quarter. Man and money, all at your service.”

The strange speaker’s manner was sufficiently burlesque, so that no one but Rastignac knew that there was a serious meaning underlying the pantomime.

As soon as the police, soldiers, and detectives had left the house, Sylvie, who was rubbing her mistress’s temples with vinegar, looked round at the bewildered lodgers.

“Well,” said she, “he was a man, he was, for all that.”

[1] From *Père Goriot*.

[2] *Travaux forcés*.

[3] The convict brand.

XIII

“SIR ROGER TICHBORNE”

(*Arthur Orton*)

BRAM STOKER^[1]

In the annals of crime, Arthur Orton, the notorious claimant to the rich estates and title of Tichborne, takes a foremost place; not only as the originator of one of the most colossal attempts at fraud on record, but also from his remarkable success in duping the public. It would be difficult indeed to furnish a more striking example of the height to which the blind credulity of people will occasionally attain. Of pretenders, who by pertinacious and unscrupulous lying have sought to bolster up fictitious claims, there have been many before Orton; but he certainly surpassed all his predecessors in working out the lie circumstantial in such a way as to divide the country for years into two great parties—those who believed in the Claimant, and those who did not. Over one hundred persons, drawn from every class, and for the most part honest in their belief, swore to the identity of this illiterate butcher’s son—this stockman, mail-rider and probably bushranger and thief—as the long-lost son and heir of the ancient house of Tichborne of Titchborne. To gain his own selfish ends this individual was ready to rob a gentlewoman of her fair fame, to destroy the peace of a great family who, to free themselves from a persecution, as cruel as it was vicious, had to be pilloried before a ruthless and unsympathizing mob, to have the privacy of their home invaded, and to hear their women’s names bandied from one coarse mouth to another. Thus, and through no fault of their own, they were compelled to endure a mental torture far worse than any physical suffering, besides having to expend vast sums of money, as well as time and labour, in order to protect themselves from the would-be depredations of an unscrupulous adventurer. It has been estimated that the resistance of this fictitious claim cost the Tichborne estate not far short of one hundred thousand pounds.

The baronetcy of Tichborne, now Doughty-Tichborne, is one of the oldest. It has been claimed that the family held possession of the Manor of Tichborne for two hundred years before the Conquest. Be this as it may—

and, in the light of J. H. Round's revelations, some scepticism as to these pre-Norman pedigrees is permissible—their ancestors may be traced back to one Walter de Tichborne, who held the manor, from which he took his name, as early as 1135. Their names, too, are interwoven with the history of the country. Sir Benjamin, the first baronet—for the earlier de Tichbornes were knights—as Sheriff of Southampton, on the death of Queen Elizabeth, repaired instantly to Winchester and on his own initiative proclaimed the accession of James VI of Scotland as King of England, for which service he was made a baronet, and his four sons received the honour of knighthood. His successor, Sir Richard, was a zealous supporter of the Royal cause during the civil wars. Sir Henry, the third baronet, hazarded his life in the defence of Charles I and had his estates sequestered by the Parliamentarians, though he was recompensed at the Restoration.

Believers in occultism might see in the trials and tribulations brought down upon the unfortunate heads of the Tichborne family by the machinations of the Claimant, the realization of the doom pronounced by a certain Dame Ticheborne away back in the days of Henry II.

Sir Roger de Ticheborne of those days married Mabell, the daughter and heiress of Ralph de Lamerston, of Lamerston, in the Isle of Wight, by whom he acquired that estate. This good wife played the part of lady bountiful of the neighbourhood. After a life spent in acts of charity and goodness, as her end drew nigh and she lay on her death-bed, her thoughts went out to her beloved poor. She begged her husband, that in order to have her memory kept green the countryside round, he would grant a bequest sufficient to ensure, once a year, a dole of bread to all comers to the gates of Tichborne. To gratify her whim Sir Roger promised her as much land as she could encompass while a brand plucked from the fire should continue to burn. As the poor lady had been bedridden for years, her husband may have had no idea that she could, even if she would, take his promise seriously. However, the venerable dame, after being carried out upon the ground, seemed to regain her strength in a miraculous fashion, and, to the surprise of all, managed to crawl round several rich and goodly acres, which to this day are known as “the Crawls.”

Carried to her bed again after making this last supreme effort, and summoning her family to her bedside, Lady Ticheborne predicted with her dying breath, that, as long as this annual dole was continued, so long should the house of Tichborne prosper; but, should it be neglected, their fortunes would fail and the family name become extinct from want of male issue. As a sure sign by which these disasters might be looked for, she foretold that a generation of seven sons would be immediately followed by one of seven daughters.

The benevolent custom thus established was faithfully observed for centuries. On every Lady Day crowds of humble folk came from near and far to partake of the famous dole which consisted of hundreds of small loaves. But ultimately the occasion degenerated into a noisy merrymaking, a sort of fair, until it was finally discontinued in 1796, owing to the complaints of the magistrates and local gentry that the practice encouraged vagabonds, gipsies and idlers of all sorts to swarm into the neighbourhood under pretence of receiving the dole.

Strangely enough Sir Henry Tichborne, the baronet of that day (the original name of de Ticheborne had by this time been reduced to Tichborne), had seven sons, while his eldest son, who succeeded him in 1821, had seven daughters. The extinction of the family name, too, came to pass, for in the absence of male issue, Sir Henry, the eighth baronet, was succeeded by his brother, who had taken the surname of Doughty on coming into the estates bequeathed to him, on these terms, by a distant relative, Miss Doughty; though, in after years his brother, who in turn succeeded him, obtained the royal license to couple the old family name with that of Doughty. Following this repeated lapse of direct male heirs came other troubles; but it is to be hoped that the successful defeat of the fraudulent claim of Arthur Orton set a period to the doom pronounced long years ago by the Lady Mabell.

Most families, great and small, have their secret troubles and unpleasantness, and the Tichbornes seem to have had their share of them. To this may be traced the actual, if remote, cause of the Claimant's imposture. James Tichborne, afterwards the tenth baronet, the father of the missing Roger, who was drowned in the mysterious loss of the *Bella*, off the coast of South America, in the spring of 1854, lived abroad for many years; but, while his wife was French in every sentiment, he himself from time to time exhibited a keen desire to return to his native land. When Roger was born there was small likelihood of his ever succeeding to either title or estates, and so his education was almost entirely a foreign one.

Sir Henry Tichborne, who had succeeded in 1821, though blessed with seven beautiful daughters, had no son. Still there was their uncle Edward, who had taken the name of Doughty, and he, after Sir Henry, was the next heir. Edward, too, had a son and daughter. But, one day, news came to James and his wife, in France, that their little nephew was dead; and with the possibilities which this change opened up, it brought home to the father the error he had committed in permitting Roger to grow up ignorant of the English tongue and habits. It was manifest that Mr. James F. Tichborne was not unlikely to become the next baronet, and he felt it his bounden duty to make good his previous neglect, by providing his son with an English education, such as would fit him for his probable position as head of the

house of Tichborne. In this praiseworthy intention he met with strong opposition from his wife, whose great aim it was to see her son grow up a Frenchman. To her, France was the only land worth living in. She cared nought for family traditions; her dream was that her darling boy should marry into some distinguished family in France or Italy. If he was to enter the army, then it should be in some foreign service. But to England he should not go if she could prevent it.

