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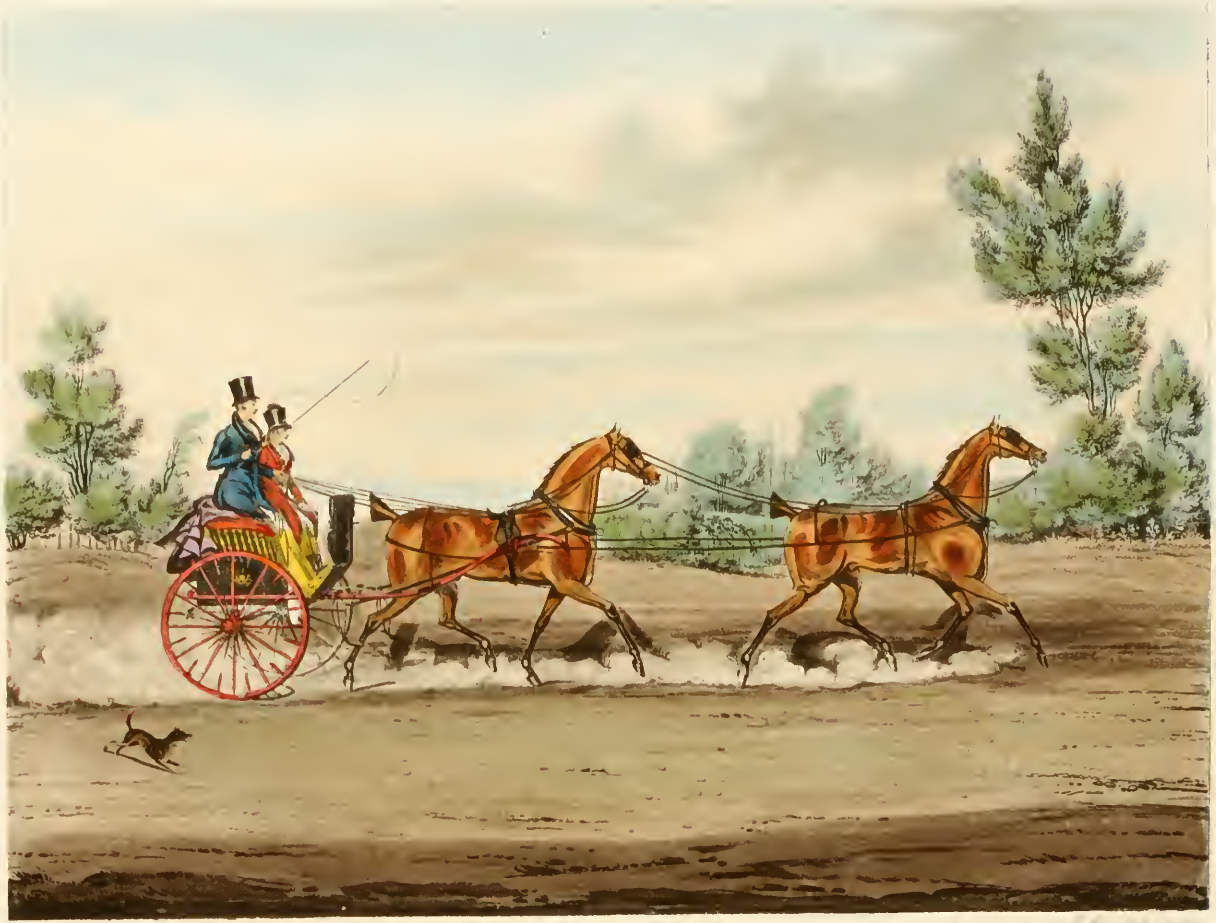
THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A STAGE COACHMAN



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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF A
STAGE COACHMAN

BY
THOMAS CROSS

ILLUSTRATED WITH 43 PLATES BY JAMES POLLARD, ROBERT
HAVELL, C. COOPER HENDERSON, C. B. NEWHOUSE
THOMAS ROWLANDSON, H. ALKEN
AND OTHERS

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. II.

LONDON
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO. LTD.
DRYDEN HOUSE, 43, GERRARD STREET, W.
1904

LONDON:
PRINTED BY GILBERT AND RIVINGTON LIMITED,
ST. JOHN'S HOUSE, CLERKENWELL, E.C.

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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A STAGE COACHMAN

CHAPTER I

THE BOX

Modern Philosophy—Sir Robert Walpole—A Railway Director—Coach Passengers—A Birmingham Man—The St. Leger—The Post-Horse Duty — A Strange Bet — Self-approbation — A Warwickshire Grazier (Culloden)—A Lace Buyer—Female Accomplishment—R. W. Elliston—Don Juan—A Dashing Military Officer — A Pleasant *tête-à-tête* — The Retreat to Corunna—General Lefevre Desnouettes—Sergeant Bunn, of the 18th Hussars—The Emperor Napoleon I.—A Cartel—A Sad *Finalé*—A Good Character.

"The proper study of mankind is man," is a maxim as durable, nay, as imperishable, as is the fame of the man who wrote it—an author whose poetic works adorn our literature, and whose name will ever be held in that veneration and esteem his writings are calculated to inspire, and to justify the verdict pronounced on both, by contemporaries and posterity. Nevertheless, worthy as his words are of all acceptation, they are capable of two constructions—Man in relation to his God; man in relation to his fellow-man.

Man, the sublime image of his Maker: man, the diminutive and distant, yet perfect, reflection of the great Creator's attributes, praising and glorifying His infinite wisdom, goodness, and power; and man toiling in his predetermined lot, fulfilling his prescribed career, urging, bending, controlling all things in creation to his use: man, enjoying and exulting in the reward due to the judicious exercise of his corporeal or mental functions.

No man can refute the justice of this axiom; and in its latter sense all men may claim a right to apply it to their own immediate associations. It has been and is practised, in the court and in the cabinet, in the camp and in the cockpit, on the bench and in the senate; and many of our great men owe their elevation and possession of power by steadily pursuing it.

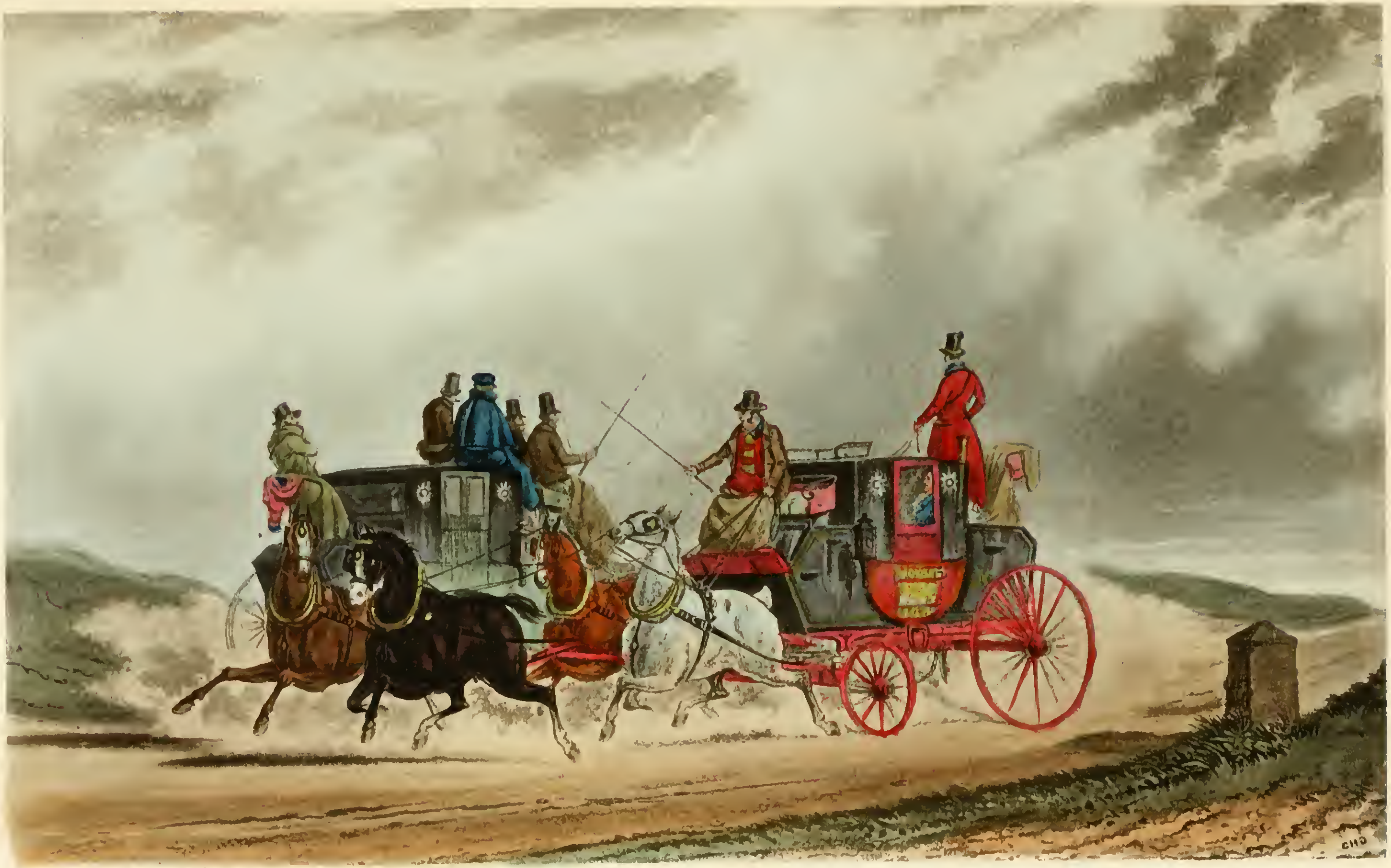
If this be the truth—and our history, as well of to-day as of yesterday, gives irrefragable proof that it is so—it must equally apply to the different grades that make up this vast and varied community. Its principle relates as much to the man who could raise himself from the box of a stage-coach to be at the head of an extensive railroad company, and afterwards to be a Member of Parliament—the highest honour, we are told from the hustings, an Englishman can aspire to—as it does to that minister who could boast of his knowing the price of every man in the House of Commons—sufficient evidence that both had made man their study, and by that one talent only did the latter maintain his supremacy in the councils of two successive sovereigns; and by the same rule did the former, aided, perhaps, early in life by fortuitous circumstances, work himself up to the ascendency and distinction he both desired and deserved.

I have been led into this train of reflection merely to show that the coach-box is not the worst school for acquiring the knowledge already spoken of—though, perhaps, the person occupying that position may have made it only a place of observation and amusement, and as such may not have turned it to advantage.

The gentleman above referred to has now paid the debt of nature, and it is but due to his memory to state that, to his indefatigable perseverance, his application to business, his forethought and general capacity, is to be attributed the success of that company of which he was so long and so deservedly the head; which, for its efficiency and its remuneration to the shareholders, ranks among the first railroad companies in the kingdom. At his death he had accumulated near half a million of money, it is said—an immense sum for a coachman to realize—more, perhaps, than the industry and talents of any one man ought to realize; and to his lasting praise it must be recorded, that he did not forget, but took pains to provide for, many of his dependents, whose means of subsistence were destroyed by the introduction of the new method of travelling. Had others upon whom the author had far greater claims done the like, he would not have been in the unenviable position for the last ten or twelve years, to which that great change condemned him.

The road on which I now drove, and more particularly the coach I was on, admitted of a far greater variety of character than the one I recently quitted. Going to a large manufacturing town, and passing through a rich agricultural and pastoral district—which included a place of fashionable resort rising yearly in favour with the public—I had an opportunity of making the acquaintance of the button-maker from Birmingham, with his cadaverous hue, soiled white waistcoat, and unwashed hands; the jolly-looking, lusty grazier, his cheeks glowing with health, and his long drab coat enveloping a form that told of an unrestricted enjoyment of the good things of this world, a few of which class half the year were my regular clients; the lace-buyers, who bi-monthly visited Stony Stratford and Towcester, and their neighbourhood; the pretty Warwickshire lasses, who periodically came up for the fashions; and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, as I will term those who inhabited the delightful spot—that, being free from the smoke of furnaces on the one hand, and the busy turmoil of the great metropolis on the other, held out such flattering invitations to, and administered to the wants of, the votaries of pleasure—and, last to be enumerated, those votaries themselves.

Among my most frequent companions from the first-named place was an extraordinary character; even the present Member for that then unrepresented borough has not attained greater celebrity in its neighbourhood. Unlike our Quaker friend, neither political power nor senatorial distinction had any charms for him. Money, with the pleasures and enjoyments it produces, was his object, and fortune seemed to mark him as an especial favourite; for she tempted and rewarded his advances with her choicest gifts, and his name and fame were as familiar to the inhabitants of Birmingham then as is that of the great



Painted by C. Cooper Henderson.

LEEDS ROYAL MAIL COACHES SALUTING-HALF WAY

London Published Octr 1st 1837 by R. Ackermann at his Eclipse Sporting Gallery, 191, Regent St.

Radical orator now,—though the origin as well as the career of the two men were very different. He was not a button-maker, or a gun-maker, or a hardware manufacturer at all; but he had contrived to hammer out himself considerable wealth, from the pulpit or rostrum of the well-known and much-frequented repository he had established.

"By what bye-paths and indirect crooked ways" he had risen to this station no man but himself could tell. Illiterate in the fullest meaning of the word—not being capable at one time of writing his own name even—he had ascended from the very lowest step in the ladder of life, and, by dint of intuition, perseverance, and cunning, had ultimately attained the topmost round—that summit which many of our magnates have aspired to all their lives in vain:—he won the St. Leger—and rightly named his horse[1] after the town that had been the scene of both his struggles and his success.

Providence had given him a help-meet for him, who conducted his correspondence, superintended his books, graced his hospitable board, and otherwise by the ease and unaffected politeness of her demeanour, and the use of good, sound common sense, had contrived to make his name respected and his acquaintance desired by men of all grades and people of all denominations.

About the time I knew him he had reached the meridian of life, and to all appearance was moving in a respectable sphere. His manners and speech were homely, but not coarse, his conversation fluent on all matters of business of any and every description; he was apparently of a kindly disposition, his spirits were always good, and he was ready to enjoy a joke, though at his own expense. As a proof of this I must mention, that among his multitudinous affairs—for he dabbled in anything where there was a chance of gain—he was a contractor, or farmer, of the Post-horse Duty, a part of revenue arising from and paid by those who were licensed to let horses for hire, which duty was put up to public tender by the Commissioners at Somerset House every third year,—England and Wales being divided into districts,—each district containing six or seven counties —Scotland being a district of itself.

---

[1] Mr. Beardsworth's "Birmingham" won the St. Leger in 1828.

In this admirable school he had received his education, and had been early initiated in all the art that was frequently resorted to for the greater, though no doubt, fair remuneration of the lessees. Now, to the shrewdness of intellect—or, perhaps, sharpness might be the proper term—necessary for the members of this unique fraternity, the acquirements of the betting-ring or the stock-exchange were as nothing. Such practice might be styled the acme of human ingenuity, as exhibited within the pale of the law.

My friend from Birmingham had already established his fame as a principal member of this community, by imparting something to the Commissioners, by which they could contrive to screw a little more out of the pockets of the innkeepers, and thereby very much increase the revenue; for this they had rewarded him with a present of £1,000.

The gift had created some jealousy on the part of his compeers; but a good understanding seemed to prevail among them the evening they all met prior to the letting, at an hotel in the city, where my friend would have me accompany him after my arrival in London. In the course of the conversation that arose I found he had credit for enlarging or exceeding the truth in matters of both small and great importance, as had another gentleman in the company, who was remarkable for a deep and crafty expression of countenance, and came from Newbury; he was well stricken in years, and did, by the relation of some few discrepancies the other had been guilty of, astonish the whole company.

My friend took it all very good-humouredly, and repaid him in the same coin, till each of them vieing with the other on the palpable absurdity of their stories, and taking credit for their own skill in exaggeration, my friend challenged the other in a bet for a dinner and wine for the party, amounting to about twenty, to decide which of the two, to make use of the vernacular, should —pardon, gentle reader—tell the biggest lie.

They tossed for the first speaker, which was won by the elderly gentleman, who, after collecting all the solemnity he could into his wizened visage, rose from his seat, and said in a slow and audible voice, at the same time striking his hand upon the table, to make his expression more forcible—"There is not an honester man in England than John Beardsworth." A roar of laughter was the result, for everyone well understood this pointed satire. This was no sooner over, than all eyes were turned on his opponent. He sat with his elbows resting on the table, his face covered with his hands, and did not appear to heed the mirth his adversary's laconic speech had elicited ; but seemed to be considering what he should say in retaliation. What was our surprise, then, when, gently raising his head from his hands, and looking round the room with a complacent smile, he said —" Gentlemen, I'll pay the bet."

The next day the majority of the company, myself included, for he insisted on my remaining in town—sat down to as good a dinner as the city of London could provide, and no expense was spared in the variety or quality of the wines. The winner and the loser sat at each end of the table, and to my great surprise no reference whatever was made to the subject of the bet. All passed off in the greatest good-humour, heightened, no doubt, by the success that one and all had met with at Somerset House in the morning. The bill was called for and cheerfully paid by my friend, without a syllable being said by the company ; and when they dispersed, and I retired to bed, I might have said, This man has made mankind his study to some purpose.

In those sturdy and useful sons of the soil whose company I generally had up on the Saturday or Sunday, and down on the Tuesday, I met with little variety of character, and nothing to call for any particular notice, except that with them I found myself quite at home, both on the box and on the Monday evening at their inn, after their day's work in Smithfield, when enveloped in one cloud of smoke, imbibing strong potations, and making display of as many acquirements as their vocation required. These they all seemed to know how to apply. Although their conversation would not extend beyond the breed of oxen, I listened with attention when they discussed the peculiar qualities of each, and their adaptation to this or that particular soil. I also discovered that they were all men of substance in every sense of that word; among them, I remember, was the father of the young man so heartlessly and cruelly sent to his last account by that inhuman monster, Palmer.

I remember about this time going into a field at Redbourn, where there was a drove of Highland oxen, on their way to Barnet Fair. Observing three or four among them with particularly large and wide-spread horns, evidently worked oxen, and otherwise showing symptoms of mature age, I asked the drover—a pure Scotchman—how old he might suppose them to be.

"Indeed," said Sawney, "I canna' say; they might have draw'd the 'tillery for Charley at the battle of Culloden, for aught I know!"

The lace buyers were men of ordinary capacity and ordinary conversation; nevertheless, from them I learnt the nature of the occupation of the female part of the community they were in the habit of visiting, which spoke much for the industry and cleanliness of the cottagers in that part of the country. What a pity that machinery, in the wide-spread good that it has accomplished, should, at its outset, be subversive of such qualities.

In the summer months I was indulged, frequently, with the company of some of the fairer part of the creation, and their attraction, I could find, was not diminished by surveying and enjoying the beauties of nature from the roof of a stage-coach; indeed, it seemed to give additional charms to their conversation, and awaken a degree of interest that would sometimes create a feeling I thought buried in the grave. This, however, was only transient, though I recollect one fair creature made a little deeper impression on my memory than usual, by a request to be allowed to add to the accomplishments she already possessed, that of driving four horses. There was such a novelty in this position, so much *naïveté* in her manner of expressing it—it, too, was accompanied by so sweet a smile, and was so earnest an appeal to my gallantry, that it completely surmounted all the scruples and objections I could entertain. I instantly gave her the reins, and sat by her side, she taking my seat while she drove one entire stage, and acquitted herself with good execution and judgment, as much to my surprise as her own satisfaction and delight.

Another of my frequent and most pleasant companions from Mesopotamia, as I have termed those two delightful places, Warwick and Leamington, was a man who still lives in the memory of my readers, and whose fame has been recorded by far more able pens than mine. He was domiciled then at the latter place, and being at the same time the lessee of the Olympic, was frequently backward and forward. I had some slight knowledge of him before, having met him at a dinner-party in London, consisting chiefly of theatricals. At our first interview on the coach-box he recognized me, and expressed himself glad to renew the acquaintance; and his conversation teeming with anecdotes of authors and actors of his time, his harmless satire and his turn of mimicry and ridicule, made his company at all times agreeable. The gratification he professed to have in my society made me look forward, with pleasurable anticipation, to the time of having him for my box companion. He was always in good spirits, and had something fresh to communicate from the literary world. He had, somehow or other, become prepossessed that I had a talent that way, and was continually urging me to give the world a proof of it, and himself at the same time, by writing a play; and all that I could say in derision or ridicule never disabused his mind of so fallacious an opinion.

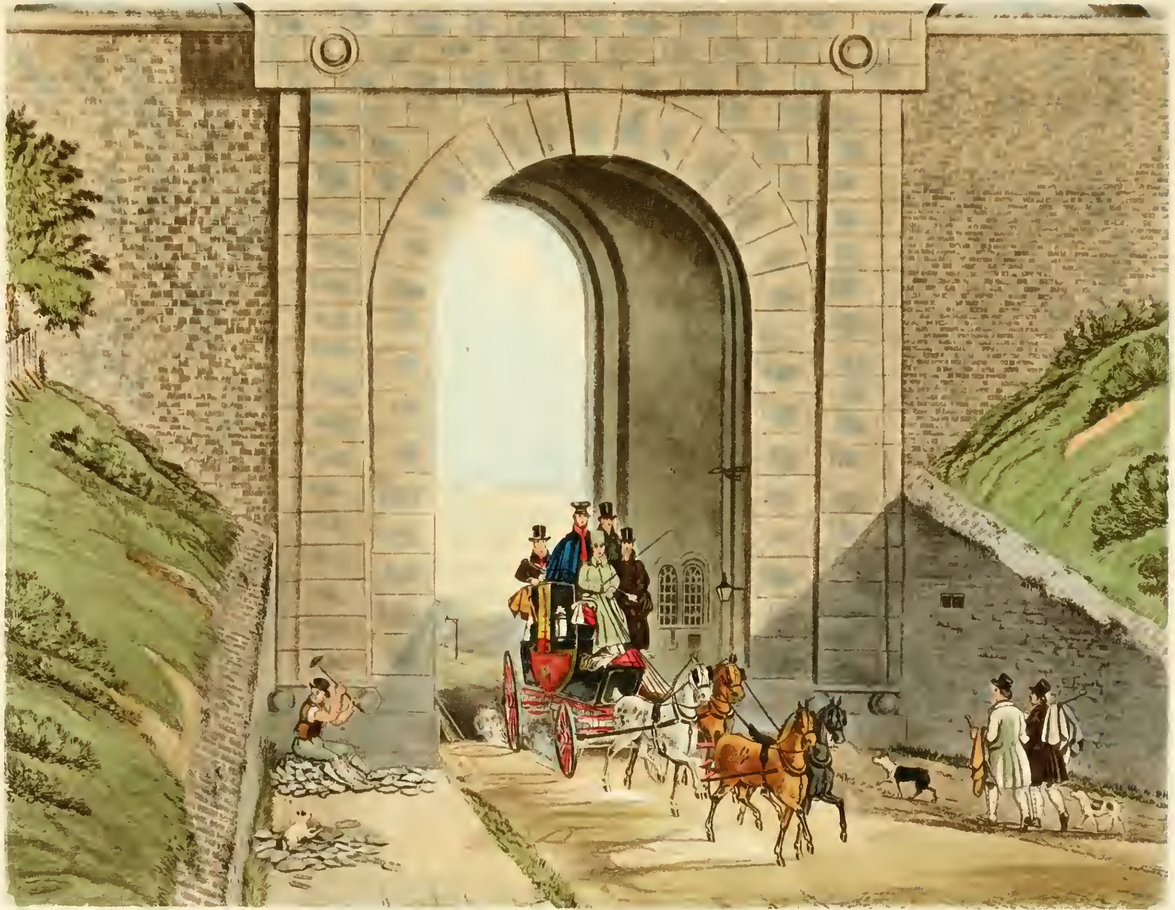
One fine summer's morning, I recollect he had a parcel in his hand, which he would not allow the porter to dispose of with his other luggage. After we had left the "Peacock" at Islington, he opened it, when it proved to be a copy, in quarto, of the first and second cantos of "Don Juan," which had been sent him by the publisher the day before, by desire of the noble author, who was then, I believe, in Italy. He read it aloud in a clear, natural voice, in a vivacious and emphatic strain, quite in accordance with the spirit of the subject, and sufficiently audible for the passengers on the roof to hear and enjoy.

Among them was a man habited as a sailor, and a regular tar he was (a *rara avis* in that latitude), who evinced his delight by rubbing his hands and laughing aloud at some of the incidents, so graphically depicted in that rare, but not very chaste, production; this caused my friend to stop and look round, and then to pursue his task with additional zest. When he had finished, and all had thanked him for the great treat he had given us, he told me he was in treaty for Drury Lane Theatre, and had written to Lord Byron to prepare him a tragedy, intimating the existence of a compact between him and the noble poet; "and now, my dear sir," he added, "do you do the same. I am sure it is in you; therefore, pray turn your mind to it." I took my leave of him that morning, thanking him for his company; but thinking little of his knowledge of my understanding.

About two or three weeks after this, I was proceeding one evening at a pretty good pace through Highgate Archway, the spot where I usually met the mails, six in number, coming out of London, when one of them hailed me to pull up, as he had done. I did so, and immediately the door of the Holyhead mail opened; a gentleman got out, and, coming towards me, placed one foot on my roller-bolt, his left hand holding by my box-iron, I instantly recognized my friend, R. W. Elliston, who hurriedly said, "Give me your hand: I have this day become the lessee of Drury Lane, signed and sealed not two hours ago; now, I look to you to help me all you can—so write me a play, and set about it as early as possible." I could not restrain a smile, as he grasped my hand; though I wished him all the success he could desire in so gigantic an undertaking. He returned to his vehicle—to digest the extra bottle of wine I supposed he must have taken on such an occasion—while I remained to ruminate on the infatuation of a man so well up in most things, but who had studied his fellow-man to very little purpose.

I must now draw on my memory for an example of another class of persons.

Idlers, in search of health, pleasure, or amusement, sometimes took their seats in the only conveyance that



nted by James Pollard.

Engraved by G. Hun

HIGHGATE TUNNEL

London Published by J. Moore, 1. West Street Upper St. Martins Lane

went direct from the metropolis to this second Bath or Cheltenham. Among them was one who might literally be called a man of fashion ; his appearance, manners, and conversation evinced the finished gentleman of the Irish school; there was that also in his exterior which always marks the military man—an upright carriage, with a sort of *bon-hommie* expression. His confident brow was accompanied by a full laughing eye and a brilliant complexion; while the good-natured smile that played upon his lips not only rendered his address at all times agreeable, but would predispose any one in his favour. His figure, too, naturally good, had been improved by his profession. In short, he was a person who, from experience, had a perfect knowledge of the ways of the world, and had himself played a considerable part in it. It was therefore impossible to be in his company for a few hours on the box, without being highly pleased with his conversation.

From motives that were afterwards explained to me by my brother whip from Warwick, he had taken a house near the road, some few miles the London side of Southam; had furnished it with every comfort, and formed a respectable establishment. This was intended only as a temporary residence, as he advertised in the provincial papers that he wanted to purchase an estate of some magnitude, in either of the counties of Oxon, Warwick or Bucks.

As our intercourse was frequent, we became on familiar terms; and after repeated invitations to accompany him to his residence, I promised compliance. Accordingly, on a stated day, leaving a deputy to take the return coach, I got off at Weedon, and walked from thence to his house. I met with a hearty welcome, and, after showing me his horses, four in number, apparently of the most valuable description, his lawns and conservatory, then his library and cellar, we sat down to a dinner as *recherché* as such a distance from the metropolis would admit. A brother whip was to have joined us, but, being disappointed in the man who had promised to officiate for him, I was quite alone with my entertainer.

The conversation during dinner was on the common occurrences of the day. We were waited on by a man out of livery, and it did not require an *habitué* to discover that, had his board been graced with people of the first quality and of both sexes, my host would have done the honours with elegance and ease.

As it happened, we were *tête-à-tête* over wine of the choicest vintage ; and, after a pretty free circulation of it, he, I may say, gave me his history, or at least part of it. It was interesting, as it related to the Peninsular War, of which I had read much, and heard more, from my friend the Commissary and others who had been present in some of the engagements and had witnessed the privations that generally attended the alternate advance and retreat of our forces.

My friend, it seems, was the younger son of a respectable Irish family ; had entered the army young, and had volunteered into the Portuguese service—on the first occasion, immediately after the Convention of Cintra, and before the formation of the Lusitanian Legion by Sir Robert T. Wilson, under whose command it did such essential service ; to this force he was afterwards attached.

His regiment of Caçadores formed part of the army that advanced into Spain under Sir John Moore, and, in the disastrous retreat to Corunna, formed part of the rear-guard, which was continually engaged with the advanced troops of the enemy, who, headed by Napoleon himself, with the corps of Soult and Ney, were absolutely, in the words used by that great military chief, driving us into the sea. "Upon one occasion, when very much harrassed with their cavalry," my host stated, "we made a stand, and by a judicious movement had hemmed in their advanced guard. Lord Paget, at the head of a brigade of our hussars, made a desperate charge upon them, which completely broke their line, and enabled our fellows to take many prisoners. Among others was Bonaparte's favourite Cavalry General, Lefevre Desnouettes."

I had listened with great attention and interest up to this time, when I interposed, and said, "I knew the man who took him."

"I took him," he said.

"Pardon me," I replied; "he was taken by a sergeant of the 18th Hussars, I always understood. Indeed," I added, "I had it from the sergeant's own lips: his name was Bunn."

"Hear me," said my friend; "we both are right. Sergeant Bunn with a dozen or more troopers, had surrounded the General on the battle-field, and demanded him to surrender. He refused to give up his sword, as there was no commissioned officer present, the rest of the regiment having galloped on in pursuit; and he and his *aide-de-camp* would have been sabred, had I not opportunely stepped up, and, speaking to the General in French, he immediately gave me his sword. You will no longer doubt me, I hope."

I bowed, and attempted an apology.

"Say not a word about it," he exclaimed; "you were not aware of the nice points of etiquette or chivalrous honour displayed on such occasions; but pray, may I ask where were you acquainted with Sergeant Bunn?"

"At Portsmouth," I said, "when the army disembarked from Corunna; and recently at St. Albans, where the regiment was disbanded."

He then proceeded:—

"On the following morning I presented the French General at headquarters, and he was sent to England from Vigo or Corunna, prior to our evacuating the latter place."

"And subsequently," I added, again interposing, "broke his parole, and regained France in an open boat; which was considered a most extraordinary feat."

"Well," he said, "the short time we were together we grew in each other's estimation, and at parting he thanked me for the kind treatment and courtesy he had received, saying, 'We may never meet again, but should it be your fortune to become a prisoner in the hands of the French army, endeavour to convey to the Emperor your knowledge of me and the cause of it, and you shall receive similar treatment at our hands.' It so chanced that two or three years afterwards, in the retreat from Burgos, after the battle of Salamanca, I was taken prisoner about the same time as Sir Edward Paget, who commanded a division. I was sent to the rear, and soon after with an escort to Paris, where I heard General

Lefevre Desnouettes was, he having shortly before made his escape from England, in the way you have mentioned. I immediately wrote to him, making known my situation. It was not long before the General was at my side, and took me to his hotel. He then asked me in what way he could be of service to me—what was the first wish of my heart? 'To return to England,' I said. At this he seemed to demur, and was silent for a time. At length he said: 'Will you allow me to introduce you to the Emperor?—he holds a levée to-morrow, where I have to be present.' I replied that I should feel proud of the opportunity of seeing so remarkable a man.

"Accordingly, on the following morning, I, attended by the General, was presented to this idol of the French soldiery, and who was at that time the dread of Europe. The General, in a few words, stated that I was an officer in the British army, who had recently been sent prisoner from Spain, and that upon a former occasion, when he was taken by the British, he owed his life to his gallant intercession. The Emperor, with his usual blandness of manner, expressed his pleasure at the interview, and, after ascertaining my country, asked me what rank I held in the British army. I replied, in French, 'A major in the Portuguese service.' "There is no such rank in the French army, Chef d'Escadron,' said he; 'will you accept the same rank in my Irish Brigade?' 'What would you think of me, Sire, if I were to accept your offer?' I demanded; 'or what would you have thought of any of your officers, this distinguished General in particular, had he taken up arms in our service?'

"'*C'est assez*,' said the Emperor; and cut short the interview by ordering a cartel to be provided for me without delay, contrary to his severe practice, for I was the only officer sent home during the whole war; as you must well remember, there was no exchange of prisoners allowed."

So entertained was I with my host's discourse, that it was morning before we retired to rest. While taking my leave of him after breakfast, and during my walk to meet the coach, I could but meditate on the fortune of war, and the opportunities the military profession afforded for acquiring a knowledge of the world.

My friend had kept the box-seat for me, and no sooner had I placed myself beside him, than, anxious to know how I had spent the preceding evening, he asked me many questions as to my opinion concerning my host, which I did not fail to answer in the favourable manner his handsome treatment and interesting conversation warranted. He then told me that the house he occupied was his father's property, and that his family, anxious to know the cause of his choosing this part of the country for his abode, had discovered that he was laying siege to the heart of a young heiress in the neighbourhood. In the event of this ending successfully, I learnt that my friend had been promised the four best coach-horses England could produce.

I thought it rather strange that the Major should select for a confidant, in so serious a matter as matrimony, one of the fraternity to which I belonged. My friend was, however, one of the most respectable members of it, it has been my chance to know; and if ever this meets his eye, he will recognize the circumstance I am relating, as well as identify the narrator, and probably recall some happy reminiscences of this period of his life.

The most melancholy part of the tale remains to be told. I did not see the subject of it but once or twice after my visit, but I heard from my friend that, two or three months after, the whole contents of the house were in the hands of the sheriff's officer, and that the tenant had left that neighbourhood, never to return. A very few years after I read in the papers that—(as I suppose driven by necessity and pride)—he had condescended to practices by which on his detection, in accordance with the sanguinary laws then in operation, his life had become forfeited, and rather than expiate his crime upon the scaffold, that he, it was supposed by means of prussic acid, had terminated his existence in the condemned cell in Newgate, on the night preceding his intended execution in the front of that prison. The incident caused great excitement at the time.

I will now relate a reminiscence on the road of a totally different complexion.

One winter's morning, before it was light, I was hailed to pull up at the "Cross Keys," in St. John Street, where the Leicester coach usually stopped, and was asked by a gentleman if I could overtake the Leicester coach, which had been gone five or ten minutes.

I replied, "Yes, as its passengers always stopped to breakfast at St. Albans."

There being no one on the box, he directly occupied that seat, and soon entered into conversation. Finding he had recently been at Portsmouth, I took the opportunity of asking after many of my former familiar acquaintances, most of whom he seemed to know perfectly well. From many circumstances he related of them, it struck me that he might have heard of the individual to whom he was speaking, although I could not recall the slightest knowledge of him.

However, as he seemed to be very communicative, I presently said to him, "You seem to know many of the Portsmouth people, did you ever know of a young man?"—naming my own name.

"Oh, very well," he replied—"a dashing young fellow—used to carry himself rather high, a cut above the others, as he thought himself."

"Do you know what has become of him?" I asked.

"Oh, he has gone to the dogs long ago."

It might have been the third or fourth year of my having left that vicinity, and the subject of our conversation was the demerits of that individual, in which I had the gratification of hearing myself handsomely abused, till we pulled up at the "Peahen," St. Albans, where stood the Leicester coach, without horses, and the passengers all at breakfast.

"What have I to pay?" said my friend.

"Five shillings," I replied.

He immediately tendered me a one-pound note; I called to the Leicester coachman, who generally stood outside the door, to give me the time of day in passing.

"Mr. Fossee, have the goodness to give this gentleman change for his note—he is going on with you."

"Certainly, sir," he said, calling me by name, and touching his hat—for old Tom and I were always on the best of terms.

At hearing my name, my late companion appeared confounded. Getting on the wheel, he gave me the five shillings, and began muttering an apology, saying he was not at all aware of who he was riding with, or he should not so have committed himself. I told him that there was no necessity for any apology, or even of withdrawing anything he had said, for I had been very much amused with his conversation; and after recommending him to be more particular in future as to the correctness of the information he appeared so pleased to impart, I advised him to be careful also how he spoke in strange company of persons he knew so little about. Again thanking him for the amusement he had afforded me—he at the same time looking very sheepish—I wished him good morning, and drove off.

CHAPTER II

MISCELLANY

Characters of all Grades—The Great Lord Chief—Discontent—The Road to Improvement—Manchester Cobourg—Lawrence Sterne—Liverpool Umpire—A Scene at Finchley—One of the Rudiments of the Art—A Particular Gentleman—The Two Holyhead Mails—An Inquest—Doleful Interview—An Anomaly in Law—The Ship-Doctor—Morning Call—Portrait—Reception—Great Horse—Thirsty Soul—A Brother—The Bay of Naples—Wounded Officer—An Operation—Trifling Error—Magnanimity and Forbearance—Messmates—Tobias Smollett—Hearty Buck—St. Albans—An Easter Sunday—The Abbey—Devotion—A Family Picture—St. Augustin—History—Purity of Election—Gallantry—A Funeral—Stratford-on-Avon—Woodstock—Wallingford—The Miller—Strange Courtesy—Impromptu—The Passing Bell—The Churchyard.

Among the numerous varieties of human character I was enabled to study on the box, there chanced to be a sweep, who travelled with me two or three times a year. Though he was a master man—and came to collect his money from his different customers, the Hertfordshire farmers in that neighbourhood, who used his soot for manure—and I daresay a wealthy man, yet was he every inch a sweep—in appearance, compass of intellect, and desires; for he seemed to have no wish to be ranked above his profession. How little beyond him in conversation and capacity were one or two noblemen, with whom at that time I also became acquainted, who might have changed stations, much for the advantage of the community, with their own stable-boy or game-keeper!

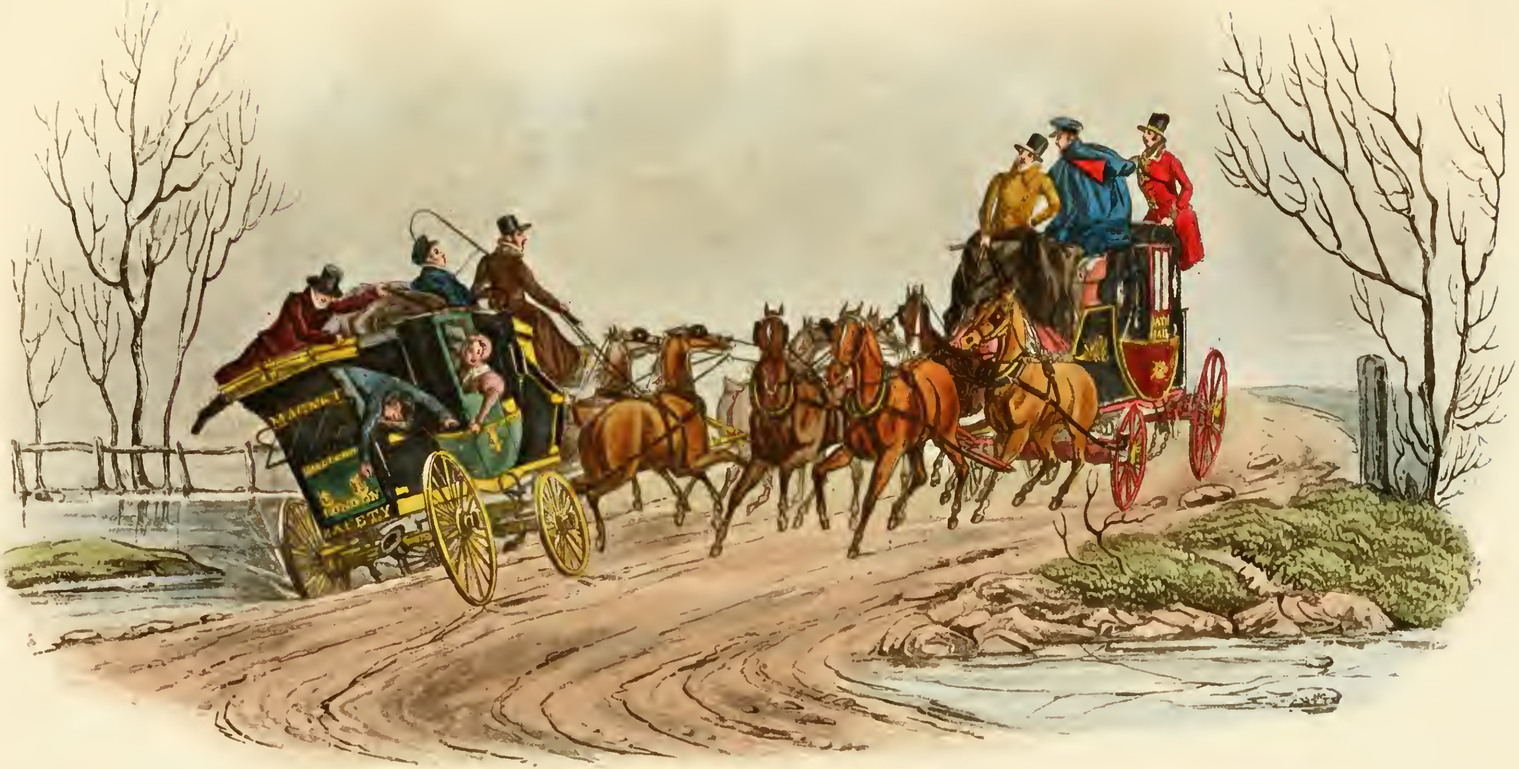
Sometimes a sober divine—occasionally a dignitary of the Church—I found seated by my side, whose conversation would awaken sympathies that the change of position and the daily repetition of objects presented to my observation had almost driven from my mind. At other times a barrister, from Warwick assizes, who would raise my wonder at recalling or rehearsing some extraordinary trial, such as that of Abraham Thornton for the murder of a female; which caused a great excitement in the neighbourhood about this time. His ingenious defence, under the guidance of Mr. Campbell, was the first step in the ladder that enabled his Counsel to attain to the summit of his profession; a proof that even the greatest ability is sometimes indebted to accident, or some happy conjunction, for the first and full development of the acumen and depth of legal knowledge of its possessor.

But all these things began to lose their charm, and my thoughts would frequently revert, sometimes in a sudden, strange, and unaccountable manner, to my former state, and to the irremediable losses I felt I had sustained—the first and greatest of which was domestic happiness; and I ruminated when alone on the comparative hardness of my fate, and silently lamented the apparent waste of the best years of my life. My two children were well cared for by my elder sister after the loss of their mother, and I had since then placed each, a boy and girl, at an excellent school in the immediate neighbourhood of London. But I had no establishment of my own; and it is admitted as a general rule that man must be discontented with his lot. I was not an exception to it. My dissatisfaction was afterwards heightened by an incident by no means peculiar to men of my age in any position desirous of partaking of the real felicities of life.

Nevertheless, I continued to toil on in my vocation, in the exercise of which I fancied I must have improved in my knowledge in the art of driving by the experience I was gaining. I continued it, too, without any accident, and consequently acquired the confidence of the proprietors and the public. Indeed, I considered myself very fortunate, for accidents were not very infrequent; and it fell to my lot to witness two—one of the "Manchester Cobourg," the other of the "Liverpool Umpire."

I met the former coach, on my journey up, between Redbourn and St. Albans. The coachman, Foster, kept on the wrong side of the road to avoid the gravel, which was so heaped on as to raise the middle of the road to an unnecessary height. The coach (Manchester-built, and very inferior to those turned out from the factories at Clerkenwell or Little Queen Street) was heavily laden on the top with luggage as well as passengers; so much so as to raise the centre of gravity above its proper position; and, although I kept on my wrong side that Foster might not have to cross, he, unaware of my intention, endeavoured to do so, when the superincumbent weight, resting upon a very slight base, swayed the coach over on the off-side, and it fell with a loud noise, that reminded me of my own overturn in the Bere Forest.

It was early in the evening, and moonlight. We all jumped down to assist. Fortunately, no one was hurt,


MAGNET
LONDON
SAFETY

C.B. Newhouse. 1834

A PASSING REMARK

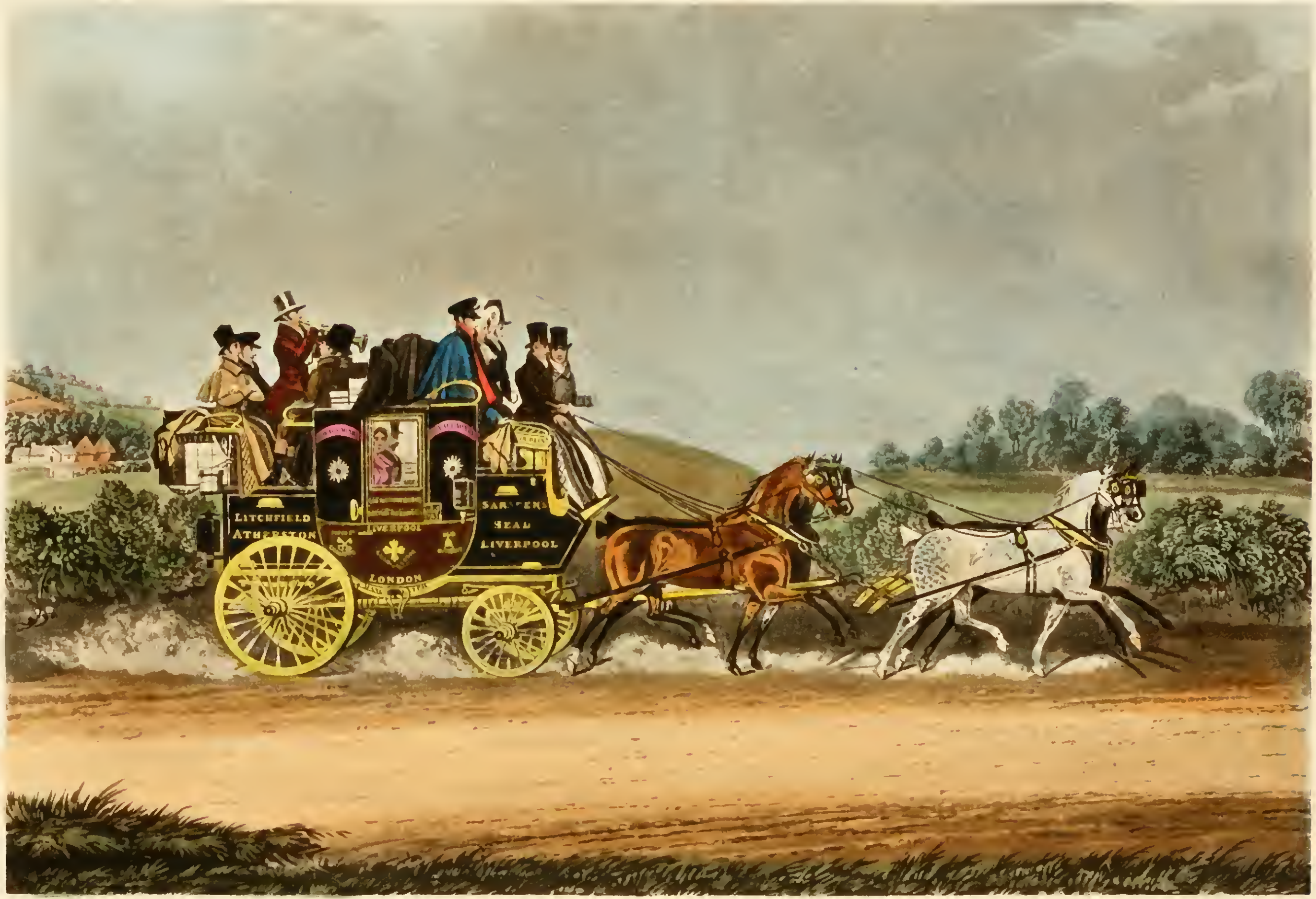
"I thought you'd pull the wrong Riband in springing round the corner"

London. Pu[illegible] June 2 1834 by Thomas McLean, 26 Haymarket

and the only cries we heard were those of a woman wailing for her child. It had been in her arms fast asleep, and she had been sitting on the off-side of the roof when the coach went over, but now it could not be found. Fearing it might be under the coach, we made every exertion to get her up, but first had to undo the luggage-straps and get the loading off the roof. This, together with getting the coach on her legs, we soon accomplished ; but, luckily, no child—for, had it been there, it must have been literally crushed. Presently, I thought I heard the feeble cry of an infant, and looking behind me I saw it, or the white garments in which it was enveloped, lying under the fence or hedge. The rush of the hitherto distracted mother, and the rapture with which she clasped her child to her bosom, formed a scene the pen of Sterne only could describe ; and such as it was, it has never been erased from my memory. Seeing there was no further harm done, and that they had but to reload the coach, I wished them good-night, and proceeded on my way to London.