James Tichborne, like many weak men with self-willed wives, put off the inevitable day as long as he could; and in the end only achieved his purpose by strategy. Roger was sixteen years of age when news arrived of the death of Sir Henry. Naturally James arranged to be present at his brother's funeral, and it was only reasonable that he should be accompanied by his son Roger, whom everyone now regarded as the heir. Accordingly the boy took leave of his mother, but under the solemn injunction to return quickly. However, his father had determined otherwise. After attending the funeral of his uncle, at the old chapel at Tichborne, Roger was, by the advice of relatives and friends, and with the consent of the boy himself, taken down to the Jesuit College at Stonyhurst. When Mrs. Tichborne learned of this step, her fury knew no bounds. She upbraided her husband violently; and there was a renewal of the old scenes in the Tichborne establishment. Roger wrote his mother filial, if ill-spelt, letters in French; but, for a year, the son, though ardently looking for a letter, got no token of affection from the incensed and indignant lady.

During his three years' stay at Stonyhurst, Roger seems to have applied himself diligently to the study of English; but, though he made fair progress, he was never able to speak it with as much purity and command of words as when conversing in French. In Latin, mathematics, and chemistry, too, he contrived to make fair headway; while his letters evidenced an inclination for the study of polite literature. If not highly accomplished, he was of a refined and sensitive nature. During this period he made many friends, spending his vacation with his English relatives in turn. His great delight was to stay at Tichborne, then in possession of his father's brother, Sir Edward Doughty. Withal, the shy, pale-faced boy steadily gained in favour, for he had a nature which disarmed ill-feeling. As time wore on it became necessary to determine on some profession for the lad; and needless to say his father's choice of the army added fuel to the fire of his wife's anger. After some delay a commission was obtained and Mr. Roger Charles Tichborne was gazetted a cornet in the Sixth Dragoons, better known as the Carbineers.

Defeated in her purpose of making a Frenchman of her boy, Roger's mother yet continued to harp upon her old desire to marry him to one of the

Italian princesses of whom he had heard so much. But Roger had other ideas, for he had fallen passionately in love with his cousin—Miss Katharine Doughty, afterwards Lady Radcliffe. However, the course of love was not to run smooth. The Tichbornes had always been Roman Catholic, and the marriage of first cousins was discountenanced by that church. Consequently when some little token incidentally revealed to the father the secret and yet unspoken love of the young people, their dream was rudely shattered.

That the girl warmly reciprocated her cousin's affection was beyond question, and Lady Doughty was certainly sympathetic, though she took exception to certain of her nephew's habits. He was an inveterate smoker, besides drinking too freely. These and other little failings seem to have aroused some fear in her anxious mother's heart, though she quite recognized the boy's kind disposition, and the fact that he was truthful, honourable and scrupulous in points of duty. Still she would not oppose the wishes of the young lovers—except to the extent of pleading and encouraging Roger to master his weaknesses. It was Christmas time in 1851 when the *dénouement* came and the eyes of Sir Edward were opened to what was going on. He was both vexed and angry, and was resolved that the engagement should be broken off before it grew more serious. One last interview was permitted to the cousins and, this over, the young man was to leave the house for ever. The great hope of his life extinguished, there was nothing left for Roger but to rejoin his regiment, then expecting orders for India, and to endeavour to forget the past. Still even in those dark days neither Roger nor Kate quite gave up hope of some change. Lady Doughty, despite her dread of her nephew's habits, had a warm regard for him, and could be relied upon to plead his cause; and in a short time circumstances unexpectedly favoured him. Sir Edward was ill and, fearing that death was approaching, he sent for his nephew and revived the subject. He explained that if it were not for the close relationship he should have no objection to the marriage and begged Roger to wait for three years. If then the affection, one for the other, remained unaltered, and providing that Roger obtained his own father's consent and that of the Church, he would accept things as the will of God and agree to the union. As might be expected, Roger gratefully promised loyally to observe the sick man's wishes.

However, Sir Edward, instead of dying, slowly mended, and Roger returned to his regiment. Occasionally he would spend his leave with his aunt and uncle, when the young people loved to walk together in the beautiful gardens of Tichborne, exchanging sweet confidences and weaving plans for the future. On what proved to be his last visit to his ancestral home, in the mid-summer of 1852, Roger, to comfort his cousin, confided a secret to her—a copy of a vow, which he had written out and signed,

solemnly pledging himself, in the event of their being married before three years had passed, to build a church or chapel at Tichborne as a thank-offering to the Holy Virgin for the protection shown by her in praying God that their wishes might be fulfilled.

His leave up, Roger went back to his regiment more than ever a prey to his habitual melancholy. To his great regret the orders for the Carbineers to go to India were countermanded. He accordingly determined to throw up his commission and travel abroad until his period of probation had passed. South America had long been the subject of his dreams, and so thither he would make his way; and in travelling through that vast continent he hoped to find occupation for his mind and so get through the trying period of waiting. His plan was to spend a year in Chili, Guayaquil and Peru, and thence to visit Mexico, and so, by way of the United States, to return home. Having come to this resolution he lost no time in putting it into execution. Being of businesslike habits he made his will, in which he purposely omitted any mention of the "church or chapel." This secret had already been committed to paper, and with other precious souvenirs of his love for his cousin, had been confided to his most trusted friend—Mr. Gosford, the steward of the family estate. After paying a round of farewell visits to his parents and old friends in Paris, Roger finally set sail from Havre, on March 21, 1853, in a French vessel named *La Pauline*, for Valparaiso, at which port she arrived on the 19th of the following June, when Roger set out on his wanderings. During his travels Roger continued to write home regularly; but the first news he received was bad. Sir Edward Doughty had died almost before the *Pauline* had lost sight of the English shores; and Roger's father and mother were now Sir James and Lady Tichborne.

Presently the wanderer began to retrace his steps, making his way to Rio de Janeiro. Here he found a vessel called the *Bella*, hailing from Liverpool, about to sail for Kingston, Jamaica, and as he had directed his letters and remittances to be forwarded there, he prevailed upon the captain to give him a passage. On the 20th of April, 1854, the *Bella* passed from the port of Rio into the ocean. From that day no one ever set eyes upon her. Six days after she left harbour, a ship traversing her path found, amongst other ominous tokens of a wreck, a capsized long-boat bearing the name "*Bella*, Liverpool."