The other accident, that of the "Liverpool Umpire," was under very different circumstances. Owing to an obstruction in the road below Dunstable, occasioned by a heavy fall of snow, four or five of us had started from Redbourn together. We all went at a pretty good pace, though not racing, and passing each other only at the different changes. So—we proceeded to the "Green Man" in Finchley Bottom, where we pulled up, and, to make use of a flash expression, took a drain. Then I fancied my friend on the "Umpire" had had one or two too many, for he was full of his slang, and very noisy. I took no notice of him, as he was the same individual who had heretofore occupied my seat, and whom I have spoken of in a preceding chapter. The two Manchester coaches started first, and my friend Humpy, as he was called (whether from the name of the coach or the hump on his back I do not know) followed, shouting and hallooing at the top of his voice, as he had done all the way from St. Albans. I certainly had a presentiment that something would occur, or I should not have determined to keep behind. However, this I did; and, on rising the hill out of the bottom, I could just discern one of the three close to the fence opposite the "Bald-faced Stag," and presently, on reaching that public, I observed a coach lying on her broadside, the luggage strewed on the road, the fore-carriage broken and otherwise a perfect wreck; and the horses standing quiet, apparently astounded with their strange position. I pulled up and proceeded to the spot, but a few yards on foot, accompanied by some people from the house.

I need not say it was the "Liverpool Umpire." The passengers were some of them bewailing their bruises, and others swearing and condemning the conduct of their coachman, who lay on his back in the road perfectly helpless, like a large black beetle—moaning and groaning most hideously, and certainly more injured than anyone else. He not being able to stand, we had him carried into the inn before mentioned. A doctor was soon in attendance, who, in accordance with his own wish, considered it best that he should be taken home as soon as possible. Therefore, as I passed his domicile in St. John's Street, I had him put into my coach, and leaving his horses and the *débris* of his drag to the care of


LITCHFIELD
ATHERSTON
LIVERPOOL
LONDON
SARACENS
HEAD
LIVERPOOL

James Pollard, delt. Engraved by G. Hunt

THE LIVERPOOL UMPIRE

London Published by J. Moore, 1 West Street, St Martins Lane

the guard—some of his passengers riding with me—I deposited him safe at his home. Although I thought—perhaps exclaimed—"For life is Hugh of Lambert lame," he ultimately recovered, and resumed his seat on the box, despite his gross misconduct, but went ever after hopping to his grave.

Some part of the coach had fallen upon him, and had dislocated or materially injured the hip-joint. The real cause of the accident, I believe, was his having his leader's reins wrong between his fingers, which was done when he took them in his hurry to start, from his box companion, without properly adjusting them. In going round the corner or bend by the "Bald-faced Stag," when he found himself too near the fence, he pulled the wrong rein, which caused his leaders to hug the fence, and, the fore-carriage striking against it, overthrew the coach into the road. He thus committed an act of gross carelessness, or, to say the least, displayed a want of knowledge of the rudiments of his profession.

I remember a gentleman, now long deceased, whom I would class as A1 among many of the same rank who one and all so liberally and so kindly patronized me on my last stage. This most excellent specimen of a country gentleman[1] frequently honoured me with his company on the box, and was always most particular in giving me the reins after I had remounted, always separating them and saying, "There are your leaders, sir, and there your wheel-horses;" rather overstrained precaution, perhaps, and approaching a little to what might be called the pedantic, but caution not to be despised, and, as has been seen, not at all times injudicious.

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[1] — Tyssen, Esq., of Narborough.

But the most serious accident of this description on that road at the time I speak of, was the overturn of the Holyhead mail, by which one of the passengers was killed. An inquest was held at the "Peahen," St. Albans, as it occurred just on the descent, before you come on what is called the New Road, and a verdict of manslaughter was returned against the drivers of the Holyhead mail and of the Chester. They, it appeared, had been racing; and one, in endeavouring to pass the other on the wrong side, was driven up the bank, and consequently overturned into the road. They were both committed to jail at St. Albans, to await their trial at the next Hertford assizes, and as they were both old servants of my father's or mine—one of them, too, having married a servant of my mother's—I felt interested in their fate, and walked one morning from Redbourn to see them.

I found them ironed like felons; of this indignity they both complained, and one wept bitterly. It struck me as being very strange that men should be degraded as felons, when their utmost punishment, if convicted, could not exceed a twelvemonths' imprisonment. I remonstrated with the jailer against the ornaments that then adorned their limbs. He replied that it was so ordered by the Mayor. I then waited on his worship, whom I knew, as he had migrated from my native county, and was in full practice at St. Albans as a surgeon. From him I got no redress, as he could only in such a case refer me to his legal adviser, the town-clerk, but he believed the practice was quite correct. The town-clerk soon convinced me, by taking down a book and turning to the statute, that such a degradation was sanctioned by the English law. Consequently the men retained those inconvenient appurtenances to their dress for six months, when they were tried at Hertford, and received as their sentence the utmost extent of punishment for their offence—viz. twelve months' further incarceration in the county jail; but were, as our friend Dibdin would say, relieved of their bilboes.

As I have before stated, the long day I had at Redbourn sometimes taxed my patience and equanimity to the utmost, particularly in the winter months; and it became irksome both to mind and body. I could not always be reading; and the inhabitants consisting, as I have already said, of publicans and little shopkeepers, I could derive but little amusement from a daily intercourse with them. Nevertheless, there was an exception, and that was the doctor, whose acquaintance I had made in the early part of my temporary sojourn. This gentleman had settled here at the termination of the war; but his nature and associations were so opposite to those of the community among whom he had pitched his tent, it was no wonder that they knew nothing of him beyond his profession—nothing of his country, his family, or connections; only that he had been a *ship*-doctor. This of itself was sufficient to raise my curiosity, and justify, as I thought, my intrusion. Accordingly, one hot summer's morning I called, intending to introduce myself.

After knocking at the door, and waiting some little time beyond what I thought was necessary, I was about to raise the knocker a second time, when I heard a heavy tread approaching. The door was next opened wide, and an object presented itself to my view that I shall not easily forget—a huge specimen of the *genus homo*, in his shirt and trousers—the former with the sleeves tucked up and the collar unbuttoned and thrown back, exhibited a chest and pair of shoulders that reminded me of the boatswain whose extraordinary feat I have related in the second chapter. His throat and neck were like the mutilated statue of Hercules in the Disney collection at Cambridge; and were surmounted by a head that resembled very much the portrait painted on the hind boot of the Liverpool coach, intended to represent a Saracen; indeed, a cast of his bust, as exposed to me that morning, would have done very well for the sign on Snow Hill. His inflated cheeks shone like burnished copper; his large prominent eyes were red with the effects of recent indulgence. Huge drops of perspiration stood upon his expansive brow, as he held out his hand, which in shape and size was like a shoulder of mutton, and said, in a voice not the most musical in the world,—

"How are ye?" calling me by name. "Walk in—I'm d—— glad to see ye—it's d—— hot, ain't it?" then turning round and sending out a puff, that I can only compare to the expiring blast of a blacksmith's bellows, he led the way into the parlour. Surprised at his address, as well as his figure, I scarcely knew what to say; and he, by way of apologizing for his undress, stroked his chin, and told me that he was just going to shave, an operation that he had not undergone very lately.

"But, how's your brother?" he asked.

"I was not aware," I replied, "that you knew me or my brother."

"I knew you," he replied, "the first time I saw you and heard your name, from your likeness to him."

"What brother?" I said.

"Why, the lieutenant, to be sure, Bob—where is he now?"

When I had satisfied him on that head, I asked him how it was that he had not made himself known to me before?

"Why," he said, "to tell you the truth, I thought you were too great a horse."

This, I should tell my readers, is a common phrase with sailors, when speaking of a person whom they think a little lofty; but, I thought, very inapplicable at that time, when used by an enlightened disciple of Esculapius, to one who had become a humble follower of Jehu.

"But where, may I ask, did you know my brother?"

"In the *Cyane*, with Sir Thomas Staines; we were messmates in her when he was a middy, and I a doctor's mate—and a fine noble fellow he was. I should very much like to see him again; he and I were always great cronies; everybody in the ship liked him," he said, "from Tommy"—as he familiarly designated the Captain—"down to the loblolly-boy."

He then ran on in a purely nautical strain, smacking a little of the Irish accent, in praise of my brother, whom he described as a thoroughbred sailor, and a brave lad;

one who was sure to rise in the service, for he could assume the officer and the gentleman, as well as any of 'em, and he again expressed the pleasure he should have on seeing him.

"Well," I said, "I am sure the pleasure would be reciprocal. I will write to him, and tell him of the discovery I have made."

"Do," he said, "and bring him down with ye, I shall be delighted to see him again."

With this short and elegant colloquy, I rose to leave; but this the doctor would not allow till I had tasted his home-brewed. He set the example, by helping himself from the foaming pitcher, and swallowing two tumblers full in such quick time, that I almost fancied I could hear the liquid hiss as it went down. The copper's hot this morning, I thought, as I deliberately drank mine, and then made my exit, not a little gratified at hearing such an eulogy on one united to me by ties of unbroken affection, although from the lips of one of the most unpolished orators I had ever heard.

I did as I promised, and it was not long before my brother, attending to my summons, came from Hampshire, and joyfully took his seat by my side. He had always entertained a better opinion of both my heart and understanding than I did myself,—perhaps far better than I deserved; and never suffered the regard and esteem we had for each other to be damaged by any word or deed of his, much less by any change in my fortune.

On our way down to Redbourn he told me this doctor was a very extraordinary character; that when on board the *Cyane*, after the action with the French frigate in the Bay of Naples, having so many men wounded, as well as the Captain, the surgeon of the ship required assistance; consequently, a signal was made to *l'Espoir*, a small brig in company, to send their doctor on board, which they speedily did in the person I have already described; he was then only assistant-surgeon, or doctor's mate, as small vessels are not allowed a full surgeon; indeed, that was a degree, I believe, our friend never attained, however his abilities may have deserved it.

On his coming on board his attention was drawn by his superior to the Captain, who lay in his cot in the cabin, with his shoulder dreadfully smashed, to all appearance suffering the greatest agony, and drifting fast into the vast and fathomless ocean of eternity.

After examining the fracture with as much care and tenderness as the seat of the wound and his own rough nature would allow, he gave it as his opinion that the injured limb might with safety be removed; and being asked by the other how he proposed to do it, he replied, by taking it out of the socket.

The patient, overhearing this conversation, said he would not submit to any experiment, as he was convinced the wound was mortal, and he wished to await his end in peace. Our Hibernian friend, upon this, calling to his aid a little of that persuasive eloquence so peculiar to his countrymen, assured the Captain it was no experiment at all, for the operation had already been performed with success by Sir Astley Cooper, an account of which he was in possession of, and would, with his permission, read it to him. Having done so, the Captain asked him if he were prepared to perform the operation himself, to which he answered confidently in the affirmative; his own surgeon at the same time disclaiming all responsibility.

With very little more persuasion the Captain, assured of the self-possession of the man, and the strong nerve denoted in his countenance and manner, at once prepared himself for the knife, which the operator, as it proved, knew well how to use; for the shattered limb was quickly removed. The patient was preserved from a painful death, and in due time restored to the service, of which he proved himself so distinguished a member.

My brother continued to tell me that this was the second time only the operation had been attempted, and performed with success; therefore did the operator get the greater praise, and the fame of it soon re-echoed from the patient's cabin through every man-of-war on the station, and thence through every hospital in London.

But there was something the Doctor liked better than fame, or his fame might have led on to fortune. He was in the habit of sacrificing largely to Bacchus; and though the first week he refrained, and was careful and particular in his attention to his patient, who would not suffer anyone else to dress the wound; yet after that time the Doctor frequently showed symptoms of indulging in potations pottle-deep, which did not escape the Captain's observation. Nevertheless, with an abnegation and magnanimity which formed part of his noble nature, this gallant officer overlooked from time to time those repeated acts of insubordination—acts that amounted sometimes to incapacity of performing his task of replacing the necessary dressings. Gratitude for having preserved his life seemed to be uppermost in the hero's heart, till, finding he was likely to suffer from his Bacchanalian habits, and that advice and remonstrance were equally vain, he was obliged to call in the services of his own surgeon; and on the arrival of the ship at Spithead, the Doctor was ordered to return to his own brig, since which time my brother had not seen him.

Their meeting, as might be anticipated, was a very jolly one. The two friends seemed to vie with each other in their gratulations, and in asking and answering questions as to their mutual wanderings. The Doctor's did not amount to much, as he left the service at Portsmouth, had formed a matrimonial connection with a sister of one of their messmates, had settled at Redbourn as a medical practitioner, and was at that time a widower.

I could but observe the marked deference he paid to my brother's staid and gentlemanlike deportment, as well as the restraint he at first put on his inclinations; and as he was possessed of good conversational powers, and had a general knowledge of worldly affairs, the fairer side of the Doctor's portrait was developed. Open and ingenuous, with a good natural capacity, he had studied anatomy and surgery with ardour and advantage; but had failed to discover that to ensure success in its practice a study of the amenities of life, and the possession of a polish a little beyond what he was likely to acquire in the cockpit of a man-of-war, were absolutely necessary before he could attain that rank in his profession which men of far less pretensions then occupied.

Indeed, the Doctor's character, as exhibited that day, interlarded as his conversation was with scenes from the cockpit, reminded me forcibly of the faithful resemblances inimitably depicted by the pen of Smollett; and in him I thought I could recognize Rory's messmate, Morgan, who, with the same goodness of heart and proficiency in the art of healing, the same disregard of worldly and personal accomplishments, had sat himself down, as this man had, in a country town as an apothecary.

I left them together early in the evening to attend to my duty; and so impressed was I with the good qualities of him who had played the host and of the evil of his besetting sin—for the Doctor had just proposed a Northwester—that I went away muttering, "Oh, that man should put an enemy in his mouth to steal away his brains!"

However, our intimacy did not end here: and one day the Doctor asked me to ride with him to Gadesbridge, the seat of that great benefactor of his species, Sir Astley Cooper. Upon the road I found by his conversation that this exalted member of the profession had been a great friend to him, and, perhaps, was the cause and the means of his practising in that locality. On our return he asked me to do him a favour, to which I readily assented. I learned that it was to get him a buck, or carcase of venison, from Whittlebury Forest, as he said he wished to make his kind friend and patron a present of a haunch, though I afterwards had reason to believe the whole of it was intended for that great chirurgical professor.

Accordingly, I deputed my brother whip, who passed through Stony Stratford, to procure me one from the steward or gamekeeper of the Duke of Grafton, the hereditary ranger of that royal domain. In due time it arrived; and the man, knowing for whom I had bespoke it, demanded immediate payment of the cost—viz., 7*l.* 10*s.* With this I complied, though a little surprised at his peremptory manner, and directed the horsekeeper to take the hamper down to the Doctor's house.

Some few weeks after this, during which time I continued my friendship with the Doctor, on my arrival with the coach at Redbourn in the morning, I observed rather an unusual number of the inhabitants in the road opposite the inn where I pulled up, apparently conversing upon some recent occurrence that very much interested them. On my throwing down the reins, getting off the box, and making my way through the crowd, one of them, who was acquainted with the Doctor as well as myself, held out his hand, and, with particular emphasis, said, "How are ye, my hearty buck?" which caused an unwilling smile upon some of their gloomy countenances. It did not require much further explanation to enlighten me as to the subject of their discourse; which was, the Doctor had suddenly taken flight, leaving this little community to mourn the loss of one who had come among them to heal their infirmities; and in return to partake of their kind donations of the three great necessaries of life—shelter, food, and raiment.

Thus did I lose sight, for a time, of this singular character, who was himself a compound of intellectual capacity and the wants and weaknesses of our nature. His sudden departure preceded mine but a few months, and he afterwards turned up at a beautiful little spot in Hertfordshire, that lay in the way of my frequent peregrinations to the shrine of the Saint to whom I was afterwards so much indebted. I seldom passed it without calling, and was pleased to find the Doctor had once more entered into the bonds of matrimony, had abated much of his original propensity, and appeared to be in the enjoyment of all the comforts of life.

About this time I became acquainted with a gentleman at St. Albans, who had something in common with myself in regard to outdoor amusement or employment. Occupying a farm a short distance from the town, he managed to keep two or three couple of beagles; and I would frequently ride back from Redbourn on one of the up-coaches, after my journey down, to accompany him on foot to his farm, and regale my ears with the music his little pack would develop when they got upon the track of a rabbit or a hare.

It was not long after this that St. Albans had a far greater attraction in an object pointed out to me by my friend in the Abbey Church, whither I had accompanied him to attend divine service—an observance, from my coach travelling on a Sunday, I had, to my shame be it spoken, almost discontinued, of which neglect some inward monitor now and then reminded me; and therefore did I readily accept my friend's invitation, more particularly as it was Easter Sunday, and I had never seen the interior of that venerable pile.

There was something always in the return of this day that affected me in a way I did not thoroughly comprehend. and therefore cannot properly express--something it was that divested the mind of all thoughts of the common occurrences of daily life, and impressed the heart with a joyful sentiment, exceeding all that could be derived from any sensual or social enjoyment. Whether it be that young Spring is then advancing, arrayed in that beauteous garment Nature has so tastefully provided for her, pouring forth her delightful carols, and bearing in her lap sweet perfumed emblems of her bounty; or whether it be the commemoration of the promises made by the God of Nature, of an eternal Spring to those responsible beings who have faith in His revealed will, hope in His most merciful dispensation, and good-will towards their fellow-creatures—either one or the other, or both, will dispose the senses to the purer and more exalted feelings of our condition.

I bent my knee in prayer to the great Giver of good—I joined in the holy chaunt that reverberated round those ancient walls—I listened with attention to the exposition of His holy text—I admired the vastness and solidity of the structure, inspected the different monuments that ornamented its pillars or its pavement, and departed with what? With feelings of reverence for the piety of our ancestors who had erected this edifice to the honour of the holy martyr whose name it bears? No. Or with a lively sense of gratitude for the benefits to be derived from an implicit trust in the mercies and mediation of One whose entrance into everlasting life we were this day called on joyfully to remember? Alas! no. But with much curiosity and a determination to know more of a certain object that had taken possession of my mind, I left the precincts of that holy temple. I will enter no further into the occurrences of this day—suffice it to say that the incident strengthened my inclination, and afterwards induced me to leave that road.

But I cannot pass over the consequences this occurrence had upon my future fate or fortune, or its effects upon the employment and rational enjoyment of my vacant hours. The object of attraction, I soon found, was one of a large and respectable family in the town, and I may say, without fear of being accused of partiality or vanity, fourteen finer specimens of the *genus homo* never sat round a parent's substantially furnished board. It was well, too, to witness the order that was observed in this graduated assembly. Cleanliness and decorum, obedience and affection, contentment and good humour, animated their bright blue eyes, and set off to perfection their fair and rosy complexions. There was nothing either Grecian or Roman in the contour of their countenances, or in their features—neither in them would the sculptor desire anything to commend his art; for the same impression would guide his chisel as did the first sight of our Saxon ancestors strike St. Gregory when he exclaimed, "*Non Angli sed Angeli.*" The first time I was admitted to put my feet under the same mahogany my eyes were far more feasted than my appetite, though it was pleasantly and politely courted, and I rose from the table in admiration of the beauty and order of an Englishman's fire-side.

My Sundays were now generally spent at St. Albans, and I was soon made acquainted with the beautiful walks round this interesting old town, the site of so many events in our history. In the valley at the foot of the Abbey orchard or grounds runs the little river Ver—now but a trout steam, though it turns two or three valuable silk and cotton mills; but in the time of the Romans navigable for their armed galleys and stately barges. Crossing it by a plank you come to the walls of the ancient Verulam, where the Roman brick is still visible, and where all attempts to detach one whole have proved futile. Here, too, did the masters of the world under Paulinus defeat and destroy the army under Boedicea, and took ample vengeance for the massacre of their countrymen.

In the time of the heptarchy St. Albans became a considerable town—that part of the community whom the fury of the Saxons had spared removing to a hill which afterwards bore the same name—the Abbey being founded and built there by Offa, King of Mercia, in the ninth century—though the British proto-martyr, to whom it was dedicated, was beheaded on the spot some 600 years before.

The court was frequently held here in the time of the Plantagenets, and sometimes the parliament of those days sat here—the family residence of the mitred abbot, the monastery, and the neighbouring nunnery of Sopwell, affording ample accommodation. One of the most enlightened of our Princes, Humphrey, Duke of Glo'ster, who was much in advance of his age, was interred here, having, it is supposed, been foully murdered at the instigation of his uncle, the Cardinal Bishop of Winchester. Two battles were fought here in the Wars of the Roses, in the first of which a great number of nobles—indeed, the chiefs of the Lancastrian party—were slaughtered. In the second the Yorkists were defeated, and the great Earl of Warwick obliged to fly for his life. New England hills, as some artificial mounds are called, apparently a Roman camp is the site of one, and Bernard's heath of the other. The latter is now often the scene of a far less bloody and more rational character—the war or game of cricket.

This old town is also renowned for its political or electoral contests; and before, and more particularly since, the Reform Bill, has always been open to the highest bidder. A pot-walloping borough so near the metropolis, there was never any lack of candidates, and ludicrous and absurd were the means taken to ensure success. Although it was notorious, and well understood on both sides, that each poor voter was to receive a certain sum, still it was thought necessary to give £20 for a parrot, or £15 for a monkey, just brought from abroad, by some seafaring member of a poor family, to place a London banker, a city alderman, or a scion of the noble house of Blenheim, at the head of the poll.

I witnessed two or three of these exhibitions of the representative system during the time I drove through St. Albans, and I cannot say they gave me a very lofty idea of the worth of the constituency, the patriotism of the candidates, or the infallibility of our institutions. The practice, which it was the intention of the Reform Bill to prevent, had become more gross and palpable, till the Legislature thought it necessary to suspend the writ, which long remained in abeyance.

The representation of the county had long been shared, unopposed, by Mr. Brand, afterwards Lord Dacre, and Sir John Sebright; still, they would always, at a general election, give the voters a call of recognition. On one occasion, Sir John, who was noted for his gallantry, called at a house where I was a frequent visitor, and asked for the master; he happened to be engaged at that moment, and one of the daughters, a fine beautiful girl in the bloom of youth, was sent by the mother to receive him; after the morning's salutation, he politely asked,—

"Is your father at home?"

"He is, Sir John," was the reply; "but he is engaged at this moment."

"I am very glad of it," said the old Baronet, "for I would rather shake hands with *you* than any *man* in England."

I stood unseen at a little distance, quite pleased with what I witnessed, and did not know which to admire most—the ready compliment of the man of breeding, or the unaffected confusion of the lovely girl to whom it was addressed. In both I saw plainly that one touch of nature is worth all the gloss of art.

I will not descant on the agreeable walks I had in this beautiful neighbourhood—sometimes in company, sometimes alone—when the thoughts of my former and present position would find vent in strains of impassioned verse.

In the meantime I was repeatedly called to the bedside of my sick and declining parent at Leamington, and after months of intermittent, intense suffering, with a firmness and resignation worthy of all imitation, her spirit was dismissed to the regions of the blessed. I, with two brothers and two sisters, followed her remains across the country, from Leamington to our family vault in Hampshire, which we reached on the fourth day, passing by Stratford-on-Avon, Woodstock, Oxford, Wallingford, Reading, Alton, and Petersfield.

At the first-mentioned town, the birth-place of our immortal bard, we did not stop; but two or three years afterwards, in passing through, I visited what was once his residence, then standing, and had the honour of inscribing my name, in a book kept for that purpose, immediately under those of the two Austrian Archdukes, who had passed through but the day before, as well as on the walls of his bedroom. I also sat in the same chair in which, I was told by an aged female, his supposed lineal descendant, it was his custom to indulge after quitting the busy scenes of the metropolis—saw the monument or rather effigy erected in the church to his memory, and read his epitaph, written by the English Roscius, which I thought did not sufficiently express the enthusiastic admiration which has always been felt for the writings that bear his name.

At Woodstock we rested for the night, which gave us an opportunity of viewing that splendid national reward to the renowned commander who led our armies to victory on the Continent, foiled the ambition of the Grand Monarque, and made his name famous in our annals. At this time it was inhabited by his descendant—a necessitous recluse. At Oxford we stopped but long enough to admire the architectural beauties of its High Street, and for me to wish to change the scene of my daily labours to this time-honoured University, a change I had for some little time contemplated.

At Wallingford we again rested, passing the mansion and estate of Basildon, then the property and residence of a baronet with whom I afterwards became acquainted.[1] There was nothing to call for any particular notice or to engage our attention in this little borough town, where, before the Reform Bill put an extinguisher upon the electoral expectations of the inhabitants, the *Miller*[2] used to pay his nocturnal visits to each individual voter. My brother and I walked into the coffee-room of the inn where we had put up, with the intention of reading the London papers, and taking one up, sat down in one of the boxes. I observed a gentleman on the opposite side eye us with what I took to be a look of suspicion, and when the waiter came in he spoke to him, and then walked out apparently very much displeased. On asking the waiter what the gentleman had said to him, he replied that he wanted to know what business we had there, as it was a subscription-room.

This was before dinner; in the evening we went in again to the room, where sat the old gentleman reading the paper that had arrived by that day's post. Observing that he took his eyes off the paper to look at us, I accosted him, "I am afraid we are unwelcome intruders."

He replied with a grunt, and continued the perusal of his paper. "When you have done with the paper I should be much obliged if you would allow me to see it,"

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[1] Sir Francis Sykes.

[2] The name given to the official employed on these interesting occasions.

I said. He made no answer, but when he had finished, he got up, deliberately rolled up the paper, and put it in his pocket, and was walking away, when he was stopped by another who had observed his demeanour, and who insisted on his leaving the paper on the table. "Do you want it?" he said.

"Whether I want it or not," was the reply, "you have no right to take it out of the room."

Upon which he very ungraciously gave it up, and the gentleman politely handed it to us. After satisfying ourselves, and chatting with the stranger, who gave us an account of his uncouth fellow-townsman, we returned to our own room, when my brother, still a little sore at his ungentlemanlike conduct, and wishing to retaliate, asked me to write a line or two, and put up on the mantelpiece in the coffee-room. Whereupon, having ascertained his name, I penned the following:—

"Strange animals I've often seen
In many towns where I have been;
But, till I came to Wallingford,
No other place could e'er afford
A brute that on two legs went forth,
And he was yclept Shuttleworth."

This we left for the offender to digest as best he might, and proceeded on our journey, stopping at Reading to dine and at Alton to sleep.

At twelve the next day we reached Petersfield, where the passing-bell mournfully tolled as we went slowly down the High Street, and stopped at the principal inn, where some few who had some known the departed came to condole with my sisters on the loss they had sustained, and to recall her many excellent qualities.

Arrived at the place of sepulture, we were joined by my married sister and her husband; while the poor natives of the village, who still retained a lively remembrance of her unostentatious goodness and charity, came to pay their last tribute of respect.

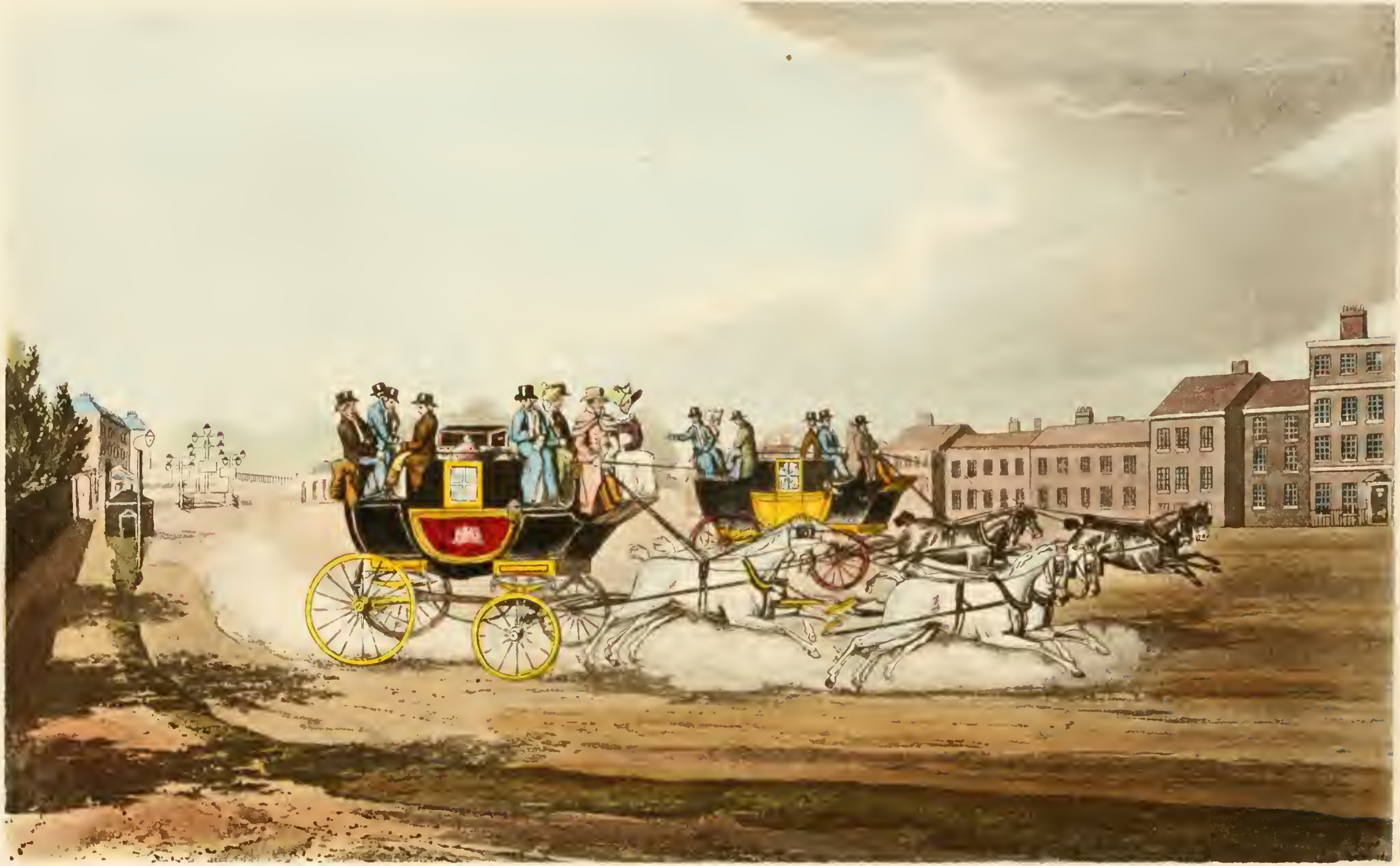
CHAPTER III

OXFORD

King Charles—An Indiscreet Act—A New Country Proprietor—The Cheltenham Coach—Scions of the Nobility—An Unexpected Interview—The Roebuck—Bishop Atterbury—Horse-dealing—Fire and Water—Hydropathic Cure—Reflections—Piccadilly—The Black Dog at Bedfont—A Compromise—An Old Acquaintance—Henley-on-Thames—An Eclipse of the Sun—An Unnatural Son—Full Stop.

King Charles the First has been made to state that in mundane affairs there is no such thing as fortune or misfortune, but that all is either discretion or indiscretion. No man had a greater right to say so than that unfortunate monarch. I must have been the most indiscreet man alive: for all the exertions I ever made, all I ever undertook or did, to extricate myself from the slough into which untoward circumstances had driven me, only served to plunge me further in the mire.

The person who had succeeded my father in the large establishment I have before spoken of, and who became a very wealthy man—partly, if not chiefly, from my father's ruin, which he had been the principal means of accomplishing—had promised to assist me in my endeavours to regain my position; and I was simple enough to believe him, and put faith in his promises. This was a folly on



Robert Havell. del^{r}

THE OXFORD AND OPPOSITION COACHES

London Published by R. Havell. 1 Sept 1818 my part, and showed want of knowledge of the world, which may well rank as an indiscretion. Nevertheless, it was this promise that first induced me to commit a greater indiscretion, in quitting a certain and well-established concern for an appointment that was quite new to me, and its success uncertain; thus leaving myself open to the fate of those, whose interests are generally sacrificed or overlooked, when an accommodation or compromise takes place between two hostile parties.

But, indiscretion or not, the change had the recommendation of novelty, and—what was my principal object—the hours of employment would be more congenial to the wishes and domestic comforts of one who was again desirous of having an establishment of his own, however it might differ from the last in degree; of again living not entirely by or for himself, but of providing a new home, however humble it might be, for his two children, where he might become again possessed of those social and rational enjoyments of which he had been deprived.

I cannot, though at this distance of time, but feel the sting of conscience at leaving my father—that is, his employ—to enter that of one of his most virulent opponents, so soon after a great domestic calamity had befallen him. But it was so. Fate, as the poet says, hurried me on; and, all things being arranged, I started from the establishment I once considered myself heir to, on the box of a new Cheltenham coach, which I was to drive to Oxford. It was intended that I should be a part proprietor. Indeed, I had promised to work a stage myself, so anxious was I to get upon that road, which appeared to me to be the most fashionable and the most frequented out of London; but, not seeing my way quite clear, I declined—and it was quite as well I did, the coach, as I might have foreseen, being discontinued within the year.

Now, there were two parties in Oxford concerned in coaches, one of whom I have before spoken of as an old-established country proprietor—a man of the first respectability and considerable substance, who was looked up to by all the fraternity as an excellent master; the other an intruder—a man of whom few spoke well—and for whom I had the greatest dislike, from the vulgar impertinence of his manners, and the evil reports about his tastes. His position and his chicanery just enabled him to allure the simple and unprincipled to unite with him in opposition to the man whom he could injure and annoy, but not ruin. Such was his vindictive feeling, that he once said, while eating a sheep's heart for his breakfast, and being complimented by one of his parasites on the keenness of his appetite, that he only wished it was Dicky Costar's—meaning his opponent—he should eat it with much more satisfaction; and I verily believed him.

With neither of these parties was I, or the coach I drove, at all connected; and the London proprietor, horsing it all the way to Oxford, he committed everything to my management. I must confess that I was, for the time, highly pleased with the change I had made. It was summer time, and the road, as far as Maidenhead or Henley, was pleasant and populous. Consequently, the retail trade[1] was abundant—therefore very profitable to the man at the helm, as Jack would call the coachman.

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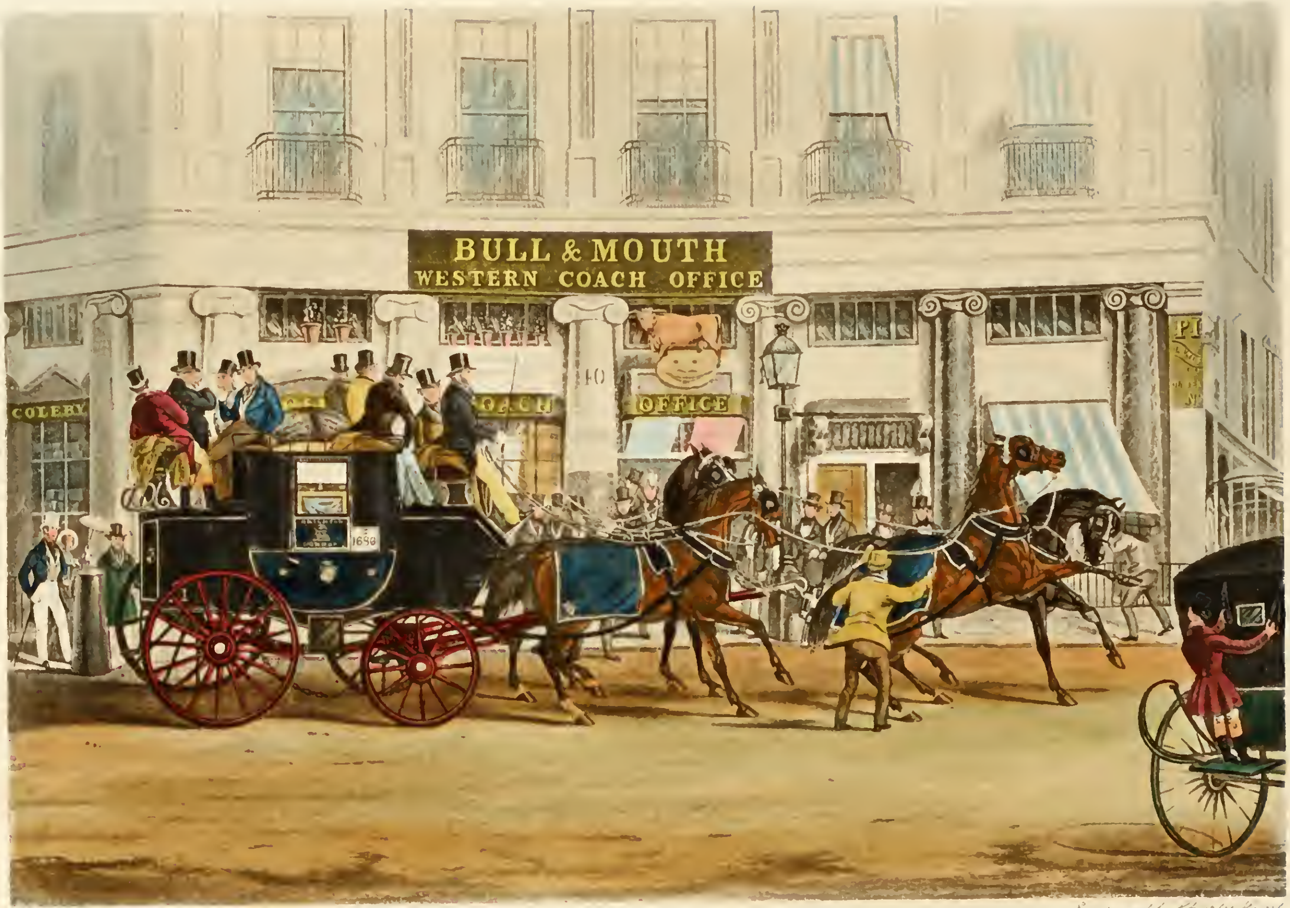
[1] The term given by the fraternity to short passengers.


BULL & MOUTH
WESTERN COACH OFFICE
COLEBY
COACH
OFFICE
40
1686

Painted by W. J. Shayer

Engraved by Charles Hunt

THE DUKE OF BEAUFORT COACH DRIVEN BY THE MARQUIS OF WORCESTER

STARTING FROM THE BULL & MOUTH, REGENT'S CIRCUS, PICCADILLY

[illegible]

The company also was mostly of the first order. We were patronized liberally by some of the first houses of the nobility and gentry, whose mansions and estates lay in the counties of Oxford or Gloucester—particularly those of Somerset and Berkeley; and I believe I may boast of being the first who put reins into the hand of the late Duke of Beaufort, then Marquis of Worcester, who soon became a proficient in the art. The other family had a seat at Cranford Bridge, about four miles beyond Hounslow, long the residence of the late Countess; and as the sons counted six or seven in number, I frequently had the honour of the company of one or other of them on the box.

I always found them free and affable, as I ever did most others of true nobility, with whom I often came in contact.

On one occasion, I remember, when one of the junior members of the family, who has since rendered himself conspicuous in their unhappy divisions, accompanied me on the box, and we had spent the morning in agreeable conversation, I happened to say that I had never seen a certain celebrated actress off the stage, but that I admired her very much on. "Oh," he said, "I expect them up to-day," meaning his brother and the lady. We had scarcely arrived at the "Roebuck" at Oxford, where I stopped, before a carriage drove up with four post horses, the owner of Berkeley Castle inside, with a lady whom I immediately recognized as the one we had been speaking of. The Colonel I knew also, as who did not who had once seen his handsome person? My late companion went to the carriage-door and chatted a little; but before the fresh horses were put to, he called me to him, and, addressing the lady, said,—

"Ann, here is a friend of mine, who has a great wish to be introduced to you."

Somewhat abashed at so sudden an appeal to my gallantry, raising my hat, I unhesitatingly stepped forward, when the lady held out her hand, and, with one of her beautiful smiles, said,—

"I am sure I shall be highly honoured by his acquaintance."

There was only time for a few commonplaces on the beauty of the day, &c., and a laugh and a hearty shake of the hand, with "How are you, ——?" from her companion, when, the postillions being ready to start, I withdrew, with as an accomplished a farewell bow as I knew how to perpetrate, or perhaps the rules of society could desire. The author of this attack upon the simplicity of my morning's conversation, accompanied me to the bar, where we renewed our gossip over a bottle of champagne.

The house where I stopped at Oxford—the "Roebuck" —was then kept by two young ladies, possessing other accomplishments, both mental and personal, besides those necessary for their station, without that brusque and familiar air which generally characterizes females brought up in an inn—at the same time not assuming a particle of the affected importance common with good-looking landladies.

The time of my daily sojourn—that is, from two or half-past in the day till the following forenoon—passed agreeably enough; sometimes at my hotel, where I met a

Fellow of one of the colleges, who was well known for a singular propensity he possessed to dive into the secrets and intrigues of the coaching community. This was a sort of morbid curiosity, which he inherited, perhaps, from his unfortunate ancestor, the Bishop of Rochester—who exercised the same feeling in more important concerns. He would almost daily come and chat with me. At other times perambulating the streets, or gossiping with the different tradesmen, or examining at my leisure the colleges and halls, the celebrated library and theatre, and other buildings; so that I could but contrast the place with the dull, low, uninviting spot in which I was lately condemned to spend my vacant hours; and congratulate myself on the change.

My employer, knowing that Oxford was a place where harness-horses were sometimes to be picked up on more reasonable terms than in London, had commissioned me to look out and, as occasion might offer, purchase some for him. This I had done, much to his satisfaction. One afternoon a tout, or man who was a sort of horse-dealer's cad, came and told me, as a great favour, of a horse that was to be disposed of for a little money. I went with him, and was shown a very useful coach horse. I asked to see him out. This was complied with, and, running my eye over him, and approving his action, I said, "Sound?"

"Perfectly; but I don't warrant him?"

"Age?"

"Six years old."

Looking in his mouth, I found this to be correct.

"Price?" I said.

"Ten pounds," was the reply.

I immediately concluded something was wrong, as he looked like a five-and-thirty pounds' horse.

"He's not a kicker?" I said.

"You can't make him kick," was the reply.

I was almost ashamed to say, "You won't warrant him quiet, I suppose?"

"You can't expect it, at that price; but all I have told you is true."

"Then I'll have him," I said.

I observed a titter on the lips of the stablemen as I followed him into the house to give him the money, when the seller candidly told me that he had given thirty pounds for the horse, and had sold him two or three times for more money; but he had always been returned, as he would not go in harness. Not very well satisfied with my bargain, I walked away, desiring him to send the horse round to the "Roebuck."

Early the next morning I borrowed a break, harnessed him, and put him to with another horse, but he would not move; and, touching him with the whip, he reared right on end, then threw himself down, and there lay. At this I scratched my head, and thought it was a bad case, when my friend who had kindly put me up to this great bargain called to me and said, "Master, master, light a truss of straw and put it under him!" Nothing loth to make trial of such a remedy, as I had heard of it before, though I had never seen it practised, and there not being many people about, as it was early in the morning, we unbuckled his traces, got him out, and with the other horse drew the break out in the corn market, and put him to again, as I was not to be beaten without a further trial. My friend, therefore, procured me a wisp of straw, and strewed it on the ground under him, and when I was ready set fire to it; the animal made two or three plunges clear of the straw, and then threw himself down.

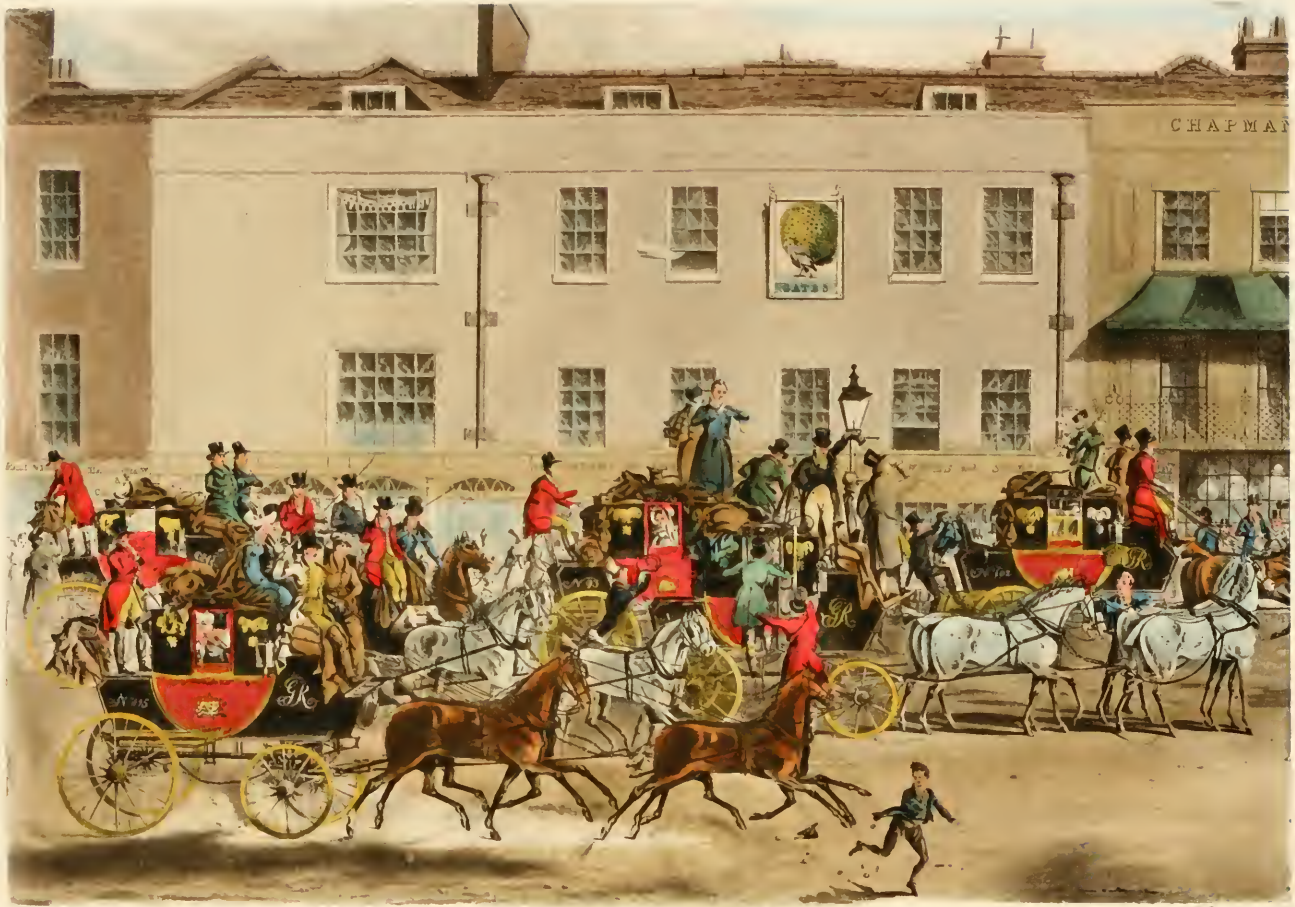
Satisfied now that he might be made to go, but not by such means, I thought I would try another element which I had before seen applied with success. After getting him up, I had him taken down to the canal, where I found a barge just going to start with two horses at length; giving the bargeman 2*s*. 6*d*. to lend me some draught harness, with his permission we put him in behind the other two, first taking the precaution to have the barge moored clear of the quay and other craft. We then moved on, when the brute threw himself about—first up in the air—then down on his knees—up again—then forward—then back on his haunches: but the two fore horses kept on, and their traces, acting upon the barge, did not give him time to lay down, and, after two or three attempts to baffle us, he rolled off the towing-path into the canal.

Here, after two or three plunges, and immersed in water, the tackle holding good, he regained his feet and the towing-path at the same time; and the other two horses keeping their places and their pace, and the barge being in motion, there was nothing left for him but to keep quietly on, or put up with another ducking. He chose the former, walked up to his collar, and took his share of draught for about two miles, without the least attempt at gibbing. We then took him out and returned to the "Roebuck." The coach arriving in about half an hour, I put him in off-wheel and drove him to Benson, a distance of twelve miles, our first stage; and no horse ever went better or quieter.

The next day I drove him back, and the report of this singular feat having spread through the city, I had all the stable fraternity in Oxford to greet my return, and, not believing such a thing possible, to assure themselves of the identity of the animal; for it appeared that he had been tried by many of Mr. Costar's men, who had all pronounced him incurable, and he had been returned accordingly, as the man from whom I bought him had told me. I continued to drive him as long as the coach lasted; and it fell to my lot, a year or two later, to renew my acquaintance with him in another team from the same establishment.

It has often occurred to me, that the spot where I tried the experiment of fire is the site where those sturdy defenders of the reformed religion, Ridley and Latimer, suffered martyrdom; a splendid monument has since been erected in honour of those champions of our creed.

The late Lord Macaulay, in one of his early essays—written, I believe, in his rooms at Trinity—asserts the claims of his Alma Mater to supremacy over that of the sister University; and states, as an argument for it, that Cambridge had the honour of educating the two Bishops—and Oxford the honour of burning them. I am not a member of either University, as these pages can testify, nor can I decide the question of controversial superiority; but I have been a long time a member of a constituency very near the University, in which Lord Macaulay was, a


CHAPMAN
BATES
No 15
GR

Painted by James Pollard *Engraved by J. Sutherland*

NORTH-COUNTRY MAILS AT "THE PEACOCK" ISLINGTON

London Published [illegible] by John Watson 7 Vere Street. Bond Street year or two back, elected to the very highest dignity in that enlightened and important body.[1]

Now, that constituency possesses the unenviable distinction of having had its representatives twice unseated for bribery ; besides having had the honour to entertain a commission, that in the fulfilment of their office discovered, and made public, unmistakable proofs of long-continued gross and unlawful practices ; an honour, I believe, that a similar corporate body, as nearly allied to the University of Oxford, has never yet reached.

To proceed : If I were desired to point out that part of my coaching career in which I found most pleasure, or, in plain terms, which road I liked best, I should certainly select the Oxford, as surpassing all others for those qualities which generally attract young men desirous of becoming distinguished in their vocation.

In the first place, the exit from the metropolis is from the West, or most fashionable end. The "White Horse Cellar," or the "Glo'ster Coffee House," in Piccadilly, would be the point of assembly of the *élite* of the amateurs, patrons, friends, and acquaintances of each well-known practitioner—who come to criticize their style, examine their team, one by one, survey the drag—and then say a word or two in praise of the whole equipment or turn-out.

There was nothing of this sort at Shoreditch, or Mile End, at the "Elephant and Castle," or the "Bricklayer's Arms." In its place there was the gape of an indifferent and ignorant multitude, or the slang of the low and vulgar cad. The "Angel," or "Peacock," at Islington, came nearest to the West-end *rendezvous;* but were at a great distance, except in the number of mails and other conveyances that issue from the North side of the great emporium.

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[1] High Steward of the Borough of Cambridge.

Then, again, the road itself was much frequented, not only by the equipages of royalty, but displayed the constant traffic of the nobility and gentry, in their ingress and egress to and from the seat of Government; it was also the scene where those amateurs and patrons, the members of the B. D. C., exhibited their love for, and skill in, the art of driving. The "Black Dog," at Bedfont, about fourteen miles off the stones, was the house to which they often resorted, the late Sir Henry Peyton at their head, and where the author's own kind friend and patron, the late Henry Villebois, Esq., was generally present to discuss the rules of the B. D. C. over a solid repast, and to award proof of their approbation to some deserving member of the profession. The distance, too, fifty-eight miles, was sufficient to render the ride a pleasure without being a toil; the company were mostly of the middle and upper classes, and the place itself afforded ample, rational, and pleasing amusement.

It was with considerable regret, then, to me as the autumn approached, I found that a sort of compromise had taken place between my employer and one of the parties at Oxford—the one I had so great a dislike to; and, to my great annoyance, I was officially informed that my *heart-devouring* friend was to work the coach from Oxford to Henley, and that, to confine my services to the London proprietor, I should be required to drive to Henley and back in the day. This was a beneficial arrangement for me, as I had two coaches a day, and but one home, which would very much reduce my expenses; but, at the same time, I had no faith in the stability of the concern, as I was well aware the new partners had it in their power to compromise it at any time, and that I should then be thrown overboard.

However, it went on for some little time, and I had nothing whatever to find fault with all through the autumn. I had between three and four hours to spend at Henley, which I managed to get rid of without being infected with idleness, or *ennui*, as it is usually termed.

A clergyman who had, from my youth up, been the officiating minister at Portsmouth, had only lately been removed to Henley.[1] I would, therefore, frequently call, and have half an hour's chat with him. I had had the temerity to publish a sermon I penned on the death of the old king, George III., which, without permission, I had dedicated to this excellent divine. It was at the instigation of some friends at St. Albans I had written it, because I happened to say the discourse I had heard at the Abbey church did not come up to my idea of what a sermon ought to be, on such a subject. Here the obsequies of the deceased monarch were celebrated; and when the choir of the old building was hung with black and lit with torches, it presented a novel and imposing scene. The printing this production may have been an unpardonable act of vanity; the dedication was an expression of heartfelt gratitude to one whose eloquent expositions of the Gospel, and clear and imposing manner with which he read our beautiful Liturgy, were indelibly impressed on my memory.

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[1] The Rev. T. G. Bussell.

But the chief occurrence that marked my short sojourn at this pretty little market town, with its spacious street —its well-built houses—their gardens and meads, flanked by the beautiful river—from which it takes its name—the lofty hills on all sides, forming a splendid amphitheatre—was a total eclipse of the sun. This was the only perfect eclipse that has occurred in my memory: that of 1858 was annular, and the great luminary was never quite obscured, but appeared in the form of a crescent, of a greater or less magnitude, as our satellite passed over its disc; therefore did it disappoint the expectations of the credulous multitude, who looked for an absence of all light, birds going to roost, and other symptoms of coming night.

The eclipse of 1820 was a far greater obscuration, inasmuch as the planet Venus was plainly to be seen with the naked eye at noonday in mid-heaven—a position in which she is never visible, not even to the telescopic view of the astronomer, and therefore the fact is scarcely credible to the uninitiated in that most sublime and interesting of all sciences. In a letter written to a friend on the day I have thus described it :—

"The single star, too, twinkling so soon after noon, and the awful gloom cast over the atmosphere by so great an obscuration of the source of light, produced a scene so pleasingly singular, so rarely beautiful, so divinely sublime, that the remembrance of it, I trust, will never be erased from my mind, or the impression it left removed from my heart. And here I must regret the want of that knowledge which in my youth I could so readily and would so eagerly have pursued, and with proper care, perhaps, have attained. I envied those who, with more ample fortune and with abler friends, had had the means, the opportunity, and the inclination, to render themselves familiar with art and science—their intelligence first scanning the trackless desert—then the wide expanse of ocean—and last the starry heavens; thus laying up for themselves 'treasures upon earth' that none but themselves can fully enjoy; for how little must be my knowledge of a subject like this, compared to the information possessed by one who, one hundred years ago, could compute the time of this eclipse so exactly as to foretell it to the very minute—I mean Sir Isaac Newton. But the time and the opportunity have gone, never to be recalled. I have no alternative but to be content with my own ignorance."

It was somewhere about this time that the following incident occurred:—

On taking the reins at Henley, and looking round, I observed on the roof, sitting on the near side, an elderly gentleman, with a youth of rather forbidding appearance, apparently about twenty years of age. I had long been accustomed to speculate on the character of my companions, and though I jumped to conclusions that were not always borne out by the results, still I was in the main not far wrong.

I remember a porter I had on my last drag, who, with no other information than the brass plate on a passenger's portmanteau, would address him in language that implied a long, though respectful acquaintance with the gentleman's family. After calling him by name, he would say, "How's the good lady, sir?" Sometimes he would go so far as to ask after them individually. "How's Master John or Master George?" chancing the individual having any such ties, or indeed any ties at all; and if it proved so, this civilest of porters was never in any way abashed.

We had not ascended Henley Hill before I discovered that the two gentlemen were not on the best terms with each other—the one endeavoured to impart his feelings on the beauty of the scenery, while pointing out familiar objects of admiration; the other would pout, and frown, and snub—sometimes looking on with a sulky and insulting air, at others denouncing in gross language the kind and conciliatory manner of his senior.

It did not take me long to discover that they were father and son, and with some reason I surmised that the father was a clergyman, and had been to Oxford to remove his hopeful, who had been placed under the ban of the University. All attempts on the part of the one to divest or allure the thoughts of the other from the loss of some fancied selfish enjoyment, or the sense of deserved degradation, were only met with angry and evil looks, or downright abuse, till at length the former was silent from despair, perhaps from fear that his fellow-passengers might take notice of his reiterated insults; and with a severe, though softly spoken remonstrance, his eyes swimming in tears, he closed a most painful dialogue.

During the journey my heart alternately rose in indignation at the perverse conduct of the son, and sank in the deepest sympathy with the heart-broken feelings of the parent, expressed in his sad and rueful countenance.

Once or twice, indeed, I felt disposed to interfere, and to attempt to reason with the young man upon his want of filial respect; still I thought, as it was no affair of mine, I had no right to interfere—so I held my tongue.

Arrived at the end of our journey, the old gentleman, in getting off the coach in the inn yard, missed his hold and fell; he had not waited for the ladder, nor had I dismounted. He lay by the side of the fore-wheel, and, calling his companion by his Christian name, asked for help, when the son, looking down, cried, "You may lie there, you old ——, and be damned, before I'll help you." He was immediately raised by the porter, who had run to his assistance.

Standing on the foot-board, I could no longer restrain myself; so, taking hold of the fellow's arm, I asked him if he were that gentleman's son. His answer, "What's that to you?" only further raised my choler.

"It is much to me," I replied, "and to every one who has witnessed your unfeeling conduct this day; you are a disgrace to humanity, and though your offence is not punishable by law, it deserves a d—— good horsewhipping, and if you do not instantly get down and assist your father, I will administer it myself." I made him descend with me. I then asked the gentleman if he were much hurt. He replied in the negative, though he appeared to be very much shaken. He expressed a wish for a hackney coach, and, having attended him into it, I directed my porter to get on the box, and see that he was taken to his proper destination.

As the winter approached the loading fell off, so much so on that road in particular, that the old Cheltenham coach was discontinued, and the traffic left entirely to us. Even then we loaded very indifferently. Finding that what little we did carry interfered with the "Oxford Defiance," the pet drag of my would-be cannibal friend, he persuaded my London employer to drop it, which he suddenly did a week or two after Christmas, leaving me to ruminate on the great error I had committed in leaving a certainty for an uncertainty, and to contemplate the little chance I had of future employment.

CHAPTER IV

AN INTERREGNUM

A Bad Prospect—Sunday's Employment: its Consequences—Spring Gardens—The Great Chirurgeon—Irrelevant Conversation—Convalescence—A Flash Dragsman—Useless Application—A Visit to the Infernal Regions—Lobster Salad—Gratitude—A Country Drive—Glance at Paradise—Disappointment—A Bold Stroke for a Box.

It being then the depth of winter, when travelling is at its lowest ebb, there was no immediate prospect of any new start, and to wait for a vacancy in the old-established coaches was similar to waiting for dead men's shoes. Consequently, my situation was far from enviable. Reflections on the past, which I could not scare from my mind, and a restless and not very hopeful temperament, although it did not altogether deprive me of reason, caused me to commit many unreasonable acts.

I was prevented in the spring seeking an appointment by an accident that had nearly put an end to my ever standing in need of one.

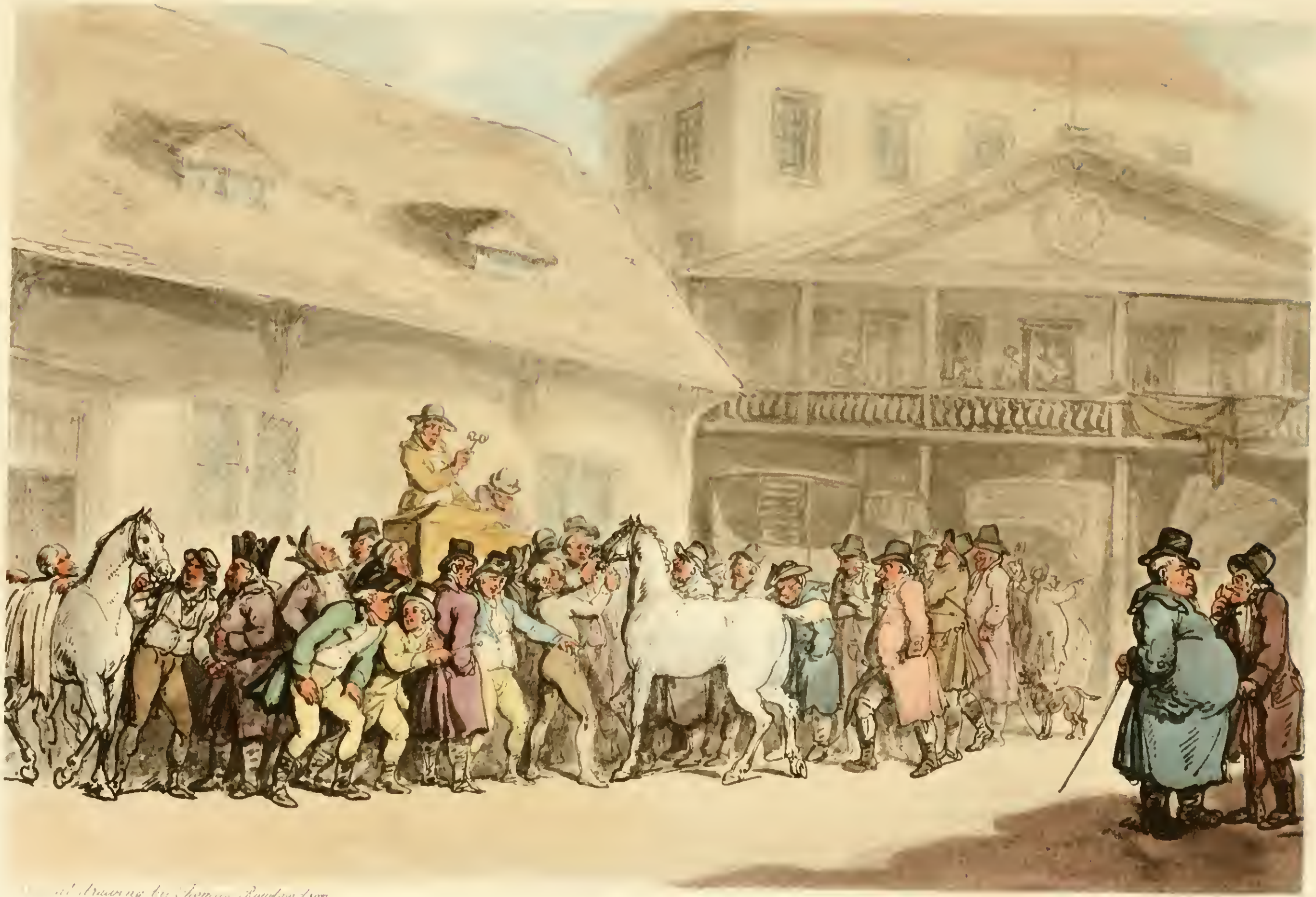
My father's establishment in the City, of which he still retained possession, besides the long coaches, was a sort of rendezvous for short stages—that is, coaches from places of ten or twenty miles distant, that would come in in the morning, and return in the afternoon and evening.

Some dispute had taken place between the Proprietors of the Kingston and Hampton coaches, and an old gentleman living at Cobham, in Surrey, who had been for a long time connected with the Portsmouth and Chichester coaches, had taken up the quarrel, and was determined, as the phrase was, to run the other off the road.

I had been out when, one evening, my father sent to my lodgings in St. Martin's Lane, to ask me to go down to Cobham with him on the Sunday morning. It was Easter Sunday, the second anniversary of the one that had already influenced my fortunes. My father drove me down in his buggy. We dined with the disputatious old gentleman, and partook of some of his excellent port. The coachmaker from Guildford had brought the new drag, which, with the four horses and harness, stood already at the "White Lion," to which place we repaired after dinner. After taking some more wine, the horses, which had all been purchased indiscriminately but the Friday preceding at the repository in Barbican, were put to, when the owner, our host, said to me,—

"You take hold of them: you know how to manage them, I know, and I'll sit beside you."

As the horses were all strangers to me, as well as to one another, I did not vastly like the task. Being eighty-three or eighty-four years old, this gentleman's limbs were not so pliant as they had been. However, he got up on the box, and we started on the road to Kingston, his nephew—a man between thirty and forty—the coachmaker, and a third person, occupying the roof, the intended dragsman sitting behind, and my father following in his buggy.



al Drawing by Thomas Rowlandson

A HORSE SALE AT HOPKINS'S REPOSITORY, BARBICAN

At Esher we pulled up at the "Bear," and were greeted by pretty well the whole household of Claremont, who must needs join in the libations that were poured forth to the success of the new drag. This was repeated at the turnpike; when the lessee, an old hand—hearing of the intended new start, from which it was more than probable he would be the only one to derive any profit—shut the gate, and planted a table, loaded with wine and glasses, in the centre of the road. There was no alternative; and after doing due honour to his generous spirit, we proceeded at a good pace to the "King's Arms," at Kingston, as this was to be the first and principal house of call in the regular way. My passengers all got down, while I went a little farther to turn, which I did in good style, and came back to the door of the inn. Here we stopped nearly an hour, still imbibing. On remounting, the coachmaker, an active, able young man, said to the old gentleman,—

"I'll sit on the box now." He got up, while the other took his place on the roof—a most providential change for him, as will presently be seen. We proceeded over Kingston Bridge, where I had never been before.

"Turn to the left," said my friend on the box.

I did so, and had not gone 100 yards, when some men at a public-house (where the coach, unknown to me, was to stop) put up their hands, and the leaders flew under the gateway. The coachmaker instantly jumped off, or he must have been killed. I, with much presence of mind, pulled the wheel-horses against the gate-post, at the same moment threw myself forward, and received a crushing blow in my shoulders and back, thereby saving my head, which otherwise must have been literally smashed; as it was, I was dreadfully injured, to all appearance irrecoverably so. The old gentleman escaped unhurt, though beside himself with fright. He was soon assisted down, and then I was lifted off, carried into a room, and laid on my back on the floor, where my father for some time stood weeping over me.

The doctor was sent for, and was quickly in attendance. He pronounced it a very serious case, though he hoped it would not be a fatal one. He bled me freely from the arm, and ordered me to be put to bed, as it would be impossible to remove me under a month.

In this state did I lay for three days; the doctor in regular attendance. He had by bleeding and potions prevented fever; and the pain from the blow having in a great measure subsided, though I still felt very sore, as well as weak, I was determined to leave the place for my father's house in London; and learn, from the highest source, the amount of injury my frame had sustained.

My friend, the coachmaker, whose family I had long known, sat up with me the first night, and did not depart till one of my sisters arrived from London the following morning, and remained.

On the Thursday morning, with her help I managed to dress myself; and it being a fine day, went out and sat under an apple-tree in the garden, where the doctor, to his great surprise, about eleven o'clock discovered me reading; he seemed glad to find me so much better, but thought I was running a great risk in leaving my room so soon. In the afternoon my father came down, and all things

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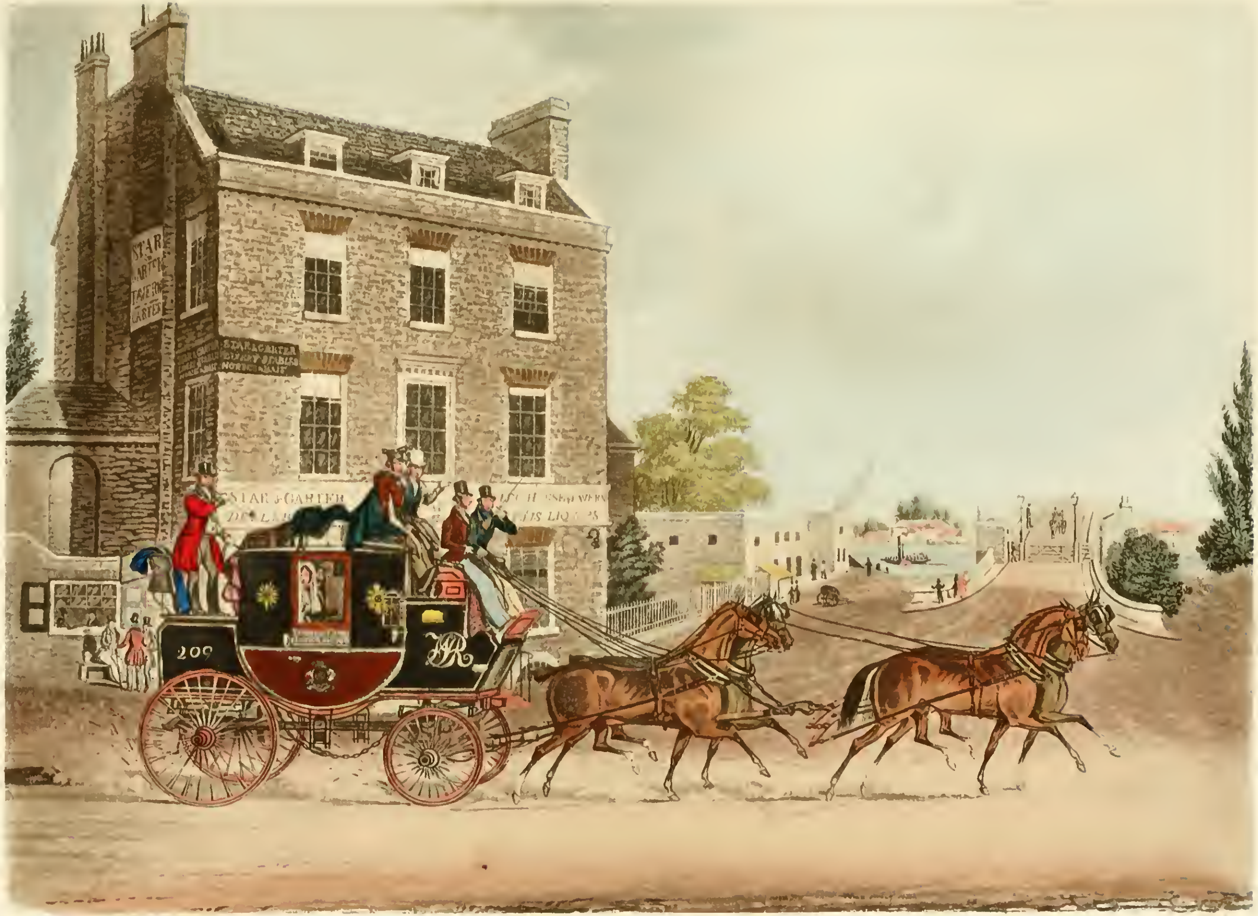
STAR GARTER TAVERN GARTER
STAR & GARTER
209

James Pollard Delt. Engraved by G. Hunt

QUICKSILVER ROYAL MAIL PASSING KEW BRIDGE

London Published Novem 1 1835 by Ackerman & Co 80 Strand

being settled, I and my sister returned with him to town.

In the morning I went to Spring Gardens, and knocked at the door of the great surgeon and anatomist. The door was opened by a servant out of livery, and after a little time I was introduced and ushered into his presence. He was sitting at his escritoire at the window, with his back towards me, apparently engaged in literary composition. His man-servant walked up to him, gave him a note and instantly retired. Without casting a glance at me, or asking any question, he handed me the note, not even turning his head, and said,—

"Have the goodness to open that, sir, will you?"

Strange as I thought such a request, I complied, and of course made myself acquainted with the contents. After some few minutes, still remaining in the same attitude, he said,—

"Have you read it, sir?"

"I have."

"Who is it from?"

"Lord Combermere, Sir Astley."

"Do you know him?" he said.

"I have seen him when he was Sir Stapleton Cotton."

"Indeed! What did you know of him?"

"I only know that he commanded the cavalry in the Peninsula, and was always considered the best-dressed man in the army."

Upon this he put down his pen, turned towards me, and smiled. I perfectly remember that smile, and it may appear simple in me to record so simple an occurrence;

but Sir Astley's was no common smile. It was not that of condescension—it was not that of a courtier; neither was it one of withering contempt or of specious designing villany; but it was one that lit up his fine and manly features with good-fellowship and benevolence. I fancied, too, there was a mark of silent recognition in it when he said,—

"And pray what brings you here this morning?"

I then related to him, as plainly and briefly as I could, the nature of the accident, and explained to him my symptoms and feelings.

"Let me assist you off with your coat," said he, observing I could not raise my right arm. "Now your waistcoat." Then, inserting his hand under my linen, he passed his fingers down my spine. Without farther consideration, he then said, "Every ligament of your backbone is ruptured. Have you a wife?"

"No," I replied, "unfortunately I am a widower."

"Well, you must procure thirty yards of calico, and get some female to wind it round your body as she would swathe an infant, and do not remove it for at least six months. Remember also to keep in a recumbent posture as much as possible."

I described to him the height of the gateway—that it would only admit the coach without any one being on it. He assured me that it was a miracle I had escaped as I had done, and that it would take a considerable time before my lungs would heal and I should entirely lose the pain and soreness complained of, as the whole cavity of my chest was bruised. Finally he told me I had better go into the country and keep quiet for a while.

I thanked him for his advice, deposited the usual fee, and was about to depart—

"What's the price of venison now—do you know?" he asked.

I answered in some surprise, "No, I do not."

"What! have you not had a buck from Whittlebury forest lately?"

"No, indeed, Sir Astley."

He smiled again, as I did, when the cause of the question suddenly occurred to me.

"Well, let me see you again before you go into the country," he added; and then wished me good morning.

When I returned and gave an account of my interview, one of my sisters, who had attended my bedside at Kingston, purchased the necessary supply of calico, in which, with the assistance of my father's housekeeper, I was tightly and speedily enveloped. A letter was then despatched to my married sister in Hampshire, to know if it would be convenient for me to take up my abode there for a little time, which was responded to in the same kind and affectionate spirit she had ever evinced for my welfare and comfort.

After taking a few days to dispose of my lodgings and settle my affairs in St. Martin's Lane, where I had furnished some apartments, I repaired again to Spring Gardens. Sir Astley seemed pleased to see me, and congratulated me on my improved condition, adding, I could not do better than follow out his advice. I told him I was about to leave town the following day for Hampshire. "Not into Hertfordshire, then?" he said, interrogatively. I said, no—Hampshire was my native county. Upon my naming the locality, he asked me many questions as to the medical practitioner of that place, who it appeared had been a very favourite pupil of his, and then dwelt with remarkable exactness and much sympathy upon an unfortunate fatal incident that had happened but a few years before at Petersfield, to the gentleman to whose practice his young friend had succeeded. A poor sailor had been found dead in that neighbourhood, and in sewing up the body, after a *post-mortem* examination, he punctured his finger, and decomposition having already taken place, the wound festered, mortification ensued, and put an end to his existence in a few days.

Sir Astley then reverted to Hertfordshire, and asked me if I had seen my friend at Redbourn lately. I told him that I had lost sight of him for a long time.

"Pray," asked he, "did he ever pay you for the buck you procured for him from the Duke of Grafton's keeper at Whittlebury Forest?"

I said that in the hurry of his departure I supposed he must have forgotten it; but that I freely forgave him; adding, that the doctor was a good fellow in the main, though fortune had been hard with him, and that, in his own nautical language, he was altogether an odd fish.

Sir Astley again put on one of his good-natured smiles. He inquired the origin of our acquaintance, which I frankly told him. He listened with great attention, though I fancied he had been made acquainted with the principal features of the doctor's history before, and something of mine. After half-an-hour's agreeable chat he rose, and, shaking my hand, bade me farewell, desiring me to write to him from Hampshire, that he might be assured of my convalescence.

Under my sister's care, and by paying strict attention to my doctor's instructions, I gradually got better, but my spirits did not keep pace with my bodily improvement. A melancholy and despairing feeling had seized me ; and, as I got out, led me to the churchyard, where it would find vent in odes and elegies of too gloomy a nature for public or even private inspection. I did not at all extend my visits, nor indeed did I seem to have delight in the former scenes of my enjoyments, and my brother the lieutenant was the only visitor in whose society I had any pleasure during my summer's residence at Catherington.

In the latter end of the autumn I returned to town, determined to shake off the hopelessness which was becoming habitual, and to seek, as common sense and necessity dictated, some means of obtaining a subsistence.

During my short sojourn at Oxford I had made acquaintance with two or three celebrated characters who figured conspicuously on that road, of whom I have attempted to give a sketch in the early part of this narrative. Among them was one who stood very high in his own estimation. He had risen by a peculiar method, made up of arrogance and persuasion, vulgarity and venality, strong nerve and recklessness of all consequences —to all of which it would be impossible to give the reader an adequate insight—and had become a man of great notoriety.

He had been the principal means of stirring up opposition after opposition on almost every line of road out of Oxford ; but though he had done considerable injury to the old-established concerns, he had not at all benefited himself. Indeed it was inconvenient for him to remain in a place where he was now too well known, and where there were too many claims upon him. So, after recovering from the effects of a recent encounter with an opponent at Stokenchurch Hill, where he had, technically speaking, floored his drag, and come off with a broken skull and the loss of an eye, he, on abandoning his wife and family, had come up to town.

It was some time after this that I met him on my return from Hampshire—like myself, soliciting employment from the same establishment; but there was this difference in our manner of seeking it—he considered that he was conferring a favour in offering his services to the head and owner of the establishment; I deemed an appointment only a right I was entitled to from former promises and from the treatment I had lately received from the same individual. However, we both met with the same success, or, more justly speaking, the same disappointment; and the manner in which our applications were received and the effect they had upon each of us were equally remarkable.

He was consulted and his advice asked as to the policy and the time of putting on a coach on this or that road, and what country proprietors he could get to join. This pleased his self-importance as well as his inclination, for Harry[1] was never so happy as when in opposition, and was ready to be the instrument in the hands of any unscrupulous London man, in endeavouring, by whatever means, to increase his establishment; consequently, he was never dejected, but bided his time. I was put off with empty promises, that were from time to time as far from fulfilment as on the day the Cheltenham coach was discontinued. A twelvemonth or near had passed away, when one evening, grown desperate by such repeated disappointment, I met him at the end of the gateway.

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[1] Charlton was killed by the overturn of Mr. Costar's Hereford coach, near Ross.

"Where are you going, young man?" said my one-eyed friend, who had been in conversation with the principal but a few minutes before.

"I don't know," I replied, in a careless and indifferent manner.

"Come along with me, then," said he.

I followed him instinctively—silently brooding over my own wrongs, and lamenting my almost destitute condition. We walked along Cockspur Street, under the Opera colonnade, turned into and crossed St. James's Square. My friend was a man of very few words—indeed his vocabulary was awkwardly deficient, and he was grossly ignorant on every subject except that of coaching. Yet he was generally pretty well dressed, though not in the extreme of either the fashion or his profession. He was a fine made man, though not tall; his neck and shoulders being a model for a sculptor, always reminded a sporting friend of mine of Gully, of fighting celebrity. His features were not bad, though a little inclined to the gladiator style, and the loss of his eye had added to his countenance a quaint, if not sinister expression. He always walked with a stick, which gave him more the appearance of a respectable London horse-dealer than anything I can compare him to.

We trudged along without exchanging a word, except, perhaps, as to the name of a coach that might be passing us, till presently in a street leading out of or adjoining St. James's Square, we came to a house with the door wide open, but with an inner door closed, in the upper part of which was a strong light, that enabled a person inside to perceive who was coming. My companion knocked, and the door was partially and cautiously opened. A glance at me and a question to my guide were sufficient; we were admitted, and I began slowly to ascend the stairs.

I had scarcely time to consider, or ask my conductor the nature of the house to which he had brought me, when at the top we entered—through a pair of folding-doors—a large parlour or saloon, full of well-dressed people, some seated round a large table, others standing, but most, if not all, silently and seriously engaged. In the centre of a table on one side I observed a hoary-headed, venerable-looking gentleman, dealing out a handful of cards, and placing them in two lines before him; opposite to him sat another with a long staff or rake in his hand, which ever and anon, upon his senior's muttering a word or two, he would extend right and left to gather up the silver and notes (there being but little gold, Peel's Bill not having yet passed) and then distribute to one and the other the amount they had left on the opposite two segments, out of the four, into which the cloth on the table—alternately red and black—was divided.

I was soon convinced that I was in one of those houses that I had frequently heard and read of in books both of the past and present century, which have been and are justly denominated a pandemonium. On looking round, I thought I could recognize one, two or more faces. Indeed, one in particular, whose services had gained him rank and distinction in the Navy, I could not mistake, from the very peculiar expression of countenance an unfortunate imperfection of speech gave him. He and many others I could see intent upon the game, their features contracting in frowns or expanding in smiles as their different chances came off. My companion soon obtained a seat, and every now and then I could see his one eye turned up to the ceiling as if asking there for information upon what colour he should deposit his chance.

"Make your game, make your game, Gentlemen," was intermittently reiterated by the venerable dealer and his associate; and urged by the nods and gesticulations of my introducer, and imbibing at the same time the general infatuation, I ventured to throw a half-crown on the table—the lowest sum the rules of the room admitted. The game was made and the cards were dealt. I scarcely regarded the issue, my eyes wandering round the crowded room, and my mind wrapt in contemplating so novel a scene, consequently I did not take any money up. The game was made time after time, till the spot where I had deposited my half-crown was covered with notes—the venerable gentleman looking at me very hard every time he doubled the heap. All eyes were turned on me, till the dealer stopped and asked whose money that was, as the stake, as they termed it, exceeded their limit, that is £100, when my friend Monops exclaimed, "Why don't you take your money up, young man?" Not a little disconcerted by this polite admonition, at the same time flushed with joy at so unexpected an acquisition of fortune, I managed to retain sufficient self-possession to reach over, for I had not been seated, grasp the notes with one hand, and put up the half-crowns that lay under them with the other, and thrust both indiscriminately into my breeches pocket.

After some little time my friend and I retired, and, entering an hotel in the Haymarket, I proceeded to count my gains, which amounted to £127 17*s*. 6*d*. We then regaled ourselves with some lobster salad and other delicacies, I of course standing treat; but this was not attended with any considerable expense, as since his accident my friend Monops had never drunk anything stronger than tea, of which he imbibed a large quantity, and always had a great objection to make what he termed a hog-tub of his internals. Upon my asking him how it was that I had been so successful, or how he could account for my good fortune—"A run upon red, young man," was all I got in reply; and, with a little further comment on the evening's occurrence, we retired to our respective domiciles.

Waking in the morning, and recalling what had passed, I certainly did not repent of the adventure, and I do not pretend to be an exception to those who are seduced by the first favours of the strumpet Fortune; but I did not, like the generality of unfortunate youths who are first entrapped into those dens of iniquity, endeavour immediately to follow up my success; indeed, I could not class myself as such, for I had nothing to lose except what they had furnished me with, which I did not feel disposed to risk again.

It will be thought, too, that I should have been grateful to the friend through whose means I had been put into a little ready cash; but so perverse is the human heart, that my feelings were of the very opposite nature; and I seemed, in anticipation, to loathe the very appearance of the man to whom I ought to have considered myself indebted. There was, however, nothing in common between us; his manners were coarse, his associations vulgar; conversation he had none; and whatever his morals may have been, abstinence seemed to me to be his only virtue, and that a very negative one; it must be confessed, therefore, that it was chiefly my dislike to be seen with him, in the company of those I took to be gentlemen—indeed some of whom I knew were—than any repugnance I had to the fascinating vice, that kept me from repeating my visit.

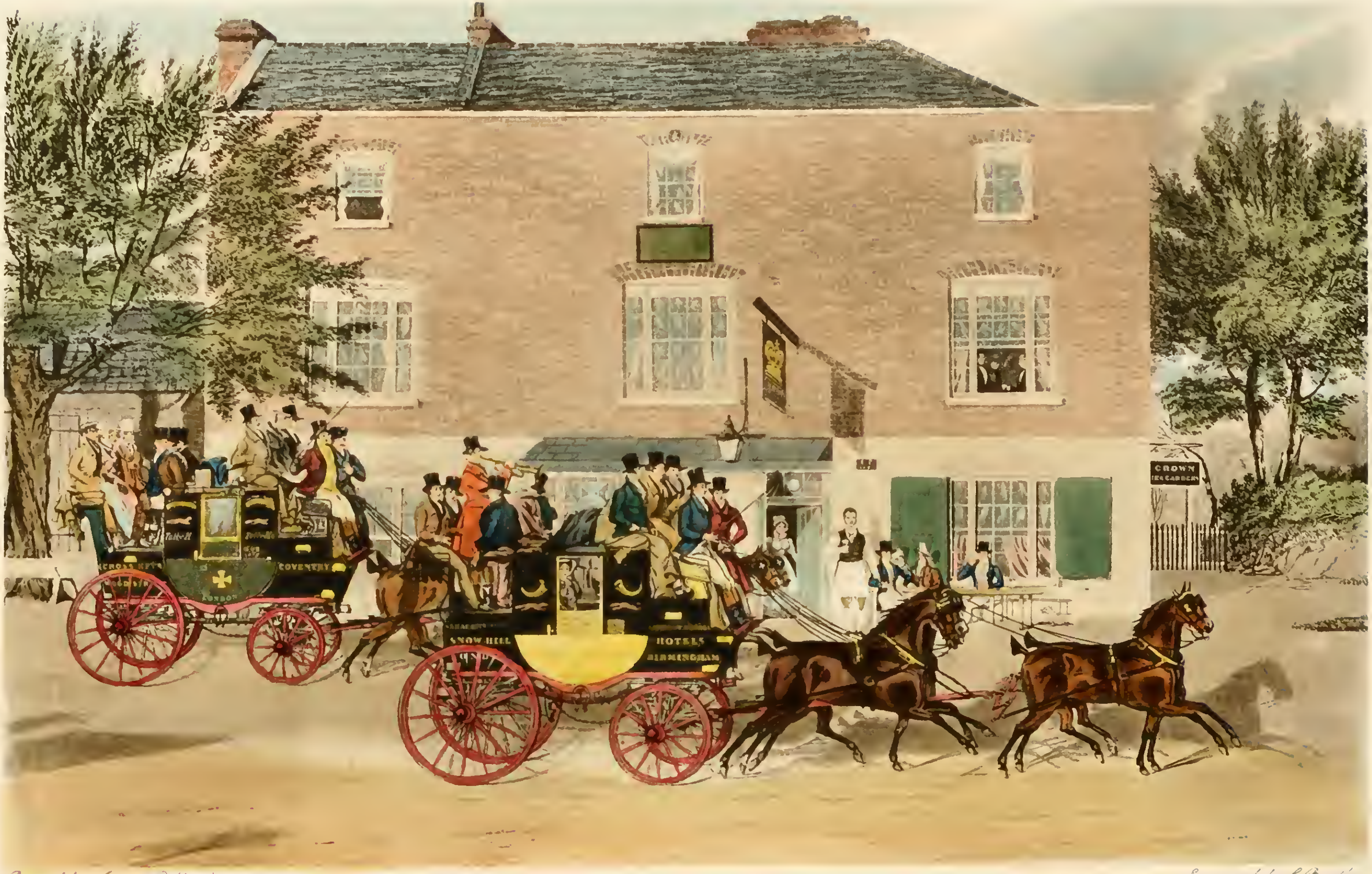
Glad of an opportunity of absenting myself from the locality of my daily attendance, and stealing into the country—above all, to avoid my last night's companion, I rose, dressed, and had an early breakfast; then, putting a change into my carpet bag, and taking it in my hand, I strolled leisurely towards the "Peacock" at Islington. St. Albans was the attraction, but it was in vain that my inclination—true as the magnetic needle to the pole—turned in that direction.

The Bedford coach coming up, I got on it, and had a very pleasant ride through Welwyn, Hitchin, and Shefford, to that neat little county town. After taking my dinner at the "Swan," and sauntering about the place, in which I saw nothing to attract or distract my attention, I inquired for the house of a person whom I knew—one who drove another Bedford coach, that went to the great metropolis by a different route, and passed through a village where I was informed I might meet with an object the sight of which would be ample reward for my trouble.

My friend of the "Bedford Pilot" was an old ally, and, like myself, had been reduced by circumstances; that is, from being the proprietor of an inn on the North Road, where, by coaching and posting, he had hoped to preserve a decent provision for a rising family—to picking up his crumbs on the box. I knew the man well, for he had been long connected with us in the York and Leeds coaches. He could not aspire to any of the qualifications that marked the most favoured of the fraternity, but he was a straightforward, honest, and most respectable man. I spent a very pleasant evening with him and his family, and finding, in answer to a few questions, adroitly though furtively put, that I had not been deceived in the object I had in view, I determined, at his invitation, to accompany him in the morning.

After a delightful drive by Ampthill, Selsoe, and Luton, near which places are the mansions of the Earls of Cork and de Grey, and of the Marquis of Bute, I took leave of my friend in the pretty little village of Harpenden.

I subsequently took a ride to Portsmouth, and discharged a few obligations of a private nature, stopping principally at the house of my deceased wife's brother's widow. I took my children with me, and spent here our


CROWN TEA GARDENS
SNOW HILL
HOTELS
BIRMINGHAM
COVENTRY
LONDON

Painted by James Pollard.

Engraved by C. Bentley

THE BIRMINGHAM TALLY-HO! COACHES

Passing the "Crown" at Holloway

London Published by [illegible] Southampton Row. 18.3

Christmas. My thoughts would sometimes revert to the scene that had so dazzled my understanding in St. James's Square. I had been at races—at Epsom in particular, as well as in other sporting circles, where I had witnessed and partook of the excitement, in a small way, that such meetings generally produced, where the qualities of the different animals were exhibited, and their merits decided by what appeared a fair competition. A numerous and joyous assemblage gave animation to the scene, and few were those of any class who did not, from some cause or other, feel inclined to have a little venture on a favourite animal. But this was far away from that deep-set, ardent and demoniacal spirit of gaming I for the first time was introduced to by Monops. At the time I did not give it much consideration; only wondering how one of his grade could find his way among men who appeared to belong to a very different class.

On my return to town, I found he had, by undeniable assurance, obtained employment, having been put on a new Birmingham day-coach, started in opposition. I was very much annoyed at his being preferred to me, and more by the proprietors telling me that he was more fitted for it than I was; they not giving me even a distant prospect of success. I resorted in a pet to the scene of my former success, where I soon exhausted what I had left of my ill-gotten gains.

To the uninitiated—that is, to any but the heartless reveller in the orgies of a Pandemonium—where all the evil passions of our nature are developed—success and loss are equally destructive of moral obligations and religious duty. The first carries him into the region of extravagance and folly, the other commits him to the lowest pit of despondency and despair.

I was silently and gloomily lamenting my sad fate, when one of the book-keepers at the establishment where I had so repeatedly sought employment, and who had been in my father's service, sent to say he wished to speak to me. I hurried to the office. He told me he had just heard that a certain person who drove out of the yard was about to leave. Upon my doubting the truth of his information, he assured me that the man had taken an inn on the road; and consequently, to make use of a hackneyed term, must vacate his seat on or before a certain day then fast approaching. Seats of another kind are frequently vacated, and as eagerly sought for by hungry applicants.

There were four proprietors on this road, each possessing an equal right to the appointment; but the London man was considered the one whose sanction or interest it was most desirous to obtain; therefore, to him I went in the morning and stated my business. He had not heard anything about the man leaving, and said that he could not, or should not, trouble himself in the matter. I then waited the arrival of the coach in the evening, and asked the driver himself, as he and I had been acquainted some little time. He decidedly told me that it was not his intention to leave. I told this to the book-keeper, who smiled and replied, "He will leave," and hinted to me the reason for his denying it. Thus was I bandied about, from one to the other, without any satisfactory arrangement. At last I went to my old friend the wine-merchant, whom I have before spoken of, and at whose house I always received the kindest hospitality. I asked him to use the power of his rhetoric with the principal in London in my favour; he entered warmly into my feelings, for I explained everything to him as regarded my future, and he promised to do all I asked him.

"I shall be sure to see him," said he; "and you had better come and dine with me on Sunday, when I will tell you the result."

Accordingly, I was true to my appointment, and met with a hearty welcome; but he first told me that he regretted very much he had not been successful, for the man was not going to leave.

"Well," I replied, "it is very strange; I know from the best authority that he takes possession of his new house on Monday."

"Did he tell you so?"

"No, but it is a fact."

"Well, if that be the case, we will first have some dinner, and then arrange the affair."

As soon, therefore, as the cloth was cleared, and we had a glass or two of wine, he said,—

"Now, take my advice."

I listened with much attention.

"Get your box-coat and whip; say nothing to anybody, but go down to Cambridge by the Fakenham coach this evening; in the morning go to the 'Bull' at Cambridge, and when the coach arrives from Lynn, if anybody asks you any questions, say you are come to take the coach up."