These were taken into Rio and forthwith the authorities caused the neighbouring seas to be scoured in quest of survivors; but none were ever found. That the *Bella* had foundered there was little room to doubt. It was supposed that she had been caught in a sudden squall, that her cargo had shifted, and that, unable to right herself, the vessel had gone down in deep water, giving but little warning to those on board. In a few months the sad

news reached Tichborne, where the absence of letters from the previously diligent correspondent had already raised grave fears. The sorrow-stricken father caused inquiries to be made in America and elsewhere. For a time, there was a faint hope that some one aboard the *Bella* might have been picked up by some passing vessel; but, as months wore on, even these small hopes dwindled away. The letters which poor Roger had so anxiously asked might be directed to him at the post office, Kingston, Jamaica, remained there till the ink grew faded; the banker's bill which lay at the agent's remained unclaimed. At last the unfortunate vessel was finally written off at Lloyd's as lost, the insurance money paid, and gradually the *Bella* faded from the memories of all but those who had lost friends or relatives in her. Lady Tichborne alone refused to abandon hope.

Her obstinate disregard of such conclusive evidence of the fate of her unfortunate son preyed upon her mind to such an extent as to make her an easy victim for any scheming rascal pretending to have news of her lost son; and "sailors," who told all sorts of wild stories of how some of the survivors of the *Bella* had been rescued and landed in a foreign port, became constant visitors at Tichborne Park and profited handsomely from the weak-minded lady's credulity. Sir James himself made short work of these tramping "sailors," but after his death, in 1862, the lady became even more ready to be victimized by their specious lies.

Firm in her belief that Roger was still alive, Lady Tichborne now caused advertisements to be inserted in numerous papers; and in November, 1865, she learnt through an agency in Sydney that a man answering the description of her son had been found in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales. A long correspondence ensued, the tone and character of which ought to have put her on her guard; but, over-anxious to believe that she had indeed found her long-lost son, any wavering doubts she may have had were swept from her mind by the evidence of an aged negro servant, named Boyle, an old pensioner of the Tichborne family. Boyle, who lived in New South Wales, professed to recognize the Claimant as his dear young master, and he certainly remained one of his most devoted adherents to the end. Undoubtedly this man's simplicity proved a very valuable asset to Orton. His intimate knowledge of the arrangements of Tichborne Park was pumped dry by his new master, who, aided by a most tenacious memory, was afterwards able to use the information thus obtained with startling effect.

As to the identity of the Claimant with Arthur Orton there can be absolutely no doubt. As a result of the inquiries made by the trustees of the Tichborne estate nearly the whole of his history was unmasked. He was born in 1834, at Wapping, where his father kept a butcher's shop. In 1848 he took passage to Valparaiso, whence he made his way up country to Melipilla.

Here he stayed some eighteen months, receiving much kindness from a family named Castro, and it was their name he went under at Wagga Wagga. In 1851 he returned home, and entering his father's business became an expert slaughterman. The following year he emigrated to Australia; but after the spring of 1854 he ceased to correspond with his family. He had evidently led a life of hardship and adventure—probably not unattended with crime, and certainly with poverty. At Wagga Wagga he carried on a small butcher's business, and it was from here that he got into communication with Lady Tichborne just after his marriage to an illiterate servant girl.

According to his subsequent confession, until his attention was drawn to the advertisement for the missing Roger, he had never even heard of the name of Tichborne, and it was only his success when, by way of a joke upon a chum, he claimed to be the missing baronet, that led him to pursue the matter in sober earnest. Indeed he seemed at first very reluctant to leave Australia, and probably he was only driven to accede to Lady Tichborne's request, to return "home" at once, by the fact that he had raised large sums of money on his expectations. His original intention was probably to obtain some sort of recognition, and then to return to Australia with whatever money he had succeeded in collecting.

After wasting much time he left Australia and arrived in England, by a very circuitous route, on Christmas Day, 1866. His first step on landing, it was subsequently discovered, was to make a mysterious visit to Wapping. His parents were dead, but his inquiries showed a knowledge, both of the Orton family and the locality, which was afterwards used against him with very damaging effect. His next proceeding was to make a flying and surreptitious excursion to Tichborne House, where, as far as possible, he acquainted himself with the bearings of the place. In this he was greatly assisted by one Rous, a former clerk of the old Tichborne attorney, who was then keeping a public-house in the place. From this man, who became his staunch ally, he had no doubt acquired much useful information; and it is significant that he sedulously kept clear of Mr. Gosford, the agent to whom the real Roger had confided his sealed packet before leaving England.

Lady Tichborne was living in Paris at this time, and it was here, in his hotel bedroom on a dark January afternoon, that their first interview took place; for, curiously enough, the gentleman was too ill to leave his bed! The deluded woman professed to recognize him at once. As she sat beside his bed, "Roger" keeping his face turned to the wall, the conversation took a wide range, the sick man showing himself strangely astray. He talked to her of his grandfather, whom the real Roger had never seen; he said he had served in the ranks; referred to Stonyhurst as Winchester; spoke of his suffering as a lad from St. Vitus's dance—a complaint which first led to

young Arthur Orton being sent on a sea-voyage; but did not speak of the rheumatism from which Roger had suffered. But it was all one to the infatuated woman—"He confuses everything as if in a dream," she wrote in exculpating him; but unsatisfactory as this identification was, she never departed from her belief. She lived under the same roof with him for weeks, accepted his wife and children, and allowed him £1,000 a year. It did not weigh with her that the rest of the family unanimously declared him to be an impostor, or that he failed to recognize them or to recall any incident in Roger's life.

Nearly four years elapsed before the Claimant commenced his suit of ejectment against the trustees of the infant Sir Alfred Tichborne—the posthumous son of Roger's younger brother; but he utilized the time to good purpose. He had taken into his service a couple of old Carbineers who had been Roger's servants, and before long so completely mastered small details of regimental life that some thirty of Roger's old brother officers and men were convinced of his identity. He went everywhere, called upon all Roger's old friends, visited the Carbineers' mess and generally left no stone unturned to get together evidence in support of his identity. As a result of his strenuous activity and plausibility he produced at the first trial over one hundred witnesses who, on oath, identified him as Roger Tichborne; and these witnesses included Lady Tichborne, the family solicitor, magistrates, officers and men from Roger's old regiment, besides various Tichborne tenants and friends of the family. On the other hand, there were only seventeen witnesses arraigned against him; and, in his own opinion, it was his own evidence that lost him the case. He would have won, he said, "if only he could have kept his mouth shut."