I gave myself but a few moments to consider, and then determined to follow his advice to the letter; for, if neither of the proprietors had appointed a man—and from the occupant persisting in telling them all he was not going to leave, I could not think they had—I might have a chance.

Arrived at Cambridge, I slept where the coach stopped, and in due time made my appearance at the "Bull." The first person I saw with whom I was acquainted was the Cambridge proprietor, who shook hands with me, and asked kindly after my father, whom he had known many years, having been engaged in business with him. He presently demanded,—

"What brings you to Cambridge?"

"I am come to take the Lynn coach up, sir," I replied.

He looked very much surprised, and asked where the other man was. No one could tell him. Then, saying it was very strange altogether, he turned away.

I asked for the way-bill, which was given to me, and the horses being put to, without further conversation I mounted the box and drove off.

CHAPTER V

CAMBRIDGE

The First Journey Up—An Untoward Circumstance—A Reassurance—Discourse on the Box—Figurative Comparison—A Timely Rebuff—Merchant and Banker—The Journey Down—An Hotel and Banquet—An Episode—Lodgings—An Agreeable Reception—Strange Object—Its Appearance Described—Anecdotes and Reflections—An Intellectual Company—Shrimp Van—Juveniles—Poor Tribute—Sporting Parson—Splendour Defaced—Immortality Rivalled—Senatorial Figures Compared—Adam a Gardener—Contemplation.

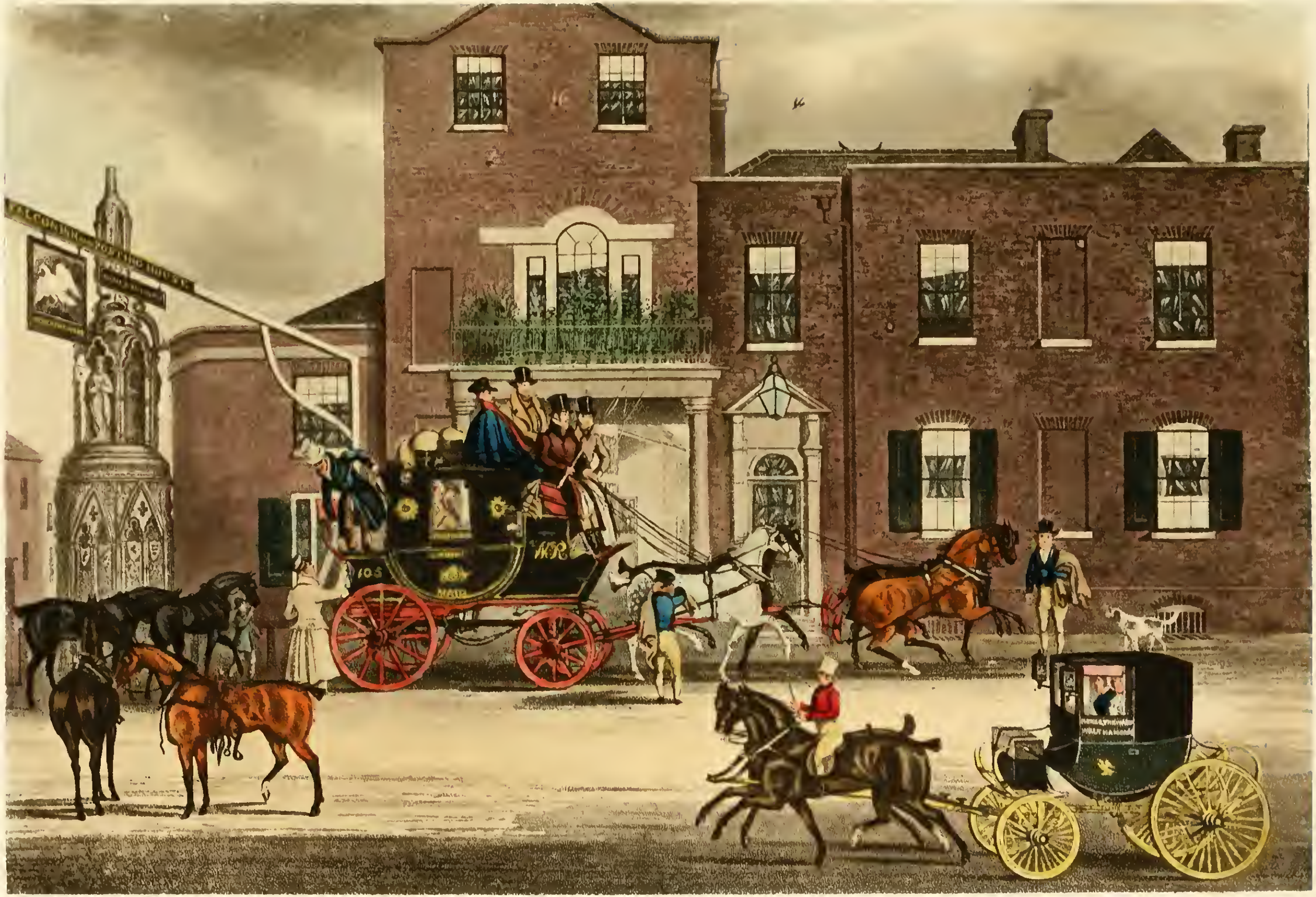
To pursue the course of my narrative, which is not quite so straight as the turnpike road upon which I was now driving, I must state that my first journey to London was attended with rather an inauspicious event. I did not know a yard of the road the first two stages before the day I took possession of the box of the Lynn coach; but had no difficulty in finding my way, as, with the exception of diverging from the Royston Road, rather more than four miles from Cambridge, I could not possibly make a mistake; and in taking the right road, the horses themselves, I knew, would be a sufficient guide. Arrived at the inn which my predecessor had used, I pulled up, and he informed me that he should resume his seat in a day or two, but gave no reason for his strange conduct, and for his not saying anything to his employers. This, of course, did not tend to put me on very good terms with myself.

After changing for the last time at Waltham Cross, and it coming on dark, I forgot, if I had ever known, the double gate at Kingsland, and the glare of the lamps not permitting me to see that the further one was closed, my leaders ran against it, and the force of the concussion knocked them on their haunches, and very much discomposed my nerves. The confusion was very great—one of the bars being broken, and the leaders partly under the wheel horses. I got down, and, there being plenty of assistance, soon liberated the team, replaced the broken bar with a spare one we always carried, and being pretty well up in knotting and splicing, made the reins right. No further mischief having been done, I proceeded on the journey; but had the greatest difficulty in piloting the team—one of which, a wheel horse, I recognized as the animal I had cured of his evil propensities at Oxford by my knowledge of hydropathics—through the city—one pulling, another rearing, and all from their excited state being nearly unmanageable. However, at last, much to my relief, I landed them safe in the "Golden Cross" yard; and to those who recollect that yard before it was purchased by Government and pulled down, this will appear to have been no very easy task.

Before I got off the box, the proprietor, speaking to me from the office door, cried,—

"Oh, you are there, sir, are you?"

My friend the wine merchant was with him, and, as I supposed, had made him acquainted with the whole


ALCON INN
POSTING HOUSE
105
WR
MAIL

Painted by Jas Pollard

THE MAIL CHANGING HORSES AT "THE FALCON" WALTHAMSTOWE

Waltham Cross

Published by T. Helme, 75, Tabernacle Square, Old Street Road

affair. I replied in the affirmative, and added that the other man would return in a day or two.

"Indeed!" he exclaimed. "It is my desire that you retain your seat, and let no one put you off. He has left without acquainting me, and he does not return."

"Very well, sir," said I, pleased at being thus reassured.

"When you have settled your bill, come into the coffee-room."

An invitation I was very glad to accept.

In the meantime a gentleman, who with his two daughters occupied the inside, and who I thought would take exception at the very awkward display I had made at Kingsland (where he sat very quiet, merely asking what was the matter), on paying me more than double the usual fee, much to my surprise complimented me on the nerve and presence of mind I possessed, and, wishing me good-night, walked with his companions towards the hackney coach the porter had called for him.

It was with much pleasure I afterwards renewed my acquaintance with this gentleman, who up to the time of his death was one of my most frequent as well as my most liberal patrons. He invariably, winter and summer, took an inside place; but if the weather were at all fine he would ask to sit beside me, and I always felt happy to have for my companion on the box a person who would converse with me, and therefore took some little trouble to preserve the seat for him. His manner to me at all times was affable and kind in the extreme, and I could venture an opinion on any subject without fear of giving offence—although I remember at one time, in the early part of our acquaintance, nearly exceeding the bounds of discretion.

The county in which I was born, including the Isle of Wight, contained before the Reform Bill more close, rotten, and nomination boroughs than any other county of its size—Southampton being the only one that could positively be declared open or free from aristocratic influence. Petersfield was a nomination, Portsmouth a close borough—the former the property of Colonel Joliffe, the latter, in the important matter of sending members to Parliament—it was generally supposed—was nearly as much under the dictation of a very wealthy old gentleman,[1] residing in the former place, as Cambridge, where I then resided, was under the Duke of Rutland.

Conversing one day with this gentleman on the representation of Lynn—for which place Lord William Bentinck, afterwards Governor-General of India, was then member—I ventured to hint that Lynn, or the Lynn Corporation, of which my companion was the most distinguished member, bore the same relationship to the Duke of Portland as Portsmouth did to the Petersfield Esquire, who always walked with a large cane, and came down at the time of an election for Members of Parliament, flourishing it over their heads, daring the Corporation to speak, or even think, of any other candidates than those he should name to them.

Of course my companion took this as it was meant —figuratively—but indignantly denied the inference. He took pains to instruct me as to the nature and component parts of the constituency of Lynn Regis, and gave good reasons for their selection of men of considerable influence with the Government and in Parliament, for their representatives; among which might be reckoned the drainage of the Fens, and the improvement of the navigation and the port of Lynn. When I was informed of the number of Acts relative to those important objects that had been, and would be yet, in the House, I could but acknowledge my fallacious and ill-drawn conclusions, and contrasted them with his sound judgment and superior understanding.

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[1] The late John Bonham, Esq.

Indeed, he was an excellent specimen of that most respectable class, the merchants and bankers of the country. He was a man of great penetration and quick discernment—his intercourse with the world, joined to faculties of no mean order, gave him an intimate knowledge of his kind—he was therefore admirably qualified for the office of chief magistrate of so important a town, or to preside over a deliberative body, and to guide those with whom he acted in all matters concerning the wants and welfare of the community among whom he resided. His name will ever be remembered and spoken of with gratitude and esteem by all who knew him, and by none more sincerely than by the author, who takes this opportunity of paying a slight tribute of respect to his memory.[1]

I repaired to the coffee-room, where, over a little brandy and water, I again received the sanction of the governor of the establishment, who, having heard the forcible reasoning of my friend, the wine merchant, expressed himself anxious to make amends for the long neglect I had experienced, though, as he said, he feared I should not find it a very lucrative appointment.

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[1] The late John Blencowe, Esq.

I began my first journey down, and performed it without meeting with any incident worth recording. The weather was exceedingly mild; for though it was the month of March, it was more like May or June, and all the windows were up as I drove down the principal street to the "Bull." This season, I must also observe, was the earliest ever remembered, and there had not been the slightest frost during the past winter. The corn was ready for the sickle before the end of June, and completely harvested before July was out.

On my pulling up, who should I see on the pavement, clutching his stick, but my friend Monops, who, it turned out, had driven the Fakenham coach down the night before. On my getting off the box, he accosted me with,—

"Well, young man. I have ordered dinner for you at my lodgings, boiled fowl and bacon."

"Very kind of you," I replied. Being a perfect stranger in the place, I resolved to accept his invitation; therefore, after answering a few interrogatives made in the kindest manner by my friend of yesterday, and finding that the coach had started for its ultimate destination with a paucity of passengers, I accompanied him.

Never having been at Cambridge, my thoughts reverted to the Sister University, and I already began in my mind to draw comparisons between them; but I looked around in vain for the beautiful High Street of the latter. And my companion would not allow me long to indulge in any such ruminations, but took me at once, after passing two or three narrow, dirty streets, to a house of a very mean appearance at no great distance. I did certainly venture to ask the name of the hotel where we were to discuss the promised meal, while looking round to discover something like one; but all I had in reply was, "Never mind, young man, come along with me." Entering the house, and ascending from the ground floor, which seemed occupied by a noisy and not very sweet-smelling community, we found a room fronting the street, rather bare of furniture, but very clean, having a table very neatly spread, and disclosing nothing objectionable to a man intent on—chiefly and primarily—satisfying his appetite. The dinner was served, and there was no necessity for asking me if it were to my taste.

We were waited on by a tall, matronly-looking woman, about the age of forty. The remains of beauty, faded like her dress, hung about her, and there was a taciturnity in her manner very uncommon in females who occupy the position of either mistress or maid in places of public resort. I observed that my companion spoke to her in very familiar terms, though they were by no means improper; and I also remarked that she always answered him with a monosyllable. There was something about the female that interested me, and, when removing the cloth, her staid and studied manner awakened my curiosity.

This was not unobserved by my companion.

"Don't you know her, young man?" he inquired.

"No," I replied, "how should I? But you do. Who is she?"

"Jack Hale's wife," he said, naming a well-known Oxford dragsman.

"Nonsense!" I exclaimed; "I was at his house in London not long ago, and when I drove the 'Crown Prince,' we had some talk about exchanging. I then saw his wife, a very different person from this—indeed quite the opposite."

Now, this man had attained as great a notoriety, as a professional, as my friend Monops, as much for being a first-rate workman as for a dashing devil-me-care sort of bearing, that caused him to be a great favourite on the road, indeed quite a pet with the amateurs, and an idol with the undergraduates.

Jack was a smart-looking fellow when young, and, by means that it would be in vain for me to attempt to describe, had made sad inroads in the affections of the females who officiated at the houses where he daily took his refreshment; and it was one of these, it proved afterwards, I had taken for Mrs. H——, indeed she really was so, although the one I had been introduced to by Monops had a prior claim on the hand and heart of this Lothario.

A day or two afterwards, on my following journey down, I was induced from curiosity to ask the lady if what I had heard from our friend was true. She replied in the affirmative; and, upon further inquiry, I found that, being the daughter of respectable parents, she had been sent to a boarding-school, where the sight of that fascinating object, a stage-coach, had more charms for her than the usual routine of female study; and, from the weakness of her heart or understanding, the nod and smile of its conductor soon supplanted the tuition of either the drawing or music master. After a few stolen interviews with this member of so engaging a profession, in an unhappy hour she consented to an elopement, and was married to him.

It was not long before she had good reasons for repenting the steps she had taken; and while lamenting and telling me the many evil consequences of her error, arising principally from his ill-treatment, she went into an adjoining room and dragged from the place of its concealment a large portmanteau. She informed me that it was once full of the most valuable articles, adding,—

"I have at this moment the life of my husband in my hands, for he purloined this from the coach he once drove, and disposed of its contents."

I did not stop to inquire whether she partook of the benefits arising from such a criminal act, but failed not to discover, as she gave me her history, intermingled as it was with tears, that her hatred of the vile means by which he supported his extravagance and otherwise profligate conduct caused her to separate from him, and to seek to obtain her own living.

Although I listened to her story with painful attention, and commiserated the poor woman's unhappy and as it seemed irreparable condition, my greater annoyance arose from my lot being cast with a fraternity where such men as the one she had been speaking of and Monops were looked upon as its principal ornaments.

I resolved, therefore, to shake off my acquaintance with them; in furtherance of which I took private lodgings, though I had some little difficulty in procuring apartments that I liked, as, contrary to the custom at Oxford, the undergraduates were, and are still, allowed to reside without the walls of their different colleges; and the benefits arising to the lodging-house keepers from the self-allotted perquisites, which might truly be called black-mail, levied on their thoughtless and unsuspicious inmates, caused them to look with disfavour on any strange applicant not being a member of the University.

However, by dint of perseverance, I succeeded in establishing myself in one of the narrow though principal streets leading from the Market Hill—as a small open space, in front of a mean and dingy-looking building which served for a town hall, was called.

Here in the morning I performed my toilet for the day, and was walking deliberately along, when, about twenty or thirty yards from my own door, splash came a whole basin of water, something like breakfast slops, in my face, running down my neck, completely saturating my cravat, and otherwise moistening and discolouring my shirt and waistcoat. Remonstrance was vain, and only elicited an apology from the Hebe who, with a slattern's gait and uncombed locks, had been the authoress of my discomfiture. She alleged, as an excuse, that having no back premises, people were compelled, like the inhabitants of the sweet-savoured Northern capital, to throw everything into the street.

Returning to my lodgings to change and readjust my dress, I issued forth again, not much prepossessed in favour of a place where I had just received so unpleasant mark of distinction, when I saw a posse of people—some men, some boys, and a few women—congregated round a figure of a grotesque and extraordinary appearance, who stood in front of a butcher's shop, gesticulating and loudly haranguing, as I thought, the motley group.

I stopped for a minute to scan this eccentric personage, who it seemed was a familiar object to all but myself. I wondered why the authorities did not prevent the collecting of such an assemblage in the streets, particularly as it comprised many gownsmen, young and old. I, however, supposed that it must be an exhibition peculiar to this University.

The man had on a blue dress coat with gilt buttons, which were not altogether disposed in regular order, nor was the garment itself free from those gaps which time and use had created. The colour of his waistcoat, from the accumulation of snuff and other impurities, it would have been a difficult matter to define. Nothing in the shape of linen was visible about his person; his head was surmounted by a large cocked hat, which he wore athwartships, as the sailors term it, with a cockade and a gold loop in front; while his nether extremities—his limbs being partly enveloped in tattered inexpressibles—disdaining any covering—corresponded in their hue with his unwashed and half-shaven visage. Round his neck he wore what was intended to represent a massive gold chain, to which was appended an eye-glass, which "ever and anon" he would apply to his organ of vision, although it was evident enough it did not need that assistance, for he had a fine full eye, which might have lit up large and intelligent features, had the organ not been dimmed by perpetual sotting. In his hand he carried an immense stick, or bludgeon, with which he every now and then threatened those who interrupted his discourse, or otherwise offended him by laughter or mockery.

On my passing him—for on my way to the coach I could not avoid so doing—he cried out, in a stentorian voice, " Who are you, sir ? " To this I did not deign an answer, when he loudly added, " What are you, sir ? "

To this question I should have been puzzled to give an answer to a more polite inquirer ; but judging from the man's appearance that he must be a maniac, and knowing from experience that it was better to please than to tease —either a fool or a madman, I deliberately took off my hat, and bowing, said,—

" *That* can be of no importance to so great a man."

Upon this the crowd set up a loud laugh, which I was willing to accept as a sort of recognition of my ignorance of the man's character, when he, turning round, with a knowing shake of his head to them, observed,—

" He knows how to behave to his superiors, you see."

I have since heard many facetious anecdotes of this compound of the lowest of vices with the highest attainments—(for he had been known to expound the most difficult passages in Tacitus, and other ancient writers, when appealed to by the students)—but as his doings have been referred to and his character drawn—rather in caricature—by the author of " Pelham," perhaps two will suffice.

One day, when in a little better trim than that in which I saw him—that is, before his irreclaimable conduct had brought him quite so low—he met the Master of Trinity, Bishop Mansel, whose son had just then made his escape from a French prison, and begged half-a-crown of his lordship to drink his son's health. The Bishop remonstrated with him, not more hardly, perhaps, than he deserved, and told him to go about his business, and when he found a greater scoundrel than himself to bring him to him (the Master), and he would grant his request.

Very soon after he met with one of the Esquire Beadles, who he knew was not in the Master's good books, and told him the Bishop, who held the office of Vice-Chancellor at the time, wished to speak to him immediately. Accordingly, the latter proceeded to the Lodge, his informant following at his heels. The door was opened, and, on his name being announced, the Bishop came out, and requested to know his business.

" You sent for me, my lord."

"I! Indeed I did not," said his lordship. "Pray, who has told you I wanted you ? "

" This man," was the reply.

The trick of the arch-vagrant instantly occurred to him, and, after politely bowing his visitor out, on his companion advancing, the Bishop smilingly presented him with a crown for his ingenuity.

On another occasion, one of a family high in favour with the Duke of Rutland had been chosen Mayor[1] for his Grace's borough of Cambridge. He was a good-tempered, easy, facetious gentleman, of whom no one ever said an evil word.

On his return from the Vice-Chancellor's Lodge, where he had been, as was customary, with his retinue of aldermen, burgesses, and mace-bearers, to receive the sanction of his high authority, our hero, seeing him distinguished by his scarlet gown and other insignia of office, ran after him, and, jumping on his back, caused him to carry him two or three yards, when he, as quickly getting off, called out to the astonished crowd,—

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[1] The late William Mortlock, Esq.

"Who can say I never rode a Mayor?"

This poor creature was at once the scoffed and the scoffer—the scorned and the scorner; his attainments were the envy of the scholar—his gross misconduct the pity of the charitable and right-thinking—his personal appearance and manner the constant jest of the learned as well as the unlearned.[1]

Such scenes as these did not much recommend the place to my favour; neither did the society I met in the evenings, by the advice of my predecessor, accord with my taste. Having entered a room called the Sixteen, which from its darkness—there being but one mutton-light placed on a table in the centre—reminding me of the poet's description of Hecate's cave, I expected from his account to be entertained with some scientific exposition, or, at least, some learned and interesting conversation. I was greatly disappointed when I found myself sitting down next to two well-dressed men, who, by earnestly disputing which was the most desirable part of the visage to commence operations on, convinced me that they were journeymen barbers. The rest of the company were doubting or affirming the truth of some doggerel rhymes published in their provincial paper, which gave a

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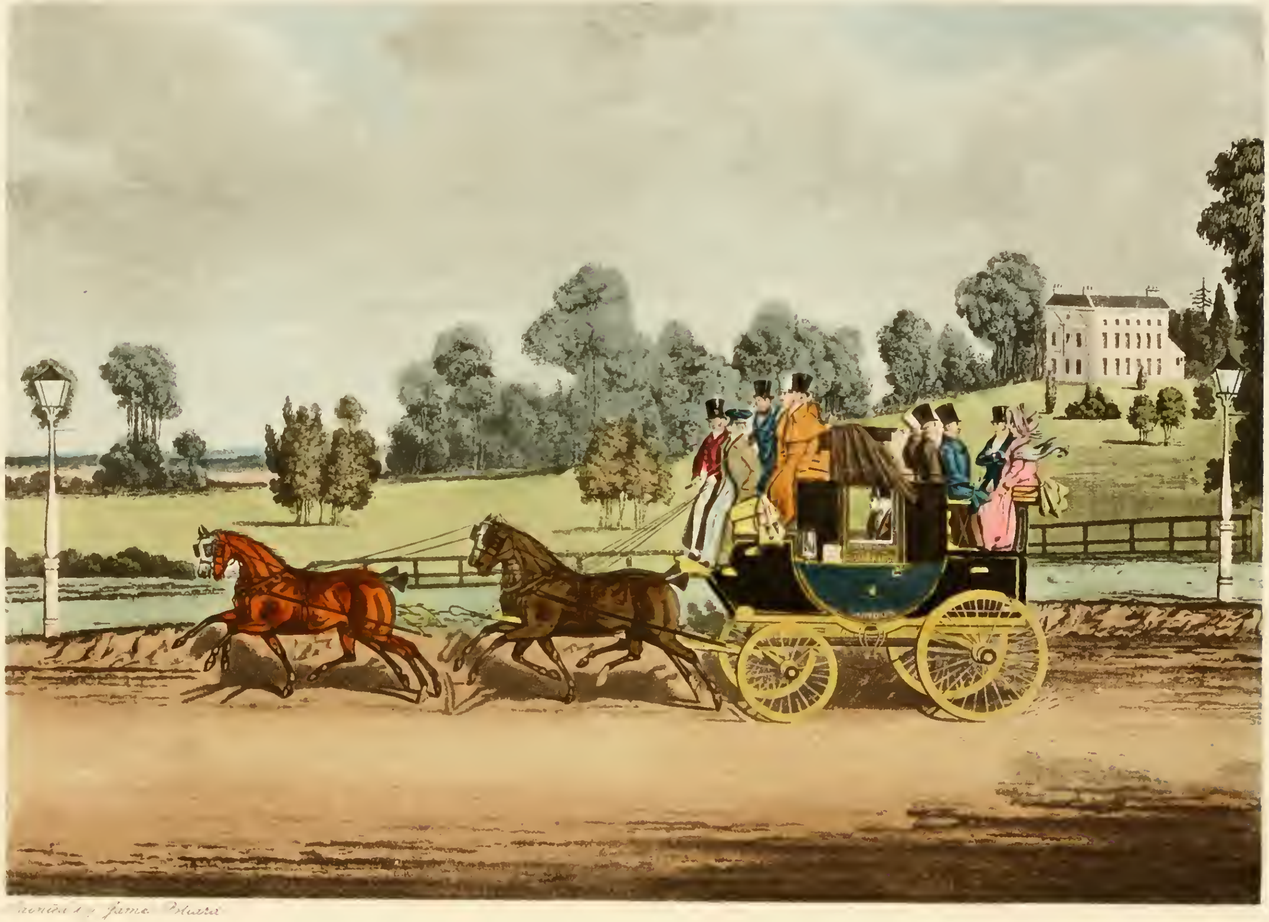
[1] This unfortunate being, well known as "Tommy Gordon," has long been defunct; but lives in the memory of every Cantab. of his time.



[illegible] by James Pollard

CAMBRIDGE COACH

[illegible] by J. [illegible] 15 [illegible] Square Old Street [illegible] ludicrous description of some persons who had been dupes of a hoax, announcing that a man would walk on the water from Lynn to Cambridge,[1] many of whom were then in the room. Such things did not give me a favourable opinion of the intellectual acquirements of a community among whom I had a very good chance of taking up my abode for some considerable time.

Nevertheless, I continued on the box, and did not, as I had expected, meet with any hindrance or interference from my predecessor. I could not boast of my coach being overloaded, except with packages of those little crustaceans so much in favour with the Londoners, and commonly called Lynn shrimps; while the down coach, hung round with empty baskets on a sultry day, would emit an effluvium that was very uninviting to the gentry, who in consequence would rather choose some circuitous route than thus have their olfactory organs offended.

Still, it sometimes happened that I was accompanied by some of the more youthful members of the upper ten thousand. One morning in particular, I remember, three of them, who in the exuberance of their spirits, on leaving the Charterhouse, treated me with a portion of them, double-distilled. Their good looks, good tempers, and, with this exception, good manners, would not allow me to be angry, although the liquid accidentally fell on the skirts of a coat I had donned for the first time that morning; and the circumstance would have fled my memory had it not been the first of my acquaintance with one of the three since grown to eminence and distinction in his neighbourhood, from whom the author has received many proofs of a kind and generous patronage, more than common marks of attention on particular occasions, and, what was more prized than all, a heartfelt sympathy in domestic calamity.[1] These things are not to be forgotten; neither is the manly bearing and liberal and Christian spirit of one of his companions, who was snatched in the prime of life from a circle of affectionate relatives and admiring friends—a gentleman who never ceased to manifest towards the author the most gratifying marks of his approbation and esteem.

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[1] One Zachariah Whitmore; a trick of some wag in the University.

Among my earliest clients was a gentleman, whom I afterwards found to be a beneficed clergyman, holding a very valuable living in the neighbourhood of Downham, in Norfolk. On my first having the pleasure of his company on the box, which he always, it appeared, took care to secure, and when we were both total strangers to each other, he did not speak or make any observation in passing through the streets till, just at the turn from St. Paul's Churchyard into Cheapside, something occurred in the conflux of vehicles that called up the exercise of all my skill as an artist to avoid an imminent collision. The quickness and precision I displayed elicited his unqualified approbation.

"Well done!" he cried. "You are a perfect master of your art, sir, I can see. Where did you first learn to drive?"

Having briefly answered him, he forthwith commenced a dialogue which continued almost without intermission the whole of the journey, in which he developed an intimate knowledge of the horse. He described the various purposes to which he was adapted, whether for draught or saddle, together with the proper treatment of that noble and useful animal, to whatever purpose he might be applied. The dog, too, came in for a share of our colloquy, and my new friend evinced as much knowledge of the kennel as he had done of the stable, distinctly pointing out the qualities of the various breeds, more particularly adverting to the difference between a pointer and a setter, and the sort of country and shooting to which each was best adapted.

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[1] Richard Bagge, Esq., of Gaywood Hall.

He was a man then advancing in years, but still of a hale constitution ; of a compact frame, strong and active ; of a pleasing countenance, and seemed formed by nature for anything but a sedentary life. His benevolent aspect, despite the vivid flash of his bright sparkling eye, would have caused any one to differ from those who affirm that the love of field sports is incompatible with the exercise of the clerical office, or who think that the pursuit of a sportsman interferes with the duty of a minister.

Indeed, I had reason to surmise, a year or two after, when we had become further acquainted, that the two might be very well associated ; that the same keenness of gaze that could descry a partridge or a hare at a distance, could seek an object on which to leave impressions not easily eradicated.

This I witnessed one morning over our breakfast where the coach stopped, when in company with my son, then a lad about seventeen or eighteen years of age ; for, after asking him two or three questions, he delivered a discourse on the proper fulfilment of filial obligations, with all that decision and earnestness of manner which is so necessary in the field, combined with that dignity of sentiment and strong natural eloquence so essential in the pulpit.

In addition to this, though his tastes were decidedly of a nature not in accordance with the spirit of the present day, he was a gentleman of sound erudition, of kind feelings, and urbane manners, and possessed a fund of useful and amusing knowledge, so that his conversation was not always confined to the animating subject of field sports. In our frequent and, to me, very pleasing intercourse, he had always some fresh anecdote to relate; and occasionally amused me with a happy solution of an enigma—a kind of ingenious trifling then much in fashion.

On one occasion, I remember, he asked me if I knew what two words in the English language (and there were but two) contained all the vowels consecutively, as they appear in the alphabet. I replied in the negative, and ventured, as an excuse for my ignorance, to say that it would require a regular and continuous perusal of the dictionary to discover the words, and for that I had not sufficient application.

"Well," he said, "I do not agree with you. Do we not take refreshment at the next change?"

On my answering in the affirmative, he added,—

"Then if you and I dine together *abstemiously*, and talk a little *facetiously* over our wine, I think we shall be able to make it out."

This, and similar peculiarities both in reading and arithmetic, the reverend gentleman made me acquainted with; and I very much regretted the loss of his company when he exchanged his living for another in Somersetshire.

My leisure hours I spent partly in inspecting the far-famed buildings of this celebrated university, and partly in pursuing my love of literature, or in courting the Muses. I of course shall not give a description of the beautiful colleges and temples founded by our pious ancestors, and erected for the advancement of religion, the diffusion of knowledge, the cultivation of science, and the education of the nobility and gentry of the land. At these I wondered and admired, but turned with disgust from the mean appearance of the houses, some of which were attached to the churches and chapels, and from the unseemly approaches by which the exterior of these venerable buildings were hid from the public view. Indeed, it would seem to a close observer that succeeding generations had endeavoured to stop the progress which the arts—architecture in particular—had made in the middle ages, and to deface those beautiful specimens by barbarous encroachments.

In that chapel, which is supposed to stand unrivalled in Europe for the unity of its design and its internal decoration, one or two of the windows that have obtained universal admiration for their splendid colours, as well as for their beautiful illustrations of sacred history from the Old and New Testaments, had long been obscured by a wall, and a side of the building desecrated by offices of the lowest description.

But all these disfigurements, thanks to the spirit of improvement, have been removed, the window restored, and a magnificent screen substituted for the wretched hovels that formed one side of the principal thoroughfare, in a town that, void of form or uniformity, seemed to be made up of narrow streets and numberless filthy courts and alleys. A splendid hall and library, new lodges and buildings, have been erected, more conducive to the comforts of the inmates, and more in accordance with the original intention of this regal endowment.

The noble quadrangle of Trinity, with its spacious hall, hung round with portraits of men eminent for the services they have rendered science or religion; its library, replete with ancient manuscripts, and the works of antique and modern writers; its chapel, famous for a work that has rendered the chisel of the sculptor almost as immortal as his subject—the great Sir Isaac Newton—by turns attracted my attention and engaged my time. Neither did I overlook a similar, though not equal, production in the Senate house; and, in "looking upon this picture and upon that," I could not fail to compare the talents and services of the pilot that weathered the storm—with the possessor of the numerous titles that are engraved on the pedestal that stood beside him; while the outrageous representations of the two first Sovereigns of the House of Hanover reminded me more of their reputed though remote and savage ancestor, Ariovistus, than they did of their talents, their virtues, or their humanity.

The mulberry-tree planted by the hand of the divine Milton in Christ's College garden, and preserved in its old age from the destroying hand of time by the care of the less learned but as useful members of this pious institution—who followed the occupation of our common progenitor—did not escape my observation.

But the frequent contemplation of these objects caused me to lament, and sometimes to forget, my position, and would drive me to my solitary room, to deliver myself up to the contemplation of a melancholy retrospect, as miserable as it was useless.

CHAPTER VI

ELY

Congratulations—False Prophets—Reaction—A Man of Two Callings—A Woman of One—The Contrast—Bad Business—Strange Interview—Diplomacy—Fen Farmers—An Awful Visitation—An Honest Man – Strange Predicament—Advice—Matrimony—The Clergy—A Good Bishop—Society—A Leading Feature—The Effects of Ignorance: its Principal Cause—Exceptions—A Real Reformer—William Cobbett—A City Hotel—Magnificent Dinner—A New Acquaintance.

I HAD not long been confirmed in my seat before I received the congratulations of many of the fraternity, some of the most flattering nature, and all rife with prognostications of the vast benefits that would accrue to me from so fortunate an appointment—though the different paths that were to lead to them were ludicrously remarkable. One—my friend of the "Bedford Pilot"—said, in his simplicity, that from what he knew of me he was sure I should have the support of all the University. Another, who drove the "Norwich Telegraph" from Newmarket, assured me that I was the very man to go in among the young 'uns, and monopolize all the betting. A third, from Oxford, asked what time I passed through Ware in the evening; and on my telling him about five, said, "You're all right"—meaning that the retail trade would generally be abundant; while old Quaker

Will, as he was called, who drove the "Cambridge Telegraph," drily averred, as a fact, that when my father's predecessor in the London establishment first started the Lynn coach, he took a man out of Newgate (the debtors' side) to drive it, and before he had been on it six months he asked the Cambridge proprietor if he had any objection to go halves with him in a pipe of port wine, as a whole pipe was more than he well knew what to do with—leaving me to draw the inference.

From all this I was to gather that my situation would be a lucrative one; but the result soon falsified all their pleasing predictions. In the first place, my drag was not known as a Cambridge coach—or if known, known only to be avoided, for reasons I have before stated; therefore, if a gownsman did travel with us it was by accident or necessity, not from choice. And, again, it was apparent that here, as at Oxford, the lowest description of professionals was most in favour with undergraduates—though I was pleased to find that among them there was not so distinguished a character as Monops, or the friend whose antecedents I have touched upon in the last chapter.

Indeed they were all, with one or two palpable exceptions, men of character and conduct, highly respected in their profession—a profession, it should be remembered, to whom the community were at that time much indebted, when the responsibility of having so many of His Majesty's lieges daily committed to their care is considered—and the estimation they were held in by many of the leading members of society was as much an acknowledgment of their merits as it was an encouragement of their manly and engaging art—although now and then less worthy motives than those of deserving the approbation of their patrons would give admission to some few black sheep.

In London I was treated with every mark of kindness and familiarity by the owner of the establishment, as if he really wished to make up for former neglect. He seldom missed an evening of joining me in the coffee-room, and conversing with me on indifferent subjects; at other times on things more immediately connected with his own business on various roads, but chiefly on that in which I was now most interested.

It so happened that there had been an accident the preceding winter to the Lynn coach—that is, the coach that ran the alternate days—by which a young lady had received some little injury, for which her father demanded compensation, and would willingly have accepted £50 for damages sustained. This was indignantly refused by the Cambridge proprietor, to whom the matter was left; consequently an action ensued, which was tried in London, when the plaintiff obtained a verdict for £700 damages: thereby, with the costs—£300 more—the company suffered to the enormous amount of £1000.

It was upon this occasion I first saw the Lynn proprietor,[1] and a strange specimen he was of the eccentricities of our nature. Should a naturalist or ornithologist meet with one of the feathered tribe whose distinctive features he cannot recognize in consequence of their partaking of the marks of more than one species or family, he immediately sets it down as a hybrid, or a mixture of two different species; a botanist does the same with plants; and I do not think I can better illustrate my view of this *rara avis* than by adopting the same classification. No one would have taken him for a minister of the Gospel, either from his dress, his manners, his conversation, or his habits; indeed, away from the scene of his ministration, he would have passed for anything but a meek and lowly successor of the Apostles.

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[1] The late Rev. —— Arrow.

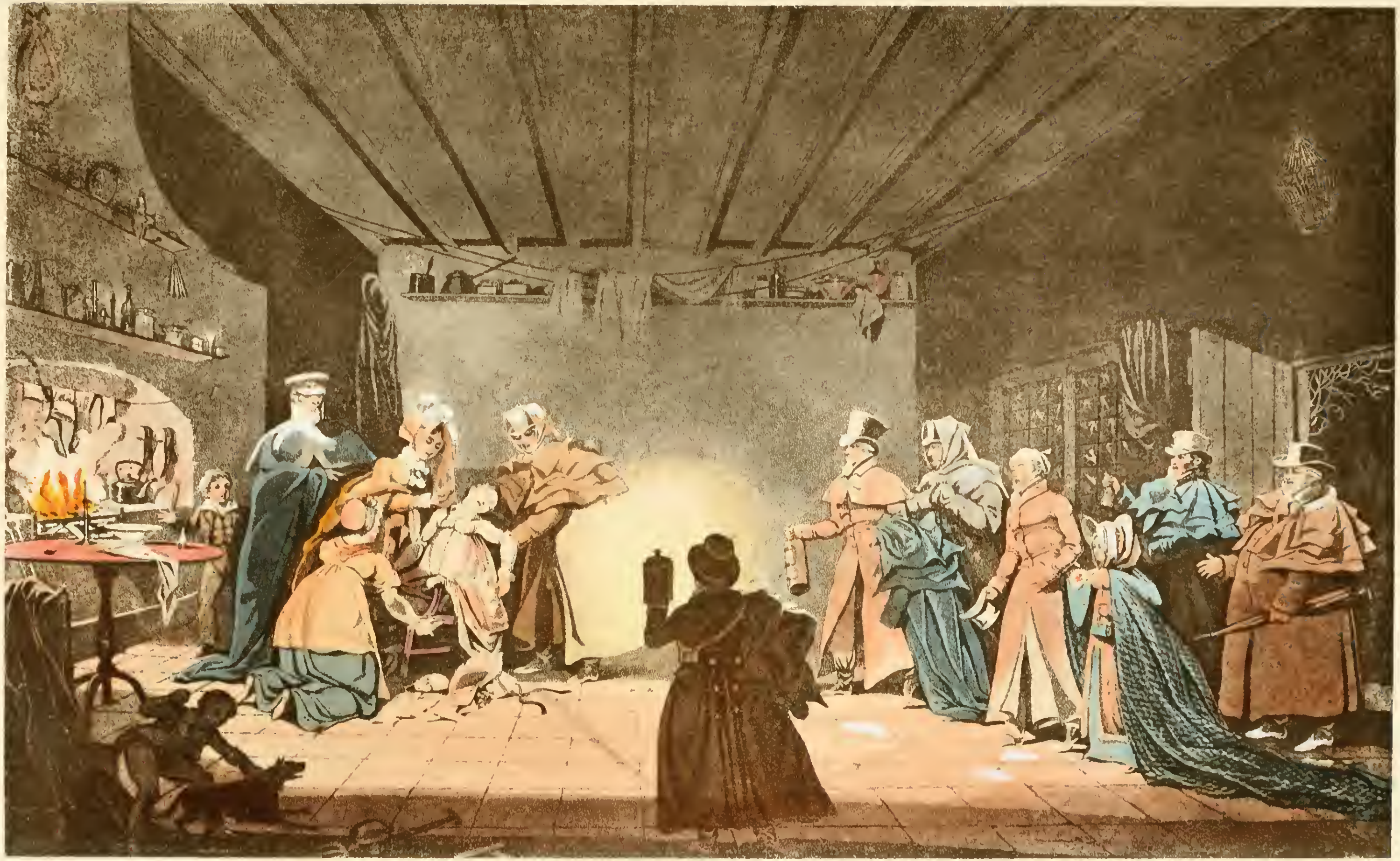
Nevertheless he was such, of the sect called Independents; and, being at Lynn, I did not lose an opportunity of witnessing his performance in the pulpit, when neither his doctrine nor his devotion struck me to be of that character which was likely to attract many followers. Yet he was what the world would call a clever, and was by no means indisposed to be an agreeable man. Fluent in his conversation, and well up in all the topics of the day, he was better calculated, I thought, for the social board than for the more sober display of his elocution in the pulpit.

Nature had cheated him of his fair proportion, and had sent him into the world with one hand deformed, which in some measure accounts for his having been brought up for the ministry, as that deformity incapacitated him for being a mechanic—although it did not prevent his trying his hand at driving four horses, which he now and then attempted—till one evening, turning a sharp corner in the village of Denver, his infirmity caused him to blunder: an overturn was the result, which put an end to his advancement in that branch of the arts. He had in his vocation obtained some little celebrity as an orator, as well as a little surplus cash; the latter he had chosen to invest in coaching—this particular branch of business being at that time at a discount in Lynn.

On one occasion I remember to have met him in juxtaposition with a preacher of another sect and sex. There had been a heavy fall of snow in the neighbourhood of Lynn, so much so that the road was obstructed; and the up-coach not arriving at Cambridge, I had to proceed with the down-coach. Pulling up to change at the "Lamb" at Ely, we there learnt that it would be in vain to attempt to go any farther, as the road was quite impassable. As the day was closing, the passengers agreed to make themselves comfortable for the night. A lady who was inside was very anxious to proceed, as her daughter, who resided at Lynn, was ill. She said she would willingly trust her life in the hands of friend Cross, as she had every confidence in his care and skill (having ridden with me several times before); but if he said it would not be prudent to proceed, she would as willingly remain.

My passengers had assembled round a nice fire in one of the lower apartments of that then very homely specimen of even a country inn. Among them was my friend of two callings, who was amusing the company with anecdotes of his sojourn in London, when a female servant entered, and said that the lady upstairs was desirous of speaking to her companions in travel, if they felt disposed to attend her.

Strange as this request was thought by some, the parson advised immediate compliance. On ascending



Drawn and engraved by James Pollard

COTTAGERS HOSPITALITY TO TRAVELLERS

or the coach fast in the snow

the stairs and entering the room, we beheld a fine, matronly lady, habited as a Quakeress, seated at the table with the Book before her. She rose to receive us. An air of placid benevolence illumined a countenance that had not yet given up all pretensions to meridian beauty; and the serenity of her brow gave a sort of hallowed expression to eyes that beamed with intelligence. Her attitude, and the solemn dignity of her demeanour, with the command she at once took of my senses, reminded me for a moment of Mrs. Siddons; and altogether I felt as if in the presence of a being of a superior order.[1]

A smile of gracious affability sat upon her lips as she asked us to be seated; she then stated that, as chance had thrown us together that evening, she thought a few words from the Book of Life would not be unacceptable. She now read a few verses from that portion of St. John's Gospel which enjoins brotherly love; then, in a mild, unaffected, and unassuming spirit, she discoursed on this all-important subject, setting forth its necessity, as regards the happiness of our fellow-creatures, and the enduring reward we had for it in our own consciences. Charity, humility, forbearance, and forgiveness, she included in the divine precept, and cited the Saviour as an example.

But it would be folly in me to attempt to do justice to this admirable woman's dissertation. She dismissed us with an extempore prayer, invoking the blessing and mercy of the Almighty; and on my retiring to rest I could but contrast her pleasing conversational tone with the declamatory style of my coaching friend—her plain and simple elucidation of the holy text with his glittering and verbose display of evangelical learning.

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[1] This female was the late Mrs. Fry.

Some few weeks after this my friend fell into pecuniary difficulties, and the proprietors were informed the coach and horses were likely to be seized at Lynn by one of his principal creditors. Upon this I was sent down to make what arrangement I thought best to prevent the inconvenience that must arise from a stoppage, and to place the concern on some more sure and solid foundation, in the event of my friend not being able to resume his position; that is, to seek out some one of the respectable inn-keepers in the town to become the Lynn proprietor.

This creditor was waiting the arrival of the coach from London, everyone seemed to stand in the greatest awe of him, he being one of the principal merchants in the town,—and the officer by his direction took possession of both coach and horses. I expostulating with him on so hasty a proceeding, he demanded to know who I was that I should dare to interfere. I told him that I was there to represent the Lynn and London Coach Company, and denied his right, whatever his claim might be, to put them to a loss, and the public to a great inconvenience.

The officer then produced his warrant. I cried, "Take the horses with their harness, but touch the coach at your peril."

There were a number of people present, most of them wondering at my impudence at thus setting their great man at defiance.

"And why not the coach, sir?" asked the gentleman.

"If you will walk into the office I will tell you, sir," I replied.

All this altercation had taken place in the inn yard, and I thought the office the most proper place to discuss a question of such moment.

The doors being closed, I said,—

"I do not, sir, for a moment doubt the validity or the legality of your instrument as far as it goes; but it is my duty to tell you that the coach is not the property of your debtor to make over, nor of any one of the proprietors: it is the sole property of the coachmaker, of whom the company hire it, and pay for it by the mile. You will, therefore, find you are exceeding the power your document gives you, if you persist in taking the coach with the horses."

Having said this, he allowed me to proceed, and I submitted that it would be much better for him and the company, as well as the public, to allow the coach with the horses to continue their work. "It was customary," I added, "in our business for any one proprietor wishing to take his horses off, to give a month's notice, thereby giving time to find some one to cover the ground. I assured him that his security would not at all be damaged or diminished by so doing; and said if he thought there would be any danger in the horses being out of sight of the officer, he could send a man to go backward and forward with them."

This seemed so reasonable to the gentleman that he gave his consent, and the company had the honour of his co-partnership till it was ultimately disposed of to the Sheriff's officer.

In the meantime an improvement in pace had manifested itself on the Cambridge road. The old-established coaches were expedited an hour, and two others had been lately started to go up and down in a day. This caused the old Lynn to become more in disrepute; and I took occasion to observe one evening to my London friend that the time had arrived when some exertion was necessary to put the Lynn coach on a more respectable footing, more in accordance with the times; for that already a new coach was talked of. and a new company was about being formed.

To all this he replied that the coach was very little use to him.

"Then," asked I, "why not remedy it?"

"Can you?" he said.

I replied, "I thought I could."

"Then go and take it in your hands, and make the best you can of it."

Upon this I took the earliest opportunity of putting myself in communication with the two principal men who had engaged to start the new coach—one at Lynn, the other at Ely; and it did not take much reasoning to convince them it would be better to join an old-established concern than to throw away money in opposition.

After some negotiation, which required no small amount of diplomatic skill to conduct, everything was arranged. The coach was to be put upon a new footing; the two new partners were to be admitted—the Lynn man to have a portion of the ground vacated by the late proprietor, the Ely one a portion of the ground belonging to the Cambridge proprietor. And this proved the most difficult part of my task, as the two gents were both brewers, the one at Cambridge, the other at Ely, both in a large way; consequently they were unwilling to concede, though in a matter that had little or no connection with their other business.