The trial of this action lasted 102 days. Sergeant Ballantine led for the Claimant; and Sir John Coleridge (afterwards Lord Chief Justice), and Mr. Hawkins, Q. C. (afterwards Lord Brampton), for the trustees of the estates of Tichborne. The cross-examination of the Claimant at the hands of Sir John Coleridge lasted twenty-two days, during which the colossal ignorance he displayed was only equalled by his boldness, dexterity and the bull-dog tenacity with which he faced the ordeal. To quote Sir John's own words: "The first sixteen years of his life he has absolutely forgotten; the few facts he had told the jury were already proved, or would hereafter be shown, to be absolutely false and fabricated. Of his college life he could recollect nothing. About his amusements, his books, his music, his games, he could tell nothing. Not a word of his family, of the people with whom he lived, their habits, their persons, their very names. He had forgotten his mother's maiden name; he was ignorant of all particulars of the family estate; he remembered nothing of Stonyhurst; and in military matters he was equally

deficient. Roger, born and educated in France, spoke and wrote French like a native, and his favourite reading was French literature; but the Claimant knew nothing of French. Of the "sealed" packet he knew nothing, and, when pressed, his interpretation of its contents contained the foulest and blackest calumny of the cousin whom Roger had so fondly loved. This was proved by Mr. Gosford, to whom the packet had been originally entrusted, and by the production of the duplicate which Roger had given to Miss Doughty herself. The physical discrepancy, too, was no less remarkable; for, while Roger, who took after his mother, was slight and delicate, with narrow sloping shoulders, a long narrow face and thin straight dark hair, the Claimant was of enormous bulk, scaling over twenty-four stone, big-framed and burly, with a large round face and an abundance of fair and rather wavy hair. And yet, curiously enough, the Claimant undoubtedly possessed a strong likeness to several male members of the Tichborne family."

When questioned as to the impressive episode of Roger's love for his cousin, the Claimant showed himself hopelessly at sea. His answers were confused and irreconcilable. Not only could he give no precise dates, but even the broad outline of the story was beyond him. Yet, for good reasons, the Solicitor-General persisted in pressing him as to the contents of the sealed packet and compelled him to repeat the slanderous version of the incident which he had long ago given when interrogated on the point. Mrs. Radcliffe (she was not then Lady) sat in court beside her husband, and thus had the satisfaction of seeing the infamous charges brought against the fair fame of her girlhood recoil on the head of the wretch who had resorted to such villainous devices. Unfortunately, some years after Roger's disappearance, Mr. Gosford, feeling that he was neither justified in keeping the precious packet, nor in handing it to any other person, had burnt it; but, fortunately, his testimony as to its contents was proved in the most complete manner by the production of the duplicate which poor Roger had given to his cousin on his last visit to Tichborne.

Where the case broke down most completely was in the matter of tattoo-marks. Roger had been freely tattooed. Among other marks he bore, on his left arm, a cross, an anchor, and a heart, which was testified to by the persons who had pricked them in. Orton, too, it was found out, had also been tattooed on his left arm with his initials, "A. O.," and, though neither remained, there was a mark which was sworn to be the obliteration of those letters. Small wonder then that, on the top of this damning piece of evidence, the jury declared they required to hear nothing further, upon which the Claimant's counsel, to avoid the inevitable verdict for their opponents, elected to be nonsuited. But these tactics did not save their client, for he was at once arrested, on the judge's warrant, on the charge of wilful and corrupt

perjury, and committed to Newgate, where he remained until bail for £10,000 was forthcoming.

A year later, on April 23, 1873, the Claimant was arraigned before a special jury in the Court of Queen's Bench. The proceedings were of a most prolix and unusual character. Practically the same ground was covered as in the civil trial, only the process was reversed: the Claimant having now to defend instead of to attack. Many of the better-class witnesses, including the majority of Roger's brother officers, now forsook the Claimant. There was a deal of cross-swearing. The climax of the long trial was the production by the defence of a witness to support the Claimant's account of his wreck and rescue. This was a man who called himself Jean Luie and claimed to be a Danish seaman. With a wealth of picturesque detail he told how he was one of the crew of the *Osprey* which had picked up a boat of the shipwrecked *Bella*, in which was the claimant and some of the crew, and how when the *Osprey* arrived at Melbourne, in the height of the gold fever, every man of the crew from the captain downwards had deserted the ship and gone up country. According to his story, from that time forth he had seen nothing of any of the castaways; but having come to England in search of his wife he had heard of the trial. When Luie was first brought into the presence of the Claimant that astute person immediately claimed him with the greeting in Spanish, "*Como esta, Luie?*"—"How are you, Luie?" The sailor with equal readiness recognized Orton as the man he had helped to rescue years before. All this sounded very convincing; but it would not stand investigation. From the beginning to end the thing was an invention; an examination of shipping records failed to find the *Osprey*, so that she must have escaped the notice of the authorities in every port she had entered from the day she was launched! Of "Sailor" Luie, however, a very complete record was established. Not only were the police able to prove that, at the time he swore he was a seaman on board the *Osprey*, he was actually employed by a firm at Hull; that he had never been a seaman at all; but that he was a well-known habitual criminal and convict, only recently released on a ticket-of-leave. This made things very awkward for the defence, who made every effort to shake free from the taint of such perjured evidence. Dr. Kenealy, seeing his dilemma, contended that it had been concocted by Luie himself. But the damning and unanswerable fact remained—that, by his recognition of the man, the Claimant had acknowledged a previous acquaintance with him, which he could only have had by being privy to the fraud.

On February 28, 1874, the one hundred and eighty-eighth day of the trial, the jury after half an hour's deliberation returned their verdict. They found that the defendant was not Roger Charles Tichborne; that he was Arthur Orton; and finally that the charges made against Miss Catherine

Doughty were not supported by the slightest evidence. Orton was sentenced to fourteen years' penal servitude, which, assuredly, was none too heavy for offences so enormous. The trial was remarkable, not only for its inordinate length, but also for the extraordinary scenes by which it was characterized and for which Dr. Kenealy, leading counsel for the defence, was primarily responsible. His conduct was sternly denounced by the Lord Chief Justice in his summing-up as "the torrent of undisguised and unlimited abuse in which the learned counsel for the defence has thought fit to indulge," and he declared that "there never was in the history of jurisprudence a case in which such an amount of imputation and invective had been used before." After the trial was over, Dr. Kenealy tried to turn the case into a national question through the medium of a virulent paper he started with the title of the *Englishman*; and undeterred by being disbarred for his flagrant breaches of professional etiquette, he went about the country delivering the most extravagant speeches concerning the trial. He was elected Member of Parliament for Stoke, and, on April 23, 1875, moved for a royal commission of inquiry into the conduct of the Tichborne Case; but his motion was defeated by 433 votes to 1.

The verdict and sentence created enormous excitement throughout the country, for all classes, more or less, had subscribed to the defence fund. But, by the time Orton was released, in 1884, practically all interest had died away, and his effort to resuscitate it was a miserable failure. In the sworn confession which he published in *The People*, in 1895, he told the whole story of the fraud from its inception to its final dénouement. Orton survived his release from prison for fourteen years, but gradually sinking into poverty, he died in obscure lodgings in Shouldham Street, Marylebone, on April 1, 1898. To the end he was a fraud and impostor; for, before his death, he is said to have recanted his sworn confession, which nevertheless bore the stamp of truth and was in perfect accord with the information obtained by the prosecution, while his coffin bore the lying inscription: "Sir Roger Charles Doughty Tichborne; born 5th January, 1829; died 1st April, 1898."

[1] From "Famous Impostors."