The shrimps, to my great joy, were to be discarded, the stages to be shortened, the journey to be performed in less time, and—what affected me most—the London coachman, instead of stopping at Cambridge, was to go on to Ely, thus making the journey for me seventy miles per diem.

A month was allowed to carry this arrangement into effect, at the end of which time I took up my residence at Ely; and one of my profession being quite a novelty in this small but ancient city, it was not long before I made the acquaintance of some of the principal inhabitants. In the settlement of the business I had gained the good opinion of the Ely proprietor, who, as I have said, was an extensive brewer, and he took pleasure in introducing me to the natives, as well as the surrounding yeomen. He gave up part of his time to my society, sometimes coming to my splendid hotel—that is, the one I have before spoken of, for there I took up my temporary abode —where most of the floors were of brick, and a carpet almost unknown, and, with another friend or two, would propose a rubber of whist; sometimes, on a market-day, I would take wine with him in the farmers' room.

On one occasion, I remember, two men of this class, well known for their great wealth, their great bulk, and their great powers of imbibing, asked me to join them as soon as I was at liberty, as they wished to speak to me.

Not at all knowing what the nature of their business might be, I readily complied. The wine being put on the table, and the bottle making more speedy revolutions than I had of late been accustomed to, I was obliged to be on my guard ; and it was some little time before I gathered from them that they wanted my assistance in getting an old friend and companion of theirs, who had a little run out, as they termed it, on to a box. I promised to use my interest with the London proprietor for him, though I could not promise them success. With this they were satisfied, but not with the wine, and, after I thought they had had a sufficient quantity (for bottle after bottle disappeared with amazing rapidity), I began to perceive they had another object besides the one named, and I had a difficult matter to escape the effects, or elude the manifold potations with which they continually plied me, while they appeared to remain quite innocent of such excess. On my positively declining to have any more, they called for the bill and another bottle, and, having discharged the one and swallowed the other, they departed, leaving me impressed with a good idea of the bodily and mental capacities of these stout yeomen of the Fens. The object of their solicitude, who was an example of the same species, was afterwards established on the box of the Wisbech coach, and gave unmistakable evidence of his former associations.

As the spring advanced (for the alteration had taken place exactly a twelvemonth from the commencement of my officiate) the coach improved both in the numbers and the quality of the passengers, and the proprietors had not to regret the loss of the carriage of the shrimps, which had always formed the staple of the coach's earnings. Now being on the best of terms with all the proprietors, and having myself become one by working a stage, I considered my position as established, and I felt myself justified in making an alteration in my condition I had long and earnestly contemplated.

And, first, I must revert to an awful and sudden visitation of Providence, which, distressing and lamentable as it was, opened the way to my ultimately revisiting St. Albans. I had finished my day's work in London, and had gone into the down office, as I always did, to inquire who or what there was booked for the morning, when the guard of the Liverpool, who generally arrived about half-an-hour before me, and was standing talking to the book-keeper, turned round when he saw me, and said, "I have been waiting to see you, sir."

"Me?" I exclaimed. "For what?"

The man hesitated for a minute, and walked out of the office. I followed him, and asked,—

"What have you got to say to me?"

"Very bad news indeed, sir."

"What about?" said I, growing impatient.

"Your intended father-in-law is dead."

"It cannot be!" I replied.

"Yes, sir, it is too true: he dropped down dead yesterday in church time."

Struck dumb almost with this sad intelligence—a little annoyed, too, at what I thought presumption on his part—scarcely knowing how to contain myself, I stammered out, "Who told you to tell me?" when he mentioned the name of a friend who was the first cause of my introduction to the family.

It would be impossible for me to describe my emotions at the time, or to give an adequate idea of the thoughts that rushed through my brain on the receipt of this melancholy catastrophe. The being whom it had pleased the Almighty thus suddenly to call from life was most deservedly endeared to a large family by every quality that adorns the husband and the father. His integrity and punctuality in all matters of business, and a proper discharge of all his relative duties to society, had gained him the goodwill of his neighbours; while the goodness of his heart and the soundness of his understanding, stored as his mind was with useful knowledge, had insured him the love and esteem of a large circle of relatives and friends. I admired and revered the man, and whenever I recall that line from Pope—

> "An honest man's the noblest work of God,"

I am convinced it would apply to him. In an unhappy moment I had made that man an obstacle to my happiness, and now, by an act of Providence, that obstacle was removed.

If a writer of romance were to rack his brain, he could hardly discover a more difficult or delicate position for his hero than that in which I was placed by this sudden and unlooked-for event. If I went down to offer my condolence to the mother, and mix my tears with the daughter's, I was taking advantage of a dreadful bereavement to renew my visits and prosecute my suit —a natural inference, against the very suspicion of which my spirit revolted. If I stayed away, where was my regard, where my sympathy, for the family in their distress?

In this dilemma I walked to my friend the wine-merchant's, where two young ladies were on a visit, the daughters of a wealthy citizen of Norwich, to one of whom a member of the medical profession, who has since attained a high position as well as great celebrity as a physician,[1] had proposed, and was then present. With him I had been some little time acquainted, and as fellow-feeling induces confidence, I imparted to him all that had occurred, asking how he would act under such conflicting circumstances. He replied, I remember, with great emphasis,—

"If a thousand lions were at the door I would go in!"

It did not require this rhapsody to strengthen my intention of going to St. Albans, however I might afterwards act. Consequently, I procured a substitute and went down by one of the early coaches, stopping at the house of my friend. His sister, who was on the most intimate terms with the family, was not surprised to see me, or ignorant of the object of my visit, but in the most earnest manner entreated me not make my appearance at the house, as the effect on the feelings of the mother in her then state of mind would only add to her sufferings, and give cause for unworthy constructions on my behaviour. Her thoughts being in unison with my own, and abhorring what might be deemed a mean attempt at being reinstated in the favour of the distressed widow, I wrote a note conveying my sorrowful feelings, and returned to London.

It was not long before I heard that the mother's health, at all times delicate, had given way under this awful bereavement; when Sir Astley Cooper, having been called in, recommended sea air. This was immediately attended to, and both mother and daughter repaired to Brighton. After remaining three or four months without reaping any apparent benefit, the latter playfully said, "Why not consult my physician?" This leading to further explanation, I was in the course of a short time reinstated in the good graces of the mother, with whom I had always been a favourite.

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[1] Dr. Farr.

The most important occurrence in a man's life, or woman's either, is matrimony: therefore, I trust I shall not be thought diverging or travelling far out of my course by thus relating the circumstances which preceded my again entering into that holy state.

The ceremony took place at the Abbey church, where we received the congratulations of not only our own immediate circle, but also of many of the inhabitants, who, I believe, were sincere in testifying their joy on the occasion; and, after visiting Windsor Castle and other places in our wedding trip, we took possession of our new abode at Ely. This, though not quite on so large a scale as my first establishment—I had so tutored my mind as to regard it equally as conducive to the domestic happiness and comfort I was desirous to renew—in the enjoyment of which I included my two children—who, arriving from school, helped to form our family circle.

Now, in Ely, as in all other Cathedral towns, the distinction between the clergy and laity was almost as strongly marked as in the days of abbots and monks. The richly-beneficed prebends, walled round in their cloisters or college, as it is now termed, cut themselves off from all social communication with the trading population. Not being troubled with any cure of souls, they thought it sufficient condescension in monthly turn to consume the produce of their own land, and sought no further knowledge of such people than the supply of household necessaries required; while the tradesmen and others, being principally tenants of the Dean and Chapter or the Bishop, could not aspire to any greater notice from persons so distinguished, two or three of whom reaped a princely revenue from the favours bestowed on them by their "Father in God."

This very considerate prelate had, through a long tenure of his diocese (the first in the kingdom for patronage), been enabled to provide for his sons and other relatives; and when the lease of office which we all hold from one great Giver was about to expire, a large living—the only similar one in his gift that he had not already had in his power to bestow—becoming vacant—he generously granted it to one of his own kin—then praised God who had allowed him to do another act of justice to his family before he died.

By such a distinction the society of the inhabitants was very much circumscribed; and there being no resident gentry in the neighbourhood, it was not all who had opportunities of cultivating the rules intended to enhance the value of social and intellectual intercourse. It was impossible for an observer to reside there without comparisons obtruding—that did not tend to exalt their good breeding, extend their understanding, or swell the amount of their hospitality. Indeed, where the accumulation of wealth is the chief object, and a rigid economy in guarding it the most esteemed virtue, there is little room for the display of those kindly demonstrations of the human heart that render society agreeable.

To enumerate instances of the excess to which this inordinate feeling was carried would neither be profitable nor amusing, yet I cannot help recording my recollection of a wealthy old lady who died while we were there, and it took her daughter-in-law three days to count over the copper coins—pence, halfpence, and farthings—she had hoarded from the sale of milk, and other little gatherings from the poor. Once, I remember, I had occasion to call at the house of a wealthy farmer, on a Sunday evening in the depth of winter, when I observed a poor servant girl sitting shivering over the embers of a wood fire on the hearth, without a candle, and surrounded by appearances of the utmost penury; while outside the walls immense stacks of corn and hay, and yards full of healthy and thriving cattle, gave unequivocal evidence of wealth and prosperity.

But these were, perhaps, solitary examples; for there were many families who did not indulge in this, their seemingly ruling passion, to so great an extent. Among them was my friend the brewer I had inducted into the coaching firm, from whose family we both received every mark of kindness and attention, as we did from a member of the medical profession—a profession that generally forms the advanced guard of intelligence and improvement in isolated districts.

Not to confine myself to one particular class, I must add that it was lamentable to observe the cloud of ignorance which then overshadowed this part of His Majesty's dominions. It was not many years before that its awful effects had been manifested in the Littleport riots, which terminated in capital punishment being inflicted on five misguided human beings, and in the deportation of many others for the same crime. One man, I remember, returned on my coach after an absence of eight years, having received an unconditional pardon ; and I shall not readily forget the violent ebullition of the poor fellow's feelings when informed by my horse-keeper that his wife, to whom he was hastening in the fulness of his heart, had married in his absence.

Neither can I omit, in the first year of my residence at Ely, the execution of a man for murder, under the most cold-blooded circumstances, on the spot marked by the crime ; and, as if to show what little progress knowledge had made in this part of our island, his body was gibbetted in sight of the turnpike road—the last of such inhuman exhibitions. Some two or three years afterwards the late Sir Robert Peel, having to post that road on his way to a mansion he had hired near Downham, in Norfolk, had the disgusting object removed.

It is still within the memory of man that the Fens, in this district in particular, were under water three parts of the year ; that many of the inhabitants lived chiefly by fowling and fishing ; and it was not till after the energies and judgment of the Bedford Level Corporation had rendered the land available for agricultural purposes, that there was any road upon which a stage-coach could travel ; and it has since, by means of improved and improving drainage, been made most productive. Consequently, a certain class have suddenly, as it were, become opulent; and it is well known that men confined to employments that require their immediate superintendence are not so apt generally to catch at the advantages of social and intellectual improvement as they are to enjoy the prospect and revel in the reality of increasing abundance.

Hence the disparity of wealth and intelligence so palpable in the laity in this district; hence, too, the princely incomes of some of our more favoured clergy; but, as we have witnessed the great improvement made in the last generation or two, we may safely conclude that not another will pass away without railroads completing what a stage-coach begun—that is, without reaping the benefits of that free and familiar intercourse which marks the progress of civilization among the people.

Amidst this waste of waters there are gems to be found of more than usual brightness. In this wilderness of rushes flowers can be plucked of exceeding beauty and fragrance, quite enough to embody the poet's sublime idea,—

> "Full many a gem of purest ray serene
>   The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
> Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
>   And waste its sweetness in the desert air."

The productions of Harrison, the Poet of the Fens, as he has been termed, have never yet been collected; but from what I remember to have seen of them, they were quite equal to many writings of the present day, as well in the air of wholesome sentiment they breathe, as in the terseness and vigour of their style. The poems of Withers, the son of rustic parents, have been printed in two small volumes, and contain some beautiful specimens of the efforts of unassisted genius. The "Song of the Butterfly" is so replete with poetry, simply yet harmoniously expressed, the imagery is so graphically drawn and so judiciously disposed, that as a pastoral it may take its place with anything in our language.

Before I knew this part of the country I had frequently read in the newspapers the speeches and the exploits of a gentleman who resided near Huntingdon. His name had been associated and his politics classed with Hunt and Cobbett, *et sui generis;* but I am inclined to believe there was an undercurrent that ran in an opposite direction to the noisy advocacy he made in conjunction with these worthies, and made him confine his attention to less speculative views and more attainable objects, those, too, within his own immediate locality.

He, like others of the same profession—he was a lawyer—commenced his political career in the extreme West, where he might the more readily attract the rays of the rising sun, that would hasten the growth of his ambition or his interest, and gain those advantages many had acquired by pursuing the same course. If his assurance was not equal to the blacking manufacturer's, his talents and his position were far superior. If his principles were not quite so lax as the powerful writer's in the "Register," he had more tact and more influence in his neighbourhood.

Like that great master of the pure and vigorous English composition he vainly attempted to imitate, he was the principal agitator in establishing a provincial paper,[1] that should advocate popular, that is, Radical measures. He also bore a conspicuous part at all county and other meetings; and, by presenting himself as a candidate for a close borough, where he knew he had not a shadow of a chance of being returned, he at least gained notoriety. By a fair share of oratory, and by constantly disputing the power of the aristocracy, he became popular among the less learned but more opulent and really independent yeomen, who were then growing into importance. By these means he had gained their good opinion, as, by his bland and familiar manner and his unostentatious hospitality, he had their goodwill; and an opportunity occurring shortly after the introduction I am about to speak of, he was placed by them in a situation that curbed his Radical propensities, while his talents and services recommended him to the interests of some members of that aristocracy whose political acts and opinions he had lavishly abused.

William Cobbett was a very unpopular man in his neighbourhood the short time he lived at Botley, chiefly arising from his innate dislike to the aristocracy and their amusements. One day, I remember, when, with the late Mr. Delme's hounds, meeting at Wickham Toll-bar, we had run a fox hard in a most difficult country. Three or four of us, all well mounted, followed a bold rider up a steep high bank out of a hard flinty lane, and landed in a fallow adjoining Mr. Cobbett's house and garden, which was surrounded with a very high fence; consequently, we trotted up to the gate that led in the direction of our game. This we found chained and locked, with long ash poles interlaced between the bars, that defied all attempts at removal. While one of the horsemen, having dismounted, was vainly trying to knock the lock off with his hammer-handled whip, a gentleman walked up to us, foaming at the mouth with rage, and desired us, in no measured language, immediately to desist. Upon one of the company asking him the way out, he told us to go out the way we came in. This I, for one, knew to be impossible, except at the risk of the necks of both horse and rider. Just at the moment the cry of the hounds, coming down the wind, broke on our ears, and I pricked my horse in to a gallop.

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[1] The *Independent Press.*

"Follow me, gentlemen," cried I; "I can find a way out." I led them down the field, and, easily topping two quickset fences in and out Mr. Cobbett's garden, we soon rejoined our companions, leaving the young gentleman, who was one of the family, railing at the top of his voice —boiling over with disappointed rage.

I was standing one afternoon, in the early part of my stoppage at Ely, in the bar of the "Lamb" (if a small slip taken from the passage—with an uneven brick floor —a few shelves upon which stood some dusty bottles— and from which dangled, by way of ornament, some cabbage-nets holding pieces of half-squeezed musty lemon—deserve that appellation), and looking through the latticed window, I saw a gentleman with a most remarkable visage, shorn as it was of its most prominent feature, advancing up the yard. He inquired of the landlady, who was sitting quietly in the corner, when he entered, in a brusque familiar manner, what he could have for dinner.

"Pitchcocked eels and mutton chops, sir," was the answer.

"I might have known that," said he, good-humouredly. "Well, that must do."

The landlady disappeared to give the necessary orders.

"The staple commodity here, sir," continued he, in the same strain, but addressing me; "I have used this house five-and-twenty years and never had any other answer.

"You've not dined, have you?" added he, with all the manner of an old acquaintance.

"No, I was about to partake of the same fare."

"Then we'll dine together. Dick," cried he to the waiter, "lay the cloth for two."

"Where, sir?"

"In the best room in the house, to be sure. *My* wine, remember."

"Yes, sir."

"I am obliged to be particular," he observed, again turning to me, "or they'd give you sloe juice and call it port wine. Excuse me for ten minutes, I have a call to make, but shall be back by the time the first course is ready."

In the meantime, I took possession of the best room, which by the hostess's directions had been put to rights—that is, the floor had been fresh sanded, all that could be done at so short a notice, and all it needed; for half-a-dozen chairs and an old club-footed mahogany table, a steel fender with an edge sharp enough to sever any limb from the body that might accidentally fall on it, with some very lean fire-irons, that might have been forged by Tubal Cain himself, were all the room contained in the shape of furniture. The table was covered with a cloth that matched the floor in colour and evenness of surface. Some black-handled knives and forks were properly disposed at each end, while two blown-glass salt-cellars, with diminutive bone spoons, ornamented the opposite corners.

The waiter bearing the eels, and my new acquaintance, entered at the same time, and we both seated ourselves at the table. He seemed by no means discomposed by the homeliness of all around him, for, taking up one of the forks, he jammed it twice or thrice through the homespun, advising me to do the same, as it was the only way, he said, to insure clean steel.

The marks which this hasty operation left behind gave ample proof of its necessity, but did not prevent either of us making as good a meal as the scanty supply of fish, with a chop to follow, allowed. This despatched, with rather a wry face at the misquoted sherry, the waiter entered with the pastry.

"Is this all you have in the house?" said my friend.

"That's what mistress allows generally to two gentlemen, sir," replied the waiter. Then, gently removing a crust of the colour and consistency of a piece of parchment, my friend counted twenty bottled gooseberries at the bottom of a very shallow dish.

"Economy is the order of the day here," I said.

"You might have given it a more appropriate name, I think," he replied.

But to say no more of this very spare meal, and the observations it gave rise to, for which the port wine that bore his name made ample amends, I found myself in company with a man of enlightened understanding, great experience in political affairs, with a thorough knowledge of his kind—evinced, I thought, a little too broadly in exposing the vanities and absurdities of his late coadjutors. He was one of the few who had done good in his generation by dispersing the cloud of darkness and promulgating truly liberal principles through the land. Having made the nature and condition of the Fens his early study, he took every opportunity of proposing and advocating measures that should improve the value of the soil and materially advance the interests of the inhabitants.

We spent the evening together, enjoying each other's conversation to a late hour, though I was more intent on the information I was obtaining than in dilating on my own antecedents, which he seemed at intervals desirous to ascertain. This acquaintance, if a free and familiar, though but occasional intercourse does not deserve a better name, continued until the rail put an end to my career, which he did not long survive. Peace to his manes![1]

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[1] Samuel Wells, Esq., late Registrar to the Bedford Level Corporation.

CHAPTER VII

VARIETIES

One of the Cloth—An Alteration—Long Sojourn in India—Lucknow—Hero of the Ancient Times—Great Man—A Lesser One—The Peer—A Member of Parliament and Whipper-in—A Star of the First Magnitude—Dido-Revenge—Poor Attempt at Wit—Norfolk Baronet—How to Remedy an Error—Swell Mobsman—Personality—A Trio—Ludicrous Accident.

The great competition and rapid advance towards perfection in stage-coach travelling, caused continual changes to be made in the different appointments that were necessary to satisfy a progressive community.

Our coach was now patronized by all the clergy and gentry of the Western part of Norfolk, and they were extremely jealous of any other road possessing a more convenient or better appointed public conveyance than themselves. That they should not have cause to complain, I as continually urged my friend, the brewer, at Ely, to adopt such alterations and improvements as I thought expedient for the benefit of the concern. He had the fullest confidence in my experience, and, being very fond of driving, I had many opportunities of instructing him in the noble art, while giving him a proper understanding of stage-coach business.

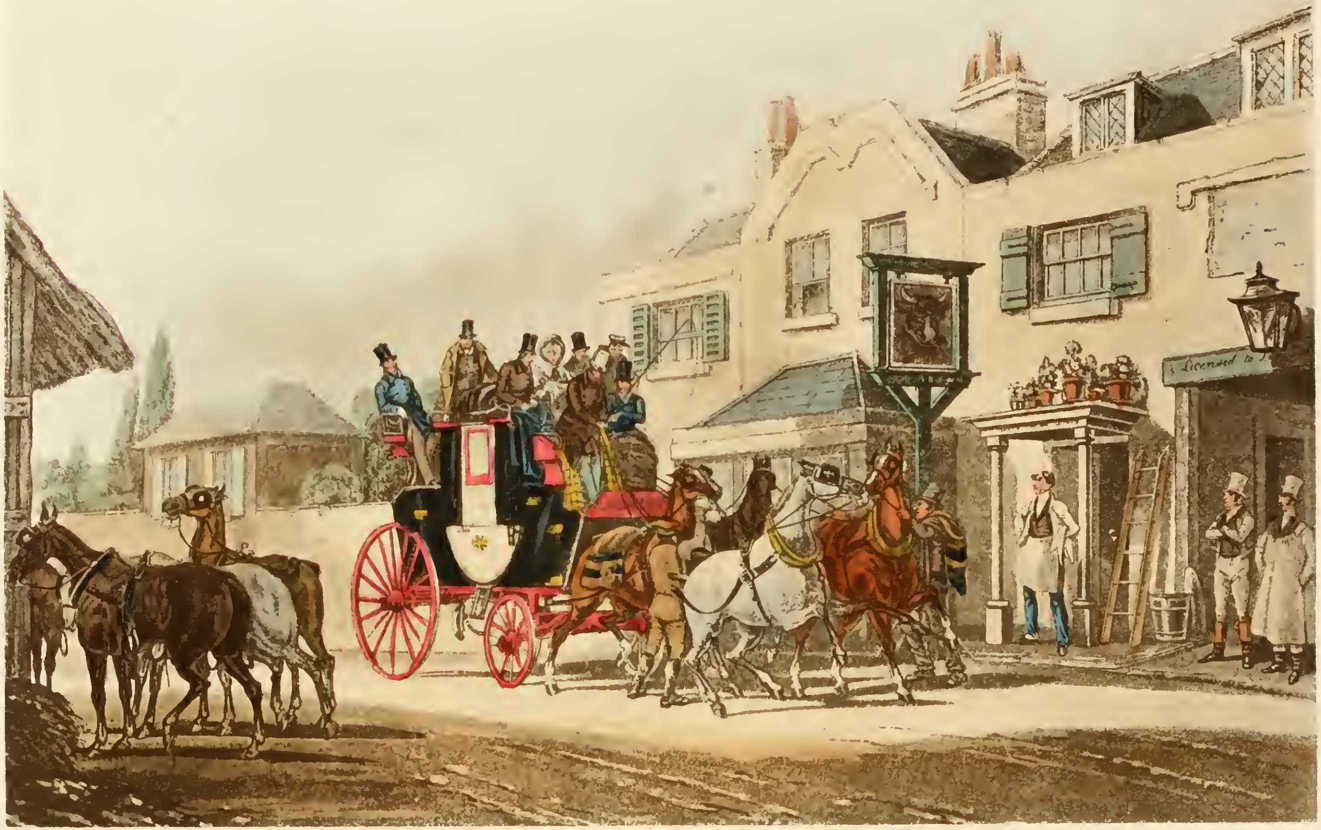
In the last alteration that had been made, in regard to having three coachmen instead of four, the situation of the lower coachman had been materially improved, as every one thought, because by it he had the benefit of two coaches a day; still he had from four to five hours at Ely, that hung very heavy on his hands.

This man had long been established on the coach, indeed, he never drove any other. He had, by his civil and obliging manner, secured the goodwill of the inhabitants of Lynn, and advanced in the favour of the gentry in the surrounding district.

Bob was no blustering, bouncing, flash dragsman, like one or two I have already described, but a well-conducted, straightforward, honest sort of man, who aspired to nothing beyond being on good terms with his employers and his passengers; with his profession and with himself. Neither was he any great scholar—indeed, he had been educated for the box, and the box alone: for as a boy, I was told, he used to stand between the knees of his brother-in-law of half-a-pipe notoriety, and learn from him—an excellent schoolmaster—how, in vulgar parlance, to handle the ribbons.

Thus had he grown, as it were, with the coach, and become part and parcel of the establishment; and when it shone forth from the cloud of dirty shrimp baskets that surrounded it, and Bob was called upon to do the polite to old ladies and young gentlemen, he acquitted himself with much credit, as well as satisfaction to his clients.

His vocabulary was not very extensive; neither did his discrimination keep pace with the *age;* for Master Henry and Master Fred, Master Richard and Master Ed'ard, were applied as familiarly in full-blown manhood



Painted by C. Cooper Henderson

CHANGING HORSES AT "THE BULL."

London Published Oct 1st 1837 by R. Ackermann at his Eclipse Sporting Gallery, 191. Regent St to the scions of affluent families as they had been to delighted and ingenuous youth, when asking permission to sit by his side. He had always a good-natured smile on his lips, and a merry twinkle in his eye, when he saw any of them, and some quaint saying—for Bob was a good mimic, and a wit in his way—which generally elicited a hearty laugh, and as hearty a shake of the hand. Bob, also, so conducted himself as at all times to command the respect of his inferiors; and he really was what Falstaff intimated to Prince Henry—"Bob Walker with my familiars, Robert with my brothers and sisters, and *Mr*. Walker with all England."

The deferential "good-night" of the horse-keeper when drawing the last of the four cloths from the near wheel-horse at Southery—"Good-night, Mr. Walker, sir"; Bob's lively chirrup to his prads, and "Good-night, Brown, boy," in reply—always called forth a smile from his companions, and will be remembered in conjunction with the Lynn coach by some of us as long as memory lasts.

With this member of the profession, then, it was my interest and my inclination—for he was a good-tempered man—to be on the best of terms; and I think I may say that during the five-and-twenty years we drove together we never had an angry word.

He had complained to me how irksome his time was at Ely—indeed, he would frequently ride on to Cambridge on purpose to converse with me about it; and one day he ventured to ask me if I should like to drive double. Upon further explanation, I found it was his wish to drive from Lynn to Cambridge and back in the day, and that our mutual friend, the brewer, had referred him to me, to learn whether I should like to drive from London to Cambridge and back.

"You know, boy," said he, "there is old Jack Thorogood drives from Norwich to London—that's 116 miles every day; and there's old friend Bob Snow[1] drives from London to Brighton and back in a day."

"Yes," added I, "and there's Sam Goodman does the same."

"Then why not you and I, boy?" inquired he.

Now, I knew very well that if I consented the thing would be done; but as such an arrangement would displace the man who drove the opposite day from Ely, I demurred—though in the rest of the journey up, I thought a great deal about it.

In the first place I had had enough of the Fens; my family was on the increase, my wife's health was not very good, and she was a long way from her friends at St. Albans, as I was from my native Hampshire. I therefore concluded that such an alteration would be very beneficial, as I should have but one home, and a double benefit every day.

Consequently, on my return to Ely, I on the following morning waited on my friend the brewer; and, on my broaching the subject, he readily fell in with my idea. I named to him the only obstacle in the way of such an arrangement, and pointed out to him the way in which it might be removed without injury to the individual, and, therefore, with satisfaction to myself; this was, to use his influence—which had grown to be considerable—with the London proprietors, to give him as good an appointment on another road. It was in due time accomplished, and I removed my family to London.

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[1] This celebrated performer on the "Brighton Dart" had heretofore driven the Lynn.

The benefit arising from the alteration I most prized was the opportunity it afforded me of introducing my wife to my sisters, and of now and then enjoying their society. It was about this time that my third sister, rather than witness the declining fortunes of our remaining parent, decided on going to India, as companion to a lady of title and her daughter. The latter marrying in the second year after their departure from England, my sister had the option of returning, or accepting the hand of a settler at Cawnpore. She chose the latter.

After having survived two husbands, she was one of the many females beleaguered in our intrenchments at Lucknow; where she had resided many years, her second husband, not long deceased, being attached to the court of the King of Oude.

Naturally intelligent and observing, with a fair share of accomplishments, experience had given her a thorough knowledge of the native character; while her husband's situation, and her intercourse with both English and Native chiefs—to whom she acted as interpreter, and sometimes as amanuensis—had made her acquainted with the political movements that preceded the awful outbreak which convulsed this magnificent part of our Empire.

In her correspondence with me and other individuals of our family, which is so far valuable as containing the opinions of the longest resident European female in India, she condemned the annexation of Oude, as insulting to the pride of the Court, as in direct violation of former treaties with the East India Company, and as outraging the prejudices of the natives. In this one act she foresaw the discontent and the dislike it gave all classes to our rule; and to it she attributed all the evils that have since arisen.

She was possessed of every comfort, and lived in comparative ease and affluence. Her house, being at the extremity of the intrenchments, and nearest the city, was made a barrack or fort, and therefore was made the principal point of attack by the bloodthirsty Sepoys, who, both by their acts and gesticulations, threatened annihilation to the little garrison and all within it.

It was in a critical hour of this eventful siege, when the mines of the rebels were making fearful progress towards my sister's residence, when ball after ball had riddled its walls and destroyed its contents, even to the very hangings worked by her fingers, that the husband of her most intimate friend, seeing the straits to which the garrison was reduced, nobly volunteered an undertaking, that for sagacity, spirit and daring, has eclipsed anything known in Indian or European warfare.

The relief of the garrison of Lucknow, and the saving of its inmates, male and female, from indiscriminate slaughter, must be attributed to the self-devotion of one man,[1] who in the night sought the camp of Sir Colin Campbell, afterwards Lord Clyde, a distance of twenty miles; and, after facing perils the most imminent, either in deceiving the pickets and passing through the lines of the rebels, or by secreting himself in what appeared impassable morasses, and in fording or swimming rivers—succeeded, in the nick of time, footsore, weary, and exhausted, in reaching our outposts. He delivered despatches from Sir James Outram to the Commander-in-Chief, who immediately put his army in motion, and, under the guidance of this brave and intelligent citizen, soon achieved the deliverance of all—men, women, and children, soldiers and civilians—from the horrors of starvation, combined with the dreadful and constant apprehension of a worse than cruel death.

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[1] T. Kavanagh, Esq.

It is almost needless to say that this gentleman's name —which ought, and, no doubt, will be ever remembered with gratitude by all—has long since been before the public in connection with this daring exploit, which the author has had the inexpressible pleasure of hearing from his own lips since his arrival in England, whither he was summoned to receive his due reward at the hands of his sovereign in the shape of the Victoria Cross.[1] After listening with intense interest to his simple but spirit-stirring narrative, the author could not help comparing it with the very graphic description of the nocturnal enterprise of Diomed and Ulysses by the Greek—or the equally beautiful but more melancholy paraphrase of "Nisus and Euryalus," by the Latin poet.

My sister accompanied the other ladies in their escape from the hands of these sanguinary and merciless ruffians in the night, on foot, carrying under her arm a small bundle containing all that remained to her of household goods and apparel, and of years of gathering of small but valuable mementoes intended for her relatives in England.

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[1] See "The Victoria Cross—How I Won It."

But the tale of the last six months of her residence in that important portion of our Indian possessions has been circumstantially related (with all that she, with others of her sex, suffered) by two civilians resident during the siege—nevertheless, I may perhaps be permitted to add, that after passing, unhurt, from the fire of the rebels, who lined the road for the first three miles—although one of her companions was shot in the arm, and afterwards died from the effects of the wound—she, with much fatigue and suffering, got safe to Cawnpore, and thence floated down the Ganges to Calcutta, whence she sailed in the steamer to Southampton, where I met her with a degree of satisfaction it is impossible to express.

It will scarcely be believed, except by those whom it immediately concerns, that no compensation has yet been awarded to the sufferers in that critical and destructive siege, although £1,000,000 sterling has been sent out to the Indian Government for that purpose.

My time now became wholly devoted to the coach. From eight in the morning till seven in the evening I was on the box, and, it may reasonably be supposed, encountered a variety of character, and increased my acquaintance with all classes. Masters of colleges, Professors, Tutors, Fellows, frequently sat beside me; Church dignitaries—nay, even a Bishop I have had on the box. Indeed, were I to enumerate all the men of distinction who honoured me with their company, I should include every degree of rank in the nobility—Cabinet Ministers of both parties, as the Treasury

Benches were occupied by Whig or Tory, Conservative or Liberal; Members of Parliament, Baronets and Squires, Clergy and Gentry, Generals and Admirals, and all who resided in, or visited at, the mansions with which the county of Norfolk abounds. To these must be added merchants and bankers, professional men, such as lawyers and doctors, engineers and surveyors, ship-builders and ship-masters, *cum multis aliis.* It would be difficult to describe all the remarkable characters that came under my observation, and my limits will only allow me to sketch a few.

Lord William Bentinck accompanied me on the box, I remember, on the elevation of his relative, Mr. Canning, to the Premiership. I found him a not very loquacious companion, his conversation being principally confined to agricultural statistics; for this *attaché* to the Sicilian Government—this active commander and talented diplomatist, and, soon afterwards, the wise and popular Governor-General of our Indian possessions—had been of late years acting Cincinnatus in the marsh lands of Norfolk.

His manners were cold and distant, I thought—perhaps properly so to one in my position, and to my inquiring mind—though far from haughty or austere; and his countenance, with a shade of the benign, was sufficiently expressive of his descent from the friend and minister of our great Dutch deliverer.

His friend and neighbour, and associate in his agricultural pursuits—and who afterwards accompanied him to India, where he died—was my frequent companion. He was as voluble as the noble lord was chary in his communications; but we had known each other in early days—I as a midshipman of a man-of-war on the Indian station, he as secretary to old Admiral Rainier, who commanded there, where he had amassed sufficient wealth to invest in some rich alluvial soil in the neighbourhood of Lynn, immediately adjoining Lord William's. Here he sat himself down as a country gentleman and a magistrate, and upheld his position with tact and dignity, winning by his frank manner and business habits the confidence and the approbation of the community.[1]

In that part of Norfolk extending beyond Lynn eastward—a fine shooting country—are situated the princely domains of Holkham and Houghton, and it contains other mansions and residences of the aristocracy, whence I had, to make use of a hackneyed expression, a host of clients. The noble owner of Raby Castle,[2] before he inherited the dukedom, living then in this district, was one of the most frequent of my passengers, and in his journeys up and down always sat beside me. His manner was at all times affable, and his conversation, if not familiar, was not rendered disagreeable by his sense of the difference of rank.

In the Right Honourable Secretary to the Treasury, whom I have before mentioned, I had a most agreeable as well as a most communicative companion. From his shooting box in Norfolk it was his custom to write me a note the day preceding, to order dinner for himself and friend or friends (always including myself) apart from the other passengers, at the house on the road where we daily stopped for refreshment.

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[1] T. Hoseason, Esq.

[2] The Duke of Cleveland, then Earl of Darlington.

Upon one occasion, I remember, he had with him a companion who had distinguished himself both in the field and in the senate. He had long been the Radical Member for the Borough of Southwark; and from his brave and active qualities as a General, Buonaparte—in one of his bulletins—had designated him as a brigand—a sure proof of some signal cause he had given to call forth that great chief's notice.

After doing especial service in raising, forming, and commanding the Lusitanian Legion, he was attached to the Emperor Alexander's staff in the Russian campaign, and with that potentate entered Paris in 1814. But the military career of this gallant and enterprising officer is too well known, as well as his participation in effecting the escape of the condemned Lavalette from his dungeon in the Conciergerie, for me to descant upon.

At the time I speak of he was under a cloud—if the displeasure of his sovereign, who had exercised his prerogative by erasing his name from the Army List, for the part he had taken in the funeral of Queen Caroline, deserve that appellation.

If there were one man more than another who, by his exploits during the war, both in the Peninsula and on the Continent of Europe, had most delighted me, and in whose treatment I felt the deepest sympathy, which I believe was common to the whole nation, it was this chivalrous and high-minded gentleman. It was therefore with no little gratification I took his proffered hand, and received his marked attention at the dinner-table.

It was winter, and he travelled inside, therefore I had but half an hour in his company; but this half hour was sufficient for me to observe a peculiar gravity in his aspect that surprised me, though intelligence and determination were sufficiently developed in his—what a casual observer would call—placid features.

His manners to me were simple and unassuming; while to his equals, I should judge, they would be attractive and confiding. His voice was soft and pleasing —very unlike one used to command—and altogether his easy carriage enhanced the good opinion I had formed of a man of known capacity and eminence.

It was not long after two or three of these meetings—when a demise of the Crown took place—that I exulted in the first act of King William the Fourth, which restored to rank, honours, and emoluments one who had deserved so well of his country as Sir Robert Thomas Wilson.

Another anecdote I must relate of my kind friend, the member for Coventry. When speaking of game, I once inadvertently stated, about grouse-shooting time, that I had not, from living so much in the south, ever tasted this bird—he, after assuring me that I should not be long without doing so, on the following day forwarded two brace, with his initials on the direction.

About this time a very questionable production made its appearance, purporting to be the memoirs of a "celebrated courtesan," which at the time made a great noise beyond the mere literary world. The publisher of this shameless *exposé* of the weakness of our common nature was well known; and the gentleman who had the credit of editing or compiling the heroine's reminiscences, and sharing in the produce, I had met in private company.

On my first perusal I condemned the book, as I strongly suspected it to be nothing more or less than an infamous attempt to extort money.

This formed the subject of conversation one morning between me and the Right Honourable gentleman. He acknowledged that I was right in my conjecture, and stated that he knew a person who had been applied to for a sum of money to have his name omitted from a long list of those members of the aristocracy who came within the frail fair one's acquaintance. This he had refused. Whether the threatened consequence followed, I was not then aware. On his next journey up, it coming on to rain, he got inside, and when we stopped to dine, he came laughing into the room, stating that there was a female in the coach, who had told him she was about to write a book—her own autobiography—and hoped he would put his name down as a subscriber.

"Do you know her?" said he.

"Perfectly well," I replied.

"Not a little assurance, I think, to ask me to appear in print."

"Better there," I rejoined, "than in the pages of another female author I could name."

A loud laugh, and "Well said," was all my imprudent sally elicited.

Apropos of this lady, for she was such, both by birth and education, who thus importuned my Right Honourable friend: she was not a "blue," but an eccentric certainly, and, for the proper acceptation of that term, I must refer my reader to the page of the great lexicographer; though he applies it in the masculine gender only. Her possession of this singular characteristic exposed her to the laughter of the vulgar, though from those who knew her history it drew forth commiseration.

When I first knew her, the personal charms that nature had bestowed on her were on the wane; and from others I learned, that, like the widow of Sichæus, she had once fondled the gentle god, and that, like her, had been deceived and deserted; but not like her did she immolate herself, and cherish the dying hope that her shade would follow her destroyer in all his wanderings. She resolved to haunt with her real presence the authors of her disappointment, and they must have supposed her gifted with the power of ubiquity—for, wherever the happy couple went, they found this victim of unrequited affection. On one occasion, for mixing a little of the animosity of the viper with the innocence of the dove, she found herself incarcerated for a week in Maidstone gaol.

In consequence, then, of this enduring attachment, she was a frequent customer, and in fine weather would seat herself, with her maid, on the roof; and her misfortunes not having disabled the member that can both charm and cheat the understanding, she would pour in my ears a rhodomontade of unintelligible, self-important occurrences, that only terminated with the journey, and an appeal to my patronage for her long-intended literary production.

This was her constant theme, and she would let no occasion slip without endeavouring to enlist the sympathies of strangers, particularly of the male sex, and those belonging to the higher class of society.

It is not to be wondered at, then, that in her aberration she should fasten on this distinguished member of the Whig aristocracy; for his handsome, portly appearance, and his urbane manner, would almost invite communication from the most diffident, however his general bearing might be marked by the pride of family connections.

This has long been set down as the distinctive mark of the great Whig families and their followers; but the highly respected owner of Hillington, who represented the Western division of the county of Norfolk, in that interest, for two or three Parliaments, and was frequently during the session my companion on the box, was an exception to the rule.[1] His conversation was at all times easy, familiar, and agreeable, and his demeanour that of a well-bred gentleman.

Upon one occasion I remember, that on a wet spring morning, I found the coach had been overbooked, which subjected the proprietors to the charge of a post-chaise the whole distance, involving an expense of ten pounds; in which the unfortunate book-keeper who had committed the error would be unmercifully mulcted. On my arrival at Kingsland Gate, having already three insides, one of whom was the Baronet, two others, whose names had been entered in the book for a week preceding, claimed their places.

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[1] Sir William B. Ffolkes.

I had been made acquainted with the error prior to my mounting the box, and earnestly entreated by the delinquent to do all I could to save him from the penalty.

Accordingly I got down, and, knowing that with rational people a plain statement of facts has always the best effect, I explained, in as few words as possible, the nature of the dilemma we were in.

"You are bound to find a conveyance, coachman," said a crusty old limb of the law, who sat muffled up in one corner.

"I am aware of that, sir," I replied; "but I was about to submit to you the hardship that one poor subordinate of the establishment will have to suffer if you are all determined to take advantage of this error and keep your seats."

"How do you propose to remedy it?" asked the Baronet.

"It can only be remedied in one way," said I, "and that is, by one getting out."

"And which of us is that to be?—are we to cast lots?" he inquired.

"Why," I replied, "in common fairness, it ought to be the last who was booked. This lady and gentleman" (who were standing at the coach-door—I knew them to be the widow of Buonaparte's General, Drouet, and her son) "have been booked a week."

"And who was the last, pray?"

"You, Sir William."

Without another word or further delay, he got out, and, taking the seat beside me, which I had purposely reserved, we proceeded on our journey, and he said not a word in disparagement of my decision.

I mention this simple act of courtesy as indicative of a mind fraught with a proper and just understanding of things of far greater moment. When such conduct is considered in contradistinction to the pertinacious and selfish adherence to what the law awards as right, the individual is placed in a very estimable point of view; for where one such incident as I have spoken of occurs, under similar circumstances, the usual penalty has been exacted by ninety-nine others.

But the reader is not to suppose that I was always accompanied by men of such standing, or of such correct views; on the contrary, I have had them of a widely different nature, though it was not their custom to make an exhibition of their evil ways. I had, however, one who gloried in showing himself an accomplished villain.

The first time I saw him, he had seated himself on the roof in Bishopsgate Street, while I had gone up to the office in the yard for my way-bill. On my return a neighbour told me who he was, and gave me a short outline of his antecedents, which were not very flattering; but they were not unknown in this vicinity. It was his common practice, I found, to cheat every one he could, and he attempted a fraud on me that morning. When I asked him for the fare, he said he would pay at Downham; arrived here, he promised the fare when we arrived at Cambridge; but, on my insisting that he should either pay or get down, he chose the former.

This man was a great annoyance to me, although I did not let him see this. He would always sit beside me when he could, which I, as often as I could, manœuvred to prevent. He had a bold, familiar air, and a fluent as well as specious tongue, which, with a tolerably good-looking face, and no small share of impudence, caused him to pass current with many as a man of some import, though it did not require a very keen observer to detect the vulgar character beneath the assumed garb of gentility. His conversation was at all times in derision of morality and religion, and, concluding "all men were liars," he thought himself justified in practising every sort of deception upon the simple and unwary, that he might despoil them of their coin —always taking care to keep within the pale of the law.

He was quite an adept in the art possessed by one of Dickens's heroes—that of making exchanges in hats, great-coats, whips, and even a set of harness he has been known to purloin in this way. Horse-stealing was too easy of detection, and led to too serious a result, for him to encounter the risk. I believe he delighted in dishonesty; for he would show as much ingenuity, and take as much trouble, to rob a chimney-sweep of sixpence, as he would one of his own class of one hundred pounds.

He occupied a farm in the Fens, and on one occasion, when he had purchased some bullocks of a neighbouring farmer, he offered in payment a bill, which the other, having been assured that it was as good as money, readily agreed to take. He ignorantly signed his name, accordingly, to what he supposed was a regular draft at two months, which, when it had come to maturity, turned out to be a receipt for the money—£250.

But to come to what I witnessed myself. It was one cold frosty morning shortly after Christmas; I was on my journey down, with him on the box—the only passenger I had on the outside—when a man, having the appearance of a mechanic, held up his hand. I stopped, and, saying he was going to Hoddesdon, he got up, and sat on the front of the roof behind us. He was no sooner seated than my hero addressed him,—

"Just from town?—Been up to receive your dividend, I suppose?"

The man said he had gone up for that purpose, but had met with a great disappointment. This led to further questions. What was he?—A master-bricklayer. What could he earn per week?—Twenty-five shillings. What property had he?—Four cottages. What did they bring in?—Five pounds a year each.

"And you are in a little difficulty?"

"To tell you the truth, I am."

The man then told a tale of deep and pitiable distress: the recent death of his daughter after a long illness, the expense of the doctor, funeral, &c. The fellow pretended to have compassion on him, and, telling him that he went about for the purpose of assisting the distressed, asked him what sum he thought would set him straight with the world. The poor fellow, believing his questioner to be what he was only enacting, innocently enough said twenty pounds would set his mind at rest; the latter immediately unbuttoned his coat, put his hand in his breeches pocket, and took out twenty sovereigns—counterfeits they might have been—and, holding them up to the man, said,—

"There—they are yours."

The bricklayer turned his eyes up to heaven in utter astonishment, and invoked God's blessing upon his supposed benefactor. I was about to denounce his trifling with the man's feelings, but determined to see the end of it, as I suspected some dishonest design.

"You have no objection to give me an acknowledgment for it?"

"Oh, no, sir. You shall have my handwriting, and I am to have yours."

"Exactly so. When we get to Hoddesdon you shall have it."

At Hoddesdon we soon arrived, when the schemer, turning round to his dupe, who had got his purse or pocket-book out to pay me his fare, said, "You must give me eighteen-pence to purchase the stamp." He deliberately put his finger and thumb in and took out one shilling and a sixpence. "Now come with me," he added. He then led him into a back room, saying to the landlady as he passed the bar, "Give that poor man a pint of beer," desiring him at the same time to remain there while he went to get the stamp. He now came chuckling to me with the one shilling and sixpence in his hand, exclaiming,—

"There, Mr. Coachman—that is more than you have earned this morning."

"Yes," I said, for I could no longer contain my detestation of his knavish trick; "and if you do not immediately return it, you shall not proceed with me."

"Don't be a fool," he cried, half in earnest.

"Fool or not," I replied, "I do not stir from this till you have returned the eighteen-pence you have robbed him of."

The county police had not been established, or I would have given him in charge. My horses were put to and ready, when the bricklayer, tired, I suppose, of waiting, or suspecting the trick, came running out.

"Give it him back," I repeated. Seeing my determination, the cheat reluctantly, though with a forced laugh, complied.

"I did not think you meant to serve me so," was all his dupe ventured to say.

On our arrival at the next stage, where we lunched, as did the passengers of the Wisbech coach, the baffled cheat went into the room. I followed, and, seeing him shake hands with one of the passengers, whom I knew, I addressed the latter,—

"I do not know if you are aware of it, but you are shaking hands with one of the most consummate scoundrels I ever met with."

"Order, order, sir!" said he; "order is the first law of nature."

"True," I said, "and it is a pity you have been suffered to violate it so long—for you ought to have been hanged long ago."