XIV

CHARLES PEACE

Master-Thief

BY CHARLES WHIBLEY^[1]

Charles Peace, after the habit of his kind, was born of scrupulously honest parents. The son of a religious file-maker, he owed to his father not only his singular piety but his love of edged tools. As he never encountered an iron bar whose scission baffled him, so there never was a fire-eating Methodist to whose ministrations he would not turn a repentant ear. After a handy portico and a rich booty he loved nothing so well as a soul-stirring discourse. Not even his precious fiddle occupied a larger space in his heart than that devotion which the ignorant have termed hypocrisy. Wherefore his career was no less suitable to his ambition than his inglorious end. For he lived the king of housebreakers, and he died a warning to all evildoers, with a prayer of intercession trembling upon his lips.

The hero's boyhood is wrapped in obscurity. But it is certain that no glittering precocity brought disappointment to his maturer years, and he was already nineteen when he achieved his first imprisonment. Even then 'twas a sorry offence, which merited no more than a month, so that he returned to freedom and his fiddle with his character unbesmirched. Serious as ever in pious exercises, he gained a scanty living as strolling musician. There was never a tavern in Sheffield where the twang of his violin was unheard, and the skill wherewith he extorted music from a single string earned him the style and title of the modern Paganini. But such an employ was too mean for his pride, and he soon got to work again—this time with a better success. The mansions of Sheffield were his early prey, and a rich plunder rewarded his intrepidity. The design was as masterly as its accomplishment. The grand style is already discernible. The houses were broken in quietude and good order. None saw the opened window; none heard the step upon the stair; in truth, the victim's loss was his first intelligence.

But when the booty was in the robber's own safe-keeping, the empiricism of his method was revealed. As yet he knew no secret and efficient fence to shield him from detection; as yet he had not learnt that the

complete burglar works alone. This time he knew two accomplices—women both, and one his own sister! A paltry pair of boots was the clue of discovery, and a goodly stretch was the proper reward of a clumsy indiscretion. So for twenty years he wavered between the crowbar and the prison-house, now perfecting a brilliant scheme, now captured through recklessness or drink. Once when a mistake at Manchester sent him to the Hulks, he owned his failure was the fruit of brandy, and after his wont delivered (from the dock) a little homily upon the benefit of sobriety.

Meanwhile his art was growing to perfection. He had at last discovered that a burglary demands as diligent a forethought as a campaign; he had learnt that no great work is achieved by a multitude of minds. Before his boat carried off a goodly parcel of silk from Nottingham, he was known to the neighbourhood as an enthusiastic and skilful angler. One day he dangled his line, the next he sat peacefully at the same employ; and none suspected that the mild-mannered fisherman had under the cloud of night dispatched a costly parcel to London. Even the years of imprisonment were not ill-spent. Peace was still preparing the great achievement of his life, and he framed from solitary reflection as well as from his colleagues in crime many an ingenious theory afterwards fearlessly translated into practice. And when at last he escaped the slavery of the gaol, picture-framing was the pursuit which covered the sterner business of his life. His depredation involved him in no suspicion; his changing features rendered recognition impossible. When the exercise of his trade compelled him to shoot a policeman at Whalley Range, another was sentenced for the crime; and had he not encountered Mrs. Dyson, who knows but he might have practised his art in prosperous obscurity until claimed by a coward's death? But a stormy love-passage with Mrs. Dyson led to the unworthy killing of the woman's husband—a crime unnecessary and in no sense consonant to the burglar's craft; and Charles Peace was an outlaw, with a reward set upon his head.

And now came a period of true splendour. Like Fielding, like Cervantes, like Sterne, Peace reserved his veritable masterpiece for the certainty of middle life. His last two years were nothing less than a march of triumph. If you remember his constant danger, you will realize the grandeur of the scheme. From the moment that Peace left Bannercross with Dyson's blood upon his hands, he was a hunted man. His capture was worth five hundred pounds; his features were familiar to a hundred hungry detectives. Had he been less than a man of genius, he might have taken an unavailing refuge in flight or concealment. But, content with no safety unattended by affluence, he devised a surer plan: he became a householder. Now, a semi-detached villa is an impregnable stronghold. Respectability oozes from the dusky mortar of its bricks, and escapes in clouds of smoke from its soot-grimed

chimneys. No policeman ever detects a desperate ruffian in a demure black-coated gentleman who day after day turns an iron gate upon its rusty hinge. And thus, wrapt in a cloak of suburban piety, Peace waged a pitiless and effective war upon his neighbours.

He pillaged Blackheath, Greenwich, Peckham, and many another home of honest worth, with a noiselessness and a precision that were the envy of the whole family. The unknown and intrepid burglar was a terror to all the clerkdom of the City, and though he was as secret and secluded as Peace, the two heroes were never identified. At the time of his true eminence he "resided" in Evelina Road, Peckham, and none was more sensible than he how well the address became his provincial refinement. There he installed himself with his wife and Mrs. Thompson. His drawing-room suite was the envy of the neighbourhood; his pony-trap proclaimed him a man of substance; his gentle manners won the respect of all Peckham. Hither he would invite his friends to such entertainments as the suburb expected. His musical evenings were recorded in the local paper, while on Sundays he chanted the songs of Zion with a zeal which Clapham herself might envy.

But the house in Evelina Road was no mere haunt of quiet gentility. It was chosen with admirable forethought and with a stern eye upon the necessities of business. Beyond the garden wall frowned a railway embankment, which enabled the cracksman to escape from his house without opening the front door. By the same embankment he might, if he chose, convey the trophies of the night's work; and what mattered it if the windows rattled to the passing train? At least a cloud of suspicion was dispelled. Here he lived for two years, with naught to disturb his tranquillity save Mrs. Thompson's taste for drink. The hours of darkness were spent in laborious activity, the open day brought its own distractions. There was always Bow Street wherein to loaf, and the study of the criminal law lost none of its excitement from the reward offered outside for the bald-headed fanatic who sat placidly within. And the love of music was Peace's constant solace. Whatever treasures he might discard in a hurried flight, he never left a fiddle behind, and so vast became his pilfered collection that he had to borrow an empty room in a friend's house for its better disposal.

Moreover, he had a fervent pride in his craft; and you might deduce from his performance the whole theory and practice of burglary. He worked ever without accomplices. He knew neither the professional thief nor his lingo; and no association with gaol-birds involved him in the risk of treachery and betrayal. His single colleague was a friendly fence, and not even at the gallows's foot would he surrender this fence's name. But his master quality was a constructive imagination. Accident never marred his design. He would visit the house of his breaking until he understood its ground-plan, and was

familiar with its inhabitants. This demanded an amazing circumspection, but Peace was as stealthy as a cat, and he would keep silent vigil for hours rather than fail from a too instant anxiety. Having marked the place of his entry, and having chosen an appropriate hour, he would prevent the egress of his enemies by screwing up the doors. He then secured the room wherein he worked and, the job finished, he slung himself into the night by the window, so that, ere an alarm could be raised, his pony-trap had carried the booty to Evelina Road.

Such was the outline of his plan; but being no pedant, he varied it at will: nor was he likely to court defeat through lack of resource. Accomplished as he was in his proper business, he was equally alert to meet the accompanying risks. He had brought the art of cozening strange dogs to perfection; and for the exigence of escape, his physical equipment was complete. He would resist capture with unparalleled determination, and though he shuddered at the shedding of blood, he never hesitated when necessity bade him pull the trigger. Moreover, there was no space into which he would not squeeze his body, and the iron bars were not yet devised through which he could not make an exit. Once—it was at Nottingham—he was surprised by an inquisitive detective who demanded his name and trade. “I am a hawker of spectacles,” replied Peace, “and my license is downstairs. Wait two minutes and I’ll show it you.” The detective never saw him again. Six inches only separated the bars of the window, but Peace asked no more, and thus silently he won his freedom. True, his most daring feat—the leap from the train—resulted not in liberty, but in a broken head. But he essayed a task too high even for his endeavour, and, despite his manacles, at least he left his boot in the astonished warder’s grip.

No less remarkable than his skill and daring were his means of evasion. Even without a formal disguise he could elude pursuit. At an instant’s warning, his loose, plastic features would assume another shape; out shot his lower jaw, and, as if by magic, the blood flew into his face until you might take him for a mulatto. Or, if he chose, he would strap his arm to his side, and let the police be baffled by a wooden mechanism, decently finished with a hook. Thus he roamed London up and down unsuspected, and even after his last failure at Blackheath, none would have discovered Charles Peace in John Ward, the Single-Handed Burglar, had not woman’s treachery prompted detection. Indeed, he was an epitome of his craft, the Complete Burglar made manifest.

Not only did he plan his victories with previous ingenuity, but he sacrificed to his success both taste and sentiment. His dress was always of the most sombre; his only wear was the decent black of everyday godliness. The least spice of dandyism might have distinguished him from his fellows,

and Peace's whole vanity lay in his craft. Nor did the paltry sentiment of friendship deter him from his just course. When the panic aroused by the silent burglar was uncontrolled, a neighbour consulted Peace concerning the safety of his house. The robber, having duly noted the villa's imperfections, and having discovered the hiding-place of jewellery and plate, complacently rifled it the next night. Though his self-esteem sustained a shock, though henceforth his friend thought meanly of his judgment, he was rewarded with the solid pudding of plunder, and the world whispered of the mysterious marauder with a yet colder horror. In truth, the large simplicity and solitude of his style sets him among the Classics, and though others have surpassed him at single points of the game, he practised the art with such universal breadth and courage as were then a revolution, and are still unsurpassed.

But the burglar ever fights an unequal battle. One false step, and defeat o'erwhelms him. For two years had John Ward intimidated the middle-class seclusion of South London; for two years had he hidden from a curious world the ugly, furrowed visage of Charles Peace. The bald head, the broad-rimmed spectacles, the squat, thick figure—he stood but five-feet-four in his stockings, and adds yet another to the list of little great men—should have insured detection, but the quick change and the persuasive gesture were omnipotent, and until the autumn of 1878 Peace was comfortably at large. And then an encounter at Blackheath put him within the clutch of justice. His revolver failed him in its duty, and, valiant as he was, at last he met his match. In prison he was alternately insolent and aggrieved. He blustered for justice, proclaimed himself the victim of sudden temptation, and insisted that his intention had been ever innocent.

But, none the less, he was sentenced to a lifer, and, the mask of John Ward being torn from him, he was sent to Sheffield to stand his trial as Charles Peace. The leap from the train is already recorded; and at his last appearance in the dock he rolled upon the floor, a petulant and broken man. When once the last doom was pronounced, he forgot both fiddle and crowbar; he surrendered himself to those exercises of piety from which he had never wavered. The foolish have denounced him for a hypocrite, not knowing that the artist may have a life apart from his art, and that to Peace religion was an essential pursuit. So he died, having released from an unjust sentence the poor wretch who at Whalley Range had suffered for his crime, and offering up a consolatory prayer for all mankind. In truth, there was no enemy for whom he did not intercede. He prayed for his gaolers, for his executioner, for the Ordinary, for his wife, for Mrs. Thompson, his drunken doxy, and he went to his death with the sure step of one who, having done his duty, is reconciled with the world. The mob testified its affectionate admiration by dubbing him "Charley," and remembered with effusion his

last grim pleasantry. “What is the scaffold?” he asked with sublime earnestness. And the answer came quick and sanctimonious: “A shortcut to Heaven!”

[1] From “A Book of Scoundrels,” E. P. Dutton and Co., N. Y.

XV

SLADE

Border Ruffian

THOMAS J. DIMMESDALE^[1]

J. A. Slade, or, as he was often called, Captain Slade, was raised in Clinton County, Ill., and was a member of a highly respectable family. He bore a good character for several years in that place. The acts which have given so wide a celebrity to his name were performed especially on the Overland Line, of which he was for years an official.

Slade was, during his connection with the Overland Stage Company, frequently involved in quarrels which terminated fatally for his antagonists. The first and most memorable of these was his encounter with Jules, a station-keeper at Julesburg, on the Platte River. Between the inhabitants, the emigrants and the stage people, there was a constant feud, arising from quarrels about missing stock, alleged to have been stolen by the settlers, which constantly resulted in personal difficulties, such as beating, shooting, stabbing, etc., and it was from this cause that Slade became involved in a transaction which has become inseparably associated with his name, and which has given a colouring and tone to all descriptions of him, from the date of the occurrence to the present day.

There have been so many versions of the affair, all of them differing more or less in important particulars, that it has seemed impossible to get at the exact truth; but the following account may be relied on as substantially correct.

From overlanders and dwellers on the road we learn that Jules was himself a lawless and tyrannical man, taking such liberties with the coach stock and carrying matters with so high a hand that the company determined on giving the agency of the division to J. A. Slade. In a business point of view, they were correct in their selection. The coach went through at all hazards. It is not to be supposed that Jules would submit to the authority of a newcomer, or, indeed, of any man that he could intimidate; and a very limited intercourse was sufficient to increase the mutual dislike of the parties, so far as to occasion an open rupture and bloodshed. Slade, it is said,

had employed a man discharged by Jules, which irritated the latter considerably; but the overt act that brought matters to a crisis was the recovery by Slade of a team "sequestered" by Jules. Some state that there had been a previous altercation between the two; but, whether this be true or not, it appears certain that on the arrival of the coach, with Slade as a passenger, Jules determined to arrest the team, then and there; and that, finding Slade was equally determined on putting them through, a few expletives were exchanged, and Jules fired his gun, loaded with buckshot, at Slade, who was unarmed at the time, wounding him severely. At his death, Slade carried several of these shot in his body. Slade went down the road, till he recovered of his wound. Jules left the place, and in his travels never failed to let everybody know that he would kill Slade, who, on his part, was not backward in reciprocating such promises. At last, Slade got well; and, shortly after, was informed that his enemy had been "corralled by the boys," whereupon he went to the place designated, and, tying him fast, shot him to death by degrees. He also cut off his ears, and carried them in his vest pocket for a long time.