Saying this, I left the room. When he rejoined me, during the remainder of the journey he attempted to turn into ridicule my sympathy for his intended victim, whom he represented as a hypocritical, canting rascal, at the same time extolling his own masterly display of cunning, by his almost successful attempt at robbing him of his last shilling, the defeat of which he attributed to my foolish interference.

It was impossible that I should have had many such customers, for I never knew his equal. He went away from that part of the country long before I ceased to drive. His name has since figured in our law and police courts; but I do not know if he ever reached that goal to which he appeared to be hastening, and which the law has pronounced a proper termination to such a knavish career.

At another time, I remember to have had what was likely to have been a serious affair with three gentlemen passengers, who had not the wit the last mentioned was possessed of to keep within the pale of the law. They were rewarded for their expertness in making an entry into other people's houses without their knowledge and consent, and appropriating their goods and chattels, with a situation under Government in the colonies.

These fellows were seated in the dickey, as the hindermost part of the coach is termed, accompanied by a gentleman who paid them particular attention. At Barkway Hill, which we always of necessity slowly ascended, the three worthies, closely allied as they were, began descending together. One of them was on the ground, and the other two in the act of descending, when their attentive friend called to his superior, who at the time was in conversation with me on the box. On looking round and seeing what was going on, he jumped over on the roof, pulled a pistol from his pocket, and cried to the man who was on the ground by name, "If you do not immediately get up I'll shoot you!" He cocked and presented his pistol. The fellow slowly re-ascended after some little persuasion from the gentleman behind, and reseated himself, as did the others. One of them, it appeared, was a most desperate character ; and, as we proceeded, my box companion stood up with his back to me, and, looking at him in particular, with his pistol in his hand, called out, in a determined manner,—

"I'll have you all in Newgate this night, either dead or alive ! "

This seemed to quiet them for a time, although they would break out in threats and abuse, of which I came in for the greatest share ; for, at the first change after we had left Barkway, I had suggested to my friend the propriety as well as the efficacy of attaching one of the bracelets with which the wrists of such persons are usually adorned, to the iron of the dickey, to prevent a repetition of the attempt at escape, and this was immediately adopted. The suggestion called down on me a threat of sending some of their acquaintances to *crack my crib* on the first favourable opportunity.

At Ware we were offered further assistance, but the officer in charge not thinking it necessary, we proceeded without, and in due time the constables safely deposited their charge in Newgate.

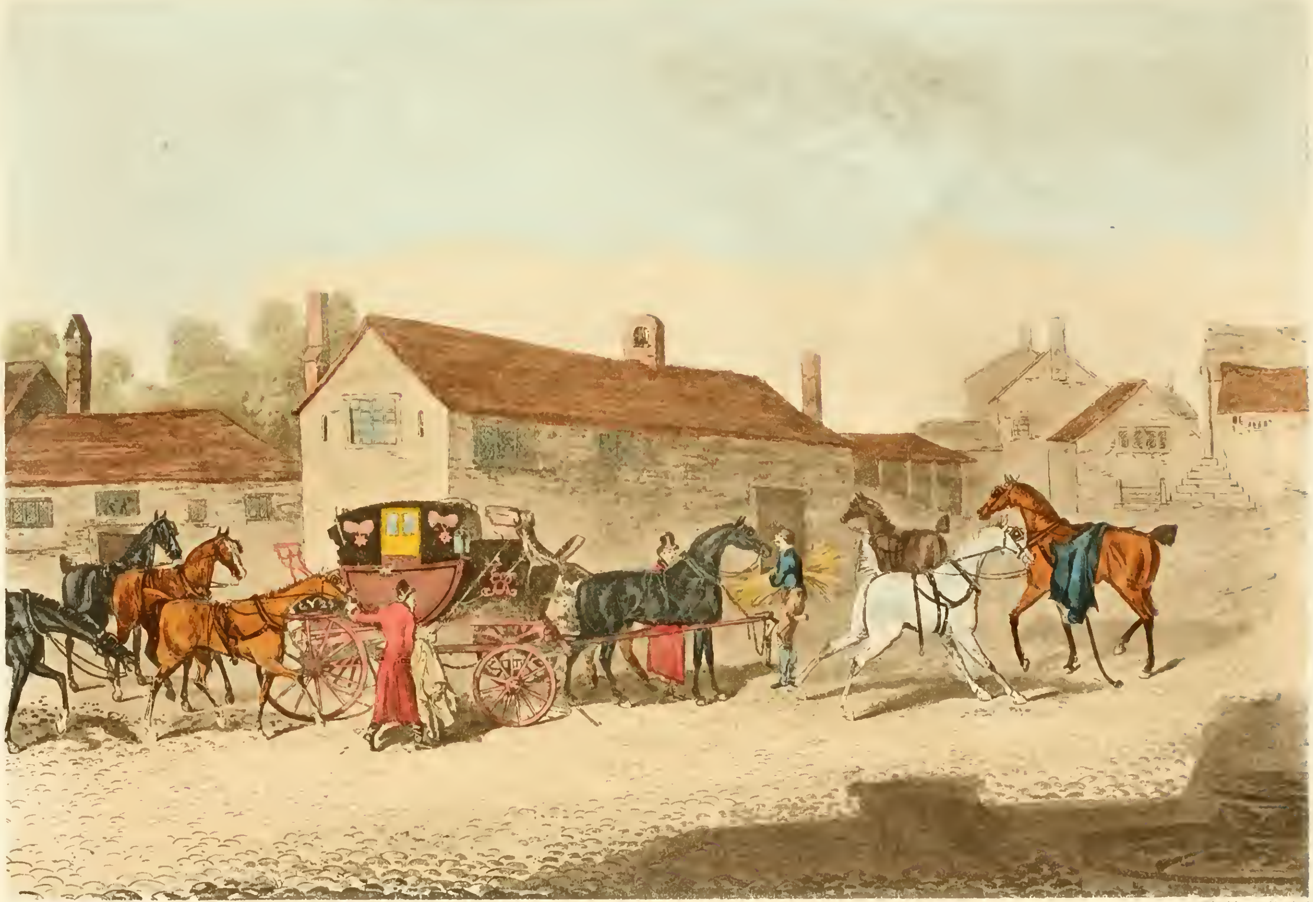
It was my custom frequently to amuse my home circle with the adventures of the day, and the little ones would as often listen with the gravest attention ; but this had a far more serious effect upon them than I expected or desired ; for they would not go to bed for weeks afterwards without one of them asking, with a most serious countenance, when the man was coming to "crack our crib," or "did I think he would come to-night ?" After a time this fear wore off, though the circumstance is fresh in all their memories.

Our two coaches—that is, the up and down coach—used to meet at Trumpington, two miles from Cambridge on the London side; consequently, as we carried timepieces, we were both of us enabled to judge the time to a minute.

Upon one occasion, my partner, having a little business at Cambridge, sent the porter on with the coach, and he, wishing to make the most of his short drive, never having hold of four horses before, did not stop at the usual place, but came on sixty or seventy yards farther in the village, and pulled up close to the gutter on the near side.

After descending and exchanging way-bills, and I had seen him off, I got upon the return coach, which was quite full, and heavily loaded on the top with luggage. I spoke to the horses before I seated myself, or had time to take the reins from the hands of the passenger on the box; the consequence was, the leaders swerved to the near side, the near fore-wheel went into a grating in the channel of the gutter, and the coach, losing her equilibrium, went over, though not before a momentary struggle between the fore and hind part of the coach had broken the perch.

The horses had not moved half-a-dozen paces, and now stood quite still, and the luggage and luggage-iron rested against the wall of two adjoining cottages. My box-companion fell on his legs, but the ladies on the roof were shot into one of the cottages, and the inmates being at a wash-tub, that had been placed near the door, one



James Pollard, del 1815

R. Havell fec^t

THE MAIL COACH CHANGING HORSES

Publish'd Aug. 15 1815 by R. Pollard, Holloway near Lond.

of them, a lady, had a warm reception. Her husband was sitting behind in the dickey; and hearing immediately after the accident a dreadful howling behind, I turned my head, after getting hold of the horses, and observed a gentleman lying on his back in the road. I supposed, from the noise he was making, that he had received a fractured limb or serious contusion.

I untied his neck-handkerchief, and asked him where he was hurt. His only reply was the exclamation, "My wife, my wife!"

Presently a lady, dripping with soapsuds, came tripping from behind the coach, and bestowing on him part of the benefits she had received in her fall, assured him of her safety, as she raised him from the ground.

The scene was sufficiently ludicrous, but fortunately no one had received any injury except myself, and it was a very slight one, having merely grazed my head by its coming in contact with the tiles that overhung the walls of the cottage. We sent to Cambridge for a spare coach, the lady in the meantime changing her dress, when we proceeded safely to London.

CHAPTER VIII

CAMBRIDGE

Another Change—Town and Gown—Lawyers—A Literary Barrister—Barnwell—Politics and Religion—An Unlucky Blow—A Post Captain and his Wife—An Original Character—A Member of the Cloth—Fifty-two Miles from London—Select Party—Glass of Wine—The Ring—A Sporting Baronet—Strange Customer—Death of a Gladiator—The double Dandy—Chance Set-to—Merit Rewarded.

Perseverance in business, and a determination to overcome all obstacles in the way of self-interest or advancement, are, we all know, worthy of general adoption. Whether I was deficient in one, or failed in the other, I cannot say, but perhaps I fell short in both, which caused me in little less than two years to tire of my continual long drive. In the morning, particularly in the winter, from bed to the box, and in the evening from the box to bed, became too wearing to suit either my inclination or my constitution. I had no time for the employment of the mind, while the hands were thus daily and hourly occupied; and though to all appearance I was revelling in out-door enjoyment, I could but consider myself a prisoner, as I was confined to the same scenery daily, and to the same drudgery, as such continual work made it. I could not escape, even for a day, without the indulgence being embittered with the loss of the profits of the day's work—for with me it was "no longer fiddle, no longer pay."

Independent of this, there was a great inconvenience attending my continuing to drive both coaches; they belonged to two different proprietors in London—the yards were far apart; consequently I was compelled to live somewhere between them, which involved a very high rental. Then, again, they were neither of them famed for horsing their coaches as they should do beyond the stage out of London—indeed, the work was scarcely done in a decent manner. Complaint after complaint being of no avail, and feeling that such incessant toil was something akin to the galleys, I resolved to give it up, and try and satisfy my daily wants with my original drag.

I had but to say the word, the alteration was made, and I removed my family to Cambridge.

This formed a new epoch in my history, as for the first time I sat myself down as an inhabitant householder in this important University town. I had now plenty of time, as well as opportunity and inclination, to study the character of the community among whom I had taken up my abode, and to observe the peculiarities of the distinction so long maintained, and so frequently exhibited, between the Town and the Gown.

But it was some little time before this attracted my attention; my leisure hours were spent partly in gardening—having a good space for that occupation attached to the cottage where I lived—and partly in writing a treatise on the art of driving, with the origin and history of stage-coach travelling, the greater part of which I had prepared for the press, when Government, or some other creditor, putting forward a claim to all the property on the premises of my printer—my manuscript as well as the proofs of what had been set up were entirely swept away.

However, I had not long been associated there before the contrast between the two was made palpable to my understanding—a contrast that seemed almost to constitute an anomaly. That learning should flourish within the walls of the colleges, while ignorance of the grossest nature should reign without (a fact that cannot be controverted), raised at once my amazement and curiosity.

It was natural to suppose that the knowledge and wisdom of which those walls could so justly boast, if they did not impart virtue, would spread their influence far and wide ; and that every exhibition of folly and dissipation opposed to morality and religion would be prohibited ; but it is not a very uncommon thing to confound causes and effects, as well as to anticipate effects as the natural result of such causes, that are never realized.

The very fact of more than two thousand men, most of them in the heyday of youth, in the glow of health and full flow of animal spirits, assembled at college, albeit to receive instruction and to imbibe wisdom,—involves a considerable expenditure, and a circulation of coin. And this is sufficient to attract men of another order, who, armed with the allurements of pleasure, are ever ready to pander to the vices of some, the folly of others, and the frailties of all.

But these would be comparatively harmless were it not for a certain class, who, from an inordinate love of gain, provide the extravagant with the means of indulging in prodigality and dissipation. Where the carcase is, there will the crows congregate ; and foremost in the crowd are those of an honourable and useful profession, who, throwing off its ornaments or trammels, that they may the more freely exercise their talents,—find means, by their knowledge of finance, to replenish the empty exchequers of inconsiderate youths, in a generous and disinterested manner known only to themselves. Birds of this feather are found in every town in England ; but I should judge that none of them can rival Cambridge in the glossy blackness of their plumage, the quick penetration of their evil eye, the keenness of their appetite, or the sharpness of their bills.

But, to leave this metaphor, the undergraduates first get involved without fair means of extricating themselves, and then fly to these harpies for relief, which they administer by anticipating all their dupes may have in reversion, and by easing them of what little they had left of honour, honesty, or good principle. It would be supposed that such practices, publicly known, would consign the enactors to an unenvied distinction ; on the contrary, they live and thrive in the midst of a community renowned for its ethics, and have been known to commit with impunity acts which ought to have sent them to the hulks. While presuming on the rank of gentlemen, which their profession gives them, without a particle of claim to it, either by birth or early associations, and by relying on a position their superior knowledge of chicanery has procured for them, they exercise their calling with an air of importance that shameless effrontery only could adopt and support, and poverty and ignorance only encourage.

One of these worthies I remember superintending the revision of the votes for the borough; and my vote, among others, having been objected to, prompted the barrister who stood by his side—a man of literary celebrity—to ask me if I had ever been at Rome. Surprised at such a question, as foreign to the purpose, and somewhat thrown off my guard, I answered, "No."

"But you have written about Rome," said he, "and therefore I conclude you must have been there."

Seeing by the smirking smile of his adviser that the two were endeavouring to raise a laugh at my expense in consequence of their having been disappointed in their object, which was to disqualify me—"It is true," I said, "I have written of Rome, but it does not follow that I should have been there. You, I believe, have written of *Ten Thousand a Year*, but it does not necessarily follow that you ever did, or ever will, possess such an income, either from your professional or your literary exertions."

This retort—a thing in which I was by no means an adept—had the desired effect, and put a stop to the impertinent allusions of my querists.

But it would be doing an injustice to the town and to the profession were I to omit due mention of the worthy. There are, no doubt, men of high honour and principle among them—gentlemen in the real sense of that word—who would scorn to descend to the machinations that are productive of so much evil to many a noble family, such sorrow to parents, and such gross scandal to the University. And the evil does not rest here, but spreads its baneful influence over other orders of this motley community. Besides bill-discounters and money-lenders at exorbitant interest, tailors have been known to provide suit after suit—jewellers, watches and trinkets—wine-merchants, wine and spirits. These have passed untouched into the hands of ready recipients, who have promoted this wasteful expenditure—or, what is worse, they have been given in lieu of money when all other resources failed, to degraded beings, who by the basest means pander to dissolute passions. Others of the class have vied in tempting their victims to excess, while participating in the plunder, thereby stamping a division of the town with ruffianism, immorality, and vice, which the fame of learning and religion cannot qualify.

It is not in the power, perhaps, of the Legislature or the University to obviate this blot upon the reputation of the latter; but the evil must strike every observer, and presents a lamentable instance of the weakness and wickedness of our nature, and the inefficacy of our institutions to remedy a state of things so deplorable.

It is a curious fact, but no less curious than true, that if you ask a particular class of tradesmen—that is, those that have most to do with the University—undergraduates in particular—who are among the best men—he will name those of the most dissolute habits, as they spend the most money; while every worthy member of their own body would select only those who most strictly adhered to the discipline of their respective colleges.

To enter into a dissertation on the long-contested subjects of dispute between Town and Gown, or to advocate the claims of one or defend the privileges and immunities of the other, does not come within the province of this work. I here need only add to my observations respecting a town in which I resided for many years, that it has exhibited a degree of partizanship in its public bodies scarcely exceeded in any other place since the passing of the Reform Bill.

I, among many, have lived to lament the unhappy division caused in our Church by the propagation of tracts, and the revival of obsolete observances, emanating from the sister University; but I can entertain no apprehensions for the stability of that mode of worship which has obtained for so many years, while it is supported and defended by such clear, practical, common-sense views as have been advocated by a Whewell, a Sedgwick, or a Philpott—I can see no danger to its established form—that is, free from the Laud-like innovations that would lead us back to the verge of popery on the one hand, and from the popular extravagances of the conventicle on the other.

I cannot help recording a most remarkable instance of a breach of discipline by an undergraduate—remarkable in the annals of the University for a gross outrage committed on one of its officers. Of this I was a witness, and also beheld the strange yet painful emotions it caused the parent of the delinquent, whom I had known from my earliest youth—he having lived within a few miles of my father's residence.

It was at Hoddesdon one morning, when changing horses, that a gentleman put his head out from the inside of the coach, his white locks streaming in the wind, and asked me if the box-seat were vacant. As one of my best clients who frequently occupied that seat thus far—whose name, with that of his family, will always be held in the highest estimation by men of all parties in the county of Herts[1]—had just bade me good morning, I replied in the affirmative.

"I should like to sit beside you, sir," said he, getting up.

"I shall feel honoured with your company, although not for the first time, I think."

I knew his fine veteran features, though age, and long service in the Navy, had wrought some few furrows in his weather-beaten cheeks; and, contrary to my usual custom, I told him my name and the place of my former habitation.

"Oh, I know you," he exclaimed, "and all your family: I ought to do, for I have frequently had you on my knee when you were an infant. Pray, tell me, do you know my son?"

"No, Admiral, I cannot say I do, personally."

"But you know what has happened?"

"Yes," I replied, "and very sorry I feel for him and his connections."

"You know all about it, then?"

The young gentleman had been expelled the University for knocking down one of the proctors when in the exercise of his duty.

"Do you know what has become of him or where he is gone?" he inquired.

"No, I really do not, though the lamentable affair is the general topic of conversation both of Town and Gown."

He then asked me to stop the up-coaches from Cambridge, and inquire if he were among the passengers, which I did—but they had no such person. As we proceeded, he every now and then gave vent to feelings that seemed almost to overpower him. First he would condemn the conduct of his son as most culpable, as unworthy the scion of an ancient family as well as the son of a distinguished naval officer, as totally subversive of the benefits that awaited him, and as contrary to what he expected and intended when he first sent him to college. Then he would blame himself in no very measured language.

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[1] The sons of the late N. Calvert, Esq., of Hunsdon.

"I have committed a great mistake, sir," said he to me—"I ought to have made a sailor of him, and a parson of the other"—alluding to his brother; "he is a meek, unassuming youth, that had nothing to say for himself on board ship; while this, sir, would knock the devil down, let alone a proctor, if he offended him."

But it would require the pen of a Dickens to describe the ebullitions of anger that escaped him at the misconduct of his son. At one breath he would avow the most implacable vengeance, while with the next he would say he was "a d—— high-spirited fellow." He kept coupling the unhappy error he had committed in the choice of professions for his sons with a conviction of the heinous offence one of them had been guilty of; now called down execrations upon him, and then accused his own folly in the most opprobrious terms.

At length, when this painful excitement had exhausted itself, for want, probably, of fresh fuel, he quietly inquired,—

"Do you know where I could get a pair of horses like these you are driving?"

I was then sitting behind a first-rate team of my own.

"I understand Cambridge is a good place to purchase a pair?" he added.

I said, "Very likely," and recommended him to a well-known livery-stable keeper.

As we drove up Trumpington Street, I observed the President of Queen's College walking quickly towards the "Bull."

"Here is Dr. King," I called out: as I pulled up, he silently squeezed my hand. Presently the Doctor took his arm, and walked with him into a private apartment.

I saw no more of him till my following journey down, when I met the Admiral cheek-by-jowl with his son, on two tall coach horses, apparently on the best of terms with each other and their new purchase.

Among the first persons who made my acquaintance after we had settled ourselves down was a gentleman who then held the office of chief magistrate of the borough. He was a Post-captain in the Navy, and is mentioned in the early part of this book as having partaken of mine and my father's hospitality at Portsmouth. He now, in a genuine blunt sailor-like manner, expressed the pleasure he should have in entertaining me in a similar manner. His naval career had been most fortunate throughout. On the unexpected death of Commodore Grant on the Indian station, he succeeded to the command, just at the conclusion of the first Burmese war, and had lately returned laden with the spoils of that hitherto unexplored and idolatrous country.

These had been tastefully disposed in a house he had purchased for a permanent residence, by the hands of his lady who had accompanied him from England. The hall was ornamented with canoes, paddles, spears, and other implements of war and commerce. A terrace built in the rear of the house was furnished with carronades and flagstaffs, after the manner of Commodore Trunnion; gods and goddesses of all sizes, the larger composed of hardened rice, in imitation of alabaster, richly ornamented, were pedestalled in every room in the house. The smaller and more valuable ones, some of silver and one of gold, did duty as Penates on the mantelpiece of his reception-room.

At this house we were frequent and welcome visitors, and though the lady did now and then ride the high horse, which was not to be wondered at, considering that she herself, as she told us, had ridden upon an elephant in Calcutta, and had been received at the Marquis of Hastings's table, we always enjoyed the visit.

H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex, introduced by a well-known Fellow of Trinity College,[1] who was always his confidential friend and companion when at Cambridge, honoured the house with his presence, and inspected the museum; and on the following evening her ladyship—a little elated, I suppose, by the honour conferred on her husband—assumed an air of patronage she probably considered adapted to her company. Such, however, not being in accordance with the tastes of this genuine son of Neptune, he denounced in no very measured terms.

"I am ashamed of you, Captain Coe," said the lady, in retort, with an air of studied importance; "you would not have behaved so yesterday when George Adam Brown and the Duke of Sussex were here."

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[1] The late Rev. George Adam Brown.

"D——n George Adam Brown," cried the old tar. "I had rather see my old friend and his wife here than all the Fellows of Trinity together."

A fit of hysterics followed this burst of ill-timed indignation, and it for a short time interrupted the pleasure of the evening. The Captain was determined not to give way to such "d—d nonsense," as he, in not the most polite terms, described it; and the lady, after the application of the usual remedies, took her place at the supper-table.

Closely connected with this family, but seldom a visitor at the house, was a character as genuine as his brother-in-law for standing out in prominent relief from the crowd of others of the community, as original and unique. Prolific as the imagination of our great bard was in exhibiting human nature in all its varied phases, and clear and comprehensive as was his understanding of her manifold vagaries, I doubt if ever he even met with so strange a character.

Peculiar in his dress, which he never altered to suit the fashion of the day; quaint in his manners, and simple in his habits, he attracted such notice only from the passer-by as a bird of a different plumage from its fellows. To those who knew him there was something more under that broad brim than a first acquaintance would perceive—something more humorous in that countenance that a high snow-white shirt collar like a sheet of note-paper more than partially hid—than the casual observer would expect. The long black waistcoat that came over his hips—covered with a cut-off coat, into the outside pockets of which his hands were usually thrust—enveloped a heart which beat in unison with the best feelings of our nature; in addition were well-polished top-boots, which supported a figure singular for its oddity and inelegance.

Possessed of an easy independence and a contented mind, his loftiest aspirations seemed to be directed to becoming familiar with the fraternity to which I belonged; and his principal pleasure was derived from acting in the same capacity at Cambridge as Bishop Atterbury, as I have elsewhere termed him, did at Oxford, though not from the same motives. This gave him an opportunity of selecting and appointing the men to drive for the particular establishment which he ostensibly owned or superintended: and in doing so, one of his invariable conditions was, that they should confine their nether limbs to knee breeches and top-boots. This did not prevent him from mixing with them in public company, into which his convivial disposition would often lead him; and while avoiding anything approaching to business in his conversation, he would display his satirical humour in good-naturedly exposing some of their peculiar foibles.

But it was at his own house and at his own table that this extraordinary and eccentric being should have been seen, for his character to have been properly appreciated. To this his sanctum—for his home was seldom invaded—I, with one other only of the fraternity, and our wives, were admitted or invited. There everything was disposed in the neatest order, and everything provided in the most simple, at the same time elegant and hospitable manner. Though a bachelor, there was no absence of politeness or want of attention to females, however his outward appearance contrasted with that of his more accomplished sister, who boasted of having sat upon gold embroidered ottomans, and fancied herself a Begum.

Joy beamed from his laughing eye, as his knife entered the smoking and well-commended joint; a heartfelt gratification lent an additional glow to his smiling face, as he looked round and severally helped his welcome and favoured guests; while the raciness of his conversation, interlarded with apt quotations from some of the most humorous characters depicted by our immortal bard, would excite the risible muscles of my brother whip as well as myself—for he had an intellectual capacity, and a classic taste for the enjoyment of such things. Without indulging in any excess, such treats, not to be witnessed elsewhere in the town, would keep us to a very late hour.

I cannot give the reader a better idea of the estimation in which I held this singular character, than by transcribing a little effusion I attached to his obituary, in a paper whose columns were always open to my pen. After recapitulating his oddities, "Farewell, Sam,"[1] I wrote—"many an hour—not unintellectual—not to be regretted—not to be forgotten—have we spent together; and as the tear with which Sterne's recording angel blotted out a good man's breach of the divine law,—so may the unhallowed, but heart-born effusion that follows this pen aid in blotting out all your frailties;

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[1] Samuel Wheeler.

and may the merits of a redeeming Saviour pass your spirit into the abode of the blessed."

Besides the person I have named as my companion at these pleasant reunions, there was one whose antecedents and whose domestic circle recommended a reciprocity of visits,[1] as well as others in the profession with whom I frequently came in contact, whose attainments would not have disgraced higher or more intellectual callings.

One was fond of the histrionic art, and, as an amateur, made frequent and respectable displays of his abilities, in Shakspere's, and Bulwer's and Knowles's more modern characters.[2] Another—who had been educated at the Charterhouse, and was closely allied to a celebrated and titled authoress—early showed a desire to join the craft, by taking every opportunity in his out-of-school hours, of driving hackney coaches. As he grew up, he has been known, instead of accompanying his mother, who kept the first society, to a party, to change clothes with the coachman, and take greater delight in performing his functions, than in any company to which his family connections enabled him to gain access.[3]

Tom was a tall, handsome fellow, with rather fascinating manners, and was as remarkable for the redundancy of his wit and the keenness of his satire, as he was in the number of his admirers among the undergraduates and the tradesmen.

Among the latter was a hatter, who sought every

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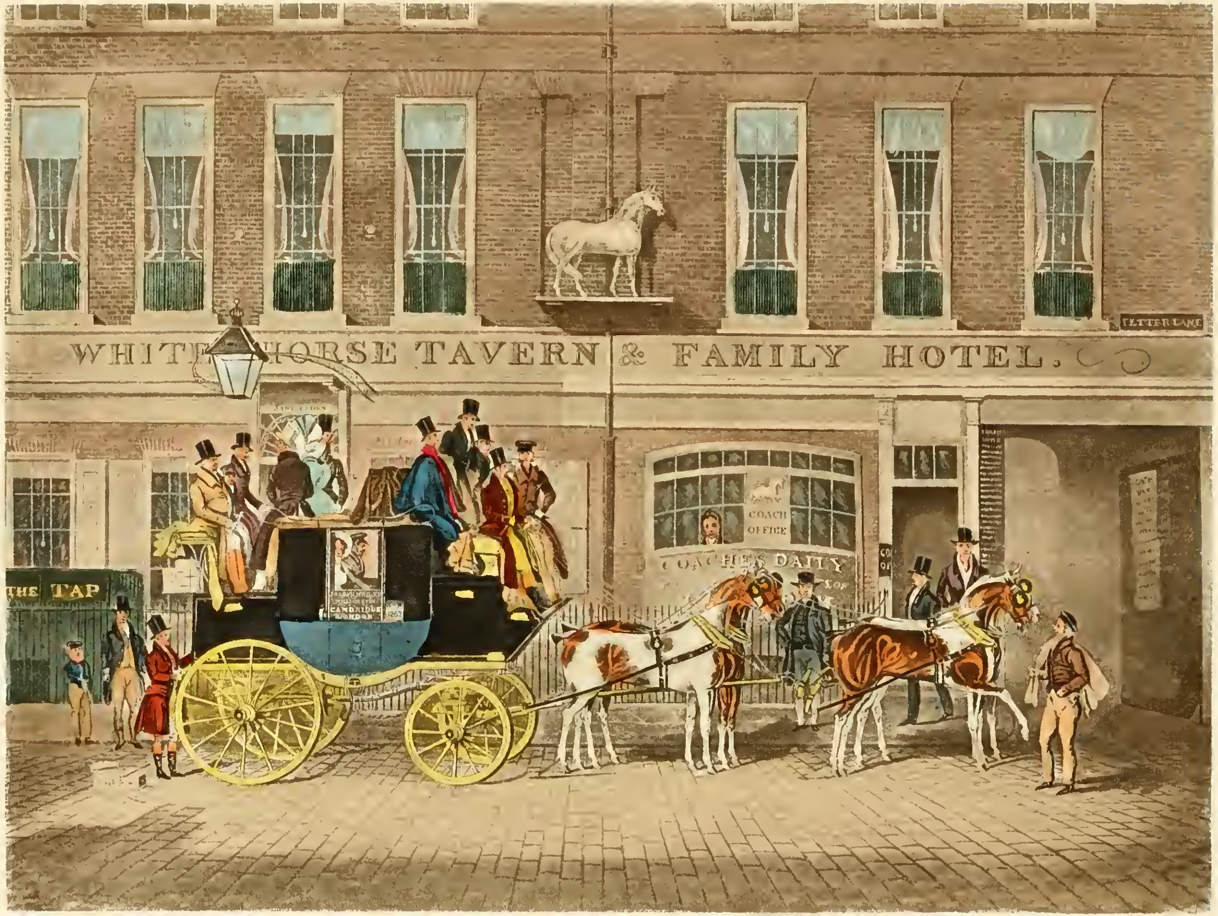
[1] Mr. Joseph Fawcett, of the "Cambridge Times."

[2] Mr. James Reynolds, of the "Cambridge Telegraph."

[3] Mr. Thomas Morgan, of the Wisbech drag.


FETTER LANE
WHITE HORSE TAVERN & FAMILY HOTEL.
THE TAP
COACH OFFICE
COACHES DAILY
CAMBRIDGE
LONDON
1262

Painted by James Pollard. *Engraved by George Hunt.*

THE CAMBRIDGE TELEGRAPH

Starting from the White Horse, Fetter Lane.

London. Published by J. Moore, 1 West Street, St Martin's Lane.

opportunity of making his society agreeable by continual applications of brandy-and-water and cigars.

This commenced an intimacy that induced Tom one morning, in going into his shop, to take up a *tile*, as he termed it, and put it on his head. His friend, rather pleased with such a customer, thought nothing of the payment; neither did Tom, whose habits of forgetfulness in that way were too deeply rooted to be eradicated before a new *roof* was required. Time went on, and it was supplied again and again, and all thoughts of the cost seemed to be drowned in the ever-flowing stream of brandy-and-water, or lost in the sweet perfume of the India weed; till one morning Tom was disturbed at his toilet by a boy knocking at his door, with a note, and telling him he was not to return without an answer.

He immediately recognized in the messenger the shop-boy of his friend, the hatter. He quickly opened the note and read thus:—

"DEAR TOM,—I enclose your little account, and I think it is high time it was settled."

Addressing the boy, he said,—

"You are not to go without an answer?"

"No, sir."

"Stop one minute and you shall have one."

Sitting down at the instant he wrote:—

"DEAR JACK,—May the difference of opinion never alter friendship!"

I think the great Sheridan never eclipsed this prompt and apt repartee.

But this was not the only member of the profession who attracted the notice of either Town or Gown; for if we may judge from the manner in which their society was courted, they must have been regarded as a favoured class. Indeed, some one thought us worthy the distinguished honour of being named individually, in a little production of one of the colleges, entitled "Fifty-two Miles from London," that appeared in a well-known weekly sporting paper. In this the habits of each particular dragsman, as we were termed, were distinctly, if not correctly given, and with some of us—not willing to think our avocation entitled us to such ludicrous exposure—this was not very kindly received.

I, among a few others, thinking a liberty had been taken with my name, felt rather indignant; and knowing pretty well who were the authors of this attack upon what we thought our dignity, took up my pen in reply, and occupied a column of the Cambridge paper for four or five consecutive publications.

My name not appearing, the articles engrossed the attention and excited the curiosity of many who had long been familiar with the objects of this pointed but not very elegant satire; and I had the secret pleasure of witnessing the laughable remarks my idle hours had called forth. My friend Samuel, who had a keen relish for the humorous, was above all others in evincing the ecstatic delight the perusal of so unexpected a production gave him.

Unlike my brethren, I did not seek or care for the society of the undergraduates; but we are not always master of our actions, and I was drawn in, by what means I do not now remember, unless it was the love of driving that urged one or two of them to elect me a member of a small circle, who *par excellence* styled themselves the "Select Vestry." The first and only rule of this little club was—for I never heard any other discussed—to meet every Saturday afternoon at Uncle Barefoot's, as they termed the host of a small but respectable hotel in the town—to partake of a dinner, cooked in first-rate style, to which I was to contribute the fish, as my portion of the expense, which I invariably did, fresh from Billingsgate that morning. The wine was of the best quality, which Uncle was always careful to bring up in flannel from the cellar, with a Bacchanalian smile upon his sporting old visage, and a joyful twinkle in his eye, knowing that he was about to partake of it.

Though much their senior in age, I cannot say but that I delighted very much in the society of these young men; for, while enlivened by mirth and wit, their conversation and demeanour were always such as became gentlemen, and I never witnessed any tendency to excess. One of them in particular, I remember, the nephew of an Earl well known for his great popularity and the high respect universally entertained for him,[1] possessed a vein of drollery in his conversation and manner that would sometimes keep us in a roar of laughter.

Dining once with this gentleman in his rooms at Christ's College, when others of his acquaintance had assembled, I was much surprised at an exploit that I never before saw equalled. The cloth being removed, the dessert was brought in on a tray, by a respectable-looking, elderly man, who, after depositing dish after dish with great precision as to their relative positions, was about to retire, when my friend, then sitting at the head of the table, having glanced at me to attract my attention, said to him,—

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[1] The late Earl Fitzwilliam.

"Barnes, will you take a glass of wine?"

"Thank you, sir," replied the man, in a most respectful manner.

"Get yourself a glass, Barnes."

Taking one off the sideboard, he put it next the decanter. This was immediately exchanged by the president for a large soda-water glass, into which he emptied the bottle of port.

"Good health to you, gentlemen," said the man, and, taking up the glass, disposed of its contents without taking it from his lips. Replacing the empty vessel on the table, and giving evident signs of satisfaction, he made his bow and was going.

"Stop, Barnes," cried my friend—"wet the other eye."

Then, emptying another full bottle that stood beside him, Barnes disposed of that in the same summary manner, and, according another bow to the company, made his way to the door with as firm a step and apparently as clear a head as he had entered.

With these gentlemen I continued my intimacy until the termination of their University career, when they dispersed. Returning to their different parental abodes, the majority became beneficed clergymen; and it has been very gratifying to me to hear of their social advancement, and of their usefulness in the ministry. There was one, in particular, whose witty conversation and classic attainments both amused and enlightened me, from a knowledge of whose kind disposition, affable manners, and good sound understanding, I ventured to predict a brilliant career, and was not disappointed.

Another, who did not go into the Church, succeeded in due time to the estates of his father, in one of the most beautiful localities of the North Riding. Following his favourite pursuits, he now possesses one of the largest racing studs in the county of York, and, though not so fortunate, perhaps, as some, he has displayed a knowledge and judgment in breeding, rearing, and training horses, that has done no discredit to his Alma Mater; while the example he sets to his neighbours as a practical agriculturist, the lessons he has taught them, and the liberal but unostentatious manner in which he dispenses the hospitalities of Easby Abbey will ever rank him as a first-rate English gentleman.

But this little coterie did not include all my University friends; for, some time after, I was honoured with the acquaintance of a noble lord who has since distinguished himself both in the senate and in the literary world. His lordship was very fond of driving, and I had frequently the honour of his company on the box; but what rendered his undergraduateship more remarkable was his having gained the Chancellor's medal, and driven four horses into the most difficult gateway in Cambridge—two very opposite, and, it has been thought, almost irreconcilable achievements. But it was this duality of purpose, or, perhaps, similarity of pursuits, that first drew his lordship's attention towards me; for I had written, not *for* the Chancellor's medal, as will hereafter be seen, but for my own pride and pleasure, and ever after found his lordship a kind and liberal patron.

In reverting more immediately to the box, it was about this portion of my career that I met with a circumstance which made a painful impression on my mind. In my earlier days I had, like other young men, taken a liking to one of the fashionable sports of the day—that is, I had the merits and exploits of Gully and Gregson—Jem Belcher and the Chicken—Tom Belcher and Dutch Sam —ever on my lips. Indeed, I had ventured to take lessons of the latter in the noble art of self-defence, as it was then called, which, upon one or two occasions, I must confess stood me in good service. But, while I admired the science I abhorred the association, so that my knowledge of the men or of their profession was very limited.

My attention was often recalled to the feats of the ring by the public papers, and by their being a frequent topic of conversation on the coach as well as in most public companies.

The stables where my horses stood were situated on a point of the road, near to which the three counties of Essex, Hertford, and Cambridge joined; and, at the distance of a mile, in a newly-erected, modest mansion, on a pretty spot commanding an extensive view over the surrounding country, looking down upon it as upon a carpet, lived a baronet who was known to be a patron of pugilism, and to possess a thorough knowledge of the science as well as of its professors. Consequently, the spot was frequently chosen as the scene where trials of science and bottom were decided.

It was on a morning preceding the day on which a long-expected battle was to come off, that I was directed by my way-bill to take up three persons at the "Cherry Tree," Kingsland Road. I had three other insides, one a young and beautiful lady, whose husband, a clergyman, was my companion on the box. Before I got to the stones' end, a gentleman on the roof said, "You have got some fighting men going down with you."

"Have I?" I replied, carelessly; but the gentleman on the box, pricking up his ears, said he would not allow any such characters to sit in the coach with his wife.

Pulling up, for my three customers were waiting, and, while telling my box companion that I had no power to exclude any one on account of his profession from the coach who had taken his seat, his mind was set at rest by two coarse-looking fellows, in rough great-coats, getting on the outside, and a well-dressed, genteel-looking young man getting in. In this way we travelled to our place of refreshment, the husband looking in when we changed horses to see that all was right.

On his assisting her out (they had not been long married) she asked him who was the gentleman who got in last, for his conversation had been extremely interesting, and she was sure, by his general information, he must be a gentleman of distinction at the University.

The individual referred to entered the luncheon room alone, dressed in an elegant suit of black, sat down at the table, and displayed on his delicate white hand a ring, in which was set a valuable diamond. His manners corresponded with his appearance, and no one could have suspected him of being a fighting man.

Reader, this was a man known as Brighton Bill—his real name I never knew—but that he was of respectable parents, and intended by them for a better calling, I was convinced. When two days afterwards I saw his contused and distorted countenance, the only part visible from under the bedclothes at the "Wheatsheaf" at Backway, when he was deserted by all, and had no friend or relative near to watch over his fast-departing spirit, I could not restrain a tear. The spectacle thrilling my inward parts with horror, I silently, as I descended the stairs, invoked a curse on such barbarous practices, as well as on the authors of his death. He expired before my return the next day; and on my arrival in town, I was met by an editor, who generally reported in full these disgusting exhibitions, whom I had long known. In answer to his inquiries, I told him the man was dead. "Then," cried he, turning to go away, "they must toddle," —meaning that his murderers must leave the country. This was all the solicitude expressed by this organ of the fancy, as it was termed, for one who, from a desire to become a distinguished member of it, had fallen a victim to the most brutal practice that ever disgraced a civilized community.

At the inquest held on the body, the jury were unanimous in wishing to return a verdict of wilful murder against his antagonist and second, as well to punish the offenders as to testify their horror of the event; but as the coroner told them such a verdict would only subvert the means of punishment, manslaughter was substituted. After a considerable time had elapsed, and the exasperated feeling of the public had somewhat subsided, the culprits surrendered to their trial at Hertford, and received the usual sentence for the offence they had committed—two years' imprisonment: a sentence far short of the deserts of the principal and savage perpetrator.

However lamentable it may be to see a young man of intellect and good breeding—for he was both—thus associating with men of brutal passions and depraved habits, imitating, unknowingly as it were—some of the worst of the Roman Emperors, in assuming the garb and entering the arena of the gladiator, yet, for the honour of my country, I hope he was a solitary instance. Yet I remember a gentleman who used to travel with me when I drove the Cheltenham coach, and, from his great bulk and his love of dress, was called "the double dandy," offering to fight any man in England; but with this proviso, that his opponent should be a gentleman. I named this circumstance shortly after to my friend the wine merchant I have before spoken of, who, though then in the meridian of life, full of health and of activity and vigour, intimated to me that he should like to accept the challenge, although an old 'un.

It so happened that, two or three weeks after, these two met together on my coach—the double dandy on the box, my friend sitting behind me. We had not proceeded far off the stones before I told my companion, after ascertaining that he was still in the same mind, that I had got a customer for him. He smiled and asked who he was.

"Look behind you," I replied.

He did so, and eyeing my friend, observed to him,—

"You are a little in the fancy, I understand?"

"Yes," he replied; "and you are the gentleman, I presume, with whom and myself our friend here," pressing his hand on my shoulder, "has made a match."

"The same. Are you going to Cheltenham?"

"Yes."

"Then we will talk further about it."

The result of this was, a fair stand-up set-to with the gloves, in which my friend came off victorious.

I have recorded this occurrence merely to demonstrate that science and manhood can be displayed without having recourse to the prize-ring, and without that resort to the modern tactics, of first hugging your adversary, then throwing him, and last thrusting your knees into his body—a system of fighting that never would have been allowed by our fathers, and has been sanctioned only for the better effecting of crosses, thereby making it a profession fit only for ruffians. I have both witnessed and experienced practical illustrations of the benefits to be derived from a knowledge of this useful art, and would glory in its display as one of our national characteristics, when practised on an emergency and in self-defence, as far more indicative of what becomes a man, than the steel of the Italian, or the extravagant demonstrations of vengeance in vogue with our American brethren.

A particular instance I remember in illustration of this idea.

Riding one day with my friend before named in his phaeton,[1] in going round the churchyard at Ewel, a very dangerous part of the road to Epsom, which has since been judiciously altered, we came in contact with a brewer's waggon. In consequence we were grossly insulted by the driver, who threatened to lay his whip about us, making use of the most abusive language; and on expostulating with him, he challenged to fight either one or both of us. My friend, first casting an eye on him, gave me the reins, and, taking off his coat, jumped out of the vehicle and went up to the fellow.

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[1] The late John Morris, of Northumberland Street, Strand.

My friend was a fine tall athletic man, as I have elsewhere said, and fit, in a military point of view, to be the right-hand man of ten thousand; but the waggoner overtopped him by an inch or more, and was stout in proportion. As he pulled his smock frock over his head, and they put themselves in attitude, I could not help applying, or perhaps misapplying, the words of the Mantuan bard—"*Fortemque Gyam fortemque Cloanthum.*" It did not take me long to be satisfied that my friend had far the best of it in science, distinctly visible by the not very gentle taps he repeatedly administered to the astonished index of his opponent's countenance. His choler rising with such unpleasant admonitions, he doubled himself up, and with his head down, to avoid, as he thought, any more of such unwelcome communications to his visual or nasal organs, went at his adversary with the force and rage of a bull. My friend, meeting him as he was coming in, gave him a chuck under the chin with his left hand that sent his head up, and the sound of the vibration of his jaws was instantaneous, with a blow from the shoulder with his right, that, like the kick of a horse, caused him, like Eryx of old, to measure his length on the green sward, where he lay bleeding and gasping with rage. Finding that the man was unwilling or unable to renew the combat, my friend, after assuring himself that he was not more than deservedly punished for his gross misconduct, and that, too, in a way he had himself invited, advised him to be more careful in future who he insulted, quietly retired to his vehicle, and having put on his coat, with a smile of triumph, we continued our pleasure excursion.

The Baronet before referred to,[1] who was the holder of two Baronetcies, and had as many names as would serve to designate a moderate family, was a very odd man, and could justly boast not a little of his personal prowess. Upon one occasion, I remember, when a great multitude had assembled to witness a pugilistic encounter, that was to be decided near his place, and with his special approval, or rather by his invitation, by some means or other it did not come off. This so irritated the Baronet that he jumped into the ring, that had been formed for two very noted men of that day, and said that, rather than the company should be disappointed, he and his gamekeeper would fight any two of the best men among them. This not being accepted—for the appearance of the two was such as must have caused a very bold prize-fighter to consider what he was about in venturing to attack them —he challenged any two men in England.

But one of the most singular feats of this most singular character took place at his own house. He was seated at the head of his table one evening, when I was an invited guest, entertaining a large company of both sexes—which he well understood, despite his less polite accomplishments—when the footman entered, and, leaning over the back of his chair, engaged his attention a few minutes.

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[1] Sir Peter Soame.

"Oh—very well," said he, aloud; and, on the servant's withdrawing, begged permission of his guests to be absent a short time on very urgent business. He beckoned me to accompany him, and we went directly to the kitchen, where we found seated a stalwart butcher of one of the neighbouring villages, who acted also in the capacity of constable to the hundred.

"Do you want me?" he asked, addressing the man by name.

"Yes, Sir Peter."

"What do you want?"

"I want 6*s.* 6*d.* for the summons I have called so many times about."

"And my servant tells me you won't go out of the house without it—is it so?"

"No, I won't, Sir Peter."

Then, taking some silver out of his waistcoat pocket, and counting out the stipulated sum, he put it on the dresser.

"Now, they call you the Fighting Butcher, do they not?" inquired the Baronet; and upon the man's answering in the affirmative, added—"Then take off your coat, and if you are a better man than me you shall have it—not without."

The butcher, nothing loth, did as he was told.

"Get you girls out of the kitchen!" said their master. "Where's Stephen?"

Stephen, who was his *fides Achates* as well as his gamekeeper, and was always' in attendance, the first thing at morning and the last thing at night, answered for himself.

"Put the chairs and tables out of the way, and go down in the cellar and get some sawdust, and then come and see that Mumford has fair play. Mr. C. will take care of me."

"Yes, Stephen," replied the butcher, "and then see me give your master a lesson. I'll serve him out."

Stephen put on one of his arch grins; he presently returned with the sawdust, which having strewed, he retired to a corner.

The Baronet leisurely took off his coat and waistcoat; which having carefully deposited, he divested himself of his cravat, &c. He advanced to meet his antagonist, who stood with his arms up, ready to receive him; but a ferocious glance of his dark eye seemed to confound or disarm the butcher, who received a blow right through his guard that laid him prostrate. Stephen picked him up. In the next minute, but little daunted, he endeavoured to close with the Baronet, who exhibited first-rate strength and science in keeping him at a distance, parrying his blows with his left, and knocking him clean off his legs with his right, till, after six tremendous falls, this terror of the surrounding villages, picking up his clothes, departed.

Stephen asked him, as he went out, when he was coming to give his master another lesson; while the Baronet, after a copious ablution, readjusted his dress, and rejoined his company, who were not at all aware of the nature of the very urgent business that had called for their host's temporary absence.

I met the butcher a day or two after, who, with his head tied up, gave unequivocal marks of his handsome reception at Haydon Grange.