While on the road, Slade ruled supreme. He would ride down to a station, get into a quarrel, turn the house out of windows, and maltreat the occupants most cruelly. The unfortunates had no means of redress, and were compelled to recuperate as best they could. On one of these occasions, it is said, he killed the father of the fine little half-breed boy, Jemmy, whom he adopted, and who lived with his widow after his execution. He was a gentle, well-behaved child, remarkable for his beautiful, soft, black eyes, and for his polite address.

Sometimes Slade acted as a lyncher. On one occasion, some emigrants had their stock either lost or stolen and told Slade, who happened to visit their camp. He rode, with a single companion, to a ranch, the owners of which he suspected, and opening the door, commenced firing at them, killing three and wounding the fourth.

As for minor quarrels and shootings, it is absolutely certain that a minute history of Slade's life would be one long record of such practices. He was feared a great deal more, generally, than the Almighty, from Kearney, west. There was, it seems, something in his bold recklessness, lavish generosity, and firm attachment to his friends, whose quarrel he would back, everywhere and at any time, that endeared him to the wild denizens of the prairie, and his personal attachment it is that has cast a veil over his faults, so dark that his friends could never see his real character, or believe their idol to be a bloodstained desperado.

Stories of his hanging men, and of innumerable assaults, shootings, stabbings and beatings, in which he was a principal actor, form part of the

legends of the stage line; nevertheless, such is the veneration still cherished for him by many of the old stagers, that any insult offered to his memory would be fearfully and quickly avenged. Whatever he did to others, he was their friend, they say; and so they will say and feel till the tomb closes over the last of his old friends and comrades of the Overland.

It should be stated that Slade was, at the time of his coming West, a fugitive from justice in Illinois, where he killed a man with whom he had been quarrelling. Finding his antagonist to be more than his match, he ran away from him, and, in his flight, picking up a stone, he threw it with such deadly aim and violence that it penetrated the skull of his pursuer, over the eye, and killed him. Johnson, the sheriff, who pursued him for nearly four hundred miles, was in Virginia City not long since, as we have been informed by persons who knew him well.

Captain J. A. Slade came to Virginia City in the spring of 1863. He was a man gifted with the power of making money, and when free from the influence of alcoholic stimulants, which seemed to reverse his nature, and to change a kind-hearted and intelligent gentleman into a reckless demon, no man in the Territory had a greater faculty of attracting the favourable notice of even strangers, and in spite of the wild lawlessness which characterized his frequent spells of intoxication, he had many, very many friends whom no commission of crime itself could detach from his personal companionship. Another and less desirable class of friends were attracted by his very recklessness. There are probably a thousand individuals in the West possessing a correct knowledge of the leading incidents of a career that terminated at the gallows, who still speak of Slade as a perfect gentleman, and who not only lament his death, but talk in the highest terms of his character, and pronounce his execution a murder. One way of accounting for the diversity of opinion regarding Slade is sufficiently obvious. Those who saw him in his natural state only would pronounce him to be a kind husband, a most hospitable host and a courteous gentleman. On the contrary, those who met him when maddened with liquor and surrounded by a gang of armed roughs, would pronounce him a fiend incarnate.

During the summer of 1863 he went to Milk River as a freighter. For this business he was eminently qualified, and he made a great deal of money. Unfortunately his habit of profuse expenditure was uncontrollable, and at the time of his execution he was deeply in debt almost everywhere.

After the execution of the five men on the 14th of January the Vigilantes considered that their work was nearly ended. They had freed the country from highwaymen and murderers to a great extent, and they determined that in the absence of the regular civil authority they would establish a People's Court, where all offenders should be tried by a judge and jury. This was the

nearest approach to social order that the circumstances permitted, and though strict legal authority was wanting, yet the people were firmly determined to maintain its efficiency and to enforce its decrees. It may here be mentioned that the overt act which was the last round on the fatal ladder leading to the scaffold on which Slade perished, was the tearing in pieces and stamping upon a writ of this court, followed by the arrest of the judge, Alex. Davis, by authority of a presented derringer and with his own hands.

J. A. Slade was himself, we have been informed, a Vigilanter; he openly boasted of it, and said he knew all that they knew. He was never accused or even suspected of either murder or robbery committed in this Territory, but that he had killed several men in other localities was notorious, and his bad reputation in this respect was a most powerful argument in determining his fate, when he was finally arrested for the offence above-mentioned. On returning from Milk River he became more and more addicted to drinking; until at last it was a common feat for him and his friends to "take the town." He and a couple of his dependents might often be seen on one horse, galloping through the streets, shouting and yelling, firing revolvers, etc. On many occasions he would ride his horse into stores; break up bars, toss the scales out of doors, and use most insulting language to parties present. Just previous to the day of his arrest he had given a fearful beating to one of his followers; but such was his influence over them that the man wept bitterly at the gallows, and begged for his life with all his power. It had become quite common when Slade was on a spree for the shopkeepers and citizens to close the stores and put out all the lights; being fearful of some outrage at his hands. One store in Nevada he never ventured to enter—that of the Lott brothers—as they had taken care to let him know that any attempt of the kind would be followed by his sudden death, and though he often rode down there, threatening to break in and raise ——, yet he never attempted to carry his threat into execution. For his wanton destruction of goods and furniture he was always ready to pay when sober, if he had money; but there were not a few who regarded payment as small satisfaction for the outrage, and these men were his personal enemies.

From time to time, Slade received warnings, from men that he well knew would not deceive him, of the certain end of his conduct. There was not a moment, for weeks previous to his arrest, in which the public did not expect to hear of some bloody outrage. The dread of his very name, and the presence of the armed band of hangers-on who followed him, alone prevented a resistance which must certainly have ended in the instant murder or mutilation of the opposing party.

Slade was frequently arrested by order of the court whose organization we have described, and had treated it with respect by paying one or two

finer, and promising to pay the rest when he had money; but in the transaction that occurred at this crisis, he forgot even this caution, and goaded by passion and the hatred of restraint, he sprang into the embrace of death.

Slade had been drunk and "cutting up" all night. He and his companions had made the town a perfect hell. In the morning, J. M. Fox, the sheriff, met him, arrested him, took him into court, and commenced reading a warrant that he had for his arrest, by way of arraignment. He became uncontrollably furious, and seizing the writ, he tore it up, threw it on the ground, and stamped upon it. The clicking of the locks of his companions' revolvers was instantly heard and a crisis was expected. The sheriff did not attempt his capture; but being at least as prudent as he was valiant, he succumbed, leaving Slade the master of the situation, and the conqueror and ruler of the courts, law and law-makers. This was a declaration of war, and was so accepted. The Vigilance Committee now felt that the question of social order and the preponderance of the law-abiding citizens had then and there to be decided. They knew the character of Slade, and they were well aware that they must submit to his rule without murmur, or else that he must be dealt with in such fashion as would prevent his being able to wreak his vengeance on the Committee, who could never have hoped to live in the Territory secure from outrage or death, and who could never leave it without encountering his friends, whom his victory would have emboldened and stimulated to a pitch that would have rendered them reckless of consequences. The day previous, he had ridden into Dorris's store, and on being requested to leave, he drew his revolver and threatened to kill the gentleman who spoke to him. Another saloon he had led his horse into, and buying a bottle of wine, he tried to make the animal drink it. This was not considered an uncommon performance, as he had often entered saloons, and commenced firing at the lamps, causing a wild stampede.

A leading member of the Committee met Slade, and informed him in the quiet, earnest manner of one who feels the importance of what he is saying, "Slade, get your horse at once, and go home, or there will be —— to pay." Slade started and took a long look with his dark and piercing eyes, at the gentleman—"What do you mean?" said he. "You have no right to ask me what I mean," was the quiet reply, "get your horse at once, and remember what I tell you." After a short pause he promised to do so, and actually got into the saddle; but, being still intoxicated, he began calling aloud to one after another of his friends, and at last seemed to have forgotten the warning he had received and became again uproarious, shouting the name of a well-known prostitute in company with those of two men whom he considered heads of the Committee, as a sort of challenge; perhaps, however, as a single

act of bravado. It seems probable that the intimation of personal danger he had received had not been forgotten entirely; though, fatally for him, he took a foolish way of showing his remembrance of it. He sought out Alexander Davis, the Judge of the Court, and drawing a cocked derringer, he presented it at his head, and told him that he should hold him as a hostage for his own safety. As the Judge stood perfectly quiet, and offered no resistance to his captor, no further outrage followed on this score. Previous to this, on account of the critical state of affairs, the Committee had met, and at last resolved to arrest him. His execution had not been agreed upon, and, at that time, would have been negatived, most assuredly. A messenger rode down to Nevada to inform the leading men of what was on hand, as it was desirable to show that there was a feeling of unanimity on the subject, all along the Gulch.

The miners turned out almost *en masse*, leaving their work and forming in solid column, about six hundred strong, armed to the teeth, they marched up to Virginia. The leader of the body well knew the temper of his men on the subject. He spurred on ahead of them, and hastily calling a meeting of the Executive, he told them plainly that the miners meant "business," and that, if they came up, they would not stand in the street to be shot down by Slade's friends; but that they would take him and hang him. The meeting was small, as the Virginia men were loath to act at all. This momentous announcement of the feeling of the Lower Town was made to a cluster of men, who were deliberating behind a wagon, at the rear of a store on Main Street, where the Ohlinghouse stone building now stands.

The Committee were most unwilling to proceed to extremities. All the duty they had ever performed seemed as nothing to the task before them; but they had to decide, and that quickly. It was finally agreed that if the whole body of the miners were of the opinion that he should be hanged, the Committee left it in their hands to deal with him. Off, at hot speed, rode the leader of the Nevada men to join his command.

Slade had found out what was intended, and the news sobered him instantly. He went into P. S. Pfout's store, where Davis was, and apologized for his conduct, saying that he would take it all back.

The head of the column now wheeled into Wallace Street and marched up at quick time. Halting in front of the store, the executive officer of the Committee stepped forward and arrested Slade, who was at once informed of his doom, and inquiry was made as to whether he had any business to settle. Several parties spoke to him on the subject; but to all such inquiries he turned a deaf ear, being entirely absorbed in the terrifying reflections on his own awful position. He never ceased his entreaties for life, and to see his dear wife. The unfortunate lady referred to, between whom and Slade there

existed a warm affection, was at this time living at their ranch on the Madison. She was possessed of considerable personal attractions; tall, well-formed, of graceful carriage, pleasing manners, and was, withal, an accomplished horsewoman.

A messenger from Slade rode at full spend to inform her of her husband's arrest. In an instant she was in the saddle, and with all the energy that love and despair could lend to an ardent temperament and a strong physique, she urged her fleet charger over the twelve miles of rough and rocky ground that intervened between her and the object of her passionate devotion.

Meanwhile a party of volunteers had made the necessary preparations for the execution, in the valley traversed by the branch. Beneath the site of Pfout's and Russell's stone building there was a corral, the gate-posts of which were strong and high. Across the top was laid a beam, to which the rope was fastened, and a dry-goods box served for the platform. To this place Slade was marched, surrounded by a guard, composing the best-armed and most numerous force that has ever appeared in Montana Territory.

The doomed man had so exhausted himself by tears, prayers, and lamentations, that he had scarcely strength left to stand under the fatal beam. He repeatedly exclaimed, "My God! my God! must I die? Oh, my dear wife!"

On the return of the fatigue party, they encountered some friends of Slade, staunch and reliable citizens and members of the Committee, but who were personally attached to the condemned. On hearing of his sentence, one of them, a stout-hearted man, pulled out his handkerchief and walked away, weeping like a child. Slade still begged to see his wife most piteously, and it seemed hard to deny his request; but the bloody consequences that were sure to follow the inevitable attempt at a rescue, that her presence and entreaties would have certainly incited, forbade the granting of his request. Several gentlemen were sent for to see him in his last moments, one of whom (Judge Davis) made a short address to the people; but in such low tones as to be inaudible, save to a few in his immediate vicinity. One of his friends, after exhausting his powers of entreaty, threw off his coat and declared that the prisoner could not be hanged until he himself was killed. A hundred guns were instantly levelled at him; whereupon he turned and fled; but, being brought back, he was compelled to resume his coat, and to give a promise of future peaceable demeanor.

Scarcely a leading man in Virginia could be found, though numbers of the citizens joined the ranks of the guard when the arrest was made. All lamented the stern necessity which dictated the execution.

Everything being ready, the command was given, “Men do your duty,” and the box being instantly slipped from beneath his feet, he died almost instantaneously.

The body was cut down and carried to the Virginia Hotel, where, in a darkened room, it was scarcely laid out, when the unfortunate and bereaved companion of the deceased arrived, at headlong speed, to find that all was over, and that she was a widow. Her grief and heart-piercing cries were terrible evidences of the depth of her attachment for her lost husband, and a considerable period elapsed before she could regain the command of her excited feelings.

Such was Captain J. A. Slade, the idol of his followers, the terror of his enemies and of all that were not within the charmed circle of his dependents. In him, generosity and destructiveness, brutal lawlessness and courteous kindness, firm friendship and volcanic outbreaks of fury, were so mingled that he seems like one born out of date. He should have lived in feudal times, and have been the comrade of the Front de Bœufs, De Lacys, and Bois Guilberts, of days almost forgotten. In modern times he stands nearly alone.

The execution of Slade had a most wonderful effect upon society. Henceforth, all knew that no one man could domineer or rule over the community. Reason and civilization then drove brute force from Montana.

[1] From “The Vigilantes of Montana.”

THE END

Transcriber's Notes

Obvious typographic errors have been corrected, and the hyphenation of words has been changed to match the predominant use in the book.

The footnotes have been renumbered sequentially within the chapter or section in which they fall and then moved to the end of that chapter or section.

[The end of *The Book of The Rogue* by Joseph Lewis French]