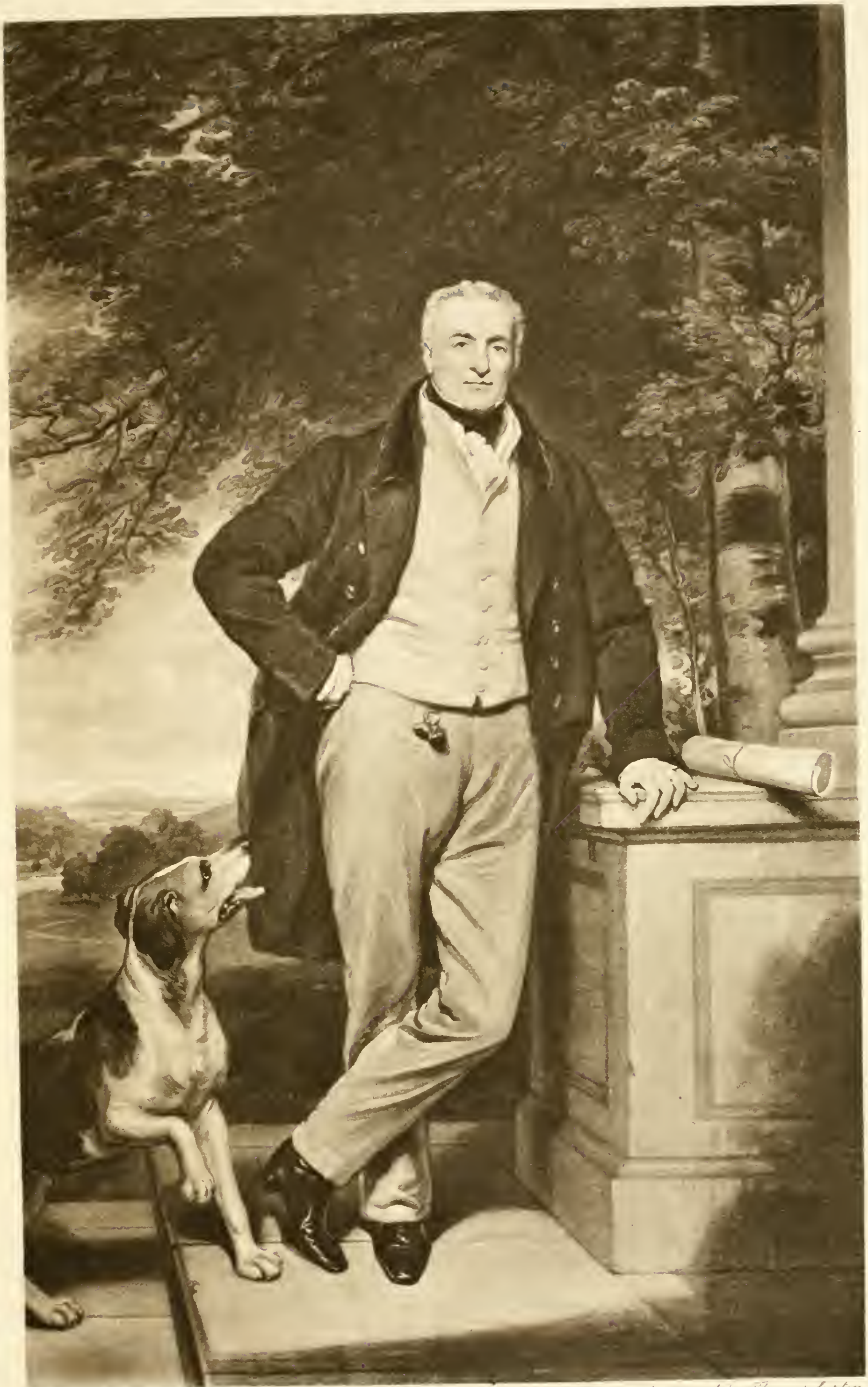
CHAPTER IX

NORFOLK

An old English Gentleman—Liberal Patron—Good Workman—Gift Horse—Mr. Rarey—Epsom Downs—Finished Gentleman—A Week's Holiday—Stag Hounds—A Somersault: Pleasing Result—Mournful Cavalcade—Strange Talk—Ludicrous Incident—Turn-up between Two Dogs—Collision—A New Feature—The Chancellor's Medal—Novel Title—A Pleasant Reception—Contrast—A Field Marshal—Vain Attempt—Another Avocation.

Among the numerous gentry who owned or occupied seats in this, the Western part of the county, was a person whom my partner, in the exuberance of his gratitude and respect, styled the King of Norfolk; and a stranger would have thought the title not ill-applied when he witnessed the esteem he was held in by all classes.

He had in early life been at the University of Oxford, and was one of the founders of a society or club that was of much advantage to the fraternity, providing for them when laid up by accident, sickness, or old age. This alone would entitle him to the praise and good word of all right-thinking professors; while those who came more immediately under his ken, and felt the genial warmth of his kind and generous nature, could not fail to be imbued with a feeling of thankfulness for their lot having been cast on a road that led to his hospitable home.



Painted by Thomas Phillips, R.A. Engraved by Thomas Lupton

HENRY VILLEBOIS, ESQ^R - 1842.

(of Marham House, Norfolk)

When I first made my appearance on that stage which I have attempted to give the reader an account of in the last few chapters, it was his custom to drive to and from London. He was an amateur and a most excellent workman, always keeping a relay of horses on the road, for the purpose of practising and indulging in an art that he very much admired.

I first saw him in his drag when he pulled up and spoke to my friend Bob at Cambridge. I knew him from his likeness to his brother in Hampshire, but did not put myself forward. As he drove off I was told by my brother whip, with some self-importance, who the gentleman was. He concluded with, "You'll see, boy, he's the best friend we've got;" and to me, for many years, did he verify Bob's prediction.

For reasons I have before stated, a year or more elapsed before I made his acquaintance; and it was not till after the alterations and improvements which were made in our drag that I had the pleasure of his company on the box; and it was my good fortune soon to grow in his favour. Whether it was that I came from Hampshire, and had frequently hunted with the celebrated pack of which his brother was master, or that he respected my former position, I cannot say, but he uniformly treated me with a frank and familiar kindness, that was as far removed from aristocratic pride as it was from assumed condescension or affected patronage.

He was possessed of a great flow of animal spirits, but there was something more in his hearty laugh when he first addressed you than would strike a common observer; and there was a sincerity in his "good-bye," too, that told you plainly, with him it was not "out of sight out of mind." Living in the midst of a shooting country, owning and hiring manors to a considerable extent, rearing and preserving game in greater quantities than any nobleman or gentleman in the county, his house was always full of company in the shooting season, and their coming and going tended as much to the support of the coach as to my own individual advantage. Indeed, from their conversation I learnt that my name was frequently in their host's mouth, and that to him I was indebted for the notice and patronage I received from many of his neighbours and visitors. Latterly, his family growing up, he generally travelled post with the ladies; while his eldest son—a fine specimen of his race—stuck to the box, and I had much pleasure in imparting to him a few rules that, perhaps, assisted in making him a perfect master of that art in which he as much delighted as he excelled all others in the three necessary ingredients—judgment, skill, and execution.

There was a neighbouring Squire who was as fond of driving four horses as himself, but, like most amateurs, he was far too fond of the whip, which he would exercise with much skill, but little mercy; consequently, his judgment was often at fault, and on one or two occasions he gave serious proofs of his lamentable deficiency in the first qualification necessary to make an adept in driving. The other rode with me more frequently; and one day, when his father accompanied him, and the son had hold of the reins, they very much admired a leader I had in my own team. The senior said,—

"Don't you think, Harry, our Johnny" (the name of one of his hunters) "would make a good match for this near leader?"

"Match him well," replied the son, "for colour, size, and action."

"Suppose we give him to Tom"—for so he familiarly designated me—"the season's over, you know, Harry, boy."

"He won't go in harness," replied the other.

Catching at this, and not willing to let so good an offer go by, I said,—

"Let me try. I never knew a horse I could not make go, if not a kicker."

"I'll send him."

He was sent the following day. I looked at him, and thought him a very likely animal; but I knew his fault, and called to mind my feat at Oxford. Here, however, was no canal. There was a stable at a lone house, and not even a break to try him in nearer than Cambridge. I do not pretend to have the acumen or experience of Mr. Rarey, whose abilities I should like to have seen tested upon a variety of tempers that have come under my own supervision; but I concluded this animal had been tried in the usual way, and that nothing could be made of him. I thought that when this horse should be put beside the one he intended to match, as off-leader, he would be free from the confinement of the pole and pole-chain, and finding himself at liberty, and seeing nothing before him but the road, that he would suffer himself to be led off by the other, and gradually take up his work.

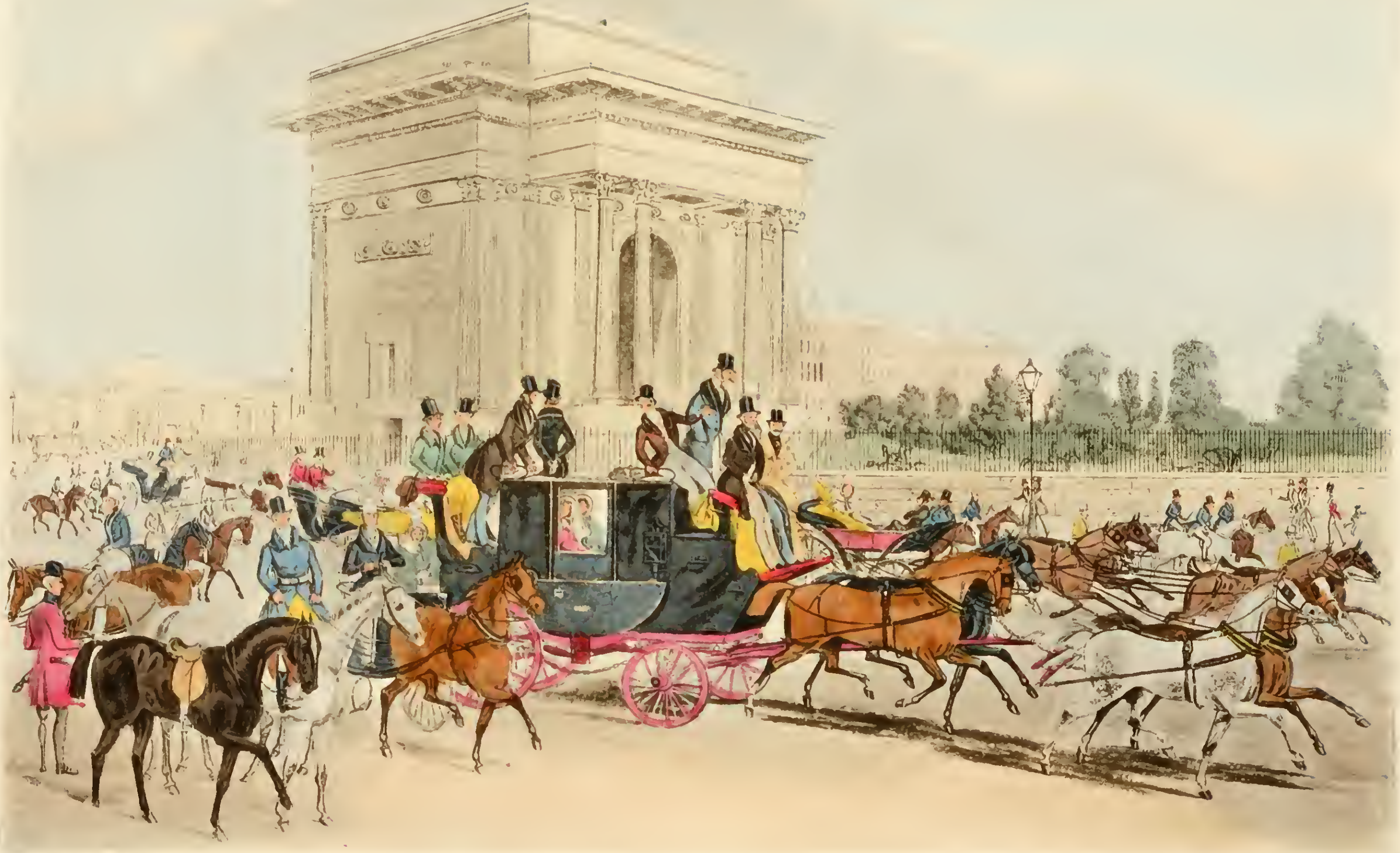
But I was mistaken. I had no sooner got on the box and spoken to the team, than he turned himself round, with his head over the other horse's loins, then reared on his hind legs as if he were going over his partner, then plunged, then came back on the bars with his hocks, then fought with his forefeet, shaking his head, and playing all sorts of tricks except kicking. It was fortunate I had a gentleman on the box who knew something about horses, and had confidence in my judgment. Presently the animal set his forefeet out, fixed his jaws, put his ears back, and remained motionless, saying as plainly as such actions will speak, "I won't go."

"What do you mean to do now, Mr. ——?" said my companion.

The horse-keeper was about to hit him with a stick out of the hedge.

"Let him alone," cried I.

With my wheel-horses both well poled and curbed up, so that I had full command of the coach as well as of them and the near leader, a powerful and very quick horse, I sat patiently, with my eyes fixed on my new acquaintance. He remained in the position I have described some two or three minutes; then I observed a motion in the skin of his neck like a slight relaxation of the muscles; his ears first almost imperceptibly moved, then nervously pricked forward. Suddenly, with one bound he went off; the other horse was with him instantly, and keeping the wheel-horses up, we went a merry pace for the first mile, when we gradually dropped into a fair trot till we reached the "Wheat Sheaf," at Barkway, where we pulled up. It being up-hill nearly all the way, there was no danger of his getting the better of me. Here we stopped two or



Painted by Jas Pollard

Engraved by J. Harris

HYDE PARK CORNER · DERBY DAY

"With spirits gay I mount the box, the tits up to their traces
My elbows squared, my wrist turn'd down, dash off for Epsom Races"

London, Published May 30th 1838 by Ackermann & Co 96 Strand three minutes, and at starting he would have played the same trick again, but, after two or three antics, he suffered the other horse to lead him off.

I continued daily to drive him, and he would frequently show his restive temper; but there was no other way than to watch and wait for him. Once I had occasion to turn back and exchange with the man who drove the "Telegraph,"[1] when he, thinking he could make him go by whipping the wheel horses, and driving the bars on to him, only proved the better effects of patience and mild treatment, for he could not succeed, and the horse was obliged to be taken out and another substituted. In my passage through life I have found that this mode of treatment will equally apply to another species, whose mouths are not confined by bit and bridle, but who are sometimes similar in temper, and almost as destitute of understanding.

This little triumph served further to ingratiate me with both father and son; and from this time, if anything occurred in the field—such as a horse breaking his knees, getting staked, or what not—it was said, "Never mind—send him to Cross; he will know what to do with him."

In the meantime, I was honoured with the continued intimacy of the son, who invariably took occasion to offer me a seat on his drag to Epsom on the Derby-day, when his turn-out was more in order or more admired than any other of a similar description. He would introduce me to many titled companions, and would always put me on an equal footing with them; but had I ever been so inclined to take advantage of the light in which he held me, I never could come up to the bland and polite familiarity of a noted frequenter of the turf, whose dress and appearance were more odd than attractive. His ostensible avocation seemed to be that of a dealer in cards; in ignorance of his proper name I must call him Jerry. This well-known character, who might be seen at the end of the day laying his length on a waggon in a state of utter forgetfulness, apparently watched our arrival; on our pulling up on the crowded downs he would advance towards us with an air of affected good breeding; and, addressing one noble lord, would say, "Ah, G——, how are you?" To another, "Alfred, my dear boy, how do you do?"

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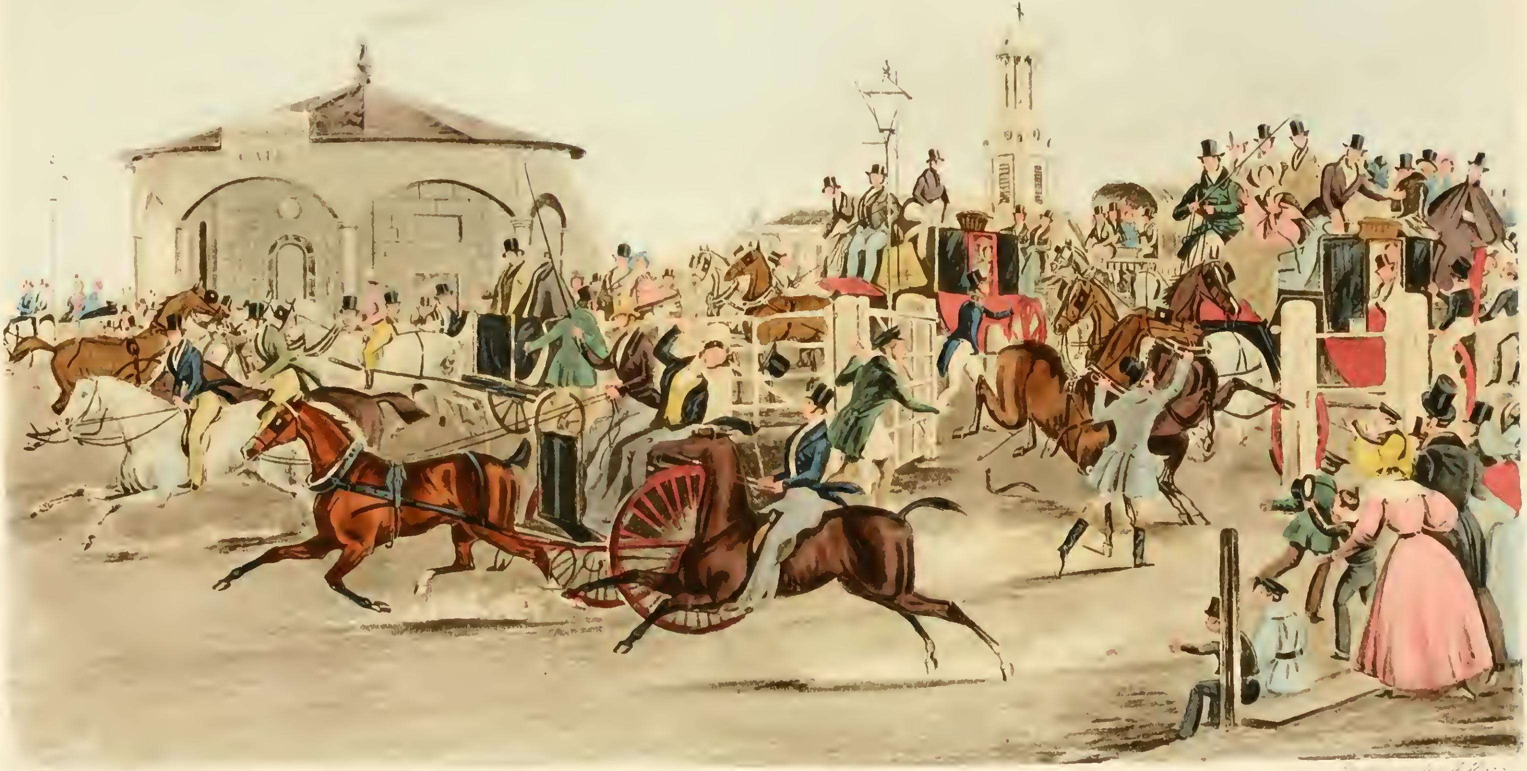
[1] George Elliot.

To such kind inquiries answers were returned that implied pleasure rather than anger at the recognition, or at the fellow's display of fraternity, for generally all distinctions were drowned in a glass of sherry, or some more choice beverage, proffered by my friend the Squire, with a hearty laugh at Jerry's *nonchalance*.

In the hunting-season I was now and then sent for—I will not say invited—to the hospitable mansion of the father; and was always sure of a mount, when the dream of former days would come back on me with vivid recollection. On one occasion I was to stop a week, as there were to be some grand festivities. Accordingly, finding a deputy, in which I had no difficulty, I went down on the Monday, and a young farmer whom I knew took me to his house in the same village, where I slept. In the morning the carriage, with the servant and groom, came to take me to the hall, about a mile distant, to breakfast. I



nted by Jas Pollard

ved by J. Harris

KENNINGTON GATE - DERBY DAY

"Thus 'tis with all who in London are thriving
Both high life and low life at something are driving"

Published May 1st 1838, Ackermann & Co. Strand

was received with one of the old Squire's hearty laughs, and as hearty a shake of the hand.

"Sit you down—sit you down," he was sure to exclaim.

I did so, and he rang the bell for a hot beefsteak to be brought in. While in the act of uncovering my plate to make ready, I saw a cheque for £10 upon it. I turned round, and looked at him with an expression of silent gratitude.

"Put it in your pocket," said he. "You can't afford to stop off your coach for nothing, I am sure; so, say not a word."

I did as I was directed, and sincerely thanked him for his considerate kindness. I turned to discuss the beefsteak, which I did with an excellent appetite, washing it down with a good supply of Truman-Hanbury, as neither tea nor coffee ever formed part of my morning's repast.

"A stag is to be turned off at eleven, and you are to ride old Miser—is he not, Harry?" he inquired, addressing the son, who just then came in.

"Oh, yes—he's all ready; but you must come with me," said the junior, taking my arm, "and I'll furnish you with whip, spurs, &c."

All arrangements having been completed, and a glass or two of sherry drunk standing, I mounted; then, with the son as Master of the hounds, and a numerous company, I rode to the field where the deer was to be uncarted; the old gentleman driving in his carriage, accompanied by the ladies, to witness the throw-off.

After a little time the hounds were put on, and the scent being good—that is, breast-high—they went off at the top of their speed. I kept close to the young Squire, when, presently, coming to a high fence, I went side by side over it with him, and at the same time, whether in lifting his hind-quarters too high, as some horses will do in clearing a live fence, or whether the potent liquors I had imbibed had an effect on my equilibrium, I went over Miser's head, and the old Squire's ringing laugh at my mishap was heard above all the others, though he was on the other side of the field in the road.

Not in the least hurt, I soon regained my saddle, and after a long run, with only one check—the deer lying down in a brook—I contrived to be in when he was taken. After a prolonged ride home—more than twenty miles—with the huntsman and two others, the day's sport wound up, as such days usually do, with an excellent dinner, when social hilarity was continued to a late hour, my somersault provoking general mirth whenever referred to.

The two following days were spent in the exhibition of a sport that is fast fading away, one which I have touched upon in the early part of this book as peculiar to this country. Men of all ranks attended, good-fellowship reigned, hospitality abounded, and altogether it was a good picture of merry old England. Another day with the hounds, in which I was more fortunate, terminated my visit, and I returned home pleased and gratified beyond measure with the mark of distinction that had been bestowed on me by my kind entertainer.

If I were to record all the good acts of this benevolent man, I should very soon fill a volume; suffice it to say, they ceased only with his life; and ever since I attended the mournful cavalcade that bore him to his last resting-place in his own parish church, my mind has been impressed with the true type of an old English gentleman, and I have sought in vain for his parallel. If ever these lines should meet the eye of his son, they will recall the old Lynn, and the many pleasurable hours we have spent together upon it.

Lines written on Witnessing the Funeral of the late H. Villebois, Esq., of Marham House, Norfolk.

And is he gone, the good old Squire?
The like of him how few!
Who is there that would not admire
A specimen so true—

A specimen of English heart
With Christian virtues crown'd,
Rejoicing always to impart
Its happiness around?

Not fam'd was he for deeds of arms,
With pow'rs forensic bless'd;
But where's the heart that living warms
A kinder, nobler breast?

The poor man's friend, th' oppressor's bane,
This earth he proudly trod:
In him was seen what poets feign,
The noblest work of God.

Oh! could my feeble pen arrest
The passing funeral bell,
How many would this truth attest,
And of his goodness tell!

Weep on, weep on! nor vainly try
To staunch the gushing tear;
For, while his spirit soars on high,
Your grief shall deck his bier.

Thus, then, did my days pass pleasantly away, my family increasing with my years. My father's utter ruin having been accomplished, the most distant hope of ever regaining my former position, or even of advancing from my present, was entirely precluded. Nevertheless, neither envy nor despair entered into my composition; and the kind feeling and urbanity of manner of the majority of those with whose company I was honoured, reconciled me to my fate. Almost daily some occurrence would take place, or some conversation would arise, that not only excited my curiosity, and sometimes interested me. but would call forth my surprise. It exhibited our nature in all its phases, and furnished examples of cupidity in quarters I, in my simplicity, should never have dreamt of, but which, if I were to repeat, would only cause my veracity to be doubted. I mention this only as a proof of what I stated in the early part of this book—that the sitting behind four good horses, and the being permitted to hold the reins, often induced a conversation of more than ordinary interest and importance.

But there was confidence reposed in me of a more pleasing nature, that was much better adapted to my position—that of now and then being entrusted with the charge of ladies of rank. This was gratifying to my pride, as well as advantageous to my pocket.

Here I cannot help recording a ludicrous scene that was exhibited at Cambridge, on the occasion of my having two ladies, the daughters of a noble viscount in Surrey, of which county he was lord lieutenant. They were going on a visit to a relative near Lynn, and of them I had especial charge. A dinner had been ordered in a private apartment, and I was to present them to the landlady, who stood on the steps to receive them; but an untoward accident prevented this. The horsekeeper at Cambridge was one of those independent sort of men of the lower class, who well understood his work and did it. Like some of his fellows, he was aware of this; always walking with his head up, his cap set jauntily on one side, and a flower between his lips, like people of better quality. Another appurtenance he had, too, which some men of all ranks prize, and women as well, a favourite dog. It was his custom, and his duty, to be at the inn a few minutes before the coach arrived; and he would sit on the stone against the gateway, with a pretty little bull-terrier, he valued at two guineas, between his knees. On my pulling up, he would first unhook the leaders' traces, draw the reins, then detach the wheel horses, and take them down the street to the stable. My brother dragsman had a dog also. His was a spaniel of a very choice breed, that would sometimes follow his master to the coach; and, on its starting, return home. I passed this coachman that day just before I got to the inn. He had his white gloves on and his dog with him. On my stopping, he went, as was his custom, to the hind boot to sort his parcels. The mistress of the house stepped to the coach door, to assist the ladies out, necessarily one foot in advance of the other. I threw the reins down, and was in the act of dismounting, when the *varmint* horsekeeper's pet, catching sight of Bob's spaniel, flew in a moment right between the hostess's feet, one of which was on the step of the coach, knocked her down, and fastened on the unoffending quadruped.

Bob dropped his parcels to relieve his dog from the silent fix in which the bull-terrier had got him; and Mr. Horsekeeper left his horses with three of the four leaders' traces unhooked, and the near rein thrown on the ground, to try and make his pet desist from his unprovoked attack. But this was a thing not so easily accomplished—his lips were fixed in too strong an embrace to be readily separated. In vain did Bob grasp the two hind legs of his favourite, with his snow-white gloves, like a wheelbarrow ; in vain did the horsekeeper go down on his knees and importune his canine friend, by taking his tail quietly in his mouth and thus endeavouring to impress on its hard nature the necessity of forsaking his ardent attachment. The leaders by this time had turned round to go towards the stable, but the outside trace still remaining hooked, pulled the fore-carriage round ; the off-wheel horse reared, a crowd gathered round, and the landlady had scrambled up and reached the door steps, leaving the ladies in the coach, one of them looking from the window, endeavouring to ascertain what was the matter. The landlord now came with a broomstick over his shoulder, looking as ferocious as an Italian bandit.

"Take care," cried he, "I'll soon make 'em leave go ;" and began belabouring them both indiscriminately, while I, with shame be it spoken, was obliged to turn my head away and bury it in my hands and coat to suppress the laughter that convulsed me. "Hullo!" exclaimed the governor, who witnessed the scene with a most serious visage, "you ought to be ashamed of yourself ; why don't you assist?"

Remonstrance, however, was for the present totally thrown away upon me. In a short time order and quiet were restored, and I became as the gravest. Handing the ladies to their seats, after their refreshment, I apologized for my unseasonable mirth; and, in answer, I received a gracious smile and a liberal *douceur*. The hostess was a little discomposed; but the horsekeeper was the only material sufferer, as he was compelled to part with his pet at a very reduced price—10*s*.—the author becoming the purchaser.

Stage-coach travelling had now approached, and on most roads had reached, perfection. It could not be expected that one solitary specimen should be an exception in the general excellence, or should escape the notice of those who are ever ready, from envy or some other evil motive, to injure their neighbours, without the smallest rational hope of benefiting themselves.

Such there were on every line of road; and ours being the only coach below Cambridge which was worked in very superior style, it had long excited the admiration of the admirers of driving, who desired occasionally to indulge in the practice of now and then driving a first-rate team.

Among these was one, a wealthy yeoman, in a village near Ely, who had been an intimate friend and boon companion of my brother whip, but who latterly had not been on good terms with him. He, with two or three others, became the dupes of artful and designing men, like Monops, and, in conjunction with a fellow of a similar grade, was induced to put on a coach against us.

It being drawn by a pair only, it did us no harm, and would have died a natural death, had its starters not been assisted by the all-powerful Ann Nelson, who had found means of making her name known on almost every road out of London. It was then, judiciously on their parts, converted into a night coach; and though it might, and did, lessen our monthly dividends, it was no longer an eye-sore, except to my friend and partner Robert, who generally met it as it came from Lynn, and always on the Tuesday—that being the market-day—his old acquaintance, the Streatham Farmer, having hold of the reins.

It so happened that one fine summer evening, as Bob was going into Lynn with his own drag, he met his old friend coming out with the "Rover," as the night coach was called. The road was wide enough, but the farmer, being a very bad hand, suffered his leaders to swerve. Coming closer to Robert than he liked, and he not willing to let an opportunity escape of showing the tender regard he had for his *quondam* friend, doubled up his thong, and fetched the farmer such a wipe over the face on passing as to leave the marks of a very sore impression.

It was impossible so sudden and so unexpected an attack could be resented in kind; therefore the farmer sought an alternative, more congenial to his feelings, by punishing Bob, as he thought, in a pecuniary way.

Two or three days after this, my friend Walker had occasion to go to London. He sat on the roof behind me, the box-seat being occupied, and a letter was put into his hand as we were about to start. When we got out of the town, he handed it over to me. It proved to be a letter from one of the lowest of the members of the legal profession, intimating that if an apology for the assault on Mr. W. R. were not immediately published in the Cambridge papers, an action would be commenced; the same time demanding 6*s.* 8*d.* for the letter.

"What do you mean to do with it?" I inquired.

"Light this cigar with it," said he.

"No, don't do that," I observed. "Allow me to answer it, will you?"

He readily assented; when, on my return to Cambridge, I wrote and despatched the following little *jeu d'esprit*:—

Oh! Billy, Billy,
Why so silly
As to take the Law on Bob,
Because his crop
He chose to drop
Upon your empty nob.

You could not think
That Bob would wink
At such an awkward Jarvie,
Who meant to pitch
Him in the ditch,
So did it just to *sarve* ye.

I own 'twas wrong
The double thong
To throw about your face;
Then learn this rule
When next you tool,
To give a little space.

Now Bob's awake,
And as you take
This punishment so sadly,
You, if you please,
May pay the fees
To honest Lawyer Bradley.

The action proceeded, and was tried at Cambridge assizes—damages being laid at £100; and so confident were both the lawyer and client of obtaining a verdict—that should mulct poor Bob in one-half of the value of his coach and horses—that they had ordered a grand dinner at one of the principal inns, at which all who were in any way connected with the "Rover," male or female, were invited, that they might chuckle over their assumed victory. But such is the uncertainty of the law, that the jury, by the direction of the judge—who stated that not being the appointed coachman, the plaintiff had no right to drive—returned a verdict for the defendant in the shape of a nonsuit. Thus was their famous rejoicing turned into grief, as the plaintiff had to pay his friendly adviser £140 for costs, while the defendant, calling no witnesses, got off for fifteen, which sum was cheerfully paid; and the issue of the trial was celebrated by my composing a song, in a rather homely but comic strain, giving the whole affair in detail.

This gave employment to the ballad singers of the town for the remainder of the assize and a week or two after, and the lyric was not forgotten on the road till the "Rover" had ceased to run.

It was about this time that I took up with or commenced another profession, that has outlived the last; and as the origin of so unexampled a conjunction may not be uninteresting, I will give it a place here. Stopping one morning in the early part of the month of October, at the usual place to lunch, a young gentleman who had been sitting behind, came and addressed me in a manner more respectful than men in my position generally look for; and, calling me by name, said he had seen my son yesterday. I understood him to mean my eldest son by my second marriage, whom I had very early sent to an excellent school in my own native county. After this introduction he told me that he had received his education at the same academy—had been matriculated at

Cambridge, and was about to commence his University career as a pensioner of Christ's College.

"Well," I replied, "if I can be of any service to you in making your stay agreeable, I hope that you will command me."

"I thought," he observed, "of doing myself the pleasure of calling on you."

"Do," I added, "as nothing will give me greater pleasure than to hear of my Hampshire friends."

After some few days occupied in settling himself down quietly in his rooms, he came. In answer to my inquiries respecting the part of the county of which he was a native, he named the village near Rumsey where my fat friend was so unceremoniously pitched into the purling brook by my carelessness. I could not help smiling at the remembrance of the wanton accident, and upon further inquiry found that the ducking the publican had received had not shortened his days, for he was still living. He continued his visits, and being what is termed a reading man, he conformed strictly to the discipline of the University; indeed was in great hopes, from having been at the head of the school in Hampshire, that he should be enabled to distinguish himself.

At Christmas vacation he did not go down; but on the day of that festivity he joined my family circle, which had got to be rather numerous.

After the customary turkey and chine, he asked, "Have you heard the subject for the Prize Poem?" addressing me.

I said, "No. What is it?"

"The Conflagration of Rome by Nero."

"An excellent subject," I replied. "I hope you mean to try. It would be a great gratification to your friends were you to obtain the Chancellor's medal."

"It is my intention to do so, provided you will give me your assistance."

At this I laughed, and, indeed, almost ridiculed the idea of my very limited capacity being required for a purpose so much beyond its sphere. But he would not be put down. He had heard of me at my sister's in Hampshire, and had seen what he called proofs of my capability.

"Pooh, pooh," I exclaimed; "I may have been guilty of twisting some sorrowful reflections, or some morbid fancies, into verse and indulged in amatory effusions in rhyme—that is all. You must not consider that this is any proof of the talent necessary for composing, in heroic metre, a fine historical subject like the one you name."

Finding he could not succeed with me, he addressed the lady facing me, and endeavoured to enlist her influence for the purpose he required.

After some varied and general conversation, in which I spoke of the impracticability of two persons writing together one poem, it was agreed, before we parted, that he should write one, and I attempt another; and that he should have his choice of the two—or send both in if he pleased.

During the time of my daily sojourn at Redbourn, I remember to have had placed in my hands the works of M. Volney, the only infidel writer of his nation, or, indeed, any other, who invites the reader, by the ease and elegance of his style, the apparent soundness of his logic, the novel and pleasing form of his narrative, or the highly finished and interesting account of his travels—to doubt the truth of our holy religion. I had indulged in poring over authors, in my leisure hours—whose arguments, founded on indefatigable research and direct testimony, confuted the reasoning and exposed the sophistry of the French philosopher's insidious attacks; and in searching for myself, I had become acquainted with many authors, sacred and profane—ancient and modern—whose writings, in the remotest degree, had reference to this all-important subject.

Consequently, I had but to refresh my memory with Tacitus and Suetonius, and the writers on ecclesiastical history, to furnish me with the necessary incidents for a subject that comprised a period when our creed was in its infancy, and when its growth was expedited by the very means taken for its destruction.

Meeting my friend shortly after, I asked him if he had begun his poem.

He replied, "No; have you done anything?"

"I have put together about forty lines or so; if you will call this evening you can see them, and you can judge for yourself."

He did so, and while I read he listened very attentively. When I had concluded, he acknowledged that they were very beautiful, but assured me that they would not win the prize.

I then, of course, gave up all hopes of being of any assistance to him, but, from fancy, I pursued my task.

Not long after this interview I was summoned to

Oxford, to attend the obsequies of one of my younger sisters, who had married and settled there, and had fallen a victim to consumption, in the full bloom of womanhood.

After the funeral, "when the baked meats were coldly furnished forth," usual on such lamentable occasions, our grief was, in a great measure, alleviated by the kind condolence of the officiating clergyman, who, it appeared, was acquainted with my brother-in-law. He stopped and spent the afternoon with us. By his conversation I discovered that he was from the Principality, and at that time was engaged in collecting, arranging, and, I believe, in translating, the productions of the old Welsh Bards for the Society of Ancient Britons.

This led to a discourse on our modern English poets, and their several merits. I then, after relating to him the cause of my entering the lists, and the subject, ventured—with his permission—to repeat the few lines I had already written. He expressed his surprise and admiration in very flattering terms, and, with all the ardour of a devotee of the Muses, urged me, nay, prayed of me, to go on with it.

I promised compliance; and in the course of the spring and summer, unrestricted by the conditions that confined the poem to 200 lines, completed it in a little more than 500.

Meeting my friend in the May Term, he told me, in answer to my inquiry, that he had written his poem and sent it in, and that his tutor had assured him that he had a very good chance of success.

"I am very happy to hear it," said I.

June came—with the long vacation, when all the men went away, and my friend, I found, had left college and taken rooms in the town.

"Why is our friend not gone home?" inquired I of my wife.

"He is waiting to see to whom the Chancellor's medal is awarded."

"Well," I said, "he has only to go to the University Marshal's—he will tell him."

He did so, and the answer was, "No production good enough; therefore, no medal to be given."

Satisfied, but not gratified, my friend packed up his portmanteau and proceeded on his way to King's Somborne that same night.

Thus much for my versifying; and now for the fact of the designation which I afterwards received—"Dragsman and Poet"—being invariably affixed to my name when attached to a basket of game, or any other kind present or notification I so frequently received from the munificent inmates of Marham.

It did not require much labour or much expense to give birth to my little bantling, and scarce any preparation. I sent it to the printer's with, perhaps, not a little vanity, mixed up with the hope of pleasing my friends and assisting my exchequer—the absence of any Prize Poem for the year being very opportune—and equally acceptable to those who would dwell with wonder on the author's position. Its appearance was unlooked for; and, therefore, took by surprise both Dons and Undergraduates, who had again begun to assemble in October.

"You did not write that poem, sir!" said the Professor of Modern History,[1] when he accosted me at the coach, as I was preparing to start.

"If I did not, perhaps you will inform me who did, Mr. Professor," I curtly replied.

"Where did you receive your education, sir?" he demanded.

"In the cockpit of a man-of-war, sir."

The Professor said no more, but bowed and walked away.

From this gentleman, the author of the "Life of Sheridan," I ever after received a polite recognition. Not so from the successor to the chair of this learned and amiable gentleman; for I remember—shortly after "Othello's occupation was gone," and I had nothing to subsist on but the sale of my poor productions—calling upon him at his rooms in Trinity Hall, to offer him a copy of my last production, "St. Paul's Vision," which had been more than sanctioned by his equals, if not his superiors,[2] in the University. I had scarcely time to name my business, when first a frown from his lowering brow, then a sneer at my presumption, and last a torrent of invective for daring to intrude or encroach on his privileges or privacy—I scarcely understood which—and he absolutely drove me from his presence. I was not just then armed with that stoic philosophy necessary to set at nought the contumely of my superiors, and I was about to fling back a volume of bitterness, when reason came to my aid, and whispered in my ear that neither the gentleman nor the Christian was always or necessarily combined with the scholar; and I silently, but moodily, turned away.

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[1] The late Professor Smythe.

[2] *Vide* Dr. Whewell's note at the end of this chapter.

I had scarcely emerged from his college gate, and walked partly up Senate House Passage, when a gentleman in his academicals crossed my path, and, stopping, asked what I had under my arm. "Nothing, sir, nothing," I replied, my eyes on the ground, and my mind brooding on the wound my pride had received; I did not stop to observe his benevolent aspect, neither was I roused from my gloomy mood by the kindness of his speech and manner, but moved to pass on.

"Stop," he cried—"stop—you forget me, I fear."

I looked up and recognized the features of one who had been foremost in the University to praise and patronize my maiden effort.[1]

"What are you doing now?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing? Have you not written anything lately? You promised me a copy of any future productions long ago."

I immediately handed him one, when he paid me with a coin far above the price set upon his purchase. I was about to give him change.

"No," he said; "if I like this as well as I did the first, I shall remain your debtor."

How blind are we mortals to the effects of good or evil that spring from accident; and how prone are we to forget, when the scale of evil or injury appears to be overloaded, how soon it may be counterpoised.

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[1] The Rev. —— Romilly, Registrar of the University.

Without travelling beyond the limits I had prescribed myself when I commenced this narrative, I have recorded this as an occurrence that arose entirely, as I have shown, from the position I then occupied (which forms the title of this book), and was immediately associated with it—for the merits and the errors of my production (for they were many) were almost daily discussed on the box, and I continued to receive praise and remuneration from noblemen and gentlemen whose sons had forwarded to them copies from the University.

But the chief benefit I derived from it—that is, what I most valued—was the introduction it gave me to one whose noble and generous heart was warmed by the blood that had flowed in the veins of magnates of the land ever since the Conquest. He himself was a votary of the Muses, and exercised his pen in composing a few lines in a laughable strain, on so strange a display as Pegasus in harness, or a coach and four, attempting to climb Olympus. Those lines I have lost, unfortunately, though they led to a correspondence that terminated only with the loss of sight of the fine old Field-Marshal,[1] who, if he did not emulate the deeds of his famous brother-in-arms in the field, did, by his actions, conciliate the goodwill and esteem of all with whom he came in contact, and was soon after one of my principal patrons.

The success that attended this my first and accidental effort induced me to pursue the calling; and elated, if not intoxicated, I ventured on another, or sequel to the first, as I thought the subject capable of further elucidation. A copy of this I sent to my friend the

[1] Field-Marshal Thomas Grosvenor.

General (he had not then attained the rank that was afterwards conferred on him), and this led to a correspondence which was most amusing, as it developed the eccentric turn of mind of this lover of the Muses. It was very friendly in the expressions it contained of his acknowledgments of, and willingness to advance, my pretensions. His next note, in which the merits of this my second attempt (Paul before Nero) was discussed, was accompanied with one from a lady of high rank and literary reputation, urging me to carry out the poem to its proper termination, and wishing me every success.

It was upon the heel of this correspondence that I had one day for my box companion a gentleman who had purchased one of these little productions at Cambridge, and, after having perused it, was pleased to speak of it in terms far from disagreeable to my feelings. He dwelt most on what he termed the vigorous and graphic style in which it was written, stating, at the same time, that I ought to write a play, as, if I succeeded, I should find it far more remunerative.

This gentleman's conversation made a considerable impression on me; and on my retiring to rest that night, I called to mind my friend Elliston, and the laughter and ridicule with which I used to meet his repeated importunities.

However, with the recollection of him, and what now flattered me as being his sincere opinion, and at the instigation or recommendation of my box companion, I attempted a play, which I completed in five acts. I had the temerity to submit it to the management of Drury Lane, with the foolish hope that its merit might authorize or justify its introduction on those boards where my departed friend had presided with so much *éclat*.

On my calling at the theatre some little time after, this hallucination was soon dispersed by the reader, who returned it with many fair speeches, first telling me that Mr. Macready's lease had nearly expired, and at the same time stating that they had another play with the same title.

Thinking this a very strange coincidence, I resolved upon publishing mine, which I did by subscription, and it was honoured with the names of the Lord Lieutenant of the County, some of the most distinguished members of the University, as well as nearly all the nobility and gentry of the western division of the county of Norfolk. It was performed at both the Cambridge and Lynn theatres,—the good old Field-Marshal bespeaking at one, and the popular member for West Norfolk at the other.[1] Its reception at both places, by genteel and crowded audiences, particularly at the latter, was highly satisfactory, and far more agreeable then than is the recapitulation of such flattering testimonies now.

It was not long after this that I was requested by the editor of one of the Cambridge papers to write a critique on Mr. C. Kean's performance of *Richard*. This led me into a dissertation upon the garbled and mutilated text of that fine original, which I delivered in the shape of a lecture at Cambridge, Ely, and Lynn, severally, at each of which places I had no reason to complain of the manner of my reception.

[1] W. Bagge, Esq., to whose liberal and constant patronage, with that of his family, the author cannot sufficiently express his gratitude.

Shortly after this I was applied to by a gentleman resident at Hackney, to deliver three lectures on the plays of Shakspere, on three consecutive Monday evenings, at the Mechanics' Institute in that place. The selection of the plays was left to my discretion, and I made choice of "Richard the Third," "Macbeth," and "Julius Cæsar," as bearing on remarkable epochs in history, rife with dramatic incident and powerful elocution—all giving astounding proofs of the skill, capacity, and endowments of their immortal author. I was listened to with profound attention on each occasion, although the audience was not so crowded as my friend either desired or expected. Nevertheless, the composition of these discourses occupied my leisure, and diverted my mind, or prepared it for the great change that was fast approaching. About this period I was honoured with the following note:—

> "Dr. Whewell returns his thanks to Mr. Cross for his poem of 'Paul's Vision,' which he has read with great pleasure and interest.
>
> "If agreeable to Mr. Cross, Dr. Whewell would be glad to have two or three additional copies, which will perhaps come within the accompanying sum.
>
> "Trinity Lodge, Feb. 11, 1850."

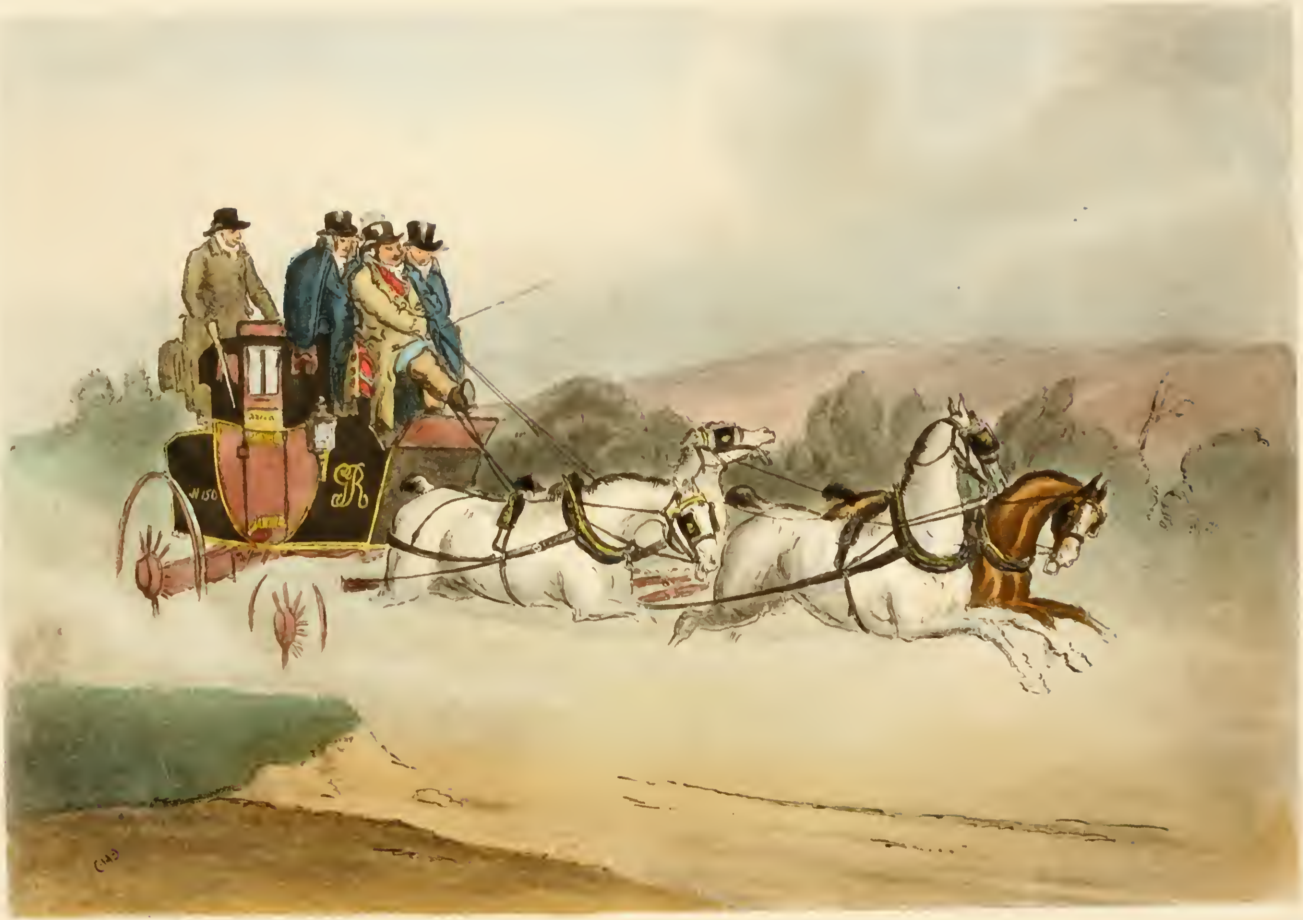
CHAPTER X

THE FINISH

The Craft—One Good Turn—Another—Compensation—Railroads—Eastern Counties—Norfolk Farming—The Eccentrics—Strange Company—A *Tête-à-tête*—Publicola—A Constitutional Lawyer—Stand-up Fight—Two Polished Gentlemen—Dilemma—Celebrated Duellist—Bold Stroke—Lucky Escape—The Fall of the Curtain.

Having arrived at the last stage of this not very eventful, and perhaps not very amusing narrative, it will not be thought irrelevant if I take a slight view of my craft or fraternity before it quite fell into almost utter oblivion. I cannot, if I would, draw a correct portrait of any of my most celebrated compeers any further than I have ever done; for I will at once admit I never felt myself sufficiently competent to converse in a language the acquisition of which was considered a great accomplishment; and altogether it was an association to which I no longer coveted to belong.

Nevertheless, there were some very respectable and very worthy men among them; men that were a credit to their station, and upheld it both before and after the profession had become a refuge for broken-down gentlemen, or the summit of ambition to aspiring cads. For competition had so disarranged or altered the original system of conducting stage-coach business, that the titled



C Cooper Henderson del

A RESOLUTE TEAM

aristocrat, and the lowest applicant, with the means of hanging on or working a stage, were equally admissible to those large establishments in London, where the antecedents either of character or professional skill were of little or no consideration. One family in particular, whose name was familiar to the traveller in the South and South-West of England, still retained their hold on the estimation of the neighbouring gentry; and when the rail put an end to the lingering career of Francis Faulkner and the "Portsmouth Rocket" (the same drag on which the author first exhibited)—to their honour be it recorded—they bought for him a handsome annuity, which descends to the next generation.

This is a solitary instance of voluntary compensation, one worthy of more general adoption; and it is also what justice and equity require from the hands of those who, by sanctioning and encouraging, if not forming the rail, cut the ground from under the feet of a part of the community, to say the least, not altogether unworthy of notice, and precipitated them to destruction; for no employment being offered them by those who had taken away their very means of existence, many were driven to the most abject poverty, and some few, in despair, committed suicide.

For myself every exertion was made by my friends on the line of road to obtain for me employment. Testimonials were got up and signed by almost all the nobility and gentry in the two counties. This the directors could not refuse to notice, and I was called one hundred miles before their board, when a sharp-visaged, evil-eyed worthy, who acted as chairman, told me very coolly—

without the least feeling or remorse at thus plunging a whole family in destitution, for aught he knew—that the directors had decided upon not employing any one who had, or ever had, anything to do with stage-coach business. He then dismissed me, without offering to pay my expenses, or compensating me for the loss of time I had incurred by attending his summons. But he was a professional gentleman, not troubled with a conscience, and possessed a heart as hard as the metal that formed the staple of the company over which he presided.

Another of the legal profession, from whose office emanated the line that gave the death-blow to my avocation, resisted every effort made for me by others, and all my own applications for employment, and consigned me and mine, without mercy and without even a hearing, to poverty and want.

On being asked by a venerable clergyman of the Establishment,[1] whose appearance as well as his preaching always reminded me of one of the Apostles—if any provision had been made for me, I said, "No." This excited his commiseration and surprise, which he expressed in most earnest language; and I, feeling as if in the presence of some superior being, warming with the subject, and stung with the injury that surely awaited me, appealed to him to be my witness on the great day of judgment, when I would arraign that man as being the author of all the evil that would befall my family.

I might have expressed myself a little too warmly, perhaps indiscreetly, nay, unjustly, on this occasion; but

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[1] The Rev. —— Edwards.

I could not restrain the poignancy of my feelings at thus being deliberately handed over to destitution, without pity and without a thought, by a gentleman with a family of his own, that, when young, I frequently had charge of (one of them has, deservedly, risen to almost the highest dignity in the Church). He evidently had it in his power, by holding out his hand, to save me from going down with the wreck he had been the principal means of creating.

Let not the reader suppose that from the amount of injury I received—it being nothing short of absolutely depriving me of the means of subsistence—I was inimical, or even indifferent, to the magnitude and importance of the great work going on throughout the country; or that I considered that the interests of the few should stand in the way of the many.

I only wish to record the injustice done to a set of men who, most certainly, had vested rights to the old method of travelling—if the means of subsistence are considered so—and in most, if not in all, other organic changes, those vested rights have been acknowledged by the Legislature. In the instance of the Municipal Reform Bill, compensation was granted to those legal officials who had held appointments in some close corporation, or under some distinguished nobleman or gentleman—patrons of the borough—and who were relieved from their arduous duties by the will of the new constituencies.

That the case of the one should not meet with the same attention and the same result as the other, must be attributed to the constitution of the Lower House. Those whose duty it is to frame the law on such occasions, depute it to craftsmen who, like the artificers at Ephesus, when persuaded that their craft was in danger, cried, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

It has been said that, in the early part of this great social revolution, money was given to two or three of the great men in London, to share and distribute among others who were equally entitled to it. If this were so, these gentlemen knew pretty well how to appropriate it.

If a stranger or foreigner were to land in this country, like Goldsmith's "Citizen of the World," the first thing that would be most likely to attract his notice is the ease, safety, and expedition of our mode of travelling; and he could not be too lavish in his praise of the skill, industry, enterprise, and wealth of the nation that had constructed the vast number of miles and the various ramifications of our railroads.

He would not perhaps, like the French philosopher, set them down as the cause, but as the effects of our civilization. Neither would he discover, in his admiration of their adaptation to the wants of a great trading community, that, for the most part—they were conceived in error—born in misrepresentation and falsehood—reared in malversation and fraud—and attained their present growth by monopoly and injustice.

But the injury done to those who have suffered by the change is as nothing compared to those deluded victims who first became the dupes of designing men, in being induced to risk their little, or their all, in extravagant speculations that were at once to insure fortune to the lucky adventurer, but resulted only in their total and irremediable ruin.[1] The present absolute insolvency of nearly all the lines, and the state of the dividends, give ample testimony to the truth of this observation. Nevertheless, if ever that common but cruel maxim, "The end justifies the means," is to be admitted, this instance may very properly be set down as one.

The same stranger, with his eyes darkened as to the origin of this vast monument to our riches and glory as a nation, would also fail to perceive the great benefit that would accrue to the revenue, or that could be made available by a skilful and experienced financier, were he to cast his eye on the constant circulation the tide of locomotion creates.

In my despair of getting either compensation or employment from those who were about to supersede me and my calling, I drew up a petition to the House of Commons, and had it engrossed. It was presented by my kind friend, the late Lord Joscelyn, than whom a more amiable nobleman did not exist; but, like many other petitions of greater or less importance, it was ordered to lie on the table. To the petition, which is annexed to this volume, I must refer my readers as to the propriety, as well as the safety and justice, of considering travelling by rail a fair and legitimate object of taxation.

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[1] The great distress and ruin that followed the immense issue of scrip for new undertakings, was not inaptly compared, at the time, to the bursting of the South Sea Bubble about a century before; but in its extent and magnitude it bore the same relative proportion as that

"To which Diana's marvel was a cell."

Or, to make use of a more homely simile—

"And Milo's ox a pigmy to the friar!"

Mr. Pitt raised the stage-coach duty (if he did not originate it) from 1*d.* to 6*d.* per mile, and it then furnished a considerable item of the revenue; and now, when travelling has multiplied more than a hundredfold, it contributes a mere trifle to the exigencies of the State. As it partakes of the nature both of a poll and a property tax, it comes recommended by all writers on political economy, who have declared that to be the legitimate basis on which all national revenues should be founded. As the subject may be ventilated in higher quarters, I will not pursue it further, but return to my own immediate concerns.

The first attempt at forming a line of rail from Cambridge to London was, by the folly of some and the knavery of others, a failure; and what was intended for and called the North-Eastern, which, if properly carried out, would have precluded the necessity of the Great Northern from Huntingdon to the metropolis, was committed to and amalgamated with the Eastern Counties. After a considerable time had been lost in preliminaries, and enormous expenses incurred in Parliament, the company succeeded in getting the line down to Broxbourne, about fifteen miles by the turnpike from Shoreditch Church. For that short distance it was not thought desirable to be at the trouble of putting on the coach with which I was concerned, though the Wisbech and one of the early Cambridge coaches took advantage of it. After far more than necessary time had been spent, in which the incapacity of the directors and the want of funds were both conspicuous, the line reached Bishop's Stortford, when, at the instigation of the London proprietors, who had become deeply interested in railroads, the old Lynn coach company was dissolved, and a new proprietor was admitted at Cambridge. In the fresh arrangement that was made I had to turn my back upon London, and drive from Cambridge to Lynn, or do nothing—a sad alternative, but there was no help for it.

This was the first blow given to my domestic establishment; and the comfort I derived from having my Sundays at home. It did not seem to decrease the dislike I had long taken to the profession, to which perhaps the undeserved praises bestowed on my other avocation had first given rise. There was no novelty to charm me, everything seemed as dull and dreary as the road I travelled on through the Fens, and the prospect—so evident to my visual organ—painfully and constantly presented to my mental vision a similar and as gloomy a picture.

Nevertheless, I was now and then cheered with the company of my excellent friend from Marham, and was sometimes amused by the various and *naïve* observations of some of my fellow-travellers, not excluding the female part, as to my future, in which many of them, I believe, felt a sincere interest; although one from the neighbourhood of Downham, a Baronet, I remember, whose intellect was as lofty as his heart was noble, and who was altogether, and always had been, an exception to his neighbours in his urbanity, told me one day on the box, by way of consolation, "that I *could* ring the bell for the starting of the train." A visit, too, now to Stradsett then to Narford,[2] but more frequently to Marham—and a hearty welcome among some few of the yeomanry—among whom must be reckoned Mr. John Gamble of Shouldham Thorpe, well known for his splendid breed of Shorthorns, selected with good judgment, and maintained at considerable expense—and that excellent agriculturist, Mr. John Negus, of Crimplesham, with whom and whose amiable family I and mine were on a footing of intimacy—helped to relieve the monotony of my daily existence.

On my first visit to this fine specimen of an English farmer, he proposed, after breakfast, a ride round the farm. I readily acquiesced, and, mounting me on a favourite cob, we almost made the circuit of every field. It really was a sight pleasing to behold—if only to contrast the present perfect system of agriculture with the slow progress our fathers had made in this most useful art. The large square enclosures were surrounded by a fence that while it prevented the trespass of sheep or swine, admitted the plough to the very edge; and was, from being kept constantly in order, of no obstacle to either sun or wind—thus rendering every foot of land available. The pastures were rich and teemed with thriving Devon oxen and Southdown sheep of the purest breed. The corn was in the ear, for it was summer time, and the tall standing stalks, free from either the red or white weed, thickly wafted to and fro by the wind, gave promise of a most prolific yield.

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[1] The seat of W. Bagge, Esq., for many years M.P. for the western division of the county.

[2] The seat of Andrew Fountaine, Esq.

The Mangel and Swedes had been cut out, and, growing on ridges, more than common care had been bestowed, one would suppose, to give the plant a healthy and vigorous appearance—while the fallows were as clean as plough and harrow—men, women, boys—could make them. At the finish I remember, when we had made the tour of the farm—over five hundred acres—as we sat on our horses in the paddock facing the house, the farmer said to me, with an air of triumph which he might most justly adopt,—

"Now you have seen all—what do you think of this for farming?"

During our ride I had made no remark except as to the appearance of the crops or the fineness of the weather. Therefore, looking at him very seriously, I replied,—

"Why, Mr. Negus, I don't call it farming at all."

A gloom came over his fine old rubicund countenance, which as quickly vanished as I added, "I call it—gardening."

The same observation will apply to many of his neighbours—more particularly to a farm I daily passed in my avocation, and which, under the judicious and most attentive management of the late Mr. William Cambridge, many years the tenant of Caius College, Cambridge, at South Runcton, was considered the model farm of the county, and never failed to attract the attention of the traveller. The nation certainly owes an immense debt of gratitude to the late noble owner of Halcomb for originating, encouraging, and progressively improving a system of agriculture that, having been taken up and followed by an intelligent tenantry, has now, by the force of example, raised the county to unrivalled excellence, and made the name of a Norfolk farmer to be held in the highest estimation throughout the kingdom. The periodical agricultural meetings, both central and provincial, have also taken their rise from the same enlightened and practical mind, and will continue ever to be a deserving tribute to his memory. They have conferred the greatest benefit on the community, and so long as the country lasts, the name of Thomas William Coke will be as deservedly immortal as that of a Stephenson or a Brunel.

> "Praised for their virtues, which *improve* mankind."

With all this, I could but regret the loss of the society I met with in London.

In vain did I look for that intellectual enjoyment an evening at the Eccentrics would afford. To this club, which has since, I believe, become extinct, and in whose lists the names of celebrated men of old were enrolled, I was frequently admitted. At one time it was the resort of some of the greatest wits and most eminent statesmen of the day, and at the time I speak of it had not lost all its charms. Though I did not then meet a Pitt or a Fox, a Burke or a Sheridan, yet these great men, with Lord Liverpool and Mr. Canning, had all been members of the Eccentrics; and I have met and conversed with there, many members of the senate—on one occasion I remember noticing one who has since held almost the highest office in the state, and now leads the opposition in the House of Commons. I sat *tête-à-tête* here with him, conversing on various topics, political and literary, when, from his highly polished manner, and what I thought to be a cultivated taste, unmarked, as his conversation was, by any assumed condescension, he seemed to me to develop gifts and attainments of the highest order; and we parted, as I flattered myself, at a late or rather at an early hour, well pleased with each other's company.

But he was not the only great public man I met there. Another, who gloried in the name of "Publicola," I frequently encountered. His manners and his conversation were as unrefined and as *brutally*[1] pointed as were his celebrated articles in the *Weekly Dispatch*, and his habits appeared to be as loose in their nature as his political creed was false and malignant. His portrait has been well depicted by the author of "Ten Thousand a Year;" but he must have been a man of considerably more calibre than ever I took him to be, to have attracted the notice of so *unbiassed* and so discriminating a satirist. His frequent contests with a little chancery barrister—the Constitutional lawyer, as he was there termed—were highly amusing. They were well matched for size as well as volubility; and one night when he had roused, by his coarse aspersions, the political irascibility of his opponent—not a little sharpened by the potations he had taken—the barrister said,—

"Stand upon your pins, sir, and defend yourself, or I'll knock you down!"

But before my friend Publicola could put himself in attitude, the Constitutional lawyer, not able to keep his equilibrium—fell flat on his face, to the great laughter of the whole room.

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[1] A word of frequent recurrence in his would-be inflammatory letters.

There were members of either University, editors and reporters, authors and artists, wits and men about town, who contributed on most evenings when I was admitted to the social and intellectual enjoyment.

On one occasion a scion of the nobility, of whose acquaintance I was somewhat proud—and, while really deserving the name of an eccentric, was a kind friend and more worthy gentleman[1]—introduced two New Zealand chiefs, dressed as Englishmen. Their real character did not first strike me; but on my endeavouring to address them, their reply was so incomprehensible, and their looks and gesticulations so ferocious, that my friend thought it necessary to put his head over the box, and whisper in my ear to warn me not to aggravate them by any further remarks, or they would kill and eat me. Not wishing to be food for cannibals, I desisted trying to elicit anything more from them; but they seemed on good terms with themselves and the captain who had brought them over; for he soon after joined them, and with him, after certain libations, they walked quietly away.

But a man may run more risks in a civilized society even—as it is called—than when in the company of savages, as the following anecdote will show. One evening in the same room, I had been giving my opinion freely upon a certain subject, without observing the disapprobation of a gentleman to whom my back was turned, and the signs and winks of the gentlemen in the same box to whom I was addressing myself failed to make me understand my danger. Warming with the subject, I animadverted strongly, and no doubt indiscreetly, on the conduct of certain inhabitants of a certain portion of the empire. This called forth his intense indignation. Rising from his seat, he came towards the table at which I was sitting, and, putting both his hands upon it, said, in a most solemn tone, that he would sit no longer and hear his country and his friends traduced. He insisted on my retracting all I had said, for he considered himself grossly insulted by the remarks I had chosen to make, and stated that he should therefore hold me accountable for them.

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[1] The late W. Barham, Esq.

I must confess to have been a little surprised and perhaps unnerved by the very determined manner in which he delivered himself, and some of my companions stared at him with astonishment. However, soon recovering myself, and not at all misconstruing his meaning, I deliberately said, "I am sorry, sir, my conversation has discomposed you, or that any observation I should have made has in the smallest degree outraged your feelings; but as to retracting what I have said, knowing it to be true, I must decline, as it would be giving myself the lie, and that I will not do for any one."

"Then, sir, you know the alternative," he observed, and resumed his seat.

That alternative I knew very well; consequently, I found myself in an awful scrape; but thinking there was nothing like being open and honest, I at once told him it would not be in my power to comply with his wishes.

"Why not, sir?"

I told him there were many obstacles.

"In the first place, I acknowledge to you I do not move in that circle where the practices you seem so well acquainted with are known."

"Do you mean to say you are not a gentleman?"

"Not in the sense you understand that term."

"Then you have no business here."

"But I am admitted here, and no objection has ever been made to me on account of my profession."

"And what may that profession be, sir?" he demanded.

"Why, sir," I replied, "I drive a stage-coach, and shall be wanted to fulfil my duties at half-past seven to-morrow morning, which is about the time, I imagine, you would require my company at Chalk Farm, or some neighbouring spot."

"Most certainly."

"Well, sir," I continued, "I have a wife and eight children—you surely would not have me put their welfare upon the stake for the very small offence I have unwittingly given you."

"You should have thought of that before you committed the offence."

Finding that nothing could appease him, I held my tongue, and sat musing on the dilemma I was in, and wondering how Ishould extricate myself. I could not leave the room like a cur—if I did, I felt assured some personal indignity would be offered me—I could not deride him, nor would I apologize any further.

As I sat twirling the spoon in my empty glass, a thought suddenly struck me, or rather came back on me, as thoughts sometimes will do unaccountably—as the poet so beautifully likens them to the distant thunder in the dying wind—and I as instantly resolved to act upon it. It was this : In my early manhood I had attended a ball at the Benevolent Society's rooms at Portsea, where I had met many of the dockyard officials and their families, also some of the most respectable tradesmen in the town. There were generally a few naval officers present, and they were mostly, with one or two exceptions, of the civil department—that is, doctors and pursers. The admission was by tickets. On one occasion the room was crowded with beauty, if not fashion ; the music was delightful ; the votaries of terpsichore were giving full play to their ecstatic enjoyment—the evening was advancing, when, hearing some rather loud talking, I turned my head towards the folding doors that formed the entrance, and saw there a post-captain in full uniform, whom I immediately knew to be the celebrated duellist Captain Macnamara. He had hold of the arm of a tall gentleman, whom I also knew as Mr. Butt, one of the highest officials in the Navy Pay Office.[1] The music ceased as well as the dancing ; and two of the stewards walked up to know what was the cause of this interruption, when the doorkeeper informed them that Captain Macnamara had insisted on being admitted without a ticket. This caused no little altercation, during which one of the stewards denounced such conduct as unbecoming a gentleman. The captain, asserting that this was language he was not accustomed to, said that he should expect satisfaction for it, adding, he was ready for anything.

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[1] This is the same gentleman who shared the fortunes of Lord Cochrane in the famous Stock Exchange trial.

"As many as you please, gentlemen," said he—with a most inviting smile. A friend of mine, one of the stewards, always what is now termed a plucky fellow, now stepped up to him,—

"I understand you, Captain Macnamara, I accept the challenge," he whispered, putting his mouth to his ear, and added, "Over a pocket handkerchief, and within an hour."

Though I thought at the time that there was more courage than discretion in this, it had the desired effect, and Captain Macnamara and his friend retired—not quite so elated as when they entered.

In the present instance the company had dropped off one by one, some of them wishing me good-bye as they made their exit, with most significant looks. In the meantime, the gentleman sat with his feet upon the fender, evidently waiting to push the matter to extremity. When all were gone but one I said to him,—

"I think you expressed yourself as not satisfied with the explanation I attempted just now?"

"By no means," he replied.

"Then," I replied, "you shall have the satisfaction you require; but it must be now, and in this room."

Silencing the remonstrance of my only remaining companion by a slight pressure of his toe, and an expression of countenance very different from his, I got up and paced the floor of the room.

"This is about the distance these things are generally done at," said I; "and, waiter," I cried, addressing the man with my finger on my lips, and slipping something into his hand the better to impress the necessity of silence—"Take this card round to Mr. —— in St. Martin's Lane, and he will give you a case of pistols—bring them here."

"But, sir," said he, "the people of the house."

"We can wait till they are gone to rest. Hark, they are about going now."

"But we shall disturb them."

"That will be of little consequence to one or both of us," I replied.

"Really, it is a very unusual way of settling matters."

"I am aware of it, sir, but I have no choice. This gentleman will act as my friend, and the waiter, when he returns, must do the same for you, as the shortness of the time will admit of no other arrangement."

At this he began to demur, when I said I could allow of no hesitation.

On the waiter's return he rose from his seat, and on my requesting him to stop and examine the pistols, observed that he would have no more to do with me, and made his exit into the court. I at the same time made him a polite but significant bow, and then followed, congratulating myself and my friend on the easy manner I had extricated myself from so disagreeable a position.

On the following morning the good old squire was my box companion, and the account of my preceding evening's amusement on the journey down called forth some of his hearty laughs.

But to leave these vanities, and come at once, however abruptly, to a conclusion, the close of my career was fast approaching. The sun of my employment, or, more properly speaking, of my enjoyment, had set when I left the London end, and I was existing as it were in the twilight. Everybody, great and small, rich and poor, was lauding the train, and seemed to be proudly anticipating the change from the slow old coach, as by comparison it was, to the splendid rail. The shades of night gathered fast around me, and presently the curtain dropped, and extinguished my calling for ever.

POSTSCRIPT

An oral or traditional account of any circumstance more properly belonging to history is always subject to error in an autobiography written after the lapse of half a century. And it is more than probable that an impression, however erroneously received at the time, would be grafted on others of a similar nature with which it was directly connected.

In the first volume of this work it is stated[1] that *three* courts-martial were to have been held on three of the principal officers of the Fleet, on its return to Spithead from its gallant and successful achievement in Basque Roads.

Now, it does not appear, either from the "Autobiography of a Seaman," or from the "Memoirs Historical and Personal of Lord Gambier," two recent publications, that any trial took place arising out of that affair subsequent to those of Sir Eliab Harvey and Lord Gambier.

Therefore must the author have confounded the third, which he has stated was held on Lord Cochrane, with that on Lord Gambier, in which the former appeared ostensibly as prosecutor.

The author has also stated that in his conversation with Sir Eliab Harvey on the coach-box, in answer to his question he told him (Sir E.) the last time he saw him was on board the *Gladiator*, the reader is not to infer from this that the author witnessed his court-martial. He did not; for though on board at the time, the court was far too crowded to gain admittance; but on the trial of Lord Gambier, through the instrumentality of the Judge-Advocate, or some one in his office, he obtained a standing place in the cabin of the *Gladiator*, as close to the president as the court allowed to spectators, and which, from the confined accommodation, might almost be said to be beside him.

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[1] Chapter v., page 95.

In my early tuition in the Royal Navy, and from my experience, short as it was, I had been always led to believe that a proper submission and a respectful demeanour to our superiors was not only looked for from all grades, but established by the articles of war, as the very groundwork of discipline, and as such had become the rule of the service. I had also been taught to look upon a naval court-martial as a most august, if not an awful, tribunal; and when I saw in that assemblage so many distinguished veterans, I could but feel surprised at the very off-hand manner, and what appeared to me, to say the least, the disrespectful conduct, of Lord Cochrane to the whole court, which was more than once animadverted on by the president and others. Hence the expectations and the rumours of a third court-martial, and hence the author's mistake—to understand which properly he begs to refer the reader to the trial of Lord Gambier, taken in shorthand by Gurney at the time, and published at Portsmouth.

The discrepancies between Lord Dundonald's and

Lady Chatterton's account of this memorable event must be reconciled by abler pens than mine, and if possible a correct elucidation of the facts elicited by more acute reasoners.

The gratitude, if not the generosity, of the British nation has been manifested on a recent occasion in the funeral of one of its most brave and scientific naval heroes, whose daring acts blaze like a meteor in our Naval annals; but the historian will pause before he ventures to record the capacity or the skill of an Admiral who never manœuvred a fleet in line of battle, and whose exploits, brilliant though they were, will not compete in magnitude or importance with those of the immortal Nelson.

APPENDIX

In taking a pleasing though melancholy retrospective view of the departed—that is, of stage-coach travelling, and the excellence to which it had arrived immediately prior to the introduction of railroads—we are apt to overlook some of the means by which it attained perfection, as well as the arrangements that helped to produce it.

Among the latter I must name the great improvement that appeared in the men who gave a character to, and raised the profession of the stage coachman in the estimation of the community generally.

The great change from the old to the new school I have had occasion slightly to touch upon in the body of this book; but as not the least important cause of this change may be attributed to the establishment of the B.D.C., I hope that it will not be thought out of the way if I give some account of this, alas! defunct body.

Its records are but few, and its institution and the names of the original members live only in their descendants, or in the memory of those who have survived its dissolution.

The gentleman under whose flattering auspices this present work will see the light has in his possession a gold cup, on which is engraved the names of the original founders of this once celebrated club. The inscription runs thus:—

"Presented by the *original* and *underwritten* members of the B.D.C., as a testimony of their regard and a token of their good wishes for the happiness and prosperity of the club.

"A. Anesley
Sir Henry Peyton
T. Harrison
H. Villebois
T. Whitmore
Capt. Hamilton
H. F. Okeover."

The first on the list is Arthur Anesley, Esq., a gentleman of Oxfordshire, whose portly figure I remember well, sitting behind his four red roans, and exhibiting all the skill and accomplishments of a first-rate artist.

Sir Henry Peyton, Bart., was long a most active member of the club, and took considerable interest in the well-doing of several professionals, whom he liberally patronized, and when in town would frequently and separately visit them at the office from which their drags set out, mounted on his handsome grey cob, criticizing and passing encomiums on all that he admired. He always drove four greys, a good-looking team, though slow, which he handled well, and was looked up to by his fellows as a Nestor, experienced in the art, both willing and capable of giving instructions to the younger practitioner.

With him was associated a gentleman I have had occasion to name before—the late Henry Villebois, Esq., of Marham, in the county of Norfolk, brother of Mr. Truman Villebois, who for so many years was Master of the Hampshire Hounds; also of Mr. Frederick Villebois, who had the Craven Hounds some few years, and father of the present owner of Marham, H. Villebois, Esq., Master of the Norfolk Hounds, who, as one of the survivors of the club, has permitted me to dedicate this work to him. No one who knew the father will ever cease to remember his kind and generous nature. His portrait, that now hangs over my mantel-piece, the last gift of this worthy member of the B.D.C., causes me frequently to recall his many excellent qualities as a man and as a workman. These, with the names of T. Harrison, Esq., of Shelswell, T. Whitmore, Esq., of Apley Castle, Shropshire, Captain Hamilton, of the Guards, and H. F. Okeover, Esq., a name well known in the sporting circles of those days, form the original members of the club that was instituted on February 8th, 1807.

Among the first whose names were added to the original list, and may be almost identified with them, was old John Warde, as he was called in my younger days, when, in company with the late Mr. William Rogers, of Southampton,[1] at a meet with the new Forest Hounds, I have sat on my horse and smiled at his dry jokes and quaint sayings, for which he was as well known as he was for his fox-hunting or his driving qualifications. Upon the box behind his four old hunters, both from his figure and manner, he looked a true specimen of the old school; indeed, it was upon the old heavy night coaches—the "Gloucester," the "Worcester," and the "Shrewsbury Prince"—that he became initiated in the art of driving long before those improvements had taken place which seemed to go hand-in-hand with the progress that better roads and more sightly conveyances were making.

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[1] A Coach Proprietor, well known for the superior manner in which all his appointments were made, and also for his boldness and judgment in the field.

Many names were afterwards added; among others, Major Spirer, of Esher Place, Surrey, who still carries out the original intentions of the club—that is, to delight in the practice of the art of driving four horses, and to encourage and reward the more humble practitioner.

And after him the late Duke of Beaufort—then Marquis of Worcester—to whom I had the honour of imparting a few lessons on his first attempt at being made acquainted with an art of which he afterwards became so conspicuous and so admired an amateur.

This was called the Benson Driving Club, as originating at Oxford, and the members performing their first exercises on their own drags on that twelve miles of road; but leaving the University, and increasing in numbers, the name was altered to the Bedfont Driving Club, Bedfont being the place to which they uniformly, twice a year, proceeded with their teams, in the best style, to partake of some of the most excellent viands and wines—to ballot for new members, and award some mark of distinction, or reward with pecuniary assistance, to a deserving professor in the class below them.

Their frequent appearance in the Park, and on the road leading from the West end of the metropolis, gained the admiration of the populace, and in a few short years gave rise to another driving club, called the Four-in-

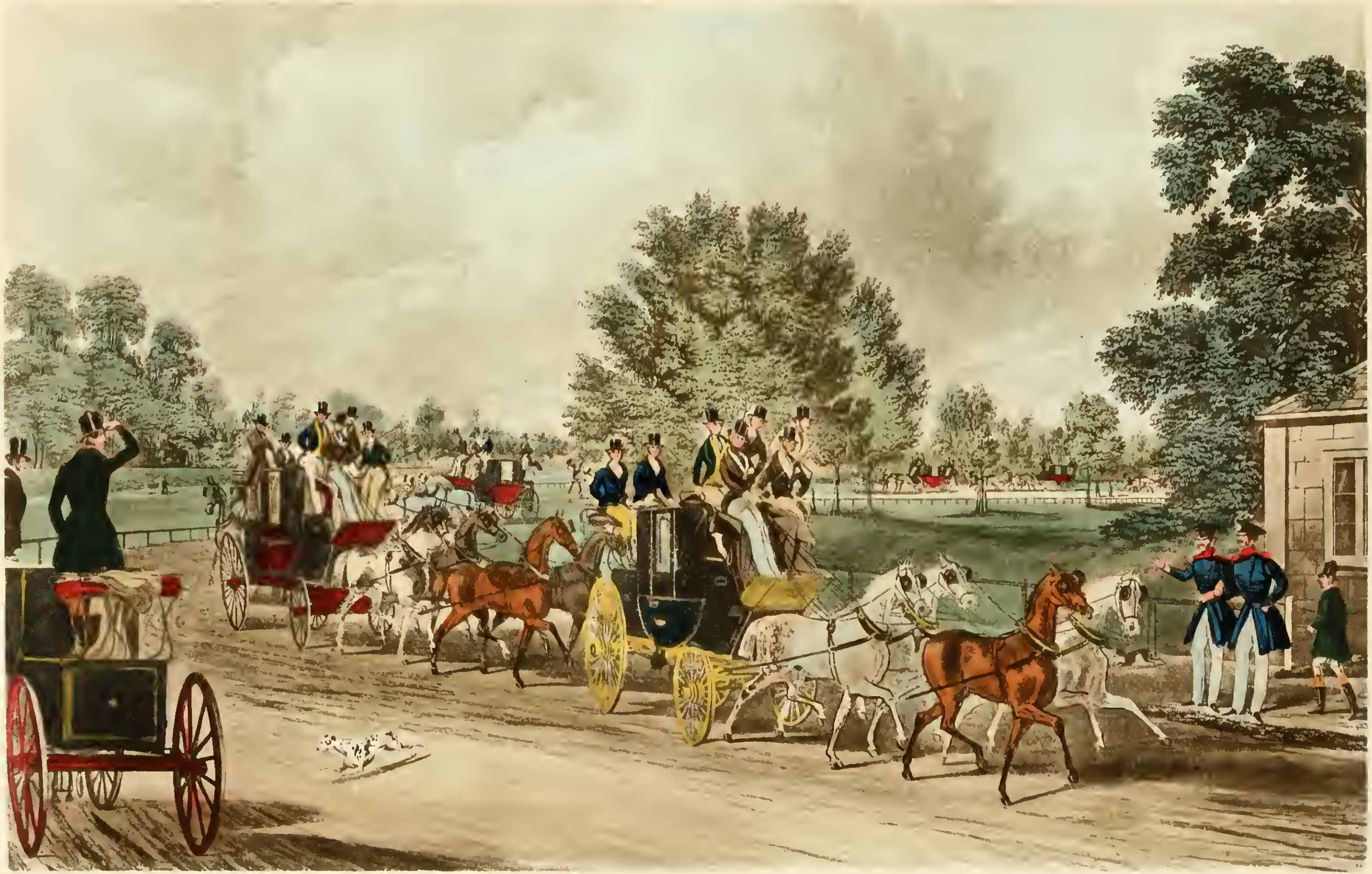
Hand—by the vulgar, the Bang-up—and this also included many noblemen and gentlemen of rank and importance; Lord Hawke, Sir Bellingham Graham, Colonel Berkeley, Mr. Maxe, Mr. Osbaldeston, Sir Felix Agar, Mr. Charles Buxton, and many others. The latter gentleman did no little service to the art by the introduction of the bit that bears his name, which has become of general use.

It has been my fate and was my delight to feast my eyes on some splendid turns-out. At that time the Park would be crowded, as it seldom was on other occasions, to witness the performances of these several lovers of the art, and to admire their equipages.

Lord Hawke's four chestnuts would be much spoken of, although his lordship's judgment, either in selecting or in driving them, did not quite correspond with the skill and knowledge of his profession displayed by his gallant ancestor.

Sir B. Graham's four matched only for pace, and his perfectly easy manner in handling them—gave sufficient evidence of his knowing his business. Mr. Osbaldeston followed much in the same style; and it was not difficult for the observer to recognize in these gentlemen two dashing and spirited masters of another sport that was frequently associated with this—Foxhunting—and that found amusement and employment for both them and their teams in the winter months.

To these the nice measured pace of Mr. Buxton's four bays, the particular attention that had been paid to every part of the harness, his gentlemanly appearance on the box, his light hand and careful hold of the reins, his



Painted by James Pollard

Engraved by J. Harris

MEET OF THE FOUR-IN-HAND CLUB. HYDE PARK

watchful eye on their every step, formed a striking contrast.

But when Sir Felix Agar turned in at the Park gates in magnificent style, with his four iron greys—the cost of each, I should guess, was little under 250 or 300 guineas —every horse carrying his head in the right place, the appointments all scrupulously correct, the driver sitting erect on the box, in perfect command of the team, it was a sight for the gods to dwell upon, and would at once attract the notice of every beholder.

Doubtless there were others equally worthy of recording, but my memory does not serve me—nor is it necessary—to particularize each individual member or his team.

During several seasons driving four-in-hand was a fashionable pastime, and its practice had a considerable effect in improving the conduct and manners of the men whose business and livelihood it was. A perfect knowledge of the art involved the necessity of an association with some of its professors—not only for practice sake, but that the amateur might acquire the rudiments, without which he found it impossible to become a proficient. Therefore was the benefit reciprocal; for while the tyro was gaining information from the precepts as well as the example of the experienced practitioner, the latter was also acquiring a little polish in manners, style, and address, that better fitted him for a position to which he had been advanced by the notice and patronage of the rich.

But now the objects of both have vanished, and the art is likely to die with the purpose that gave it birth.

Steam having surpassed horse-power, driving has ceased to be a profession; and with nothing to engage the attention of the amateur, or to invite his imitation, both tutor and pupil, original and copy, have, as our senators would say, *pari passu*, disappeared.

Some weak attempt may be, indeed has been made to prolong or revive the love for this national pastime and display; but even should the present amateurs succeed in forming a new society or club, we may look in vain for such glorious specimens of the four-in-hand as we have seen, or for that skill in driving four horses that a perfect knowledge of the rudiments alone can give; and where are those rudiments to be taught or learnt but in a school that is now no more? As well may we attempt to revive the study of grammar or rhetoric in Athens or Rhodes without an Apollodorus, as endeavour to resuscitate the art of driving in this Island without a Jack Moody.[1] Consequently, all knowledge of it will pass away, or it will be recognized only in the records of poets or historians, like the chariot of Achilles or the dress of Nero.

It would be almost a folly here to enter into a dissertation upon an art that is nearly obsolete, and bids fair to become as much lost to future generations as is that of training lions to cars, or any other such practices of the ancients. But if it should be asked what is meant by rudiments, the reply is—a proper understanding of the nature of the mouth and temper of the animal, as well as a correct knowledge of the means by which he can be best controlled, to become a principal feature in the enjoyment and display of a driver who is supposed to have a perfect management of the four-in-hand, either singly or collectively. This would apply equally to those who were entrusted with the animal for a more useful, though less brilliant purpose.

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[1] The name of two celebrated practitioners on the Windsor road, father and son.

It is an old saying, and a very true one, as I have myself experienced, that four horses well put together are half driven; therefore, no man can be a proficient in the art without paying the nicest attention to the bitting, bridling, harnessing, putting to and coupling his team; and without such attention, as well as to the proper length of each trace, the pole-chains, and a proper adjustment of the curb, and seeing that the collar, pads, and harness fit in every part—that every buckle and strap is in its right place—no man can drive in crowded streets with precision or safety. By this attention too, the horse goes with more ease to himself, and is less likely to gall and chafe, which will frequently make the best-tempered animal fretful and fractious in harness.

I do not pretend ever to have been a perfect master of this useful as well as fashionable and exhilarating art. I knew my own inferiority, at the same time I could pronounce upon the merits of others; and though I might not, like that celebrated writer on the road, "Nimrod," tell a coachman by the manner he drew his right-hand glove on—the way in which he took hold of the reins and mounted his box would give me some little idea whether he was an adept in the art or not. The consequence and the necessity of paying a strict attention to and acquiring a perfect knowledge of these early rudiments of an art then so much in vogue, I once experienced in a remarkable manner.

Beginning at the Golden Cross, passing through the city, and making my exit by Shoreditch Church from this great metropolis—(which sacred edifice I never passed without casting my eyes up at its steeple in admiration, for it is one of Sir Christopher Wren's most beautiful specimens)—I had plenty of what was called stone work. One morning a fresh horse was put to my coach—one that had only been purchased the day before—and, what was contrary to all adopted custom, harnessed as near leader. It was of no use to expostulate, so, after looking round, I got up. Starting and proceeding along the Strand and Fleet Street, he went pretty straight, except that he carried his body away rather from his partner, as young horses in a strange or new position are apt to do—but a slight communication under his bar soon put that to rights. After stopping at the corner of Wood Street, we proceeded along Cheapside by the Bank to the commencement of Threadneedle Street, when he made a bolt to go down Broad Street. I had my hand upon his rein instantly, and prevented him taking the wrong road. But there being a post, in the shape of a gun with the muzzle downwards, as there is now at the corner, I could not catch him up in time to prevent his going on the pavement inside of it. In the same instant, seeing that the leaders' bars would be caught by the post, having my wheel-horses tight in hand, I drew their reins back; this caused them to throw their heads up, and that acting upon the pole-chains, jerked the bars over the top of the post: at the same moment, as it were, hitting the near wheel-horse, he brought the splinter-bar clear, and neither horse, harness, nor any part of the coach or carriage touched that post. This occupied only a few seconds, for the wheels never ceased turning, and the escape from any accident must be attributed to the care and nicety with which the horses were harnessed and put to, and proves the necessity of a coachman having a perfect knowledge of the bearings of every part of the harness, so as to have a full command of his wheel-horses ; for here there were three chances—that is, of the bars coming in contact with the post, the pole breaking in the futchells, or the splinter-bar, or the near fore-wheel striking the post ; either of which might have been attended with bad consequences, and was avoided by the pole-chains being of a proper length, and the wheel-horses being properly curbed up.

Many accidents, some of them of a most serious nature, have occurred from a neglect or want of knowledge of these indispensable rules ; and no man, either gentle or simple, can be called a perfect master of the art without possessing a matured judgment and experience on these points—he may have admirable skill in using the whip—and in this many young amateurs are too vain of their ability, frequently punishing a horse unmercifully, with no other object than that of showing their dexterity and skill—but the lack of the former qualification will account for the very small number of gentlemen who have ever attained anything like perfection. In this I do not include those who became daily practitioners on the Brighton road, a road that latterly seemed purposely reserved, or particularly adapted, for the exhibition of their skill—such as Mr. Stevenson, Mr. C. Jones, Sir St. Vincent Cotton, John Willan, Esq., and others.

Indeed, the only amateur I ever knew who combined theory with practice—and I say it without fear of being accused of adulation—a correct judgment, with an easy, at the same time skilful execution in this enviable accomplishment, and who can really be called a perfect master of the art, is the gentleman to whom I have dedicated these volumes.

The following petition was written when the railroad mania was at its zenith, and the country in a fevered and discontented state. It was presented by the late lamented Lord Joscelyn, in the Session of 1846, when member for King's Lynn, and, like many others of greater or less importance, was ordered to lie on the table :—

"To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled,—

"The humble Petition of Thomas Cross, of King's Lynn, in the County of Norfolk, late stage-coach proprietor, showeth,—

"That your petitioner was originally brought up in a noble profession, but from a visitation of Providence, and other circumstances over which he had no control, was compelled to seek subsistence as a stage-coachman.

"That your petitioner has now followed that employment for eight-and-twenty years, and during this time has been enabled to provide for a wife and large family in a respectable manner.

"That your petitioner has seen, with considerable dismay, the invention and rapid increase of railroads during the last few years, accomplishing the ruin of hundreds in the same employment as your petitioner; and now, by the numerous Bills before your Honourable House, threatening the very livelihood of your petitioner and his numerous family.

"That your petitioner, not actuated by selfish motives alone, but viewing with deep sympathy the distress, the discontent, the poverty, and the ruin, that has lately, and does now partially, pervade the land, would humbly point out to your Honourable House how much the invention and use of railroads has had to do with their increase.

"That your petitioner, passing over the large amount invested in turnpike trusts, now become bankrupt in consequence of substituting railroad for stage-coach travelling, which has been more than once mooted in your Honourable House, would proceed at once to show the direct injury, the devastating ruin, that has fallen, not only on those immediately connected with stage-coach business (with the exception of a few, and those of an extraordinary character), but through them with every class of tradesmen inhabiting towns situate in any of our great thoroughfares, whether they be North, South, East, or West.

"And your petitioner would further proceed to show that this injury has its ramifications from one end of the Island to the other, threatening the depreciation of property to a ruinous extent; as a proof of which, your petitioner need only point to every town in the kingdom which a railroad has approached, except two or three of our largest cities and towns; and even to them the benefit would become questionable, should the state of every class of their overcrowded populations be strictly looked into.

"That your petitioner is not unwilling to admit the convenience, the luxury—nay, even the safety and importance, as regards the speed of the new mode of travelling—as also to acknowledge the truth of the French philosopher's axiom, that the quick communication of persons and thoughts is the very perfection of civilization; but your petitioner would humbly submit that luxury is not happiness, any more than civilization is prosperity in a nation or in a family.

"That your petitioner views with considerable alarm for the welfare and happiness of his country the immense amount of capital already invested in railroads—amounting, with the costs of those now introduced, or intended to be introduced, to your Honourable House, to more than three hundred millions sterling; and that your petitioner's alarm arises from this vast accumulation of capital, its tendency having been at all times and in all nations to make the rich man richer and the poor man poorer—thereby oppressing the working-classes, and grinding our already debased peasantry to the very extreme of misery, inducing the increase of atrocious crime to a most fearful extent.

"That your petitioner would also show that these monster establishments render anything like competition impossible, and create a monopoly which, under any circumstances and in any form, is, has been, and ever will be, inimical to the best interests of the community.

"That your petitioner witnesses the investment of such capital, in a financial point of view, by individuals in certain trunk lines, as being beneficial, as well to the country as to the shareholders, inasmuch as they (the latter) get good interest for their money, and are thereby enabled, in some measure, to counteract the evil they have produced; while others, many of them, some that have passed, and others now before your Honourable House, originating in false premises, and projected by artful and designing men, are calculated to give rise to a spirit of gambling, successful for a while, but which must ultimately involve, if they have not already done so, the ruin of thousands who have, under some specious pretexts, consented to become their dupes; such systematic adventurous schemes being derogatory to the national character, subversive of that safe and healthy state which the monetary transactions of a great commercial country should ever enjoy, incompatible with the industrious habits, as well as prejudicial to the social, moral, and religious obligations, of the people.

"That your petitioner has long and deeply thought of and deplored the late dilapidated state of our finances, the state of the nation—her debt, her revenue, her expenditure, her resources—as well as our present unwholesome system of taxation; and your petitioner, with his faculties unimpaired, and the same zeal to serve his country as he had when he first put his foot on board of a man-of-war, is prepared to prove before any Committee your Honourable House shall appoint, upon certain returns being produced, that such a revenue can be raised from the present mode of travelling as shall surpass all others in its efficiency, its safety, its equality, its justice, and its policy ; and that, too, without any interference with vested rights.

"And here your petitioner cannot but remind your Honourable House, that in cases where great changes have been wrought, care has always been taken of vested rights—such as with the Municipal Reform Bill, which provides compensation for the clerks of different corporate towns.

"Therefore, your petitioner lastly prays, that in passing any Bills having reference to railroads, in some or one of them such provision shall be made as shall prevent your petitioner and his family from coming to the extreme of misery.

"And your petitioner, as in duty bound, shall ever pray.

"Signed at Cambridge, 15th April, 1845.

"THO. CROSS."

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PRINTED BY GILBERT AND RIVINGTON LTD.,
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